While multitudes of Christians chase after signs and miracles and flock to teachers of success and prosperity, God has been calling out a "wilderness people" who are consumed with hunger for more of Christ. Right now a glorious company is coming forth!

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HISTORY OF THE CHURCH AND EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

PRAYER STIUDY #546

Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing.

Psalm 92:13-14

THE ECCLESIA AND THE KOINONIA

There are two wonderful Greek words used for Church in the New Testament. We are most familiar, perhaps, with *ecclesia*, which means *a calling out* or *assembly*. This word has to do with the structure and government of the Church. Thus, we in the Body of Christ are *the called out ones*. It is for these *called out ones* that Jesus gave His life (Ephesians 5:25: *Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.)* And it is this glorious church that Jesus is passionately in love with and is coming back for (Ephesians 5:27: *…a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.)*

Ecclesia describes the Church's relationship with the world. The Ecclesia is *called out* or separated from the world. There is,

however, a much more tender word for the *called out ones* or ecclesia, a word that has to do with the Church's relationship with the members. That word is *koinonia*. *Koinonia* has to do with fellowship and communion. The Church was to practice *koinonia* or be like a family. One passage that clearly illustrates this is found in Acts 2:44-47: *Now all who believed were together and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*

The growth of Christianity all over the world during this first century is so phenomenal that we can attribute this *only* to the power of the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Church walking in both ecclesia and koinonia. Yes, the first century Church walked in the power of the Spirit, exercised spiritual gifts, and loved each other. Because it is often controversial in today's "watered down" and "seeker friendly" theology, I want to specifically comment on how the early Church walked in the gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit, although this study tonight is NOT designed to comprehensively give the early history of the Church nor to be a defense of the use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit today. I want to give a bird's eye view of the Church from its birth at Pentecost to its role in the world today.

The Church, since its birth at Pentecost in Acts 2 has ALWAYS, without ceasing, had those who walked in the gifts and ministry and the power of the Holy Spirit. Any cessationalist, who studies with integrity and an open mind the history of the Church, could not possibly say that the gifts went out after the last Biblical apostle died or after the canonization of scripture. Furthermore, there is absolutely NO scripture that supports this viewpoint. Historically, there is amble evidence which, in this age of instant information and the Internet, is easily accessible to verify the ministry and the operation of the 9 gifts of 1st Corinthians 12, from the first century to the present day. Besides all this, John Chapter 1 tells us that Jesus is the Word, and Hebrews 13:8 tells us, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

Because of time, I can give only a few examples of the power of the early church walking in gifts and signs and wonders. In AD 150 Jusyn Martyr wrote of Jews still leaving their communities in order to become Christians and to receive spiritual gifts in their new faith. Irenaeus, the Bishop of Lyons, around AD 180 spoke of words of knowledge, prophecy, and healing. Novatian, a prominent Christian elder in Rome, around AD 250, told of people who discerned spirits. Tertuillian (AD 200, Origen (AD 230), Phioxenus (AD 510) affirmed the use of spiritual gifts in their services. John Knox (1514-1572), a Scottish leader of the Reformation, had the gift of prophecy as did Samual Rutherford (in the 1600s) and Charles Spurgeon (in the 1800s). Other famous Christians who testified of walking in gifts of the Spirit include Jeanne Guyon, George Fox, John Bunyan, John Wesley, George Whitfield, Charles G. Finney, George Muller, A.J. Gordon,

D.L. Moody, and William and Catherine Booth, just to name a few.

THE FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY

In addition to the gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit, Jesus gave the 5-fold ministry gifts (or offices), which are just as applicable today as they were in the first century church:

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things unto Him who is the head-Christ-from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does it share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love (Ephesians 4:11-16).

Why Did Jesus Give These 5 Fold Ministry Gifts?

1. For the perfecting or equipping of the believers
2. For the work of the ministry
3. For the edifying or building up of the Body of Christ
4. So that, we, as the Body of Christ, come into unity and knowledge of Jesus
5. To a perfect or complete or mature person

Why Are These Gifts Necessary for Today?

Because the 5-Fold Ministry Gifts in proper operation will bring the Body of Christ both into unity and into a more complete knowledge of Jesus-remember that Paul said the goal of his life was *to know Him*! (Phillipians 3:10: *That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death)*- the Body will come into maturity so that the Sons' Company might be manifest and Jesus can come back for a Bride without spot or blemish.

I have taken the liberty in the rest of this teaching to quote extensively from Dr. Bill Hamon in his book *The Day of Saints* pp.183-187 and his book *The Eternal Church* to explain what each of the 5 ministry offices entails. This information is not complete and greatly summarized:

Apostles specialize in supernatural signs and wonders. They give building strategies and lay foundations. The requirement for all apostles in the New Testament is that they had seen Jesus. Apostles are often sent to establish new works and then stay to support those works. They provide structure and leadership. They help activate other believers in spiritual gifts, and their miraculous signs and wonders enable believers to be delivered from evil spirits, healed of diseases, and freed from strongholds. Apostles will be key in helping transform saints from pew-sitters to active participants in the Body of Christ.

Prophets help bring vision, spiritual insight, revelations, impartations, and activation of the believers' supernatural gifts

and callings. Prophets have a special ability to minister a rhema word that personally enlightens and activates faith in the believers. Prophets help bring God's direction and vision to the Church at large, to local bodies of believers, to businesses, cities, and nation, as well as to individual believers.

Evangelists have a special anointing to stir up the zeal of the Lord in believers. They have an anointing and passion for winning the lost and making the, active members of the Body of Christ. Without their enthusiasm for tearing down the works of darkness and building up the Kingdom of God, churches would be in danger of becoming "bless me clubs" focused on self.

Pastors have the ability to nurture, stabilize, grow and mature the believers. They specialize in building character, faithfulness, and family relationship in the local church family. Even those who have reached spiritual adulthood need to remain in committed relationships with those who have ben charged to keep guard over their souls. Biship Hamon requires all those who receive prophetic words through the ministry of Christian International to write out their prophecies and submit them to their pastoral covering.

Teachers Teachers help prepare the believers in both the milk and the meat of the Word. They have a special ability to teach the truths of God with simplicity and revelation. We are all to study the Bible for ourselves, but we can greatly benefit from anointed teachers who have spent years of study of Bible truths. James 3:1 states that teachers will receive a stricter judgment.

Therefore, it is important for them to know and rightly divide the Word of truth.

*The **apostles**, in particular, are the fathers and mothers who impart to the Believers and raise them up as sons and daughters in the faith. The **prophets** bring supernatural revelation and insight concerning the calling and ministry of the Believers. They give vision and reveal the times and seasons of God so the Believers know what to do. The **teachers** teach the Word of God with simplicity and wisdom as a mother feeds a growing child. The **pastors** nurture the Believers with counseling, clothing them with Christlike armor and garments. They help the Saints become a family of God meeting in the local churches. The **evangelist** imparts zeal for souls to be saved and equip the Believers with wisdom and anointing in winning the loss.* (Pp 182-183)

We have seen a remarkable restoration of these Five Fold Ministry offices in the last 60 years:
1950s **Evangelists-**Deliverance/Healing Evangelism(Oral Roberts, AA Allen, Jack Coe, Kathryn Kulhman)

1960s **Pastors-**Charismatic Renewal (Harold Bredesen, Dennis Bennett, Don Van Hoosier)

1970s **Teachers-**Faith Teaching Movement(Kenneth Hagan, Kenneth Copeland, Derek Prince, John O'Steen)

1980s **Prophets-**Prophetic Movement (Dr. Bill Hamon, Mike Bickle, John Paul Jackson, Bobby Conner, Rick Joyner, Bob Jones)

1990s **Apostles-**Apostolic Movement (Peter Wagner, Dr. Bill Hamon)

So again why did the Lord give the five-fold ministry offices gift to the Church?
Again,

1. For the equipping of the Believers
2. For the work of the ministry
3. For the building up of the Body
4. So that we come into unity and knowledge
5. To a mature Body

The Church must come to maturity before the Coming of the King. This is only one aspect of prophetic fulfillment that must take place before the coming of Jesus. At the same time, we will see Christians delivered up to be afflicted and killed, false prophets, iniquity abounding, the Gospel of the Kingdom preached in all the nations, the characteristics of the Days of Noah, etc, and the restoration of Israel, both natural and spiritual. You can study more about His Coming by reading the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24-25.

I again refer to Bishop Hamon. I find his book on Church history, *The Eternal Church*, a masterpiece concerning the Church. Almost all of the following history comes from his book.

EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

1. Birth of the Christian Church AD 30 on the Day of Pentecost
2. Separation of the Christian Believers from the Jews AD 70
3. Dark Ages 500-1500 AD
4. The Period of Church Restoration 1517 AD to Present

FIVE MAJOR RESTORATION MOVEMENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY

1. The Protestant Movement 1500s
2. The Holiness Movement 1600-1900
3. The Pentecostal Movement 1900
4. The Charismatic Movement 1950-1980
5. The Prophetic-Apostolic Movement 1980-2010

There have been several movements in Church history in addition to the above 5 major movements. I will capitalize and highlight the major movements, but put lower caps for the minor movements. I want to include the latter so that you can see the restored principles that many denominations are stuck on. Typically the new denominations in each movement took as their foundation the major truth restored. The problem came when they held on to and got stuck in their restore truth and refused to accept new restored truth and revelation that came after their own movements started. Thus, they allowed themselves to become old wine skins, which could not hold new spirit-quickened truth. Sadly, we see many Pentecostal and Charismatic churches today, which once were so vibrant and alive and walking in the Spirit, now dead, because they got stuck in their own revelation and became harden to new truth.

This information below is from *The Day of Saints* pp. 156-157:

1. THE PROTESTANT MOVEMENT 1500

Major Truth Restored: Salvation by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Denominations founded: Lutheran, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Congregational.

Note: Protestants are wrong in not recognizing the importance of the Catholic Church in maintaining Christianity throughout the Dark Ages. As Dr. Hamon from an Assembly of God background, says, "I hope that…you will gain an appreciation for the Catholic fathers (and mothers) who maintained the truth of the Christian monotheistic faith in one God and in His virgin-born Son, Jesus. They enabled the basics of Christianity, as found in the Apostle's Creed, not to be lost during the Dark Ages, a time of great Church apostasy. During this period there was great persecution and martyrdom of Christians from heathens, Muslims, and many other anti-Christian groups."

Evangelistic Movement 1600
Major Truth Restored: Water baptism, separation of church and state
Denominations founded: Mennonites, Baptist, All fundamental-evangelistic churches

2. HOLINESS MOVEMENT 1700

Major Truth Restored: Sanctification, the Church set apart from the world
Denominations founded: Methodist, Nazarene, Church of God, all Holiness churches

Faith Healing Movement 1800
Major Truth Restored: Divine physical healing in the atonement

Denominations founded: Christian Missionary Alliance, Church of God

3. PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT 1900

Major Truth Restored: Holy Spirit Baptism, Speaking in Tongues
Denominations founded: Assembly of God, United Pentecostal, Foursquare, Church of God in Christ

Latter Rain Movement 1950
Major Truth Restored: Prophetic presbytery, singing praises, Body of Christ membership
Denominations founded: Non-denominational churches

Deliverance Evangelism Movement 1950
Major Truth Restored: Evangelist ministry, mass evangelism with miraculous healings
Denominations founded: Independent churches and ministerial fellowships

4. CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT 1960

Major Truth Restored: Renewal of all restored truth from all past movements; pastors restored as sovereign head of local church
Denominations founded: Independent Charismatic churches and Charismatic groups within denominational churches

Faith Movement 1970

Major Truth Restored: Faith confessions, prosperity, and victorious attitude and life; Teacher ministry restored as a fivefold minister.
Denominations founded: Faith and Word churches

5. PROPHETIC MOVEMENT 1980 & APOSTOLIC MOVEMENT 1990

Major Truth Restored: Personal prophecy, activating gifts, warfare praise, prophets to the nations. Prophet ministry was restored and a company of prophets brought forth. Apostolic leadership, release of miracles, networking, great harvest, and Apostolic ministry restored to bring divine order, finalized restoration of fivefold ministry for full equipping of the believers.
Denominations founded: Prophetic churches and networks, and Apostolic churches and networks.

Possible Future Restoration Movements

6. THE SAINTS OR BELIEVERS' MOVEMENT-Many believe the early start of this movement happened in 2008. This will be characterized by the believers in Christ taking their authority and beginning to live out kingdom principles and, as Daniel said in Daniel 11:32, "…the people who know their God shall be strong and do exploits." The church will continue to grow spiritually until it becomes that mature bride that Jesus longs to come after.
Major Truth Restored: Believers will demonstrate the Gospel of the Kingdom and reap the Great Harvest at the end of the age.
Denominations founded: We don't know yet what denominations or groups will be founded since this movement is yet to be or at least in the very infantile stages.

7. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON THE EARTH. This will be marked by the rule and reign of Christ on this earth. Revelation 11:15 tells us, *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, " The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."* Some prophetic voices believe that this will start around 2030. This of course will be marked by the Second Coming. We are not date setters here, but do believe the signs of the time are pointing to the imminent and soon return of Jesus.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

The more I study the more I feel that trying to explain the Gospel of the Kingdom is almost as complex as trying to explain the Trinity. The Kingdom of God(or called the Kingdom of Heaven by Matthew because he was a Jewish writer and the Jews believe that they are not worthy to write God's name and also believe avoiding using His name is pious and proper-that's why you see Messianic Jewish believers write G-d) is, as we have discussed here many times, the first and the last thing that Jesus spoke of on this earth. Both He and John the Baptist mentioned it frequently. The better translation for the word *kingdom* would probably be *dominion*, *sovereignty*, *kingship*, or *kingly rule*. Even Jesus said of the Kingdom of God that one cannot say, "Look here it is" or "There it is!" in Luke 17:21. When Jesus speaks of the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven, He is referring to a time of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, a time of restored earth, when believers will worship the Lord

forever under the rulership of Messiah. Remember from our recent study that the Abrahamic Covenant said that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham's lineage. The Davidic Covenant said that the temple would be built, the Messiah would come, and God would be merciful. It was marked by sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. Thus, Jesus is referring to a future time in history when God's will is done on the earth as it is done in heaven.

The Gospels define the Kingdom as something that was both "at hand" and a future reality(Mark 1:15). This view sees Jesus and His life on earth as the beginning of the Kingdom but not the consummation, which will follow His second coming. Traditionally, Catholic, Liberal Christian, and Pentecostal denominations emphasize its present aspect, while conservative Fundamentalists and evangelicals have emphasized its future aspects. The present aspect of the Kingdom refers to the changed hearts and minds of Christians (Luke 17:20-23), emphasizing the spiritual nature of His Kingdom by saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." The activity of Jesus in healing diseases, driving out demons, teaching a new way of living, offering hope to the poor, etc., is the demonstration of this Kingdom. Yet the consummation of this is yet to come and will come only with the return of Christ.

THE GLORY OF THE COMING FULLNESS OF THE KINGDOM

(Based on a reading of Isaiah 11 and 12)

1. All of the animals will not longer eat each other or harm humans (ex. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb. The lion

will eat straw like the ox. Cows and bears will eat peacefully together.)

2. Children will no longer be afraid of wild animals (even safely putting their hands in the holes of formerly poisonous snakes) and will lead the animals.
3. There will be no accidents or deaths.
4. Jesus shall stand as the standard around which all nations will gather. All men will look to Jesus Christ for safety and deliverance.
5. Jews will again become missionaries taking the Word of God from Jerusalem to all nations.
6. The nations shall seek Jesus.
7. There will be universal peace.
8. His rest shall be glorious.
9. He will set his hand again the 2nd time to recover His Jewish remnant.
10. He will gather the outcast of Israel.
11. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart.
12. The adversaries of Judah will be cut off.
13. There shall be a highway for the remnant of His people.
14. The righteous shall praise.
15. The Gentiles shall see Christ and bless the Jewish people.
16. There will be no fear.
17. The righteous will be full of joy.
18. The inhabitants of Zion will sing and cry out and shout the greatness of the Holy One in the midst of the remnant company.