

## Restoration and Influence

**Restoration** in every dimension of human experience is at the heart of the gospel. It is woven through both OT and NT Scriptures and should be kept at the forefront of the things we communicate. The **restoration** we have been examining recently is the return of the church (the Bride of Christ), to the majesty and glory God intended for her. But remember, when something is **restored** according to Scripture, it is always increased, multiplied or improved so that its latter state is significantly better than its original state.

Restoration is already taking place, and God's **Spirit** is being poured out on all flesh. However, **restoration** is a process. Through a series of very distinct and diverse operations of the Holy Spirit, God is systematically renewing different aspects of His beloved church. And this present-day "move of God" is deeply affecting every dimension – the spiritual, emotional, physical and material.

When this profound effect (the manifestation of God's glory) becomes visible outside our church buildings, the world will sit up and take notice. I'm convinced that God has started to restore His church to a place of great influence in society. *"Arise! Let your light shine for all to see. **For the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. Darkness as black as night covers all the nations of the earth, but the glory of the Lord rises and appears over you. All nations will come to your light; mighty kings will come to see your radiance"** (Isaiah 60:1, 2).*

Notice, God's glory doesn't just attract ordinary people, it appeals to every nation and powerful leaders as well. God has always intended to elevate His church to a position of prominence. For this is exactly what the glory of the Lord represents!

Isn't it truly incredible? The church's time to **"arise and shine"** has come - for the manifest glory of the Lord is here. While the world is slipping into apostasy (spiritual darkness) the Lord has chosen to shine through His bride (the church) in a greater measure than ever before. So much so, that representatives from every nation – including the most powerful leaders on earth – will come to pay their respect to a restored church. But it doesn't end there! Let's read on...

*"Look and see, for everyone is coming home! Your sons are coming from distant lands; your little daughters will be carried home. Your eyes will shine, and your heart will thrill with joy, for merchants from around the world will come to you. They will bring you the **wealth** of many lands."*

The prodigal sons and daughters are coming home. Jesus is calling them back! And accompanying the return of God's precious children are business men from around the world - bringing the wealth of many nations. Influence requires wealth for it to be effective. In today's material society, it's probably impossible for an impoverished person to have any influence. This is why the Lord said, *"...A **harvest** is appointed whenever I restore the fortunes of My people"* (Hosea 6:11).

I believe that the present-day harvest is also there to increase the influence of God's people. The Oxford Dictionary says, *"...influence is the power or ability to affect a person's character, beliefs or actions."* As the glory of the Lord rises upon the church, God will birth very influential individuals - people who shall have a significant effect on the character, beliefs and actions of others. We're in a dispensation where God is

preparing a unique collection of human vessels (*new wineskins*), and these vessels are believers who have been miraculously equipped to distribute the Good News throughout every aspect of today's society.

We are entering an new era - a time where the church will display one of its primary functions, as mentioned in Ephesians 3:10, "...*To the intent that now the manifold **wisdom of God** might be made known **by the church** to the principalities and powers in heavenly places.*"

To restore the church to its intended glory, and make her truly **influential** in society, God has promised to make her known before the representatives of every nation – including the most powerful and wealthy people on earth. However, the diverse wisdom of God should also be *made known*. And this wisdom must be displayed *by the church* to the rulers of darkness in the spirit realm. These are the evil forces that themselves have a significant effect on today's society. Note, God has chosen to influence man by releasing His glory **to the church**. Yet, He has also chosen to influence the spirit realm by making His *wisdom* known by the church. Both the 'natural' and 'spiritual' are being influenced.

There is no point in us becoming influential before man alone, because we do not wrestle with flesh and blood but with the powers and rulers of darkness in high places. And, it was the **wisdom of God** that defeated the devil (1 Corinthians 2:7-8), so this is why God wants us to make it known in the spirit realm. The big question we should all be asking ourselves is this... "*Am I having any influence in the spirit realm?*" Or as a famous preacher once said, "*Is my name know in hell?*"

If you are having any significant influence in the area of the spirit, your name will be known (and feared) by the evil powers that seek to kill, steal and destroy. God has fully equipped you to be effective and influential in this dimension. When Jesus was raised from the dead, He came up with all the spoils of that spiritual battle, and He made a show of them openly – *triumphing* over them in it! Consequently, every knee shall bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Because Jesus is Lord – you are destined to win! But, to fulfil your destiny you still need the wisdom of God, and you need that wisdom to be made known by you to the evil forces opposing God's plan for your life. So how do you do this? James 1:5-8 says, "...*If any of you lacks **wisdom**, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must **believe** (have faith) and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.*"