

The Messenger

A Prophetic Bulletin Published by Prepare the Way International

Malachi 3:1 "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me."

Volume 9, No. 2

January 28, 2011

2011: A Year of Crossing Over

By Rob Winters

Even as Joshua led the children of Israel out of the wilderness and into their land of promise, 2011 will be a year of crossing over for the Body of Christ. Indeed, the Lord is corporately challenging the corporate Church to leave the spiritual wilderness we have inhabited for years and cross over into a season of fruitfulness and fulfilled promise. Truly, this year is a "make or break" year for us all – a year of decision. Will we break down and settle for the crumbs of a desolate wilderness of sin and hopeless compromise? Or will we arise, break off our engagement with besetting sin, and break through to become children of promise – prospering and conquering sons and daughters of the King of kings?

Joshua 1:2-3 "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them – the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses."

To understand where the Lord is taking us, we must first understand not only where we have been, but also why we have been. Surely, the Lord has a purpose in our wilderness journey. The wilderness is intended by the Lord to be a period of preparation – a season of humiliation, soul purification, and death to our flesh. While in the wilderness, we must conquer the giants that lurk within – pride, jealousy, intimidation, insecurity, self-pity, greed, vanity and lust, just to name a few.

Deuteronomy 8:2 "And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not."

Unless we vanquish these formidable foes within, we will not be equipped to dismantle strongholds and battle strongmen in our land of promise. In other words, we might as well forget about confronting Baal, Mammon, Leviathan, and the Queen of

Heaven, or attempting to dismantle iniquitous structures such as abortion, racism, Islam, and secular humanism, unless the issues of our heart have been thoroughly dealt with. Make no mistake about it, whether we like it or not, we are destined for war. Unfortunately, the Western church has taught us to be sons and even servants of God, but not soldiers of the cross. Needless to say, our mindset must change if we are to be successful in not only driving out the King's enemies, but also becoming a light to the nations.

Joshua 4:12-13 "And the men of Reuben, the men of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken to them. About forty thousand **prepared for war** crossed over before the Lord for battle, to the plains of Jericho."

Keys to Crossing Over

Extended wilderness seasons can be not only discouraging, but also wearisome. No wonder the Lord commanded Joshua no less than four times to "be strong and of good courage" (Joshua 1:6, 7, 9, 18). It is therefore imperative that we surround ourselves with encouragers, instead of the dream slayers of the past. For some this may require transitioning from one circle of friends to another. Others may require healing prayer to wash away the heartache and disappointment of hope deferred. Still others will need to revisit their personal prophetic promises and stir up the gift of God within them. Only then will the joy of renewed vision and purpose bring the energy and strength required to cross over.

The wilderness can also "mess with our minds". Developing a wilderness mentality, some may envision mirages, or even become delusional - thinking God has forgotten them or does not love them anymore. For this reason the Lord commanded Joshua to meditate in the Law day and night, which enabled him to not only observe His commandments, but also make his journey into the land of promise prosperous and successful (Joshua 1:8). Therefore, God's word must become the Alpha and Omega word of our existence. Indeed, transformed thinking requires radical reconstruction - the restructuring of days and the reprioritization of lives around Holy Scripture. For some this will translate into letting go of certain people, places and things that have bound them to a poverty and victim mentality. For others it will mean immersing themselves in God's word, whereby they can be renewed in the spirit of their minds.

Crossing over into our promised land also requires sanctification, also known as consecration. Indeed, every wilderness wanderer must make the choice to enter this new season by the narrow gate of humility, sacrifice and faith. Those who have left their first love must return to Him. Surely, we are entering new kingdom days that require new kingdom ways - for we have not been this way before.

Joshua 3:4-5 ""For you have not passed this way before. And Joshua said to the people, "**Sanctify yourselves**, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

A Year of Transition

For those bold enough to cross over, 2011 will be a year of transition. The number eleven signifies "chaos" and "disorder" – words we despise. Nevertheless, it is imperative that we leave the false comfort of the wilderness and journey into our promised land of destiny. For some this will mean leaving an abusive relationship, starting a new career, moving to another state, changing churches, or kindling new relationships. Unfortunately, some will choose to remain in their wilderness and eventually be consumed by the darkness that is covering the earth. However, others will arise from the ashes of despair, seek the Lord anew, and receive the renewed vision and strength necessary to cross over into the new season. Empowered to conquer giants and to reign as kings and priests to our God, we will see the glory of the Lord rise upon and among us, drawing kings and commoners alike to the foot of the cross (Isaiah 60:1-2, Revelation 5:10). For even as in the days of Joshua, the Lord will soon do wonders in our midst. Indeed, the best is yet to come!

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