

The Men Of Hope

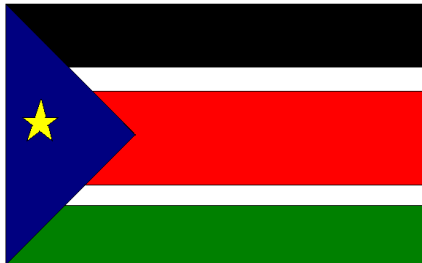
~~The Lost Boys of Sudan;~~ The Men Of Hope!

*Oh God!
We praise and glorify you
For your grace on South Sudan
Land of great abundance
Uphold us united in peace and harmony
Oh motherland!*

*We rise raising flag with the guiding star
And sing songs of freedom with joy
For justice, liberty and prosperity
Shall forevermore reign
Oh great patriots!*

*Let us stand up in silence and respect
Saluting our martyrs whose blood
Cemented our national foundation
We vow to protect our nation
Oh God, bless South Sudan!*

(The national anthem for the Republic of South Sudan.)



A New Day Has Come

“The night may be too long, but the day will surely come.”
(President Salva Kiir on South Sudan’s independence after decades of war.)

One day early in March of 2015, my daughter and I were watching the movie “The Good Lie” in our home. It was based on the true story of a group of young people that have become known as the lost boys of Sudan. Their journey was incredible and has inspired many to reach out and help on their behalf.

As we watched the movie, the Lord stirred both of our hearts, moving me to question Him as to why. After some research on the internet, we discovered that the movie had been made about a man from west Michigan, where we live. I made a phone call to his office early on a Saturday morning. By the afternoon, I was speaking with him. He was in Florida at that moment, but would soon be returning to his home which just happened to be 12 miles from mine.

His name was David Bowman, chairman of Partners In Compassionate Care (PCC). Shortly after retiring, David and his wife, Nancy, had taken in five of the lost boys in December of 2000. About two years later, while unloading some plywood, David began to have some chest pains that would lead him into a 5-bypass heart surgery.

While in the hospital, David did a lot of thinking about the legacy that he would be leaving his children and grandchildren if God did not bring him through this major surgery. As he thought about this, he decided that he would want his legacy to be that their dad, and grandfather, obeyed God. Little did he know that God was going to test him six months later to see if he would still be willing to obey Him by going to Sudan. David did go and the Lord began to reveal His plan for him to be involved with the building of a hospital.

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PCC is a nonprofit organization that saw desperate needs in a war-torn land. Their mission is to provide hope and healing for the people of South Sudan by partnering with like-minded organizations and individuals. They started as a group of nine, some of whom had served as American parents to the Lost Boys and Girls of Sudan who arrived in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 2000. A group of Sudanese church leaders invited them to visit Werkok in the Jonglei State area to see how difficult everyday Sudanese life could be. Nine of them traveled to Sudan in 2004 to assess medical care in Southern Sudan.

What they saw were unbelievably poor living conditions and nearly nonexistent health care. They also saw an amazingly vibrant Christian church in the area which gave them hope. Since then they have built a hospital in Werkok that now serves a struggling community in the love of Jesus Christ. The rebel army came down from the north in late 2013, killing many and causing the rest to flee for their lives. Through the power of prayer, the hospital was left untouched while many others nearby were destroyed.

As we talked, the presence of the Lord was very evident. Dave was discerning enough to sense God's fingerprints on our conversation. He then told me of his team that would be departing in just a few weeks, mentioning that he had room if I wanted to go with them. My heart lept inside me, knowing that the Lord was now calling me to go to South Sudan. I informed Dave that my daughter was a registered nurse who had been seeking a medical ministry to get connected with. He said to ask her if she would like to also come. My daughter and I both knew immediately that the Lord was calling us. We quickly began to prepare for a new adventure to the other side of the world that neither of us had been to before with a man we would not meet until we were in Africa.

As I spent time with the Lord before our journey, He revealed something to me that has now led to this writing. This is a word of hope for those who are presently in a spiritual battle that rages in the heavenly realm over your newly freed homeland of South Sudan. The Lord Jesus Christ has ushered in a new day to those who have been living in a war zone for many years. The smoke is

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beginning to clear over a new nation that has risen by the sovereign act of Almighty God.

This is not a book of your past history, but rather a word from the Lord for your glorious future. It is a word of hope, as well as a word to action. When the children of Israel were told to take possession of the Promised Land of their inheritance, it required their obedience to get up and move as the Lord led them. South Sudan, this is your time to stand firm in the Lord, moving as He directs, and see His full deliverance from your enemies. But first, you must repent where He convicts you in order to take this land back from the devil and live in peace. Jesus Christ must fully possess you first before you can fully possess the land. He must become your Lord, not just in word, but in deed.

May the Lord grant your people repentance, leading to the knowledge of truth, so that you may come to your senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will (2 Timothy 2:25-26). Your citizens must be stirred by the Holy Spirit to repent and then rise up in the power of Jesus' name in order to do the great and mighty work of the last days that He has appointed for you. Your time to defeat the devil and see the Lord's glory in your land has come. South Sudan, this is your time to rise and shine with God's glory!

*“And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of **hope** until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”* (Hebrews 6:11-12)

The Divided Tribes

Before we embarked on our trip, we were introduced to a former lost boy who works for PCC. His name is Deng Jongkuch. He has written a book called *“A Story of Hope – The journey of a lost boy of Sudan”*. On his incredible journey of survival, Deng was helped by a special gift his mother and father had given him; the gift of

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hope in his heart. His parents had told him; *“Never give up hope, Deng, no matter what happens.”* These words would place within him a very strong urge to survive.

Deng mentions there are over 500 different tribes in Sudan. Within the tribes of South Sudan, intertribal fighting has continued after their becoming a sovereign nation, resulting in continued grief and chaos for a nation that has already suffered greatly because of war.

Based on this tragedy, is there any hope of their people ever truly becoming “one,” united with the same mind and in the same judgment? Through the efforts of man alone, no. But through the work of the Lord, most definitely YES! The only way for them to ever become one tribe is to come under one Chief whose name is Jesus Christ. There is no other way. As I’ve already stated, this can only occur through repentance and reconciliation found in the Lord.

Regarding the divisions that were occurring in the Body of Christ within the church in the city of Corinth, Paul declared, *“Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe’s people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, ‘I am of Paul,’ and ‘I of Apollos,’ and ‘I of Cephas,’ and ‘I of Christ.’ Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”* (1 Corinthians 1:10-13)

Paul is giving us the plan of God for all people, throughout the earth, to truly come together as one united people. The divisive nature of tribalism can only be overcome through the mind and judgment of Jesus Christ. Satan’s desire for you is to continue fighting and killing each other so that you will never enter into your destiny in Christ. When you choose to repent and come under His lordship you will quit fighting as the church in Corinth over your group or tribe name. The only name that matters is the Lord’s!

Repentance is the only way to bring healing to a nation. Disobedience fueled by generational hatred will only serve to

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further the devil's strongholds in your tribes. Someone must hear this word of God and act upon it, reaching out to your Christian brothers in the other tribes to bring national healing in Jesus' name.

The Greek word we interpret in English in 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 as "complete" is *katartizo* (kat-ar-tid'-zo). It is defined as "to mend what has been broken or rent, to repair." Ethically speaking, it means "to strengthen, perfect, complete, make one what he ought to be." From this we can see that in order for any of us to be fixed, for any damaged relationships to be repaired, we must receive the heart and mind of Christ. Without this, we will never be brought to the place of perfection in the only One who can make us what we ought to be. Without the establishing of this foundational pillar through repentance, South Sudan will self-destruct under the powers of darkness.

While praying to the Father about His disciples need for unity, Jesus said *"The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me."* (John 17:22-23) The Greek for "perfected" is *teleioo* (tel-i-o'-o) which means "to carry through completely, to accomplish, finish, bring to an end." Again, as you can see, the way God has designed for all people groups to be brought to completion in Him is through the unity of His Spirit. Remember, it's *"'not by [human] might nor by [human] power, but by My Spirit' says the Lord of hosts."* (Zechariah 4:6)

As we walk together in His glory, the world is able to see Jesus through us and experience His love for them. Without His glorious presence, the people of South Sudan, as well as every other nation, will lack what is necessary to become perfected in the end. It is impossible for mankind to be brought to completion in their own strength. A lack of unity in the church results in the world seeing us and our religious institutions that are void of God's love. They leave our midst dissatisfied, still searching for that which will fill the God given void within them.

South Sudan, God Is With You!

South Sudan is now a nation because of God's predetermined plan. This is your Divine destiny! The Bible tells us that *"He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist."* (Acts 17:26-28)

My question before going to South Sudan was, "Why, God, have You raised up this seemingly insignificant nation right before Your second coming as the reigning King of the earth?" What I began to see was that South Sudan is about to receive a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit to fulfill their Divine purpose at the end of this age. They will be used to shame the so-called wise, and to shame those who are strong around them. The glory of God will shine on His repentant people in their land. They will play a significant part in His final plan for the last days. To God be the glory!

South Sudan, you have risen from the ashes of a long contested civil war. God has done a "new thing" in you. You must now be VERY careful how you build, because *"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it..."* (Psalm 127:1, NAS)

During the Constitutional Convention of 1787, the United States was also a new, struggling nation trying to become united. It seemed as if there might be a split before they even started. At a crucial moment of our nation's history, Benjamin Franklin, one of our famous Founding Fathers, providentially stood and declared;

"God governs in the affairs of man. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured in the Sacred Writings [Bible] that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this. I also believe that, without his

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concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel.”

South Sudan, you too must be very cautious in this crucial moment of history. Political corruption must be exposed and those who will not repent removed from office. Your pillars must consist of justice and righteousness. Without them you will crumble. Be encouraged, though, for God is with you. Under His lordship your nation will swiftly rise up and do great exploits!

The Revealed Word Of Hope

A couple of days before traveling to South Sudan, the Lord spoke to me regarding His plan for your nation. After praying, I was led by the Holy Spirit to 1 Chronicles 17:1-10. In this passage, King David desired to build a place for the covenant of the ark to dwell in. He was about to be reminded of what he had just learned in chapters 13 thru 15. He would accomplish God’s will by His prescribed way (1 Chron. 15:13), not man’s way.

First of all, we see God giving David a promise. He reminded him that He had taken him from being a follower to being a leader, and that He had cut off all his enemies from before him. The Lord also said that He would make David’s name great on earth, as it is today. It’s interesting that another “David” (Bowman) was leading this work in South Sudan.

The next couple of verses, verse 9 and 10, is when the Lord gave me a promise for South Sudan. He said *“I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant [“to establish”] them, so that they may dwell [“to reside or permanently stay, to tabernacle”] in their own place and not be moved again; and the wicked [literally “sons of wickedness”] will not waste [“to wear out”] them anymore as formerly... I will subdue all your enemies.”*

While speaking specifically to Israel in this passage, the Lord strongly impressed upon my heart that this was also for His children in this appointed moment of history residing within South

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Sudan. God has sovereignly positioned you in His “appointed place” that you may dwell and never be moved again (i.e. the journey of the lost boys). Presently, within the Werkok area where I visited, the majority of tukels now stand empty. Their owners fled in fear after many were killed by the invading rebel army from the north and have not yet returned.

The Hebrew for moved is *ragaz* (raw-gaz’). It’s defined as “to quiver with any violent emotion, especially anger or fear.” The Lord is declaring that the sons of wickedness will no longer make you fearful of what they might do to you, or to make you angry by their evil deeds. If you will submit yourselves fully to Him, they will no longer wear you out with their violent deeds of injustice. Instead, He will subdue ALL your enemies. Your obedience to His call is extremely crucial for the fulfillment of His will in this midnight hour. My Christian brothers and sisters of South Sudan, prepare your hearts by faith for your King who will soon come to deliver you!

The devil controls mankind through fear and intimidation. He does not want us to discover and grab hold of the hope that is found in Jesus Christ and His word. In the Bible Paul exhorts us to *“be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”* (Ephesians 6:10-13~ NIV)

It is the armor of God’s light that protects us from the powers of darkness. But as Paul just said, it is our responsibility to put it on. This occurs as we DO what the Lord commands. The armor does us no good if we choose, through disobedience, to not wear it. A Christian without armor will quickly be subdued by the powers of darkness. What they fear is the follower of Christ who walks in daily submission to the will of God. The power of God can flow freely through them. Wearing God’s armor they are used to destroy the strongholds of wickedness.

Establishing The Covenant Of God

It's important to notice that the promise to Israel (and South Sudan) in 1 Chronicles 17:9 of permanently dwelling in their own place was dependent upon the establishment of God's covenant within His people. This refers to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit within the hearts of all Christians. The battle is not over once we first turn to Christ in repentance. In fact, the battle now heats up even more. Once a man or woman turns to the Lord, the deceiver immediately attempts, as he did in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, to cause the child of God to question God's word (Genesis 3:1-5). His goal is to cause us to disobey, thereby making us powerless against him.

As we put on God's armor of light through obedience, Satan's deceptive schemes are more easily exposed. The Bible declares that if we will obediently submit to God, and then resist the devil, he MUST flee (James 4:7). Through the knowledge of truth, the Lord will make us wise to the devil's tricks.

The promise of God to establish His covenant within us does not mean that it will automatically happen, regardless of our response. He has given us His Holy Spirit to give us the strength that we will need to walk in obedience. This is why 2 Corinthians 6:1 urges us to work together with Him, not receiving the grace of God in vain. Presumption in God's grace while living in rebellion against Him will, like the children of Israel, cost many their entrance into the promised inheritance of the Lord.

It is only as we walk in obedience to the Lord's commands by the power of the Holy Spirit that the covenant is established within us. The promise alone wasn't enough for the children of Israel to enter the Promised Land. The majority of them were destroyed on the way. They were unable to enter because of unbelief (Hebrews 3-4). On their journey, they were destroyed for rebelling against the government of God over them.

Paul uses their disobedience in the wilderness as an example for the church to be careful in their Christian walks. God was not pleased with most of them. Because their rebellion caused them to

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die before entering into the Promised Land, Paul says that we who are now living in the new covenant in Christ must also be careful. The person who assumes they are standing firm in Christ while continuing in deliberate sin will, like the children of Israel, fall away from God's grace if they remain unrepentant (1 Corinthians 10:1-12).

In the book of Genesis the Lord told Noah *"And behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark-- you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you."* (Genesis 6:17-18)

The Lord established His covenant with Noah for him and his family's protection during the judgment that was soon to come. He is doing the same thing today, warning those with hearts like Noah to prepare, per His specific instructions, in order to be spared in His final judgment of the wicked on earth.

Jesus told us that when He returns it will be very similar to the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37-39). The Lord desires to reestablish His covenant within the hearts of mankind before judging the earth by reminding us of His requirements so that we are ready and may enter His ark of protection. That which brought judgment on the wicked (i.e. the flood) was also used to exalt the righteous. The wicked were taken away and the righteous were left behind to inherit the earth that had been cleansed. It will be the same at the end of this age.

God said He would establish His covenant in order that Noah can enter into the ark. It's the secret for us to enter in today into the protected vessel of God's deliverance. When Noah had entered inside, the flood came outside (Matthew 24:37-39, Luke 17:26-27).

The ark had rooms covered inside and out with pitch that kept it from sinking. This represents the protective covering of the Lord that covers and protects those who hear His word, as Noah did, and prepare their hearts by faith. Without this attention to God's details, he, and therefore we, could not enter the ark of deliverance and be safe from the judgment of the Lord upon His enemies on earth. The "doers" of God's word will be the ones who will

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survive the quickly approaching storm of the Lord's wrath. The rest will perish.

God spoke to Moses and said, *"I am the LORD; and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them. And I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned ["lived as aliens"]. And furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant."* (Exodus 6:2-5)

Israel's patriarchs, even though living in the Promised Land, were still looked upon by the Lord as aliens. It was only in the establishing of the covenant that citizenship was gained, and the land granted. There are Christians in South Sudan today who are considered "aliens" in the eyes of God in their own land because His covenant has never been established within their hearts. As such, they will never receive the right of ownership from the enemy over their nation.

Satan retains his rights over mankind wherever the covenant of the Lord is defiled through disobedience and neglect. The people of South Sudan will rightfully take the land from the enemy of their soul when the Lord has fully taken their hearts and established His covenant within them. As we will see, this will occur when the Holy Spirit is poured out in the coming revival within their land.

This is why present day Israel does not fully possess the physical land that God has promised them. Because of their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah, God's covenant will not be established within them until the Gentiles are brought to completion in Christ first (Romans 11:25). Until then, God has given Israel a partial hardness of heart.

Their lack of complete ownership of the physical land God has promised them is a reflection of the lack of internal ownership God has of their hearts. This will change in the near future. Through the righteous judgments of the Lord that are coming upon the face of the earth, Israel will be granted repentance giving them ears to hear and eyes to see the truth, who is Christ. But first, South Sudan, a gentile nation, will enter into their completeness in

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Christ, before Israel.

In fact, South Sudan may very well have the honor of being the last nation God raises up before allowing Israel to come to completion in Himself. Will South Sudan, the last nation established by God in this age, be the first nation to receive the final outpouring of God's reviving Spirit, leading the way for all other nations? Your response to God's final offer will determine your destiny in history. Rise up, South Sudan, rise up! Fulfill the words of your national anthem and through humble hearts give glory to the Lord so that the world will know that He loves them.

After David's son, Solomon, became king, the Lord said to him;

“And as for you, if you will walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you and will keep My statutes and My ordinances, then I will establish [which means “confirm, ratify, to stand, to arise, to become powerful”] the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, just as I promised to your father David, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’ But if you or your sons shall indeed turn away from following Me, and shall not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you and shall go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them, and the house which I have consecrated for My name, I will cast out of My sight. So Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples.”

(1 Kings 9:4-7)

The Lord was saying that if King Solomon would walk in obedience to Him that his rule over Israel would be established forever. On the contrary, a disobedient life toward God would result in the entire nation being cut off from the land they had been promised. Unfortunately, he did not take this command as seriously as he ought to and it cost him, and the entire nation, dearly. This principle of maintaining possession of what God has given us applies to all of God's children.

The Warning Of America's Current Spiritual Crisis

The church in America, where I live, is quickly losing dominion over our land because of the wickedness that abounds within the hearts of God's people. We are about to be humbled by God in order to remember from where our blessings flow. Our vast wealth came from God's blessing of His covenant with our Forefathers. It was by His power that our nation rose to such great prominence and influence in the world.

At the beginning of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln sought the Lord as to why the South was winning almost every major battle. It was revealed to him that the nation's chief sins were slavery and pride. This led him to issue the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, which released the slaves from their bondage to slavery. He later called for a national day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer throughout the North on April 30, 1863.

Within his statement to the nation he declared, "We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown; but we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own." The same issue of forgetfulness toward God plagues us today.

Like Israel, God's blessings on our nation did not come to us through our own righteousness, but rather is a continued blessing that began with the obedience of our Forefathers. Generally speaking, the church in America has forgotten God. We now offer the misinformed masses power (to even make wealth) before joining Christ on His cross at Golgotha. Consecration to God and sanctification by the Spirit are first in order to keep us from misusing wealth for self-glorification. Giving great wealth to a person whose heart has not been purged of the love of money will destroy them. Our harlotry known as "The Prosperity Gospel" has infected many countries, including Africa.

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Within America, many have been robbing God by not giving to others with the wealth God has given them (see Malachi 3:8-10). Instead of giving back to God, the majority lavishly spend what we have received from God on themselves. The prosperity preachers today keep it for their own kingdoms, encouraging others to do the same. They end up glorifying themselves instead of God with their wealth. Thankfully, the Lord is about to tear His kingdom from their greedy hands. Amen!

Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:17-19, *“Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”* Instead, the prosperity gospel proponents foolishly tell their followers to “wear their wealth.” Beware of putting on a Babylonian garment (Joshua 7:21) instead of a cloak of humility (1 Peter 5:5). Like Achan, it will bring disaster on you and your family. Be careful, South Sudan, of the blessings you will receive from God in the near future. They are not just for you, but in order to be a blessing to others.

In Zechariah 3:7 the Lord declared, *“If you will walk in My ways [“a road, a journey, a manner, a course of life or mode of action”], and if you will perform My service [“keep My requirements”], then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts...”*

Self-government (i.e. internal submission to God’s government) is first, followed by governmental authority in the kingdom of God. If there is no internal government of Christ, there will be no external government with Christ. Many religious leaders now rule by their own authority, resulting in a heavy hand of control over their congregations. As with Pharaoh, the Lord now commands them to “Let My people go!”

Governing in the age to come is conditional. Zechariah 3:7 has two big “ifs” in it, followed by a “then.” It’s a conditional promise that is dependent upon how we attend to the charge of the Lord to walk in His ways and perform His service during our lifetime in the present age. We must not be negligent in attending to our God

given duties which start with guarding our own hearts. Free access before the Lord is then granted to those who hear and “do” what the Lord commands.

Heart Circumcision

Another key passage in this revelation from the Lord is found in Joshua 5:1-12. The Lord had just dried up the waters of the Jordan allowing the sons of Israel to cross over into the Promised Land. Before they could take it, something extremely crucial needed to transpire.

At that time the Lord said to Joshua, “*‘Make for yourself flint knives and circumcise again the sons of Israel the second time.’ So Joshua made himself flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth.*” (Joshua 5:2-3) The following verses explain to us why the Lord had commanded Joshua to do this.

All the males who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, died in the wilderness along the way. They had been circumcised, but all the people who were born in the wilderness after they came out of Egypt had not been circumcised. God had previously commanded Abraham to have every male circumcised as a sign of the covenant between Him and Israel (Genesis 17). Due to a lack of obedience to God, they had not been diligent in keeping God’s commands by passing His word and ways on to their children. God was not pleased with them and they perished on their journey.

Many spiritual fathers have committed the same sin in our day. They have not taught God’s people what He has commanded in order to keep covenant with Him. In fact, they do not believe that under the new covenant through the blood of Jesus Christ that it’s even possible to break covenant with God and be cut off from His Body. Because of this, many of God’s children now walk in the precarious state of being a powerless covenant breaker that will shrink back in shame at the return of Christ.

The writer of Hebrews clearly warns Christians, saying “*For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the*

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truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10:26-31)

To receive the knowledge of the truth is to receive Christ, who is the Truth. The proper fear and respect of the Lord through the knowledge of truth is there to keep us from becoming a covenant breaker. It means we understand that continued, willful sin AFTER turning to Christ, thereby insulting the Spirit of grace, results in the judgment of God on His own people. This age old boundary of the fear of the Lord has been removed through acceptance of doctrines of demons as truth. Those who promote this false teaching, saying "Peace, peace!" when there is no inner peace, will pay dearly for all the blood they have on their hands of those who accepted there lies as truth and then fell away from continued devotion to Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us that *"The sons of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, that is, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished because they did not listen to the voice of the Lord, to whom the Lord had sworn that He would not let them see the land which the Lord had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. Their children whom He raised up in their place, Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them along the way."* (Joshua 5:6-7)

Notice that it wasn't Moses, but Joshua who circumcised the people. The word we interpret as Jesus is a transliteration in the New Testament of the Hebrew for Joshua in the Old Testament. Joshua, therefore, is a picture of Jesus, the One who cuts away the flesh (our sinful nature), as pictured through circumcision, by His Holy Spirit. He is the One who transforms us and leads us into the

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Promised Land of our spiritual inheritance. This is why we must not grieve the Holy Spirit by fighting Him in the pruning process of sanctification. It is this purifying process which establishes the covenant between the Lord and each one of His children, ensuring our entrance into His kingdom.

In the New Testament, Paul clearly defined this vital, inner working of the Spirit that every Christian experiences. He said, *“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter [represented by Moses in the Old Testament]; and his praise is not from men, but from God.”* (Romans 2:28-29)

Moses represented the law. The law is good, but without the Spirit of Jesus cutting away the fleshly, fallen nature of all mankind, we will be cut off from the promised place of our inheritance in Christ. This is why Paul uses the disaster of the Israelites rebellion in the wilderness to warn us in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 10:1-12). He clearly cautions all Christians to be careful as we follow God, avoiding the evil cravings of the heart that led the children of Israel into rebellion against God.

Again, as I said earlier, this warning has been removed and is now taken lightly by many in the church because of the acceptance of teachings that promote a false sense of security among the rebellious. The fear of the Lord is cast aside, thereby removing the barrier necessary to keep us from participating in evil. This satanic deception is paving the way for the great falling away from the faith in the last days as prophesied in the Bible (2 Thessalonians 2).

God had commanded Abraham to circumcise the sons of Israel as a sign of the covenant between them. It was all tied in with the establishing of the covenant, as we previously discussed. When Abraham was 99 years old the Lord appeared to him and said, *“I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless. I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.”* (Genesis 17:1-2)

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Further on, after telling Abraham that He would make him the father of a multitude of nations, God said, *“And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”* (Genesis 17:11-14)

Circumcision, the unseen mark of God that is seen by those in the heavenly realm, is the sign that we are citizens of the nation of God, His eternal kingdom. It is the joining together of all people groups into one new nation under God, by His Spirit. Much emphasis these days is placed upon the mark of the beast, with very little on the necessity of receiving the mark of God so as to enter in and be saved. This is from the devil who loves to cause a distraction in order for people not to see the truth. May the Lord open our eyes to see the way of escape and pursue it with the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

After the rebellious generation died in the wilderness, and those whom the Lord had raised up in their place were circumcised, the Bible tells us *“Now it came about when they had finished circumcising all the nation, that they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. Then the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Today I have rolled away the reproach [“shame, disgrace”] of Egypt from you.’ So the name of that place is called Gilgal [which means “rolling”] to this day.”* (Joshua 5:8-9)

The Hebrew for “healed” is *chayah* (khaw-yaw’) which means “to live, to revive, to be quickened.” Notice that the twelve tribes of Israel stayed in their camps until they were healed. It wasn’t until they were revived, after their circumcision, that their hearts were woven together as one tribe. It wasn’t until they were revived that they could partake of the new provision in the Promised Land revealed through the joint partaking of the Passover Lamb, who is

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Christ. Only then did they have the disgrace associated with Egypt rolled away from them (Joshua 5:10-12). Through the coming revival, the tribalism of South Sudan will be removed as the Holy Spirit circumcises your hearts and brings healing to your land.

The Coming Revival

I have heard of a revival that came to Sudan in 1992. While in your land, the Lord revealed to me your need for a second circumcision of the heart, by the Holy Spirit, just like the children of Israel in the wilderness. Like the church in America, you have forgotten the One who blessed you in the past. I saw a second revival coming in your land in order to quickly prepare you for the good work the Lord has called you to do in the final harvest of the earth. What takes man years to accomplish, the Holy Spirit can do in an instant. As with Christ's first coming, you must prepare the way of the Lord by faith in your hearts in order to receive His glory in you. Your rising up in the power of the Holy Spirit will be a light for the nations surrounding you.

As with Israel, the Lord will perform circumcision on the hearts of your people by His Spirit, removing the divisive power of tribalism. Only then will you become one tribe under one Chief. You will not have the shame of your current status before the surrounding nations removed until you truly make Jesus Christ your Chief. It is only in Christ, not a tribal name, a denominational title, or any other affiliation of man that we are truly united, without divisions (1 Corinthians 1:10).

Isaiah prophesied of the coming Messiah. He said *"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the*

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punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:3-5)

This Old Testament prophecy speaks of Christ and what He accomplished on the cross. The Hebrew word for “wounds” in verse 5 is *chabbuwrah*. It comes from another Hebrew word, *chabar* which means “to join, to unite, to have fellowship with.” As we join Christ in His cross, uniting with Him in His sufferings (Phil. 3:10, Romans 8:16-19), we will be healed. False teachings do not involve a gospel that includes suffering. Men (and women) of hope, the Lord is calling you. Are you willing to take up your cross and join in His suffering in your nation in order to partake of the outpouring of His glory?

The next key word is the Hebrew for “healed” which is *raphe*. It’s defined as “to mend by stitching, to cure, to heal, to make healthful.” It’s also used of the hurts of nations involving restored favor, and of individual distresses. This is exactly what God is about to do with South Sudan. He will heal, by His Spirit, your national wounds and individual hurts. It is through this suffering you have experienced that you will soon be stitched into one healthy Body.

In Hosea 6:1-2 we are given the promise of God for the last revival on earth before he comes. Through the prophet He declares, “*Come, let us return to the LORD. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage [“to wrap firmly, to rule, to govern”] us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day that we may live before Him.*”

The Lord wounds when necessary with the intent to bring healing to those who return in humility. This is what is about to happen within South Sudan, the United States Of America, as well as the rest of the world. Will South Sudan lead the way in this issue of healing? Your response to God’s call will determine your place among the nations.

The Latter Rain

When I recently left South Sudan, the rainy season was just about to begin. I believe the same thing is about to happen in the spiritual realm. Throughout different passages, the Bible refers to the early and latter rains (also referred to as the autumn and spring rains). These two critical seasons of rain were essential for maturing Israel's crops. Whether or not they would come in their appointed season would be dependent upon Israel's obedience. On the contrary, disobedience would result in the rains being withheld.

The early rain, or the autumn shower, is the rain which falls in Palestine from late October until early December. The latter rain, or the spring rain, are the March and April rains which bring the crops to maturity. Both outpourings from heaven are necessary in order to make the crops healthy, ready for harvest. I see in these rains a picture of faith being brought to completion in the Body of Christ on earth.

Like the crops of Israel, the final ingathering of the harvest of souls is dependent upon the final outpouring. The final outpouring is dependent upon the obedience of God's faithful servants who hear and do what the Spirit is saying in these last days. Because the end of this age and the accompanying final harvest of souls on earth draws near, we can be confident in prayer that it is time for God to send rain from heaven.

Like the crops of Israel, our maturity in Christ is dependent upon the receiving of the latter rain. This final outpouring is a promise of God that guarantees our completion in Christ. If we do not know that there is more, we will not seek after it.

James 1:19-22 says, *"My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."* Getting rid of "all moral

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filth and the evil that is so prevalent” occurs within us as we work together with the Holy Spirit rather than resist His refining fire in our lives. Left within us, sin will choke off all spiritual growth in Christ.

The seed planted within us can save us, if we do not fight the Master Gardener’s work in our hearts. As any gardener will tell you, just because you put something in the ground does not mean it will automatically sprout and bear the desired produce. There are a lot of variables that will determine the destiny of the seed in the place where it has been planted. So it is with the Lord’s righteous seed in His people. Unrighteousness restrains the progress of growth in the seed (Romans 1:18). If left unchecked, without repentance, weeds of wickedness can overcome God’s garden, even destroying a good plant.

This is the last call to prepare the way of the Lord. We must quickly remove anything that may be hindering the Holy Spirit’s work within us. There will not be another opportunity. It is the time of the end when Jesus will eat His “last supper” with His disciples. Unfortunately, the spirit of betrayal remains among some of His followers. Some who now sit feasting at the Lord’s table will refuse His final offer of cleansing. In the end, they too, like Judas, will leave the delivering presence of the Lord and enter into the darkness of night where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Earlier in our discussion I quoted Hosea 6:1-2. In verse 3 the Lord reveals the promise of the latter rain revival at the end of the age, in its appointed season, right before His return. For clarity I we need to repeat all three verses. Hosea declares, *“Come, and let us return to the LORD; for He has torn, but He will heal us; he has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight. Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; he will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth.”* (Hosea 6:1-3~ NKJ)

According to the Bible, with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day (2 Peter 3:9). It has been approximately two thousand years since Christ was crucified for

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our healing. That would be comparable, then, to two days. Hosea's prophecy is that after two days He will revive us. From this we can be assured that the promised healing of the Body of Christ through the sending of the latter rains is about to occur. Without it we would die in His holy presence at His return. Once again, we can be sure that it's time for the final revival to occur. This will be followed by our being raised up, as Christ was, in order to live before Him.

Zechariah 10:1 says, "*Ask the LORD for rain in the time of the latter rain. The LORD will make flashing clouds; he will give them showers of rain, grass in the field for everyone.*" (NKJ) I see in this that once we have recognized by the Spirit that it is the appointed season of the Lord for the latter rain to fall, we must then cry out for Him to send it. This is the revival prayer that needs to be prayed in this moment!

The conditions of the Lord for the latter rains are now being clearly revealed so that we will work together with the Spirit and do what He says in order to birth it into existence. This is our time to be doers of the word, thereby causing the reviving rains from God to fall on earth. The perfecting of the saints, and the ushering in of the end of the age, has come.

The final rain from heaven will probably begin with just a few. With Elijah, it started as a cloud as small as a man's hand before building to a deluge (1 Kings 18:41-46). It might even be comparable to a small nation (in man's eyes) such as South Sudan. Elijah had told Ahab that it would not rain except by his word (1 Kings 17:1), and it didn't for three years. Even when Elijah said it would rain, he still had to pray intensely to bring it down. James exhorts us, saying that "*Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit.*" (James 5:17-18)

Recognizing by the knowledge received from the Holy Spirit that it is time for the appointed season of the latter rain of God on earth, we too will still be required to pray in order to bring it into existence. As with Elijah, it will probably start small, with just a handful of people. Through persistent prayer, though, the

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floodgates will open for our vindication (Joel 2:23), and the greatest measure of the Spirit ever poured out will flow, just as the Lord has revealed. Praise the name of the Lord!

The Men Of Hope & The Call To Return

As I stated at the beginning, the Lord began to reveal this revelation to me right before leaving on our trip. While in South Sudan, He confirmed it. One night, Peter, the Sudanese spiritual leader at Memorial Christian Hospital in Werkok, asked me if I would give the devotion the following morning at breakfast. As I was in prayer that night, I saw in my spirit the words “The Lost Boys” with an “X” through it. Below it were the words “The Men Of Hope.” The Lord was telling me that the Lost Boys of Sudan were now the mature, men of hope for a nation that was struggling to stand up on its own feet. They had been sent to another nation to receive training and skills in order to go back and bring order out of the current chaos in their own land.

Many of you are currently being called by the Lord to return to your birthplace. In some cases you have come back to South Sudan and then left because of the harsh living conditions which you have become unaccustomed to. Others of you are not being called back, but are being used in the nation God has relocated you. You represent the minority. Your nation needs you to hear the call of God and come back home, wherever you may presently be living, and bring hope to your people who are in desperate need.

Another nagging question in my spirit has been “What about the South Sudan men and women who are currently living in refugee camps such as Kakuma, in Kenya, who are unable in their present situation to return?” That is not their homeland. Some might argue they need something to come back to, as well as obtaining a skill to contribute to their society instead of being more of the present burden. This may be true, but the call to come home applies to them as well. In their case the problem is they are currently

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trapped behind a fence. I believe the Lord will soon take care of this issue and set the captives free.

As I meditated on this, my thoughts went to the children of Israel who were at one time held in bondage within Egypt. The Lord heard their prayers as they struggled in slavery, finally releasing them through a strong arm of judgment. I believe that the Lord will also bring your sons and daughters out in the near future. I was led to Isaiah 49:14-26 which says;

“But Zion said, ‘The Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me.’ Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me. Your sons hasten back, and those who laid you waste [“to make desolate, to be in ruins, to be dried up, to attack”] depart from you. Lift up your eyes and look around; all your sons gather and come to you. As surely as I live, ’ declares the Lord, ‘you will wear them all as ornaments; you will put them on, like a bride. Though you were ruined and made desolate and your land laid waste, now you will be too small for your people, and those who devoured you will be far away. The children born during your bereavement will yet say in your hearing, ‘This place is too small for us; give us more space to live in.’ Then you will say in your heart, ‘Who bore me these? I was bereaved and barren; I was exiled and rejected. Who brought these up? I was left all alone, but these — where have they come from?’ This is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders. Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the Lord; those who hope in me will not be disappointed.’ Can plunder be taken from warriors, or captives rescued from the fierce? But this is what the Lord says: ‘Yes, captives will be taken from warriors, and plunder retrieved from the fierce; I will contend with those who contend with you, and your children I will save.’”

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South Sudan, the Lord has not forgotten your children either. They are always before Him. I believe the Lord is declaring that, like the children of Israel held in Egypt, your sons and daughters will come out of the Kakuma refugee camp in northern Kenya, and any other place of refuge where they currently reside, and return to their homeland. With man this is impossible, but with God ALL things are possible! (Matthew 19:26)

The lost boys are no longer lost. You have matured now and in God's eyes are the men (and women) of hope for your nation. May you be stirred within as you hear the voice of the Lord calling you to come home, if you haven't already.

He is now giving you His promise of protection from your enemies and an outpouring of His Spirit in revival for the healing of your nation if you prepare your heart by faith and DO what He commands. Who will answer the call? As the last line of your national anthem declares, "*Oh God, bless South Sudan!*" Amen.