

CONTENDING WITH GIANTS

COREY STARK

I. THE COMING VICTORIOUS CHURCH AND ESCHATOLOGICAL WITNESS

A. Prior to Jesus' return the **victorious church** that He is building (Mt. 16:15-19) will emerge as a **mature Bride** in identity (1 Cor. 2:9-11; Rev. 19:7; 22:17), that eternally functions as a "**kingdom of priests**" (1 Pet. 1:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:4; 22:5) in the **Father's House of Prayer** for all ethnic groups (Isa. 56:7), according to the **Tabernacle of David** (Ps. 27:4; Am. 9:11-12; Acts 15:16-17) and anointed with the **forerunner spirit of Elijah** (Mal. 4:5-6; Lk. 1:17) to **confront darkness**, bring in the **Great Harvest** and **hasten the Day** of the LORD (2 Pet. 3:12).

1. **Divine insight** (wisdom) - In the decades leading up to the Lord's return, the saints will understand the end-time plan of God "perfectly" or in a mature way (Jer. 23:20; 30:24). An angel told Daniel, that although none of the wicked would understand it, the wise would not only understand God's plan, but when men's hearts are failing for fear (Lk. 21:26), they would instruct many (Dan. 11:32-33; 12:10).

Jer. 23:20 For who has stood in the counsel of the Lord, and has perceived and heard His word? 20 The anger of the Lord will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart [His plans]. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly [in a mature way]. (Jer 30:24)

2. **Godly character** (fruit) – Titus 2:14; Jude 24

Eph. 4:13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we... 15 may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ...

Eph. 5:27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

3. **Supernatural power** (gifts) – Dan. 11:32-33; Mt. 16:18-19

Jn. 14:12 Most assuredly... he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do... 13 And whatever you ask in My name, I will do... (Dan. 11:32-33)

B. At the same time **light** is increasing so is **darkness** (Mt. 13:24-30). **Four eschatological winds** will converge in fullness, bringing the greatest time of trouble the world has ever known; **creations groan**, **man's sin**, **Satan's rage** and **God's zeal** displayed in a 7-fold shaking of both wrath and glory (Hag. 2:6-9).

Mt. 24:21 There will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved...

C. I desire to call forth and equip a generation of **forerunner messengers** to prepare the way of the Lord through **bold proclamation**, (singers, musicians, artists, dancers, etc) combined with a lifestyle of **unceasing prayer**, **fasting**, deep commitment to the **Word of God** and radical allegiance to the **Jesus of the Bible**.

D. Recently, as believers have desired to stand for **life**, the **traditional family** and God's purpose for **Israel**, I've seen **three giants** emerge that have caused some to get **confused** by academic arguments and secular rhetoric and put their head in the sand and **ignore** the battle, others to draw back in **fear** and still others have stood up in **anger**. However, we can have **clarity**, **boldness** and **tenderness** as we confront these together.

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II. THE THREE GIANTS – SPIRIT OF DEATH, ANTICHRIST SPIRIT, SPIRIT OF PEVERSION

A. I want to be very clear on these sensitive issues. First ***mercy and grace*** are available for all. I have friends that have dealt with all three of these giants and I can tell you God loves to ***take what the enemy meant for evil in a persons life and turn it around for their good*** (Rom. 8:28) and not only for their sake, but for the sake of others God will raise them up as ***anointed delivers*** to free those who are now bound with the same chains they once were. Second, people are NOT our enemy, the spirit's that influence them are.

Eph. 6:12 We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

B. The ***abortion holocaust*** – According to Wikipedia each year there are over ***44M*** abortions globally. That is almost as many as died in WWII (50M). This equals 120K per day, 5K per hour, 84 every minute or over 1 child every second! In all ***3 transitional generations*** Satan attempts to destroy deliverers (OT, NT, MK)!

1. Margaret Sanger founder of the largest abortion provider in the world Planned Parenthood, ***"The most merciful thing that a large family does to one of its infant members is to kill it."*** Margaret Sanger, *Women and the New Race* (Eugenics Publ. Co., 1920, 1923)

2. In her autobiography Sanger admitted that her entire life's purpose was to ***promote birth control*** (population control). An Autobiography, p. 194. Her stated purpose for birth control was ***"to create a race of thoroughbreds,"*** she wrote in the *Birth Control Review*, Nov. 1921 (p. 2)

3. Referring to minorities, poor and immigrants ***"...human weeds,' 'reckless breeders,' 'spawning... human beings who never should have been born."*** Margaret Sanger, *Pivot of Civilization*.

4. According to www.abortionno.org "43% of all abortions in the U.S. are obtained from women identifying themselves as Protestants; 27% Catholic women, 1.3% Jewish women and 23.7% from women with no religious affiliation". There isn't even a category for Muslim!?!

C. The ***radical Islamic threat*** – Islam is both a religion and political ideology that seeks to impose Sharia law and take over the world through waging Jihad or "holy war". We see this threat openly everyday. However there is a much more insidious war being waged as well. A 2.11 fertility rate is required to sustain a culture. Historically no culture has reversed a 1.9 FR. The E.U. only has a 1.38 FR, yet their population is increasing. Why? Immigration - 90% Islamic immigration. Canada has a 1.59 FR – *CIA World Factbook*.

1. One of the most extreme examples is France. Traditionally Christian, but now has more mosques than churches. France only has a 1.8 FR, while the Muslim population has a 8.1 FR and growing.

2. The German government, the first to publically speak about this said, ***"The fall of the German population can no longer be stopped. It's downward spiral is no longer reversible. It will be a Muslim state by the year 2050"***.

3. Muammar al-Gaddafi former Libyan dictator, ***"There are signs that Allah will grant victory to Islam in Europe without swords... guns... [or] conquest. We don't need terrorists... [or] homicide bombers. The 50M+ Muslims in Europe will turn it into a Muslim continent in a few decades."***

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D. The **gay agenda** – Targeting our children to desensitize and indoctrinate, while intimidating opposition.

1. *"We shall seduce [your sons] in your schools, in your dormitories, in your gymnasiums, in your locker rooms, in your sports arenas, in your seminaries, in your youth groups, ...wherever men are with men together. Your sons shall become our[s]... They will be recast in our image... All churches who condemn us will be closed. Our holy gods are handsome young men. ...We shall be victorious..."* A self-proclaimed "gay revolutionary" Michael Swift - Boston Gay Community News - February 15-21, 1987

2. They have adopted the following tactics with the goal of forcing their beliefs on society:

- a. Eliminating free speech by harassing and attempting to silence anyone who disagrees with them;
- b. Preying on children by indoctrinating and recruiting them into their lifestyle;
- c. Imposing their beliefs on others through activist judges and lawmakers requiring that everyone actively promote homosexuality in every institution (schools, workplace, churches, etc.);
- d. Destroying marriage and undermining the traditional family in order to annihilate any moral standard of behavior;
- e. Intolerance toward anyone who does not willingly submit to their agenda;
- f. Fighting for a discriminatory and unconstitutional double standard of justice by demanding that crimes against homosexuals be punished more severely than the same crimes against heterosexuals through 'hate crimes' legislation; and
- g. Deceptively portraying homosexuality as a harmless and victimless behavior.

3. The Gay Revolution Party Manifesto: *"The gay revolution will produce a world in which all social and sensual relationships will be gay and in which... heterosexuality will be incomprehensible."*

- a. "Currently in California SB 48 requires all public schools to include positive discussions of transgenderism, bisexuality and homosexuality." – Dr. Peter Jones, *Male, Female Incomprehensible*
- b. "M" and "F" are disappearing from birth certificates and passport applications in Western countries. Parent A and Parent B are replacing mother and father. – Dr. Peter Jones, *Male, Female Incomprehensible*
- c. "The New American Bible Revised Edition has translated all references to human beings using gender-neutral words or phrases because male pronouns are sometimes understood in North American English to be gender-specific." Wikipedia

E. Yet Jesus is raising up a **generation of voices**, both men and women, young and old, rich and poor from every ethnic group, who are **faithful witnesses** of the truth to contend with these **giants**, who are anointed with the forerunner spirit of Elijah to boldly confront the powers of darkness and give the nations a prophetic witness of truth in love. Our purpose is to:

1. **Deliver the captives** from the grip of these giants by being a faithful witness the truth in love. People are NOT our enemies (Eph. 6:12).
2. **Restrain evil** using spiritual weapons of the Word of God, prayer, fasting, giving, serving, blessing.
3. **Hasten the day of the LORD** when Jesus will bring ultimate and lasting justice (2 Pet. 3:12)!

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III. A MODERN-DAY DAVID AND GOLIAH STORY

A. The story begins in the days of King Saul when the Philistines gathered together for battle against Israel in the Valley of Elah, southwest of Jerusalem (1 Sam. 17:1-3). And Goliath the giant who stood between 9-11ft tall went out each day for forty days to defy Israel and provoke them to battle (1 Sam. 17:4-11).

1 Sam. 17:8 “Why have you come out to line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine... 10 I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.” 11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

B. However, on the 40th day David was sent by his father to bring supplies to his three oldest brothers (1 Sam. 17:12-19), but when he drew near and heard the Philistine defying Israel and saw the army dreadfully afraid and flee, something in David was provoked unto faith (1 Sam. 17:20-30).

1 Sam. 17:26 For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?”

C. David’s older brother Eliab demeaned him and condemned David’s zeal as pride (1 Sam. 17:28-29).

1 Sam. 17:29 And David said, “What have I done now? Is there not a cause?”

D. Saul tried to discourage David as well (1 Sam. 17:33). Jeremiah was a teen. Moses was 80 (Ex. 4:10-11).

1 Sam. 17:33 And Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.”

Jer. 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.” 6 “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.” 7 But the Lord said, “Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ For you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. 8 Do not be afraid... for I am with you to deliver you”. (Ex. 4:10-11)

E. David knew that God had prepared him for such a time as this (1 Sam. 17:34-37). We too have been prepared for this battle. Our personal battles have prepared us to stand together in this fight. Some may ask, “***Why is everything going wrong? Why do I find myself in this wilderness?***” (Deut. 8). Intense pressure and heat over time turns coal into ***diamonds!*** ***Butterflies*** are strengthened in breaking out of the cocoon.

1 Sam. 17: 37 David said, “The Lord, who HAS delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He WILL deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”

F. Saul gave David his armor, but he could only use what God had given him; staff, sling 5 stones (1 Sam. 17:38-40). ***An anointed stone is better than an army! One plus God is the majority!***

1 Sam. 17:45 Then David said... “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand... that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 [and that] the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord’s...

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IV. OUR MEANS OF TRANSFORMATION – BECOMING BY BEHOLDING

A. So where are the David's? Why is the church so far from the victorious church in Ephesians? Because in many ways we have beheld a Jesus that is an ***incomplete at best*** and ***incorrect at worst***. A Jesus of love, who tolerates everything (sin w/out repentance), never judges (clean and unclean) and turns the other cheek, while our children are being swept into hell. We are simply reflecting the image that we're beholding! ***An "unbiblical Jesus" has no power to produce a biblical church!***

2 Cor. 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

B. So what ***transformed*** a youth like David into a mighty man of valor? Where does this kind of ***clarity***, ***boldness*** and ***zeal*** come from? Simple – ***encountering God*** or "knowing Him" (Dan. 11:32-33).

C. To the degree that ***we encounter His heart in an experiential way, we are changed to be like Him***. Information alone is insufficient for true and lasting personal transformation at the heart level. We ***encounter God experientially*** and are ***transformed into His image*** by simply ***beholding the Person of God*** (what He feels, thinks, does), primarily through the Word and by having ***an active dialogue with Him***.

Jn. 5:39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

D. The revelation of the knowledge of God is the ***everlasting fount*** from which all worship, intercession and proclamation flow. The LORD said, ***"Learn from your Father's"*** The Twenty-Four Elders, as the most powerful, mature and highest ranking men in authority within the government of Almighty God, spend their strength ***beholding*** the beauty and glory of God (Rev. 4:4; 5:5-6; 7:11; 14:3) unto ***transformation through revelation*** (2 Cor. 3:18), effortlessly producing ***worship*** or agreement with Who God is (Rev. 4:10; 5:8-10, 14; 11:16-17; 19:4), ***intercession*** or agreement with God's purpose (Rev. 5:8-10) and ***proclamation*** or making known the knowledge of God with an invitation to encounter Him (Rev. 4:11; 5:4-5, 8-10; 7:13-17; 11:16-18) as the primary means to ***advance the Kingdom*** (12x Rev. 4:4, 10; 5:5, 6, 8, 11, 14; 7:11, 13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4). ***The church doesn't have a worship or prayer problem, she has a revelation problem!***

1. ***Rev. 4:4 Around the throne... I saw twenty-four elders sitting... (Rev. 5:6; 14:3)***
2. ***Rev. 4:10 The twenty-four elders fall down before Him... and worship... and cast their crowns...***
3. ***Rev. 5:8 The twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp [worship music], and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song...***
4. ***Rev. 5:14 The twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.***
5. ***Rev. 7:11 The elders... fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God...***
6. ***Rev. 11:16 The twenty-four elders who sat before God... fell on their faces and worshiped God...***
7. ***Rev. 19:4 The twenty-four elders... fell down and worshiped God... saying, "Amen! Alleluia!"***

E. Peter and John being uneducated fishermen couldn't help to boldly proclaim Jesus (Acts 4:1-31).

Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus... 18 So they... commanded them not to speak... in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered... "20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Amos 3:8)

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V. JESUS, THE GLORIOUS SON OF MAN

A. The primary issue facing the early apostles who would lay the foundation of the first century church was centered on how they understood the true identity of Jesus as the Son of man. The Holy Spirit is emphasizing this again. Jesus used the “Son of Man” title more than any other when speaking of Himself (85 references). In Mt. 16 Jesus reveals that the title points to His **dual nature** as being both fully God and fully man forever.

Mt. 16:13 “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” 14 So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Peter answered, “You are the Christ [humanity], the Son of the living God [divinity]...” 18 And on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it [power over darkness]. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven... [authority in intercession]”

B. As the “**Son of Man**”, Jesus, the “**Last Adam**”, finally and ultimately fulfills all of God’s original design and intention for man to be created in His image and likeness, taking **global dominion** and **subduing** the earth unto to the Father’s will forever (Gen. 1:26-28). The title “**Son of Man**” pointed to Jesus as the “**ideal man**”, unveiling the **perfection of all that man was intended to be**.

C. In His deity, as the **Son of God**, who is in the “bosom of the Father” (Jn. 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; Heb. 11:17; 1 Jn. 4:9), Jesus is the **highest revelation of God to us** (2 Cor. 4:4-6; Col. 2:2-3, 8-10; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:3).

Col. 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God... 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell... 2:2 Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge... 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily...

2 Cor. 4:6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

D. In His humanity, as the “only begotten of the Father”, He is the **highest revelation of Man to us** (Lk 13:32; Heb. 2:10; 5:9; 7:28). He not only shows forth all the fullness and perfection of the Father, but He also reveals the fullness and perfection of **all that man was intended to be!** Jesus Christ is the Father’s “**divine invitation**” into our eternal fullness and perfection.

E. In approx. 500 BC Daniel sees the “Son of Man” coming on clouds to rule all nations. Daniel is undoubtedly perplexed: 1. The Father. 2. Human in Heaven (not open). 3. Approach God and live. 4. Comprehensive dominion over every nation not just Israel. 5. Every sphere of society not just political. 6. Everlasting term not temporal. 7. Incorruptible forever. 8. Shares authority with weak saints. Unbelievable!

Dan. 7:13 Behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days [the Father]... 14 To Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion... And His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed. ²⁷Then the kingdom... shall be given to the saints of the Most High.

F. The greatest revelation of Jesus in the bible is the book of Revelation. Every word and phrase is meant to reveal the **glory of a Man** (thinks, feels, does), the **wisdom** of His plan and the **power** of His hand (Rev. 1).

Rev. 1:1 The Revelation [unveiling] of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants...

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VI. THE DIVINE BLUEPRINTS FOR A VICTORIOUS CHURCH THAT MOVES IN POWER!

A. Even as Noah was given divine blueprints to build an “ark of safety” that would prevail through the unprecedented global shaking soon to come (1 Pet. 3:20), so also we have been given divine blueprints to build an “ark” as well. It’s called the victorious church and it’s founded upon the identity of Jesus Christ!

Lk. 17:26 And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man...

B. The primary issue facing the early apostles, responsible for establishing the *foundation of the church* was the truth of Jesus’ identity. This is being emphasized again by the Holy Spirit, as He brings the end-time Church to her final and fullest expression in this age (Jn. 16:12; Eph. 2:19-22; 4:11-13; 5:27; Rev. 19:7).

C. Mt. 16 was Jesus’ first teaching and prophecy on the Church (Mt. 16:13-19). It’s one of the most significant passages concerning its *foundation*, how it would *function*, and its *sure victory*, centered on how the early leaders viewed Him (Mt. 16:15). The Spirit is asking the same question to believers today.

Mt. 16:13 Jesus... asked His disciples, “Who do MEN say that I, the Son of Man, am?”¹⁴ So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah...”

D. The people had many *different views of Jesus’ ministry* and *what He did for them* even as today (v. 14).

1. John the Baptist: A holiness preacher with great dedication who fearlessly spoke the truth.
2. Elijah: A prophet, confronting the powers of darkness, having supernatural power over nature.
3. Jeremiah: The weeping prophet of compassion who tenderly cared for the people (Jn. 8)

E. Jesus then asks the question upon which the Church is built. Not *what I do for you*, but *who am I to you?*

Mt. 16:15 He said, “But who do YOU say that I am?”

F. *A Church built on truth about Jesus (v. 16)*: The “Christ” means “the anointed one” or “the messiah.” Peter wasn’t saying, “You forgive sins.” He was saying, “You are the full embodiment of ALL that the O.T. prophets have spoken about The One who is both fully God and fully man” (Isa. 2; 9; 11; Dan. 7; Mic. 4-5).

Mt. 16:16 Simon Peter... said, “You are the CHRIST [the Messiah], the SON of the living God... Jesus answered... “Blessed are you... for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father...”

G. *A victorious Church over darkness (v. 18)*: Only on the magnificent bedrock of truth, concerning who Jesus is as the “*Son of Man*” will the church openly prevail over the “gates” or authority of hell and drive it off the planet forever! The *foundation* of the “*victorious church*” that Jesus is building is more than *what He does*, but *who He is* and an ongoing dynamic relationship with Him forever (Jn. 15:5). This includes victory over the darkness in the soul (mind, will, emotions) and body, as well as, in every sphere of society.

Mt. 16:18 On THIS ROCK [of truth] I will build My church... the gates of Hades shall not prevail...

H. This answer determines the *foundation* (accuracy, depth, strength) upon which the church is built (Eph. 2:20). If we answer “in part”, the church is only strong “in part.” The reason the spiritual vibrancy and manifest power is so weak today is because the church isn’t being built upon the *full truth* of who Jesus is!

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I. **A powerful Church (v. 19):** Jesus then gives them the way to this victory through intercession, which releases God's power to "bind" (stop) demonic influence and to "loose" (release) God's blessing in prayer.

Mt. 16:19 And I will give you the KEYS of the kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

J. Some focus on "**binding and loosing**" (v.19) without growing in the knowledge of who He is (v.16). This leads to **prayer w/out intimacy**, also called duty-based or needs-based prayer that produces "beat up" and "burned out" workers who are discouraged, disappointed and disconnected from Jesus' heart (Lk. 9:53-56).

Lk. 9:53 But they [Samaritans] did not receive Him [Jesus]... 54 And when James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" 55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. 56 For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them."

K. Others emphasize "**victory over darkness**" (v. 18) without growing in the knowledge of who He is (v.16). This leads to **power w/out intimacy**, producing a ministry style of self-will, presumption and deception (Mt 7:21-23). The wise can become foolish if the value ministry over intimacy (Mt. 25:1-11).

Mt. 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

L. Jesus emphasized the primary importance of **knowing Him**, as the Scriptures declare to realize the **full manifest victory** on a sure foundation that can withstand the coming shaking (Mt. 16:15-19; Jn. 7:38; Eph. 4:13). The Church will partner with Jesus, having a **vibrant spirit** (Dan. 11:32; Jn. 7:38; Eph. 3:16-19), being **victorious over darkness** (Mt. 16:18) and having **authority in intercession** (Mt. 16:19) to the degree we understand the revelation of Jesus Christ, as "Son of Man", who is both fully God and fully Man!

Jn. 7:38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

Eph. 4:13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children...

M. In the greatest time of shaking, it is the people who **know their God** that will be strong (Dan. 11:32-33).

Dan. 11:32 The people who know their God shall be strong [vibrant in inner man], and carry out great exploits. 33 And those of the people who understand shall instruct many...

N. Right now, the Holy Spirit is raising up **faithful witnesses** who have a **deep commitment** to the Word of God and **radical allegiance** to the Jesus of the Bible, not the "counterfeit Jesus" of modernity, because they are **fascinated** by the truth of who He really is, not just the benefits He gives.

O. Understanding Jesus, as the Son of Man, both fully God and fully man is critical to our maturity.

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VII. PRAYING THE FIFTY-TWO ASPECTS OF JESUS MAJESTY ACCORDING TO A-R-K

A. In Rev. 1 Jesus reveals Himself, as the “*Son of Man*”, highlighting **52 distinct aspects** of His majesty, strategically given in **14 titles**, **10 attributes** (inherent qualities) and **28 descriptions** (authority, appearance, apparel, articles, action, words) that equip our minds with understanding, transform our inner man and empower our hearts in love, giving us the **clearest picture of who Jesus is**. Just as it takes time for our eyes to adjust when we walk into a dark room, we begin to see more detail the longer we gaze upon these truths.

B. These **52 distinct aspects of His majesty** are merely hints that “whisper” of the infinite Person of the eternal God, increasing according to our hunger for more (Mt. 5:6). Each facet is only the tip of a massive “iceberg of truth” that the Holy Spirit will use to guide us into the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:9-12). Like “mining for gems”, searching out and finding the deeper truths of God doesn’t happen by accident but is a real labor of love that is intentional, focused and persistent. God beckons all to search Him out (Pr. 25:2).

Pr. 25:2 *It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.*

C. **Titles (14)**: Jesus (Rev. 1:1, 2, 4, 9 x2); Christ (Rev. 1:1, 2, 4, 9 x2); Faithful Witness (Rev. 1:4); Firstborn from the Dead (Rev. 1:4); Ruler over the Kings of the Earth (Rev. 1:4); Him Who Loved Us (Rev. 1:5); Lord (Rev. 1:10); Alpha (Rev. 1:11); Omega (Rev. 1:11); First (Rev. 1:11, 17); Last (Rev. 1:11, 17); Son of Man (Rev. 1:13); He who Lives and was Dead (Rev. 1:18); Alive Forevermore (Rev. 1:18).

D. **Attributes (10)**: Blood (Rev. 1:5); Voice (Rev. 1:10, 12, 15); Feet (Rev. 1:13, 15, 17); Chest (Rev. 1:13); Head (Rev. 1:14); Hair (Rev. 1:14); Eyes (Rev. 1:14); Right Hand (Rev. 1:16, 17, 20); Mouth (Rev. 1:16); Countenance (Rev. 1:16). *Compare to Song of Solomon 5:10-16*

E. **Descriptions (28)**: His revelation (Rev. 1:1); His servants (Rev. 1:1 x2); He sent and signified (Rev. 1:1; 11); His angels (Rev. 1:1); His testimony (Rev. 1:2, 9); He loved us (Rev. 1:5); He washed us from our sins in His own blood (Rev. 1:5); He made us kings and priests (Rev. 1:6); His God (Rev. 1:6); His Father (Rev. 1:6); He is coming with clouds (Rev. 1:7); Every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him (Rev. 1:7); All the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him (Rev. 1:7); His tribulation (Rev. 1:9); His kingdom (Rev. 1:9); His patience (Rev. 1:9); His Day (Rev. 1:10); His appearance behind John (Rev. 1:10); He commissions to write and send (Rev. 1:11, 19); He’s in the midst of the seven lampstands (Rev. 1:13); He’s clothed with a garment down to the feet (Rev. 1:13); He’s girded about the chest with a golden band (Rev. 1:13); He holds the seven stars in His right hand (Rev. 1:16, 20); Out of His mouth goes a sharp two-edged sword (Rev. 1:16); His appearance is deathly terrifying (Rev. 1:17); He laid His right hand saying “Do not be afraid” (Rev. 1:17); He has the keys of Hell and Death (Rev. 1:18); He reveals mysteries (Rev. 1:20).

VIII. JESUS’ NAME – OUR A.R.K. OF SAFETY IN THE COMING STORM

A. As in the days of Noah (Mt. 24:37-39), Jesus name will be an “*Ark of Safety*” during the coming storm (Ps. 91). When we speak of God’s name, we speak of insight into His character, nature and Person. Whenever God revealed His name, he did so as an **invitation** into the experiential knowledge of Himself. The Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth and reveal the glory of Jesus as our protection (Jn. 16:13-14).

Pr. 18:10 *The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.*

Jn. 17:11 *Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me... (Ps. 91)*

CONTENDING WITH GIANTS

COREY STARK

B. **A.R.K.** stands for *Agreement*, *Revelation* and to *Keep the Prophecy*. (Rev 1:3; 22:7)

1. **Agreement: make declarations of agreement** to Jesus about who He is (titles), what He's like (attributes, authority, appearance, apparel) and what He feels, says or does (emotions, actions, words). We identify the core truths in each of the **52 aspects** of Jesus majesty (some overlap) and simply declare them back to Him with affection, wonder and gratitude. Search out other Bible passages to add clarity.

- a. "**You are...** the Faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the Dead, Ruler over the Kings," etc.
- b. "**You have...** eyes like a flame of fire, a sharp two-edged sword, the keys of Hell and Death," etc.
- c. "**You do...** hold the seven stars in Your right hand, dwell in the midst of the churches," etc.

2. **Revelation: pray for increased revelation** of these specific aspects of Jesus majesty. For example, "Reveal Yourself to me as the Faithful Witness. Show me why Your eyes are like fire," etc.

3. **Keep the Prophecy: commit to respond** in loving faith and obedience to these specific truths about Jesus and **ask for strength** to walk them out in the face of resisting temptation or enduring persecution. We make simple declarations of our **resolve to walk in agreement** and to **stand in faith** according to these truths. We also ask Jesus to **empower us** to reveal these aspects of Himself in our lives and ministries, while turning these Bible passages into a living and active dialogue with God.

C. **Linger in God's presence:** Jesus said that it is not enough to study the Scriptures alone (Jn. 5:39), but we must encounter Him by "**coming to Him**" by creating an active dialogue with Him through the Word. Take time to linger in His presence, as you speak slowly and softly to Him, adding statements of love, praying in the spirit or being silent. **Don't Rush!** If you pray slowly and say less, you'll experience more.

Jn. 5:39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

D. **Meditation:** Due to John's calling to prophesy about the end-times (Rev. 1), he was **commanded** to "**eat the scroll**", similar to Ezekiel (Ezek. 3:1-3) and Jeremiah (Jer. 15:16). This includes reading, studying and meditating, upon the Person of Jesus, again and again. As we are progressively transformed in our thoughts, motives and emotions we may faithfully display Him in our words, actions and our lives.

Rev. 10:9 And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth." 10 Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. 11 And he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings." (Jer. 15:16; Ezek. 3:1-3)

E. **Pray-Reading & Journaling:** Take time to journal your thoughts as you "**pray-read**" the Word. This helps us capture the truths the Holy Spirit gives and to grow in our dialogue with God. The Holy Spirit is our best teacher. When we "pray-read" the Word with a heart posture of confidence, devotion, dedication and expectation the Spirit works in us to provide a tailor-made teaching in the Word (1 John 2:27).

F. **Enjoying God:** We approach the Scripture as much more than just an intellectual exercise. Informing the intellect is only a starting point, much like studying the menu at a good restaurant. The point of **studying the menu** is to eventually **enjoy the dinner!** Similarly, we study the Word for the purpose of enjoying the Man between the lines. "*God is most glorified in us, when we are most satisfied in Him*" - John Piper.

CONTENDING WITH GIANTS

COREY STARK

IX. EXAMPLE OF PRAYING ACCORDING TO A.R.K.

Rev. 1:13 One like the Son of Man... 17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

A - **Agreement**: “Jesus, You are my sympathetic and merciful High Priest. You took on flesh, just like me, so that You can identify with my weakness, frailty and humanity. You are not ashamed of me. You were tempted in all points, just like me, therefore I can come to You when I’m weak, discouraged or afraid and trust that You will strengthen, encourage and love me.” (Heb. 2:10-18; 4:14-16)

R - **Revelation**: “Reveal more of Yourself to me as the sympathetic and merciful High Priest.”

K - **Keep the prophecy**: “I commit to coming to You for help and not hiding from You in the face of temptation, discouragement, fear, etc. I commit to reveal this aspect of Your majesty through my life.”

X. THE COMING ESCHATOLGICAL WITNESS

A. In Mt. 24 Jesus highlights a global witness as a condition to be fulfilled prior to His return. But which gospel? Nowhere in Mt. 24 does Jesus speak of the gospel of forgiveness. We are to proclaim the **full gospel of the kingdom**, including the truth that a King is coming to take over all the nations of the earth (Dan. 2).

Mt. 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Joel 3:9).

Rev. 11:15 The 7th angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven... “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” (Dan. 2)

B. In Isa. 61 the Spirit reveals that Jesus full prophetic ministry includes proclaiming the **day of vengeance**, when He makes wrong things right (justice), as well as, the **year of favor**. In the gospels He proclaimed favor, while leaving the proclamation of justice to His body still on earth (Isa. 61:1-3; Lk. 4:16-22).

C. In justice we are to give the nations a prophetic witness and warning of what’s to come, so they have time to make sense of it and respond correctly to the LORD (Amos 3:7).

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His... prophets.

D. In Joel 3, we see the anointed proclamation to the nations that have resisted God’s will (Joel 3:9-10).

Joel 3:9 Proclaim this among the nations: “Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, Let all the men of war draw near... 10 Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, ‘I am strong.’” 11 Assemble and come, all you nations... 12 “Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.

E. Our witness must be **Biblical, Clear, Bold, Tender, Humble**.