



Generation Benjamin

— Jeff Fromholz —

Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:19)

GOD

Acknowledgments

I dedicate this book to a generation that has yet to realize all that God has planned for it. You are the hope of the world and the reason that my life many times seems upside down. I love and forgive you.

Lisa, you are my treasure in this life. Thank you for allowing me to do what God has called me to even when it seems to cost you more.
I love you.

Taylor, Tianna and Jordan, my three Benjamites, your lives and love challenge my own walk more than you will ever know. May God use you to make a difference in this world.

Jesus, you are the reason and true author of his book. May you be glorified!

A Word to the Reader

Whether you are a young person, college student, parent or pastor, we believe that this book is for you and has the potential to not only change your life, but a generation and the world. Written from the perspective of having spent the last six years as pastors in Brazil, three as head and two as youth, we continue to be on staff at our local church; we believe that what we have to offer is a balanced view and perspective of two generation that many times find themselves at odds. We understand not only the energy and potential of this unique generation, but also identify with the concerns and positions of parents and pastors. This is not a “rah! rah! Rise up and rebel against your local church” book. Nor is it a sit on your rear for the next 10 years while you wait to become an adult and thus somehow magically a useful member of society and the body of Christ. We believe that now is the time for this generation to rise up. The youth that we have around us, bored in the pews, are not the only the future of the church; they are the present. They are the fire that fuels revival and we would be wise to use it. I heard it once said that the army of God is the only army in the world that sends its old people to the battlefield and make the young men stay on the sidelines watching. If we are to win this battle, things must change. And that is our hope and purpose for this book. To not only reach a generation and give it identity and purpose, but to also reach it’s leaders; to cause both to see and understand their roles in God’s grand scheme of things.

May God bless you and may we win this battle!

Jeff and Lisa

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1. What is it?

the generation – the music – the movement

“One of the most extraordinary characteristics of the harvest will be the youthfulness of the laborers. Teenagers will be the backbone of the revival, and preteens will be some of its greatest evangelists. Young children will cast out demons, heal the sick, raise the dead, and divert raging floods with a word.”

(Rick Joyner - MorningStar)

In studying the scriptures, we find a parallel running between the sons of Jacob and the history of the church, with each son representing a certain era. Starting with Reuben, the primitive church, until Benjamin, the last son and a type of the last day's church.

So, if it is true that we are in the last days, the days of “Benjamin,” this prompts us to ask more questions. Is it possible that this could be the last generation? Is it possible that this generation could actually fulfill the “Great Commission?” Could this generation possibly see the greatest harvest of all time? Not only do I believe that it is possible, I believe that it is going to happen. For the first time in the history of the world, a generation has the possibility to fulfill the “Great Commission.” And that is this generation, the generation of the “last days,” the Benjamin Generation.

Identity

“Who am I?”

The biggest problem with this generation is not drugs or drinking as many would think. It is not even sex, although this is certainly a huge area of concern. The biggest problem confronting this generation is an identity problem, or better yet, a lack of identity, a lack of knowing who they are. They do not know who they are as far as the history of the church is concerned or how God sees them; let alone what He has planned for them. The majority of the youth today have only one main question and worry in life: “Who am I and what is my purpose for being?” You can forget about occupations. You can forget about spouses. You can forget about money. There are numerous books out there to guide any youth in how to find the right spouse or how to be successful. But, if you don't know who you are in the grand scheme of things and what your purpose is, there is no need for any of these books and there is essentially no point to life. The importance of identity, of knowing who you are and what is your purpose in life, is crucial.

“You have to know who you are in order to understand what it is that you have been set apart to do.”

There is a story of a man, who one day, as he was looking in the mirror, began to wonder as to who he was and what his life was all about, when all of the sudden it became clear. It was so obvious that he was almost surprised that he hadn't seen it before. How could he have passed so many times in front of the same mirror and yet not seen it? It was as obvious as the nose on his face, albeit a beautiful nose. He was "Superman." He was arguably the greatest of all super-heroes. So, like a little boy getting ready for the first day of the school year, he very excitedly returned to his bedroom and put a red sheet around his shoulders, taped a big "S" on his shirt and managed to pull on some of his wife's blue nylons and then went downstairs for breakfast. Wanting to make the most of his discovery with a grand first entrance, he got a running start and jumped through the kitchen door scaring his wife half to death and causing her to drop the eggs and toast. At which point, he promptly declared, "I am Superman!" as though it weren't obvious. His wife stood there gazing at him with a look of disbelief on her face and waiting for the punch line. It never came. He was serious.

So, as the story goes, much to the chagrin and embarrassment of his wife, he dedicated himself to this new revelation and began looking for situations in which he could help people. For the most part, it was only old ladies crossing the street and the occasional cat in a tree, until one day, as he was watching TV, his life changed forever. All of the sudden, a special report came on. It was a very nervous reporter in front of a bank, all worked up over something, who went on to tell of a Bank robbery gone awry. Apparently, five armed men had entered the bank with the intention of robbing it, but much to their dismay, while they were in the bank, the police arrived, leaving the bank robbers trapped inside the bank with the others. So, they did what they thought to be the only possibility of escape and took the employees and customers hostage, prompting a very dangerous and possibly hopeless situation.

As he sat there, shocked and almost not believing what he was seeing, it became clear to him what he needed to do. He got up, and throwing the red bed sheet around his shoulders, ran out of the house in the direction of the bank. Arriving shortly thereafter and seeing the police, the family members of those being held hostage and all of the television cameras, he quickly analyzed the situation and decided on his course of action. Before anyone knew what was happening, he had broken through the police line and was running in the direction of the bank. Those who were not in shock in viewing the strange man running for the bank were yelling for him to come back. But, to no avail. He knew what he needed to do and he was set on doing it. At that very moment, his wife, still back at home, passed in front of their TV, in time to see her husband, dressed as Superman, enter the bank. Her heart tightened as she stopped breathing for the moment and quickly sat down to wait and see what would become of her dear husband.

No one saw what happened next. His wife didn't see, the police didn't see, not even the television cameras saw. But everyone heard, "BANG!" the gunshot and then saw him, "Superman," come out of the bank, covered in blood, and fall to the ground...dead.

Obviously this man was not Superman, as we all know that a bullet can't kill him. But, it serves to show us the importance of identity, of truly knowing who you are. This man did not die because he was not a good person, or because he didn't want to help others, quite the contrary. He died because he thought he was something, someone that he wasn't. He was mistaken about his identity and it cost him his life. The issue of identity is sometimes an issue of life and death.

Allow me state at this point that if you do not know who you are in Jesus Christ and what His specific purpose for your life is, although you are living, you are, for all kingdom purposes, dead. God has given each and everyone of us a specific task, a specific job that He has set apart for us to do. *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."* (Ephesians 2:10) If you are not aware of or doing what it is that God has prepared for you, although living and breathing, you are dead. You are never more alive than the moment in which with total conviction you know that you are doing exactly what it is that God created you to do. It's a simple question of identity. **Who am I?**

"You have to know who you are in order to understand what it is that you have been set apart to do."

Lack of Identity

This generation has a serious, fatally serious, problem; a lack of identity and it's not their fault. The devil has been working hard to try and distract, deceive and kill this generation. The truth is that the devil knows very well who this generation is. And for this very reason, he has been fighting against them. His fear is that they will understand who they are. For in that hour, he will begin to lose, and lose big.

This generation has been called many things errantly. It's a wonder that it is not so thoroughly confused as to never understand who it is. But, probably the biggest name that has stuck is that of "X", prompting some very obvious questions. Who was it that came up with the name "Generation X"? Why did he choose Generation X? And what exactly does "X" mean?

"X" in and of itself means nothing; it has no real significance. X is the letter used when you don't know something, the unknown variable such as in mathematics. X speaks of having nothing to separate you from the others, nothing of your own

that specifically identifies and sets you apart. It speaks of a generation without value or purpose. X is what someone puts on a piece of paper when he doesn't know how to sign his name. The name "Generation X" is a curse and slander that the devil put on this generation. And this was not by some accident or chance. He knows who this generation is and he is afraid. For this very reason he has worked hard and to this point had some success in confusing it, but his time has come to an end and the hour for God to call this generation to rise up is now. God has begun to reveal Himself to this generation and has begun to call it by name, Benjamin, and reveal its purpose.

The following chart shows the difference between what the world would have you believe about this generation and what God has declared about it.

Generation X	Benjamin
no identity worthless without reason without direction without purpose without motivation weak lost dead without a future	The chosen generation Beloved of God Son of my right hand Son of my power Son of my authority Powerful Prophetic Radical Anointed Set apart

Young people, this is who you are, and your purpose and call in life is to impact, revolutionize and win this world for Jesus. There are millions going to hell and God has set you apart to rescue them, to preach the good news of Jesus Christ. Your generation is going to know the Lord and be more intimate with Him than any other generation to date. You will be the people that *know* their God, really *know* Him and will be known by Him. You are going to be used more, see more miracles and walk in an anointing that has never been seen. An anointing that my generation and all previous generations only dreamed was possible yet never saw it actually happening.

The generation that was once known as the generation without value, without purpose is now going to be known as the called and chosen generation. The "X" by which you were formerly known is no longer your name, but a mark showing

where the treasure is hidden. This generation is the hidden treasure that is only now just beginning to be discovered.

The Music

Every generation has a style of music that it identifies with and in time is identified by. And generally speaking, every move of God has a style of music that accompanies it.

We, as adults, have to be honest and admit that at many times, what happens in the church and the style of the music being played reflects the tastes of the older generation and our youth as a result have a hard time identifying with the sound. I love my mother, but I certainly do not wish to listen to the music that identified her generation. (Yawn) The words and significance are great, but the style, quite frankly, is boring. And most youth would state the same about the music prevalently being played in the average worship service. They find it boring. This is being said, not to judge or condemn anyone, any church or style of music, but to force us to look and see the truth of the matter. The truth is that many of our youth today are having a hard time entering into the presence of God, not for lack of desire, but rather because of the vehicle offered to take them there. It is not their language or style, but that of their parents.

I am not saying that we need to change our services or the style of our music just for the sake of accommodating the youth in the church. What I am trying to do is cause us to open up our minds and hearts to the new styles of music that are already here and going to be coming out, a style completely theirs, a style totally youthful. A style that some of the older folks might not understand and may even doubt as to whether or not it is Christian. But, it will be Christian, and it will be a style in which they will identify and in the end will lead them to the very presence of God.

We need to encourage the youth of today to seek God in their own way and stop trying to force them to seek Him in our way and through our means. This generation is going to know God, but they are going to know Him in their way and are going to worship Him through their style of music.

The Movement

We are going to very soon be seeing a youth movement rising up. It is going to unite the youth of our nation, without consideration or concern for names of churches or denominations, and in turn the youth of the world. They are going to unite under one banner, that of Jesus Christ. What is coming is a movement that is going to strengthen and contaminate the local churches with a passion for Jesus and His glory, a passion that has never been seen or experienced before. This movement, very quickly, is going to impact this generation, this nation and the world.

2. Desire or Willingness? There is a difference.

Desire is a very interesting and many times misunderstood thing. If I were to ask 100 Christians if they were willing, or wanted to be used by God, it is more than likely that all of them would raise their hands, responding in the affirmative. The truth is that most Christians want to be used by God, but most have questions or concerns. "I am willing, but...is it going to be hard? Is it going to hurt?" Or "How much is going to cost me?" Willing maybe, but, **that is not desire!!!**

Willingness or Desire?

Willingness is not the same thing as desire although the two are generally used in an almost interchangeable sense. Simply wanting or willing is not the same as desiring. It is totally possible to be willing but not have desire or to have desire and not be willing. The two are not the same. They are not equal. Willingness is the decision to do something (yet not necessarily doing it) without involving the emotions, the decision to do it regardless of personal feelings; like mowing the lawn or washing the dishes. Many are willing to do either of these, but I doubt many really want to.

Desire is the passion, the fire burning in the depths of a man that cause him to do that which he does. Like the Apostle Paul said in 1Corinthians 9:16, "For preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am compelled by God to do it. How terrible for me if I didn't do it." This was more than a willingness of heart or a want. It was something that God had put in him, a desire burning in his heart, something that he needed to do, something that he had to do. He was compelled; he was forced by something inside of him to do it. He was possessed by it. He wanted it.

There once was a man who was involved in a shipwreck and after plunging into the sea, with every ounce of strength that he could muster; he began to swim until he finally caught onto a piece of wood floating, a result of the shipwreck. For 12 hours he held onto that piece of wood until the tide took him into the shore of a deserted beach. Arriving on the beach, he lay on the sand, gazing up towards the heavens and offered up a prayer of thanksgiving to God for having spared his life. He was happy in the beginning just to be alive and everything was wonderful until the day the food ran out. It didn't initially bother him as he figured that he would just find more. But, there was no more to be found. And after two weeks of not eating, he began to become worried at the lack of food and the prospect of death, not to mention the pangs in his stomach. He had never gone hungry before, much less starved. Two more weeks passed and nothing, which only caused him to worry more and begin to deal with the reality that he might die; hungry and alone on a deserted island. Finally after six weeks

he succumbed to the fact that he was going to die. There was no more hope to be found in his heart or empty stomach. At this, weak and sad, knowing the end was near, he walked down to the beach and kneeled, ready to offer up his last prayer and die. His prayer went something like this, "God, it's me again. God, you know what I'm going through. You know that I'm about to die." And then with tears in his eyes he said, "God, I don't want to die. I don't want to die! You are my only hope. You saved my life once, don't you think you could do it again. God I need a miracle. God if you don't send someone to save me now, I'm going to die." And right then, in the middle of his prayer, he heard something; something that sounded like...an airplane. Could it be? Could it possibly be a plane? No! It must only be his imagination playing tricks on him. Perhaps he was delirious as death approached. He tried to put the sound out of his mind, but it wouldn't go. Not only would it not go, it became louder. Surely the end had come. Or, was it truly...a plane? He stopped and listened. It was a plane! It was a plane! God had heard his prayer! God had sent a plane to save him. So, with his heart beating fast and his adrenaline pumping, with all the strength that he had left, he dragged himself down to the water's edge and with one big burst of energy he stood up. And "willing" to be saved, politely took off his hat, stood up straight, cleared his throat and with his most educated tone of voice began, "Ah, excuse me mister pilot. I don't want to be a bother to you, but would you mind saving me? You see, I am here on this island all alone and starving to death. Sorry if this seems bothersome, but I really am dying and if you wouldn't mind landing down here, I am willing to be saved. Thank you."

What an absolutely ridiculous story. Does this appear to be someone who is on the brink of death? Does this appear to be someone who only moments earlier saw a white light in a tunnel approaching at a very rapid pace as he tearfully prayed to God for a miracle? Is this how you would act if it were you on the island dying of hunger and then miraculously seeing a plane passing overhead? Of course not! The strongest natural desire in a man is the desire to survive, the desire to live. The only thing that man was capable of thinking of was his death. He was consumed by it. But why? Because he didn't want to die. He wanted to live. If you were that man, you would probably run down to the water's edge, take off your shirt and stand there jumping up and down yelling like some mad fool, "HELP! HELP! HEEEEELP! SAVE ME! I'M DYING! DON'T LEAVE ME HERE! IF YOU LEAVE ME HERE, I'LL DIE! HEEEEELP! You would do whatever it took, whatever was necessary to get the pilot's attention and thereby be rescued.

That would be the natural thing to do. And that is what is quite simply called desire, raw and pure desire. And that is the difference between being willing and desiring. The first man was willing. He wanted to be saved, but he didn't want to be a bother to the pilot. Most likely, he will die on the island. The second man desired to be saved. And in that moment of potential rescue, something took over control of his body, possessed him, and the only thing that he could think of was getting that pilot's attention and living. He could have cared less if he were

bothering the pilot or looked like a fool. That was of little importance in comparison with his survival.

Probably the best example of this in real life is that of a sterile woman, a woman who wants children but for some reason or another cannot have them. In today's age of modern medicine, there exist numerous treatments and opportunities for a sterile woman to have a chance at experiencing the joy of having her own child. And these women spend countless numbers of dollars and hours trying different methods in the hopes of becoming pregnant and giving birth. One might be tempted to ask, "Why?" Why all of the work, stress, money and time? What's the big deal? Why not just adopt? Because some sterile women just simply want to be pregnant and give birth to "their own child", nothing more nothing less. The desire for children in a sterile woman is so strong that money is not a question or time an obstacle. Nothing else really matters when held in light to the absence of children in their lives. This desire, already strong, with age becomes something that takes over; it begins to control their thoughts and in the end causes them to act. For desire that is true desire is not absent of actions. If you truly want it, you will go after it and one way or another get it.

Rachel, the wife of Jacob, was sterile. But she had a strong, overwhelming, consuming desire to have children. She got to the point of being so desperate that one day she went up to Jacob and grabbed him by his clothes and screamed at him, "Give me children or I'll die!" Imagine this, some women so freaked out by her inability to have children, going up to her unsuspecting husband, perhaps he had just sat down to have a cup of coffee for breakfast and take a look at the local paper to see who won yesterday's camel race, and in comes his wife looking a bit squirrely like something was desperately wrong. Had she been crying? Was she mad? Had he left the toilet seat up again? Whatever it was, he could see that something was definitely out of place. And then as she approached, he could see that there was some crazy look in her eye and before he could escape, she grabs him by the robe and trembling with emotion begins to yell and cry all at the same time, "Give me children or I'll die!" Imagine what Jacob must have been thinking. "Oh my, she's lost it." "Is it possible that it's 'that week' already? Seems like it had only been the week before." No, this was not PMS speaking. This was pure, raw passion, desire. Rachel knew what she wanted and went after the only other one around that she could grab on to. And be sure that no amount of consoling was going to work on this woman. She was possessed. She was more than willing. She wanted it and was going to do all that she could to get it. That is passion.

Passion is not offering up some whiny little prayer about if God wants you to witness or if God wants to use you, that you are willing. The church is full of willing people, people willing to be used, but not wanting it enough to get up off of their pew. Ever wonder why they call them "pews"? God didn't call anybody to be a bench warmer. He has called us all to get into the game. It's like God looking at the new guys on the bench and saying, "Who wants to go in?" And there on

the end is one guy going, "Send me in coach. I'll do my best. Give me a chance. Send me in coach." And right next to him is some guy with a whiny little voice going, "I'll go in if you want me to." Which one do you think the coach is going to send in? Right, the guy who wants to be in the game; the guy who wants to make a difference; the guy who wants to win. It's no different with God. God is waiting for men and women who want to be used. Who enter into their rooms and shut the door and not too soon after begin to cry out in desperation, shouting and blubbering, "God, use me! Use my life! Don't let me pass 70 years here on his earth and not be used! God if you're not going to use me, take me now, because I don't want to be here just to be here! I want to be used! Use me! Use me! UUUSE MYYYY LIIIIIFE!" That is what God is waiting for. That is what God expects. And that is what God is raising up in this generation. A generation that is desperate to be used by Him; a generation that wants it and will stop at nothing until it gets it. God we want to see your face! We want to experience your presence! We want to flow in your anointing and see the dead rise! We want to be used!

This generation is not some weak-kneed, willy-nilly generation that is only hoping at a chance at garbage time. For those of you who are not basketball literate, garbage time is the remaining moments of a game when the outcome is already decided and the coach puts in all of the benchwarmers. It is also the time when all of the spectators start heading for the door hoping to escape the inevitable traffic jam. Nobody stays, except for some mom excited at seeing her son finally take off his sweats and go out on the floor, because it doesn't really matter at garbage time, the outcome is already decided. God is raising up a generation that wants to be part of deciding the outcome, that has a part in the victory, not that just gets in just for the sake of getting some playing time. This is a generation of starters, not sitters. And you can see it in all that they do. They are intense, dangerously intense. You can see everything, right down to the way that they worship. They are 100%, all the way, over the top in everything. My wife recently commented to me in regards to the hard stand that we take on holiness, because we receive plenty of criticism for preaching radical holiness from those that hope that the way is not so straight and maybe the gate not so narrow; it's all or nothing. And she said that we have to preach it that way or not preach it at all because this generation is not interested in compromise. They are either totally in the world or totally into Jesus. It's not like it was with our generation with the fence riders. These kids go all the way and give it everything, good or bad. They know what they want and they go after it. They are not so much looking for direction or ideas but for someone to believe in them and tell them how to accomplish what it is that burns in them, that possesses them.

It all comes down to desire. If you want God bad enough, you will find him. Jeremiah 29:13 says that "if you seek Him with **all** of your heart, you will find Him". If we want to be used bad enough, He will use us. God is not in the

business of ignoring the hungry, the thirsty or the desperate. God wants to use you. Do you want it?

Going back to Rachel, after the scene at the breakfast table, something happened in the life of Rachel. No, Jacob did not move to the barn. God caused Rachel to become pregnant. Imagine Jacob's relief. No more scenes at breakfast. No more spilt coffee or dropped toast. Now they could live in peace; his wife was finally pregnant. Not to mention that this was a moment of great joy for Jacob as well, for his hearts desire was also for a son with Rachel. God heard the heart's cry of Rachel and responded. And this is the cry of the heart that God is waiting to hear from a generation; a generation that knows what it wants and will not be satisfied until it gets it. Do you want it?

3. From curse to blessing; Benjamin's story.

It all started with a woman who was sterile and wanted nothing more than children. She was desperate for children and told God so. She went to Him with her request and this is important, we can go to men all we want and beg and implore, even demand that they do something, but when it involves a miracle, there is only one place to go, to the Lord. Thus, it finally happened, she was pregnant. God had heard the cry of her heart. The time of her pregnancy passed and finally came the long awaited day, the birth of her son to whom she gave the name Joseph.

What a day of joy in the house of Jacob; a day of celebration; God had been faithful and now Rachel could be happy and satisfied. Or could she? She named him Joseph, which seems like a pretty normal name and at first glance seems to point to nothing out of the ordinary, except for those who understand what is behind this, or to put it in another way, the meaning of the name Joseph. Joseph means, "There will be another." What? Excuse me? After that whole scene of grabbing Jacob and for most purposes ruining his breakfast and making him a nervous wreck, they finally get a son and she doesn't name him, "God is faithful" or some other grateful name, but "there will be another." Imagine the shock of Jacob. "Oh my goodness, we have to go through that all again. You're not going to hit me this time are you?" Why couldn't she be content with just one son? Wasn't that what she had asked for? What's this business of there being another? Perhaps Rachel knew something that Jacob didn't know.

The name Joseph was not a wish of a greedy woman trying to get all that she could out of his life, but prophesy, a prophetic name. She knew that although Joseph was a complete joy, there was more. Although Joseph would be a man of God, there was another to come; the child of the promise, the child of her dreams, her desire. I don't believe that she understood it any more than Jacob except that she knew deep down there would be another and through that other would come something special. The law was good, but there was something better to come; the completion of all that the law pointed to. The Son of God would come and bring salvation, an end to the works of the law. And in the same way, Joseph would be good, but in one way or another, the "other" would come and bring salvation.

Joseph was a dreamer, a visionary, just like the generation of leaders that we see in the church today. There are great leaders in the church today with extraordinary ideas and visions of how to reach and disciple the world. What the world doesn't need are more methods and visions. What the world needs is a generation of doers, those who are going to grab hold of the vision of their leaders and run with those dreams; those who are going to make those dreams

become a reality. Joseph was born, but he wasn't enough, he wasn't the fulfillment, but merely one huge step in that direction. There had to be another, one who would be the fulfillment of the promises; the one who would come to fulfill the dreams, the son of the dream. And that is what the world desperately needs today, a generation to fulfill the dreams of its leaders. The dream of seeing the world won for Jesus Christ.

During the time in which Joseph was born, Jacob was living with his father-in-law in Haran, (Paddan-aram), outside of the Promised Land. After Joseph was born, God told him to return to the land of his forefathers, the Promised Land. So they packed up all that they owned and set out for Canaan. On the way, Jacob had a life-changing encounter with God himself that changed the course of his life forever. The Bible tells us that Jacob spent the whole night fighting with the angel of the Lord (the pre-incarnate Jesus) and this battle transformed Jacob. Jacob would not let go until he received a blessing. What he received was a whole lot more (other than just a limp), God changed his name, gave him a new identity.

The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered.

Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob but Israel, because you have struggled with God and men and have overcome."

(Genesis 32:27-28)

God not only changed the name and identity of Jacob, but also who he was as a person. He was different after that encounter. After this Jacob met up with Esau and reconciled with him, something that probably should have been dealt with years earlier except for the small fact that after Jacob had deceived his brother, he ran. And for almost 20 years he had been living in hiding. In Bethel, Jacob renewed his covenant with the Lord and received his new name: Israel – and God blessed him. As Jacob and his family continued their journey on to Hebron, Rachel once again became pregnant. The prophetic word of the "other" was about to be fulfilled. Happy as she was pregnant, her joy was about to come to a quick end, as this pregnancy was different.

And as she was having great difficulty in childbirth, the midwife said to her, "Don't be afraid, for you have another son." As she breathed her last – for she was dying – she named her son Ben-Oni. (Genesis 35:17-18)

Imagine the mixture of emotions at this moment; the moment in which all had waited for, the expectation of another child, "the other;" the excitement of childbirth and the obvious difficulties of the mother using her last ounce of strength to bring her dream, her son into the world; a moment which only those who have experienced it can possibly understand. I have seen the birth of all three of my children and the experience is beyond words, the sure pleasure and mixture of emotions is beyond explanation. I wanted to cry, shout; laugh all at the same

time. Now, other than the obvious that you are about to gain a son, throw in the fact that you are also losing your companion, your wife and best friend, and things get a little muddy. Emotions become confused as you lose that which you love to gain that which you do not yet know. So as Jacob watches his wife die and his son born, he hears the words, "His name is Ben-Oni" come out of her mouth. Ben-Oni? Ben-Oni? And before he knows what he is doing he blurts out, "No! His name is Benjamin!" Seems like a bit of a petty thing at the moment, your wife is dying, let her choose the name, it's the least you can do. Imagine, some poor woman dying and her last dying wish is to name her son, but some stubborn, bigheaded husband denies her that. Where's the love I ask you?

Once again, things are not as though they appear. For Ben-Oni means "son of my trouble, son of my pain." What a name. Here we encounter the importance of a name. Your name is your identity; it is who you are and how you are known. It is what people will call you. Imagine this poor kid and the persecution that he is going to someday receive in school as a result of his name meaning pain. "Hey pain in the ..." Never mind. Imagine if your name meant something "smelly poop," all of your life, when someone said your name, they would be calling you smelly poop. "Hey Smelly Poop, want to get a pizza?" Can you say "counseling?" What kind of life would you have? What kind of future would you have? Where would you work? I doubt a restaurant. And whom would you marry? "Oh my smelly poop how I love you." Picture the wedding, "And do you so and so take Smelly Poop to be your...?" Gross! Your name is important. It is who you are.

Just a personal side note here: My wife and I along with our three children are missionaries in Brazil, a country in which they speak Portuguese. My name at birth was Sydloski, (please hold the Polish jokes), which doesn't seem to out of the ordinary (if you live in Poland or the east side of New York). But here in Brazil, the phrase "se-laski" which comes out sounding like Sydloski means something to the effect of "Go to hell." Great name, huh? Pastor Go to hell. Needless to say, ministry would be a bit difficult with that name. Now, to take it a step further, my wife's maiden name is Mort, which too at first appearance just looks like any other name. But here, "morte" which is said just like they would say Mort if they were to read it means, "death." Now you can laugh. Pastor Go to hell and his wife Mrs. Death. Just our names would have been the end of us here had it not been for the all-knowing God that we serve who saw fit for me when I was two years old to be adopted by my step-father thus inheriting his name and identity "Fromholz," which to my knowledge does not have any vulgar significance in Portuguese. It's amazing how something so little can have such huge ramifications in our lives. "Go to hell" and "death" became "Fromholz" and have a growing ministry in Brazil.

Your name matters and so did Ben-Oni's. For this reason his father Jacob intervened and at the very moment in which "Ben-Oni" was declared, it was also thankfully shot down for something better, something worthy of the man that he

would one day be. "His name is Benjamin!" "His name is Benjamin." Benjamin means, "Son of my right hand; son of my authority; son of my power." The boy, barely alive, went through a drastic change of identity, "Son of my trouble and pain" to "Son of my authority." Wow! Now this kid has a future. Just think of what Jacob was declaring over him and offering to him. I can think of another son who is also at the right and of his father and that puts Benjamin in pretty good company. And just like that, Benjamin was the only son of Jacob to receive his name from his father. This also has a lot of significance beyond the authority bestowed, but I will leave that for a future book.

The last thing that Rachel did on this earth was give birth to Benjamin, the son of her dreams. Benjamin was the fulfillment of the prophetic word "there will be another." What she didn't know before was that the price of seeing this dream fulfilled would be her very own life. At this point I want you to stop and think about the dreams that you have for your life. Are you willing to give your life to see them happen? Are you willing to die to see your "Benjamin" born? Because if you are not it is more than likely that you will not see your dream fulfilled because the devil knows to what point you will go before quitting and he will try to take you there to cause you to quit and not fulfill the dreams that God has given you. The devil is a dream wrecker by nature and the only way to have victory over him in this area is to determine that nothing will take you out of God's plan for you, not even death. Anyone who is willing to die to see his or her dream fulfilled will more than likely see it happen because they will never quit until it does happen. You have to want it!

Your hour has come! And your name is not a curse, but a blessing. Your name has not been given to you by your mother, but by your father, your heavenly Father.

Your name is BENJAMIN!

4. Joseph and Benjamin; two brothers, one future.

Joseph and Benjamin had a very special relationship being the only sons of Jacob and Rachel. When Joseph was just 17 years old, his father gave him a special long and colorful coat because he was Jacob's favorite son. This certainly was not what was needed in an already volatile environment, a special coat making it obvious Jacob's favoritism of Joseph, but that is what he received. This was enough to make it uncomfortable in anybody's house and to make matters worse, Jacob always sent Joseph out into the fields where his brothers were working to check up on them. It's amazing that any of them even talked to Joseph. He's already the "favorite" and now he's the rat too. Have you ever had to deal with this? Having a younger brother or sister who thought that it was their duty to tell everything that you did wrong to your parents? In my family, I am the oldest of three boys, so I understand the irritation of Joseph's brothers. I remember times in which it appeared that my brother's derived a certain pleasure, a certain amount of satisfaction telling on me. I can also understand the thought and temptation of maybe getting rid of at least one of them.

Now to complicate it even more, God gave Joseph two dreams, one was of him and his brothers out in the field tying up sheaves of grain when all of the sudden his sheave stands up and the sheaves of his brothers gather around and bow to his sheave. Tell me that Joseph was not asking to get beat up. It's one thing to dream, it's another to have the courage to tell a dream, especially one in which your older brothers who already hate you vehemently are bowing to you. They asked him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" The Bible says that they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he said. Then he receives the second dream: In this one, the sun, the moon and eleven stars are bowing down to him. This left his brothers fed up and outraged. "Who does this little punk think he is, us bowing down to him?" Even his father rebuked him for this one.

Going back to my own brothers, I don't know what my reaction would have been had one of them told me that one day I would bow down to them. I am sure I would have doubted it and said so for the oldest, at least in our way of thinking, is always the one who gives the orders, the one who leads. And generally speaking it usually is like that. Who did Joseph think he was? I don't doubt the fact that Joseph's brothers hated him. Imagine Joseph all excited about having had a dream, "one from God." And calling the whole family around to tell it and it ends up with everyone bowing down to him. Give me a break.

Finally, his brothers had had enough, they couldn't take any more, and so they plotted to kill Joseph. Mind you that this is not some spur of the moment rage or hatred. This is something that has been building for years and is not going to go

away any time too soon. Ruben, apparently a little bit more merciful, talked his brothers into throwing him into a well and leaving him to die there rather than spilling his blood. I can only imagine some of the ideas that the other brothers had in thinking of how to get rid of the big mouth; things that maybe had to do with “ripping his little head off.” Ruben planned this with the intention of coming back later and saving him. After throwing him into the well, the Bible says that the brothers sat down to eat. It’s amazing how getting rid of someone you hate makes you hungry. But, their little celebration meal was to be short lived as some merchants passed by and the brothers got an even better idea, “Let’s sell him.” So they sold him as a slave to the Ishmaelite merchants and that is how Joseph arrived in Egypt.

God blessed Joseph in every place and in every situation in which he found himself. In the house of Potiphar he was such a valuable and trustworthy young man that he found himself in charge of everything, and he was faithful. Unfortunately, Potiphar’s wife seemed to notice Joseph and not for his faithfulness. The Bible says that she desired him. She wanted him, and not to help wash the dishes. She after many failed attempts at seducing him, she finally threw herself and him grabbing him by his robe and pulling him in the direction of her bed. But Joseph being a righteous young man resisted and ran. Now that’s true righteousness. He was smart. He didn’t stick around to try and reason with her or talk her out of it, he ran...without his clothes. Now this is where the problems really started for Joseph. It was bad enough that the wife of his owner was anything but faithful to her husband and he just happened to be the object of her desire, but he just had to run from her house naked. But, that is not the real problem. The real problem is that there now stands a rejected, frustrated and half naked woman with the robe of her rejecter; and she is upset. So, what does this ungodly woman do? She begins to scream for help and as the rest of the household arrives, they find her crying and muttering something about Joseph having tried to rape her, all the while she standing there holding his robe as proof and he somewhere outside hiding naked. Yes, I admit it would have looked bad. But, we know the truth. Something we always need to remind ourselves; the truth is not always as it appears.

But, even not being the truth, convincing this to Potiphar was totally another situation, who, filled with rage threw Joseph into prison. And yet even in prison God’s hand was on Joseph and before long he found himself in charge of the whole prison. Fortunately there weren’t any women there. While he was there he interpreted the dreams of two men who were servants of the king. One would die and the other would be vindicated and restored to his former position in the king’s court. The only thing that Joseph asked was that the man when restored would remember him. But, as most men do, he forgot all about Joseph and the interpretation of the dream until one day when the king had a dream and no one could interpret it. On that day, the servant remembered Joseph and his ability to interpret dreams. And with one word from the servant, Joseph was brought into the presence of Pharaoh. There he heard the Pharaoh’s dream and interpreted

it. This resulted in Joseph being put in charge of the whole land of Egypt, second only to the Pharaoh.

Joseph began to run Egypt and it began to prosper. And during this prosperous time, Joseph was busy saving wheat for God had already told him, through the Pharaoh's dream, of a time of famine that was to come. And just as God had told him, the famine did come. Along with the famine, also came Joseph's brothers who themselves were starving in Canaan. They had come to Egypt hoping to buy food. They were all there except for Benjamin. As the governor of Egypt, it was Joseph who sold the grain to those who came from other lands to buy. So as it was, Joseph's brothers appeared before him looking to buy food. Not recognizing Joseph, the brothers entered and knelt before him, just like Joseph had seen in his dream. Joseph though recognized them the moment that they entered. I doubt he ever forgot the faces of those who had sold him into slavery. In order to intimidate them, he accused them of being spies. Afraid, they denied the accusation and told Joseph how they had moved to Canaan and how they were twelve brothers, ten present, one who is no more (no more?), and the youngest who stayed with their father. At this Joseph told them that the only way that they could prove to him that they were not lying would be to bring their youngest brother to Egypt. He then put all of them in prison and said that he would not release them until the youngest appeared. After three days he released nine of them but kept Simeon in prison until the other brothers returned with Benjamin. They returned home and told Jacob of all that had transpired. Jacob rejected the idea on the hour saying that if anything happened to Benjamin, he would die. Apparently Benjamin meant more to him than Simeon who stayed in prison until the food that they had brought back with them began to run out. At which point Jacob finally consented and let Benjamin go.

When they all arrived back in Egypt, they went immediately to see Joseph. They were taken to Joseph's house to speak with him. When Joseph appeared he first asked them of their father and if he was still living to which they responded with the affirmative. Then he asked if the young man with them was their younger brother. When they said yes, He said, "God be gracious to you, my son" and then fled the room overcome by emotion.

Deeply moved at the sight of his brother, Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to weep. He went into his private room and wept there. (Genesis 43:30)

Imagine the scene; here you are, already nervous, before some great leader who already has thrown you into prison once who then suddenly bolts from the room with no word or explanation. As we all know, he ran in order not to cry in front of them. For the better part of 20 years Joseph had dreamed of this moment, playing it over and over again in his mind, how it would be if he were to ever see Benjamin again. For all those years, one thing that kept him going was the possibility of the dream, wild as it may have seemed, to one day be with Benjamin, his blood brother, again. And here he was right in front of him. It was

too much to believe, too much to handle and for this reason he ran. He didn't know what else to do. Benjamin was there and Benjamin was alive. These were not tears of sadness, but of joy, of pure emotion. How he loved Benjamin and had wanted to be with him again, to hug him, to kiss him, and there he was. After all that he had gone through in life, he had almost given up hope of one day being reunited with Benjamin. After finally getting himself under control, he went back to his brothers and ordered that a meal be served. After eating with them, something that will be dealt with in another chapter, and another episode in which Benjamin ended up with one of Joseph's cups in his sack, apparently stolen, but actually placed there, Joseph declared that Benjamin being a thief would have to stay there with him as his slave. That was it; that was the end of the brothers; they began to plead with Joseph telling him that they could not return without Benjamin for their father would surely die; especially after having lost one son and now Benjamin. Finally Joseph couldn't take it anymore and he ordered all of the attendants out of the room and then he broke down, right there; more than 13 years of anguish and emotion came pouring out. He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him and Pharaoh's house heard about. Imagine if you're one of the brothers, what are you to think at this moment? The ruler in front of you having already fled from the room once is now having an emotional meltdown right there in front of you. Do you give him a hug?

At this moment Joseph reveals who he is to his brothers and asks, "Is my father still living?" His brothers didn't even respond they were so terrified at his presence. He then called them closer and told them, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt!" (As if there might have been another.) He then told them not to be distressed because it was all part of God's plan to save them. Wow, I think I would have let them be distressed just for a little while; a bit of a payback. He then told them to go back and get Jacob and bring him to Egypt.

Only at this moment does Joseph demonstrate the love that he has for Benjamin, the emotions that he had hidden away, as he throws his arms around Benjamin and the two just stand there embraced and weeping.

Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. (Genesis 45:14)

What a beautiful picture of an-adulterated love. A love like that can only be met in comparison with the love of Jesus. Interestingly enough, scholars all agree that Joseph is a shadowing, a fore type of Jesus. Joseph's life had many signs in it that pointed to Jesus, how he would be and what he would do. And with that in mind, I would like to establish the following parallel: Just like Joseph waited for the better part of 20 years to see Benjamin, Jesus has waited the better part of 2,000 years to finally see his Benjamin, the Benjamin Generation born and rising up. Now, imagine the emotion and excitement of Jesus at finally seeing Benjamin, his chosen generation knowing who it is and what it is to do. Just like

the creation, Jesus has been waiting a long time for the “sons of God to be revealed;” for this generation to finally come onto the scene.

“The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.” (Romans 8:19)

5. Sterile Women, GB and the Nazarite Connection

And so the saga of a sterile woman continues; a woman who desperately wanted to have her own children; a woman who went to God and asked for a miracle; a woman who in desperation threw herself before her husband crying out for help, preferring rather to die than live if living meant not having children. That desire was the seed that eventually brought Benjamin into this world. And it is through the sterile women of the Bible and their desire to have children, coupled with our hearts desperate for God, that we, today, find the characteristics, the peculiar parts of the identity of this generation called Benjamin.

Hannah

Hannah was married to Elkanah, a husband and a friend whom the Bible said loved her very much. There were only a few problems in this potentially perfect picture. One was Elkanah's other wife; yes, he had another wife called Peninnah and this in and of itself is an invite for marital problems. Hannah and Peninnah had an ongoing rivalry which constantly tore at Elkanah and the peace in their home. Even though Hannah was the favorite, Peninah was the only one who could give Elkanah children for Hannah was sterile. And in a society in which women found their value in being able to provide their husband with male children, Hannah was at a huge disadvantage creating a lot of turmoil between the two women and a constant inner struggle in Hannah. Why was it that she couldn't have children? Why was God only blessing Peninnah, as though she somehow deserved it? Peninnah was by no means what you would have considered a nice person as lived constantly provoking and ridiculing Hannah and her inability to have children. Surely this was all born out of envy for Hannah and the love that Elkanah showed her but nonetheless, it hurt. Jealousy can produce some ugly fruit. And as a result of the constant ridiculing, her inadequacy began to haunt her and the desire to bear children began to possess her every thought.

Then, the day finally came when it all came rushing to the surface; they had gone to the temple to offer sacrifices and Hannah took advantage of being there and went to the temple to pray. Her prayer was simple, and the tormented heart from which it came, sincere:

“O Lord Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.” (1Samuel 1:11)

The Bible says that she stayed there for a while weeping and praying in her heart as her lips moved. At this the high priest Eli went over to her and rebuked her. "Woman, have you know respect for the temple of the Lord, coming in here drunk?" She looked at him with tears in her eyes and said, "You don't understand, I'm not drunk, I'm desperate, I'm in anguish and pouring my heart out to the Lord." At this, Eli, realizing his error, told her to go in peace and that God would give her what she had asked for. And God surely did give her what she had asked for, for on the very next day, the Bible says that Elkanah lay with her and she became pregnant. Now that is the type of response to prayer that I like, the next day. Cool, huh? In reality, it wasn't the next day. Hannah had been praying and crying out to God for years, but the day after the temple, God moved. Just a note here for those of you who are hurting and crying out to a God that seems to have hidden His face from you, God sees your tears and hears your hearts cry. When your desires are His desires, they are guaranteed to happen sooner or later. Just don't give up.

Nine months later, her son was born; and to him she gave the name Samuel which means, "Because I asked the Lord for him." She told her husband that she would keep him until the time that he was weaned and after that she would present him to the Lord to live in the temple. For years Hannah had cried out for a son and now as she held him in her arms she did not forget her vow to God to give her son back to Him. It had to have hurt, looking at him thinking, "Wow, this was great, but it has to come to an end." This woman was more dedicated to God than to her own desires in this life and she knew what it meant to fulfill your vows to the Lord. Just a quick thought; do you think she was tempted to nurse Samuel until he was like, I don't know, maybe 20 years old? Boy how things are different today; we make thoughtless vows and promises to God in feeble attempts to get something from Him with no intention whatsoever to actually fulfill our part, or at least intending to initially and then after thinking it over decide against it. Ever wonder why God doesn't give you what you ask for, even when you promise him something in return? Are you willing to give back the very thing that you asked Him for after a determined amount of time? Hannah was.

After Samuel was weaned, Hannah took him with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh. When they had slaughtered the bull, they brought the boy to Eli, and she said to him, "As surely as you live, my Lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the Lord. I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord." And he worshiped the Lord there. (1Samuel 1:24-28)

Samuel grew up in the temple serving the Lord under the priest Eli. As he grew, he came to know God more and more until one day he became the Judge of Israel and one of the Major Prophets in the Old Testament. The Bible itself speaks on behalf of Samuel, "none his words fell to he ground." (1Samuel 3:19) It

says that God was with him and that He (God) didn't let any of his words fall to the ground. In other words, all that Samuel prophesied happened.

Benjamin, like Samuel, son of a sterile mother, you are prophetic and God is putting His words in your mouth and so long as you walk with him and seek to know him more, none of your words will fall to the ground. This generation is prophetic!

The Wife of Manoah

There is yet another sterile woman in the Bible; along with also having a huge desire to have children, there are some interesting characteristics about her that I would like to draw attention to. This woman of great importance to the history of Israel is, interestingly enough, only known as the wife of Manoah; she is not identified by name, much like this generation. But, God knew her and He knows your name. Maybe at this point in your life you are feeling insignificant and forgotten by a world that seems to be passing you by quicker every day, but let me tell you, God knows you and He knows your name and He has a purpose for your life. Manoah's wife, as already stated, desperately wanted children and for this she sought the Lord and asked Him to bless her and give her a son. God heard her prayer and sent an angel (the angel of the Lord once again) with the following message: "You are sterile and childless, but you are going to conceive and have a son. Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean, because you will conceive and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy is to be a Nazarite, set apart to God from birth, and he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines." (Judges 13:3-5)

The word of the Lord came to pass and her son was born and to him they gave the name Samson. Samson was brought up separate, consecrated unto the Lord, until one day he became the Judge of Israel and began to deliver the people of Israel from the hands of the Philistines as the angel of the Lord had said. Samson made plenty of mistakes in his confused and sometimes distracted life, but one thing was certain, the guy was strong. He was famously known for his incredible, God-given strength. The things that Samson did when the power of the Lord came on him were never, nor ever will be, repeated by any other men. He was a man of great strength, but it was not a strength of his own. And this generation is going to have a strength that it not it's own. They are going to walk in an anointing so strong and intense that it will scare many. Miracles are going to become commonplace and the dead rising will not turn anyone's head. God has a powerful anointing that He is pouring out on this generation, an anointing for the supernatural, for miracles. But, unlike Samson, they will not give up the secret of their strength, their intimacy and passion for Jesus, to anyone. And thus will not fall. This generation is powerful!

Elizabeth

Elizabeth, like the other sterile women also desperately wanted children. In fact, she had spent almost all of her life hoping and wanting to get pregnant. Imagine the monthly frustration of the ever recurring menstrual cycle. Not that this time of the month is not bad enough in and of itself, but it also served as a monthly reminder to Elizabeth of her failure, her inability to achieve that which she most desired. It was something that she had come to terms with as she was already old now and had resigned herself to the fact that this was not going to happen; albeit difficult to admit and accept. She had come to believe that the will of God was for her not to have children. How could she come to any other conclusion after having spent the better part of her life praying for this and God having not responded?

The one day, her husband Zechariah who was a priest went to minister before the Lord's altar in the Temple and while he was there, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and said, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:13-17)

But Zechariah didn't believe the angel. And who could blame him? All those years praying for what seemed to be the impossible and now in his old age, some angel is going to appear to him to tell him that his old, wrinkled wife is going to have a baby; yeah right. Unfortunately because his unbelief, he was unable to speak until his son was born; that meant about ten months of charades. "Sounds like..." Elizabeth then became pregnant, much to the surprise of Zechariah, and didn't leave their house for five months. She was ecstatic at the prospect of having a child and said, "The Lord has done this for me. In these days, he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people." During that period of time, it was a disgrace for a woman not to be able to give children to her husband. It was considered a curse, as the greatest thing a woman could do for her husband was give him children so that his name would continue on. For this reason she considered herself disgraced among the people. She was right in saying that the people would no longer look down on her as all of them would know of her son, a man radical and passionate for the Lord, a man known as John the Baptist.

John the Baptist was a man separated by and for God from before the time he was born. The angel instructed his father that he was to drink no wine and that he would be full of the Holy Spirit from the day he was born. Now, that is a

calling. And John was all that and more. Imagine him preaching with his long hair, beard and clothes made from camel hair, sounds a lot like some of the youth that I know. They wear what they want as style seems to be totally subjective, trust me; I've seen a lot worse than camel hair. And speaking of hair, they like long hair, short hair, no hair, hair of all colors and use earrings (oh my); basically, they wear what they like with no regards to the crowd. It's everyone for themselves with their own unique likes and style.

The people looked at John the Baptist and thought he was weird, but no one could deny the divine authority with which he spoke. And it's going to be the same with this generation passionate for Jesus. People are going to look at them and think that they are weird, but no one is going to be able to deny the authority with which they speak and the miracles that are going to follow them. Passionate and radical is what the masses are going to say about them. It's their passion for Jesus that's going to lead them to be radical for God; totally sold out for His causes and purposes and crazy enough to do whatever he asks of them. Even if that means standing up in a shopping cart in the middle of the supermarket in order to tell others of the love of Jesus and his sacrificial death on the cross. John preached to the people about the first coming of the Lord and the need for them to prepare themselves, "Get ready". And this generation is going to be preaching about the second coming of the Lord and their need to prepare themselves for that hour is coming and He who promised will not delay. Just like John the Baptist, this generation will need to be radical and passionate to carry out what God has called them to do.

Thus, through the lives of the sterile women of the Bible and their children we find the characteristics of this generation, this prophetic, powerful and radical generation.

The Nazarite Connection

I cannot end this chapter without making mention of one interesting fact. The three men that we have previously mentioned in this chapter all had another thing very particular in common; they were all Nazarites for life. The significance of this although at first glance may seem for the most part insignificant is quite large in regards to this generation.

First of all, what was a Nazarite? A Nazarite, coming from the Hebrew word *nazir* meaning "consecrated" or "separated", was an individual, man or woman, who took a voluntary vow of separation unto the Lord for a determined time. During this time of his separation, the regulations in which he subjected himself to were actually the same as those for the High Priest and for the priests during worship and included three absolute restrictions by which he would live:

1. He couldn't drink wine or any fermented drink.
2. He couldn't cut his hair.

3. He couldn't touch a dead body

Although these three requirements may give the appearance of a very disciplined life and certainly it was, it went a whole lot further than just a vow of self-discipline; it was an act of total devotion and consecration to the Lord. For this very reason in the section in Numbers 6 that speaks of the regulations of the Nazarite vow, we find the phrase "Unto the Lord" eight times. It was not "Under the law," but, "Unto the Lord." It was not by force or obligation, but desire to be wholly devoted to the Lord. The Nazarite was a willing, voluntary servant, not a slave or employee.

The Nazarite vow was voluntary except for one exception; parents could take the vow for their young or unborn children. In this case, the child would become a Nazarite for life. There are three cases of individuals that the Bible mentions as Nazarites for life, being that their parents took the vow for them: Samuel, Samson and John the Baptist.

Samuel - 1Samuel 1:11; And she (*Hannah*) made this vow: "O Lord Almighty, if you will look down on my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you. He will be yours for his entire lifetime, and as a sign that he has been dedicated to the Lord, his hair will never be cut."

Samson - Judges 13:5; You (*wife of Manoah*) will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and his hair must never be cut. for he will be dedicated to God as a Nazarite from birth.

John the Baptist - Luke 1:14-15; You (*Zechariah*) will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice with you at his birth, for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or hard liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth.

These three were different from all of the other Nazarites in that their vows were involuntary and for life.

Now, it is God himself who has set apart this generation. Your call to be separate and holy, set apart and consecrated, is on one hand something that before hand was determined by God, but on the other is also a voluntary act as God is looking for willing servants, not slaves; God is looking for sons. Just like Samson, you can either decide to live in such a way so as to accomplish all that God has set apart for you or follow your own desires and eventually die doing something somewhere that you did not have to. For some it will be a quick death as they will make some seriously bad decision involving some sin and for others it will be a slow gradual death. Something that takes place over the course of years as they realize that they are simply surviving, just being, as opposed to actually living. There are many dead men today in our world still breathing, much to their own disappointment. They are alive sure enough in their bodies, but their

spirits are dead as all that gave them life went to the grave years ago. Their dreams and the opportunities to realize them have long since passed them by and all hope for the incredible and supernatural has become only that, a hope; and one that has already seen it's time and now rests collecting dust upon some shelf in the heart of the man. The only thing that will truly give you life in this world is Jesus Christ and doing what it is that he has prepared for you to do.

Yes, you can make decisions in life and follow your dreams. I am giving you permission to do this, but make sure that what it is that you dream of doing or accomplishing is something that God has also dreamed of you doing. Just for the record, all of your dreams are not necessarily of God, even though they might be good and perhaps even spiritual. God has not called all of us to be Christian Musicians selling CD's and doing shows, although that would certainly be cool and even good if we were to use it to speak of Jesus Christ and challenge our listeners to live holy lives dedicated totally to Him. Yet it is more than likely that God has something else for you to do. Even a good dream, if it is not of God, will ultimately lead to frustration and death, independent of whether or not you accomplish all that you set out to do. For this very reason, many successful individuals are deeply frustrated. Satisfaction is not spelled S-U-C-C-E-S-S. Satisfaction is spelled O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E. Obedience to do what it is that God has called you to do. Jeremiah was probably one of the most unsuccessful individuals to ever walk the face of the earth. Think about it, 40 years as an itinerant evangelist and not one convert. Ouch! Let's face it, by today's standards the guy was the ultimate failure, a loser. But regardless of what tag society might place on him, obedient he was. And this is where society and God part ways; society measures success by numbers, but obedience is the mark by which God measures everything. God doesn't count numbers, he looks at the heart. It was He who said, "Obedience is better than sacrifice." And in all fairness to Jeremiah, God told him before anything ever started that no one would listen to him.

The purpose of the Nazarite vow was to raise up a group of leaders devoted completely to God. And although God is not looking for literal Nazarites in the sense that we all become long hairs who do not touch dead bodies, he is looking for those who in their hearts have taken a vow of total separation from the world; a vow to not contaminate themselves with the things of this world, totally set apart, radically holy.

The call has gone out, but the price to be used of God is not cheap. Will you answer it? Will you pay the price? Will you give him your life with no reservations and no thoughts of looking back? God wants to use you, but don't be like Samson and sell your calling for the price of a good haircut.

6. The Portion

Going back now to the story of Joseph and Benjamin as I promised, one thing interesting to note is the size of the portions that were given to each of the brothers when they sat down to eat with Joseph. The Bible says that after Joseph pulled himself together that he sat down to eat with his brothers. They were all given food, but Benjamin was given five times more than the others: *“When portions were served to them from Joseph’s table, **Benjamin’s portion was five times as much as anyone else’s.** So they feasted and drank freely with him.”* (Genesis 43:34) It was only after they had eaten that Joseph revealed himself to his brothers. After which he sent them all back to get their father Jacob and all of their families to come and live with him in Egypt. Joseph, for the trip, gave each of his brothers new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave five times more than the others: *“To each of them he gave new clothing, **but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and fives sets of clothes.**”* (Genesis 45:22)

So, the question begs to be asked, “Why did Benjamin receive five times more than his brothers?” What is the significance of this? And what does this have to do with this generation?

In Egypt, as well as other countries in the East, there exist customs in which special attention is shown to the guest of honor. One such is that the host, with his own hand, will give a portion of food specially selected to the guest, or will have it taken to the guest. The level of respect that he has for the guest is represented by the quantity of food given. In that time, a common rule of etiquette was to show preference to a guest by giving him a double portion, like Elkanah did with Hannah: *“Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Penninah and to all her sons and daughters. **But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the Lord had closed her womb.**”* (1 Samuel 1:4-5)

So, if the custom of the day was to give a double portion to someone that you really loved, respected and wanted to honor, imagine someone receiving five times more. Without a doubt, this was a show of preference for Benjamin. Joseph showed his special favor and love for Benjamin by giving him five times more food and clothing than his other brothers.

Knowing that the sons of Jacob represent the different periods in the history of the church and that Joseph is a type of Jesus, we can, without too much of a stretch, draw a parallel between the relationship of Joseph and his brothers and Jesus with the different generations and periods in the history of the church. Jesus poured out on all of them a certain portion of the Holy Spirit in the same way that Joseph gave food and clothing to all of his brothers. But, to Benjamin, he gave five times more. I strongly believe that we are entering into the last

period in church history. And this is the generation that, for the first time in all of history, has a real possibility of completing the Great Commission, making it also possibly the last generation. It is over this generation that God is wanting to pour out His Spirit in a way that has never been experienced; five times more of the prophetic, five times more power and anointing, and five times more passion so that this generation will end of up being the most radical generation in the history of the church.

Imagine all of the miracles that are going to take place; the blind seeing, the deaf hearing, paralytics walking and the dead rising. This is all going to begin taking place not as scattered events, but as commonplace, everyday events. We are going to see this generation walking under an anointing so powerful that for some it will be frightening and doing things that we had never imagined possible. Signs and wonders are going to be normal in these days!

Five times more! That is what God is wanting to pour out on His Generation Benjamin. And that is what He is going to do.

7. The Response

The Bible tells us the story of a young girl named Maria who loved the Lord and also loved her fiancé. They were living their lives as any other engaged couple, preparing for and counting the days until their wedding. Until one unexpected evening, the angel Gabriel appeared to her and said, *“Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”* (Luke 1:28) Now, that would be pretty cool to hear those words from an angel, and not just any angel, but Gabriel. But the Bible says that Maria, *“greatly troubled”* just stood there unable to think of what to do or say, which I guess would be normal having an angel in front of you. I don’t imagine that you would offer him a glass of water or a coke. So, the angel continued, *“Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”* (Luke 1:30-33)

Imagine what could have possibly been going through Mary’s mind at that moment: “OK. That was nice, but what the heck is that supposed to mean?” After all, she was just a normal young girl that loved the Lord. Now here she is face to face with some angel who calls himself Gabriel and is telling her that she is going to be pregnant, and not just pregnant, but pregnant with God’s son. *“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”* (Luke 1:34) Now, this is a more than reasonable question. “Uh, excuse me Mr. Angel, I know that God sent you and all, but do you think that perhaps you erred and knocked at the wrong door. You see, there is another girl down the street and well, she isn’t a virgin, and you know, it’s, oh, well, more likely that she might be pregnant. You see, **I AM STILL A VIRGIN!!!** I can’t be pregnant!” *The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”* (Luke 1:35)

Somehow that response was meant to be comforting? If anything, it probably scared her. What does that mean, “the Holy Spirit will come upon you”? *“And what about Joseph?” “How am I going to explain this to him?” “What are the chances that he is going to believe all of this?” “What is everyone else going to think?” “What is my family going to think?” “No one is going to believe me.” “This can’t be real. This can’t be happening.” “**GOD! WHAT IS THIS? WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?**” “How am I, a virgin, going to have a son?”* Without a doubt, her head at that moment was going in circles, full of questions and full of doubts. And that is what makes her response and the way she handled the situation all the more incredible. She didn’t argue with the angel or even question him as to her doubts, but simply declared:

“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.” (Luke 1:38)

The quickness with which she conformed and submitted herself to the word of the Lord is incredible. What God had told her was almost unbelievable, yet Mary believed and subjected herself to God. Not because it made sense to her, but because she trusted in the one who had spoken to her. This is certainly something that we can all learn from. How many times have we felt God speaking to us and in place of acting on His word, we doubt and question and make a list of things for God to do to prove that it really was Him; rather than knowing his voice (perhaps this is where the true problem exists) and acting upon what was spoken.

Maybe even at this moment you are questioning God, much like Maria, "How is all of this going to happen? Who am I? How am I going to see a dead guy rise from the dead when I haven't ever even prayed for someone with a headache? How can I preach the Gospel and impact this generation when just thinking about speaking of Jesus to someone makes me so nervous that I begin to sweat and feel like throwing up?" God's response to you is exactly the same that He gave to Maria:

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." (Luke 1:35)

It is God, the Almighty One that is going to do these things in and through your life. He is the one that is going to give you the courage necessary to stand up and act.

What was born of Mary was Holy and called Jesus. And what God is bringing forth in our days is holy and will be called Benjamin, Generation Benjamin. God is going to do all that he has planned in your life and through your generation. But, for this to happen, it is necessary that you have the same attitude of submission and surrender as Mary had. Your response will have to be the same as hers was:

"I am the Lord's servant, May it be to me as you have said."

God has a purpose for your life. God wants to use you in a very special way. This is not some generic call to a generation, but specific calls that God is putting in all those that make up this special and set apart generation. Yes, it is a call to a generation, but within this greater call exist specific things that God has set aside for each and every one of you to do, something that was made especially for you. Be prepared to hear what it is that He wants you to do, and even if He shows you everything or maybe only one great thing, don't get caught up in the "How is that going to happen?" realm. That is not your concern. Leave the "hows" with God. Your part is to submit and respond: "Here am I, the Lord's servant! Do it God like you said." This needs to be the constant cry of your heart!

The response and willingness of Mary changed the history of the world and the same can happen through your life, if at this moment, your response and willingness of heart is the same as hers was.

“I am the Lord’s servant, May it be to me as you have said.”

8. The Responsibility

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16)

The responsibility that comes with responding “Yes” to the Lord is not to be misunderstood as it is very large and the price to be paid will not be small. For this very reason, the desire of your heart needs to be the same as God’s. You need to passionately desire Him and want to be used for His glory more than any other thing in the world. The pulse of your heart beat has to be Jesus. Or to put in another way; you need to be ready to give your life for the cause of Christ if necessary. If the desire of your heart is not, “Lord, use my life, I’m ready and willing to do whatever you want me to, in order that you can be glorified”, you can close this book because the rest will not interest you.

Going back to three sons of the sterile women, we must keep in mind that they were all Nazarites from birth, or in other words, dedicated and set apart from birth to the service of the Lord. Yet, there were many others who took Nazarite vows of consecration, all for determined amounts of time and all for the same purpose, the Lord’s service. As spoken before, the purpose of the Nazarite vow was to raise up a group of leaders completely dedicated to God, separated unto the His service. Their vow was one to control their carnal nature; to pay the price to be found ready in God’s eyes.

God is looking for young men and women today of the caliber of these three men: Samuel, Samson and John the Baptist; youth who have set themselves apart for the service of the Lord; youth who live out in their fullness the words found in 1 Timothy 4:12.

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but **set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.**”

God is looking for young people who are true examples in all of these areas for it is on these very ones that He is going to pour out His power and His anointing. In order for God to use you, your life has to be pure and an example of true Christianity. God is not going to put His stamp of approval on any life that is not an example of the transforming power of God and salvation. Don’t even think for one moment that God is somehow miraculously going to decide to do great things through your life if it speaks more of the power of sin than of righteousness.

The price to be paid in order for the prophetic word about the Benjamin Generation to be filled in its totality and in your life is huge and the first convert

needs to be you! No more playing games. You are either saved all the way, or lost all the way. There is no room or time for fence riding. This call is going out now for all that are set apart and ready, living lives that speak of the incredible power of transformation found in the name and work of Jesus Christ. Remember, it starts with you!

In Speech

What comes out of your mouth is of extreme importance. How many of us have been subject to hearing curse words in the course of our days? And how many times have we been shocked to see that it was one of our fellow Christians? Or how many times have we heard a “brother” telling one of those infamous “dirty” jokes? Does it not shock us? Shouldn’t it? And does it not leave us questioning the condition his soul? I mean, where is he coming from? Or better yet, where is he going? And if we think this way, how do we imagine that the world perceives it? You know, the world is paying a whole lot more attention to us and our conduct than we sometimes realize, especially in what comes out of our mouths. If you say that you are a Christian, the world wants to see some proof, they want to see it as well as hear it. I know numerous “Christians” that have absolutely no control over their tongues. And with the same tongue that they praise God on Sunday, they condemn themselves throughout the week. Matthew 12:34 says, “For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.” If your heart is full of Jesus, then your mouth will speak of Him. But if your heart is full of worthless things, then garbage will most certainly come out. Don’t be deceived, fresh water does not come from the same source as salt water. Be an example in the way that you speak. Watch every word that comes out of your mouth and make sure that they either glorify God or edify a brother in Christ, and in this leaving no room for gossipers.

Though you probe my heart and examine me at night, though you test me, you will find nothing; I have resolved that my mouth will not sin. (Psalms 17:3)

But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. (Matthew 12:36)

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. (Ephesians 4:25)

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. (Ephesians 5:3-4)

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. (James 3:9-12)

In Life

How many times have you heard someone say that he is a son of God but acted more like a son of the devil? Sadly this is a reality that we all too often would rather not admit. Just because someone says that he is a Christian doesn't mean that he really is. The world will know us by our actions. If you speak of Jesus with your mouth, but your life speaks nothing of Him, what good is it? The reality is that after awhile, no one is going to listen to you, much less believe you.

There was a story once of a man who traveled around selling cough remedies. Unfortunately, he had a rather tough time selling his medicine, not that it wasn't a good product, or that he wasn't a good salesman, for he was. The problem was his horrible, persistent cough. Every time, right in the middle of his sales pitch, he would suddenly drop to his knees coughing and sputtering and gasping for air. At which point, most would leave. And rarely would anyone buy. Finally one day, someone from the crowd yelled out, "Why don't you buy some of your own medicine and show us how it works!"

And that is what the world is crying out to us as we try to "sell" them Jesus. Lots speak of what Jesus can and will do in someone's life, but far fewer actually show it. And it is at precisely this point that many of the world turn and walk away. Something is lost as we lay on the ground half sputtering, half talking in our sin and trying to tell them how God can heal them. You can't sell what you haven't bought. And you can't give what you don't have. Unfortunately, the world is not half as stupid or blind as we think they are. It's not supposed to be this way. God has called us to be lights.

Mt 5:14-16; You are the light of the world-like a city on a mountain, glowing in the night for all to see. Don't hide your light under a basket! Instead, put it on a stand and let it shine for all. In the same way, let your good deeds shine for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly father.

We are called to be lights; to show the world the truth as it shines through our lives. Talk is cheap. We all know that. The want and need to see the truth, the light of Jesus. And at this, we need to stop and examine our lives to see if we truly are shining. Certainly no one is perfect, but that is no excuse for complacency and compromise. One of the most commonly heard phrases in the

English language is “Well, no one’s perfect,” as though that somehow justifies a sloppy life. And even so, it is wrong. God is perfect and he has called us as His children to be perfect too.

***“Be perfect, therefore, as your father in heaven is perfect.”
(Mt 5:48)***

Really though, it’s not the lack of perfection that is so much the problem today as the blatant contradiction that many of us live. Can you imagine a professing Christian girl, who just happens to be pregnant, witnessing to a non-Christian youth and trying to tell him or her about their need for Jesus and how He can change their life? Or a Christian young man as he has just finished having sex with unbelieving young woman rolling over and trying to tell her of Jesus and her need of salvation? It just doesn’t work. If our lives don’t show changes and something different, then our faith is worthless to the world. They want to see what God can do and has done. The truth is, we to stop coughing in order for them to even become interested in our medicine.

I remember recently being at a wedding in which a young man came up to me, and as he was drooling, slurring and falling all over me with a beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other, I was trying to think of an angle in which to tell him about Jesus when a Christian youth busted in and said, “Oh! I see you’ve met Brian. He’s in the ministry with us.” OK. I’m not one to judge, but his light went out somewhere in the midst all of the beers and apparent buzz. My friends, God wants us to be different, we are called to be different. We are called to be radically different, even weird for Jesus.

One of the biggest roadblocks to non-believers becoming Christians is the lives of the very Christians who are trying to tell them about Jesus. We talk the talk but know nothing of the walk. Do you suppose there have been times in your life where a non-Christian has looked at you and said, “Yeah right, I don’t think so”? Do you think there have been times when a non-Christian has been paying more attention to your cough than to your well prepared speech?

In order to speak of freedom and transformation, your life has to have first experienced it and have the fruits, demonstrating the very thing you are speaking of. The most powerful testimony is one that is lived, one that people can see. The transforming power of God is best seen through a transformed life. The need to see and not only hear is essential.

We need to act in a way that leaves no doubt as to what team we are playing for, be it on the side of God or the devil. For anyone that is looking at us, Christian or not, it needs to be obvious that we are followers of Jesus. If we are not being an example to the un-believers, do we really think that we can somehow be an example to those that are a part of the family of God?

“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.” (Galatians 5:13)

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children (Ephesians 5:1)

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. (Ephesians 5:8-11)

Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. (Titus 2:6-8)

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. (1 Peter 2:12)

In Love

What was it that first brought us to Christ? Wasn't it the recognition of sin in our lives and the realization of some great love of a God that killed His Son in our place? Imagine if God didn't really love, but just simply forgave our sins, certainly there would be no relationship there. Just a rather dry, "That's OK, I've taken care of it. Now get out of here." Of course we know that it is not that way. There is the obvious issue of his love and that is where it all began and that it is where it all continues. Is it not His love that we find most attractive about Him? Does He not somehow, divinely fulfill a need in each of us to be truly known and loved? Yes, without a doubt, He does. He somehow finds a way to come down off of His holy throne and meet with and embraces an individual who at one time was His enemy and the very reason for the death of His sinless Son. Each of us has a need and desire to be loved and He perfectly, yet inconceivably, loves us. Most of creation spends the better part of their lives searching for love, true love, only to be frustrated in the end, partly the fault of looking in all of the wrong places as the country song goes. Yet, just the same, with a broken heart, a mind full of deceptions and a life marked by let downs we continue down that well trodden path in hopes that love is waiting just around the next bend.

Only in God is true, real love, to be found and through His children, the world has an opportunity to experience and feel the love of Christ. We are His hands, His feet, His mouth and His representatives here on planet earth. When we find

ourselves near to someone who is in need of a touch from God, a word of encouragement or a hug, we are it. We are the ones through whom God wants to demonstrate His love for them. And just like that someone is able to see God's love, revealed on the cross, in us. Not that it is only us who is loving them, but the very God who created the universe loving them through us. Generally speaking, those who are most difficult to love are the ones most in need of it.

Let the world see the love of Christ in and through your life, words and actions. And then the world will know you as a Christian and this generation as a result of your love.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35)

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. (1 John 3:23)

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. (1 John 4:7)

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. (1 John 4:11-12)

The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:14)

In Faith

"A faith that moves mountains." This is the faith that God is giving to this generation, allowing them to do great things in the name of Jesus and to have the courage to dream big, bigger than life; seeing the unseen and believing that it can happen. The ability to see with "eyes of faith", seeing their classmates being saved, whole families serving the Lord, this generation reaching the world, the dead rising and many other miracles. Faith is nothing more than believing in what God has already said, and in this, we can see things before they happen. God has brought you to this point in your life for this, but you need to believe in the word of God and the fact that he wants to use you. You need to make yourself available to Him. Give your life unconditionally to Him. Then and only then will you begin to see the sick healed, the deaf hearing, the blind seeing, the dead rising and multitudes of individuals repenting and giving their lives to Jesus as you preach His word.

In order for your faith to be able to move mountains, it has to be active. In other words, your response needs to first be, "according to your word Lord, according to your will." And not, "Wow, do you think so?" or "Well, we'll wait and see." You've got to first believe that it is possible and then start acting as though you really believe it. Start praying for the sick. Start preaching the word. Start DOING something. The great secret to seeing a sick person healed, dead person raised from the dead or an unbeliever coming to know the Lord is action. You've got to do something. You've got to pray, you've got to witness and you've got to move. All things are possible for those that believe (and act upon that belief).

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. (Matthew 21:21)

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrew 11:6)

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Hebrew 11:1)

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. (James 2:14-18)

In Purity

To be an example in purity, you have to have a blameless life. And let me be straight up with you, the devil is looking for any inconsistency in your life in order to accuse you and compromise you and your testimony. Don't even pretend that he went on vacation. He doesn't vacation. He is always active and all he needs is a little crack in the door for him to shoot it wide open. And for this very reason, it is always better to go beyond what is considered normal or even necessary in order to avoid any appearance of evil. How many times has someone blown their testimony just because of a dumb moment in which they didn't avoid the "appearance of evil?" You don't have to necessarily sin to blow your testimony,

just look like you sinned or give reasonable doubt and it's all over. Purity needs to be one of the defining characteristics of this generation. It's all about holiness.

I know that remaining pure is one of the greatest difficulties and challenges for any young person today as they are attacked every moment of the day by television, internet, magazines, at school and even by their friends. The battle is not easy, but, at the same time, the victory is not impossible for "greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." You are not alone! But, at the same time, you need to be alert and always on the look-out. Be careful of the traps of the enemy. Many times he will come and try to convince you that something is not "really" sin. Be careful with that. It may not make the top ten list of sins, but it could be, and very likely is, dangerous and possibly fatal to your testimony. Remember, just the appearance of something wrong is enough to convince those around you to not believe you.

As a pastor, I have a few rules that many people consider extreme: for example, I won't give a ride to another woman if my wife is not with me or another male is not riding in the front next to me. I do this simply to avoid the appearance of evil, in order for the unbeliever that knows me not to think that I might possibly be betraying my wife. A perverted heart always thinks about perverted things. Have you ever noticed how a thief always thinks that everyone is stealing? Exactly. And for this, you need to think twice about everything you do and how it might look. Not that you need to have to be paranoid about it, you can live your life, but, be aware that someone, other than God, might be looking.

The whole opposite sex thing is a serious area that deserves special consideration. Consider what others *might* think the next time that someone of the opposite sex wants to talk to you, *alone*. Consider how it might look as you walk off hand in hand. Who hasn't been a victim of those rumors? Think twice about accepting that invitation, tempting as it may seem. Firstly, what is it that he/she needs to say to you that can't be said in front of the others? And where are you going in order to speak *alone*. The closet? In a dark home in which no one is there but you two? In the bedroom with the door closed? Beyond being incredibly stupid this is a great opportunity to do more than just give the appearance of evil if you hear what I'm saying. You need to be cautious not only in order to avoid temptations and the appearance of evil, but also to avoid evil itself. The devil only needs an appearance to ruin you. Think before you go to a party that you know will involve drinking, even if "everyone knows" that you don't drink. What exactly do you plan on doing there? Purity is a personal decision to dedicate yourself wholly to the Lord and not satisfy your flesh. Holiness is a decision. Holiness is a lifestyle. Holiness is what God requires of us. Be sure that if you decide to seek holiness in your life, God will not desert you. I in all of my life have never heard anyone speak regretfully of having walked in holiness for so long and having not sinned more. But I have heard many speak of how stupid they had been and how they wish they could go back and undo some of the things that they had done. Those who walk in holiness are never sorry about

it. Those who walk a time in the world are always regretful of having waited so long as they harvest the fruits of their sin.

Your holiness is important to God. That is why he promises us in 1 Corinthians 10:13, that he will never let us be tempted beyond what we can handle and when the temptation does come, He will always offer us a way of escape. He will always be with you warning you when you are close to the edge, or when danger is approaching. Your part is to pay attention to His voice and to run from the situation or temptation just like Joseph did with Potifer's wife. Be careful with the appearance of things. The devil would like nothing more than to take you out of the game. All he needs is for you to commit one error. But, above all, remember, "Greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4) The victory is yours, walk in it!

so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing. (Philippians 2:15-16)

Avoid every kind of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14)

Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2:22)

9. A Word to Musicians

Music, being the key that opens the door to the heart of this generation, is of great importance. And we need to treat it as such. Music is not just some extra thing that if we have it good and if we don't, well, that's OK. It is the language of a generation. The majority of this generation is listening to some type of music virtually 24 hours a day. It is where they find their selves. For this reason we cannot risk ignoring the importance of this area and of those that are involved as its components. And just to set things straight right from the beginning, it is a whole more than just knowing how to play an instrument or sing. This is the great error that the church has fallen into in recent years. "Worship" in church has more to do with good professional sound than with the presence of God. When in reality it should be more about anointing and bringing God's presence to a location, be it with three chords and a song consisting of one phrase being repeated for 20 minutes or with some grand symphony production and a 100 member choir.

It's amazing to hear the quality of music in the church today; it really is quite good. But, to me, what is more interesting is to note the obvious absence of God's presence in this beautiful music. Not to judge anyone, but just to mention the obvious. Nowadays, the question is, "Can you sing?" not "Are you walking in holiness?" Give me three halfway decent musicians that know how to worship God and we'll make some godly noise. But give me three professional musicians who somehow think that God should be impressed with their technique and talent and I will be a very frustrated man. I want God's presence and He wants worshippers. A true worshipper can please God with a kazoo, not to put aside musical ability or talent, both of which are given by God. It is important to know how to sing and play, but we need to make sure that our focus is on the giver of the gift and not the gift itself. God is looking to your heart, not the speed of your fingers.

We need musicians that live walking in God's presence and through their lives exhibit the power of God. Unfortunately, especially in this area, many men and women have fallen from their places as leaders before actually realizing their potential because of sin in their lives. How many worship leaders or people on the worship team do we know that have fallen into sin while they were part of the worship team. It's almost like a bad joke when we begin to speak of the number of "worshippers" who have fallen. The worship team in a church is the most unstable team as its members are constantly changing. It should not be like this!

The area of worship, especially the leaders, is an area that satan has worked overtime to try and destroy. He knows full well the power of a people that worship and spend time in the presence of God. For this reason, he stops at nothing to try and take out those who lead the people of God into His presence. And when speaking of this generation, he knows all too well, the importance of the

music. It's like our call to battle. So, be prepared to come under attack if this is your area. The attack is coming as well as the victory. Do not be deceived, a battle will ensue. That is why it is not sufficient to only be a good musician you must truly be walking with God in holiness, or you will be the first to fall. Most of the problems that the church suffers as a result of its musicians, a revolving door policy, can be avoided if we stop to consider three key areas in their lives **before** they enter into the ministry: character, gift and anointing.

Character

Character speaks of the integrity and moral quality of an individual and how he acts. Obviously an individual with character will not be compromising his life as a Christian with the practice of sin. Not to say that someone who struggles or perhaps even messes up is not a person of character. I am speaking of someone who lives practicing a sin; a sin that happens frequently and unchecked by the individual; masturbation for instance or certain things done in the context of dating i.e. making out, touching, having sex, things that although we can close our eyes and pretend to be blind until Jesus returns, are happening in our churches and on our worship teams. And this is not character in action, but a dangerous game and risking finding yourself on the wrong side of the pearly gates someday. God will not be mocked, and a sinful people will not be called His.

What you do and how you act will be directly reflected in the opinions that others have of you. Generally what people think of you is a reflection of who you are and how you present yourself. Although one can fake it for a while, nobody can live a lie forever, and the majority of people can spot a poser a mile away; especially when it comes to youth, they can smell a poser before he even opens his mouth. A person of character is transparent in who he is. He allows the walls to come down and others to see in, to see his struggles, and to celebrate his victories. A person of character is not perfect! **NO ONE IS PERFECT!** But, a person of character is honest about his imperfections and seeks the help of others when necessary. The fact that no one is perfect is in no way an excuse to sin. The individual who excuses his sin with the phrase; "Well, no one's perfect" is not a person of character and is more than likely to fall again. No one is perfect and that's reality; a reality that the individual with character fights against. Perfection and holiness are always the mark. But, if one should fall into sin, God can forgive him.

1 John 1:9; If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

God is always working on us and the person of character is not only aware of this, but he embraces this, he looks to change. He looks to be more faithful and humble. He wants to be more like Christ.

A person (musician) of character finds his identity and security in God, not in his gift. How many musicians do we know that are totally wrapped up in their ability to sing or play well? If you were to take away their gift, many of them would cease to be. This is a huge hole that many musicians have fallen into. Put a musician on the bench for a couple of weeks and see if everything about him doesn't change. I've seen musicians practically go into depression for lack of being in the front. They have a real need to be recognized and they find a sense of value and security through the compliments paid to them. Some even get to a point of "fishing" for compliments; "That was really good today wasn't it?" When a musician begins to seek out compliments, you can count that as a red flag; his identity and security are in his ministry and gift, not in the God who put him there. When a musician gets to this point, he ceases to be useful in God's hands because his search for glory begins to be personal other than seeking for God to be glorified. Music is not the beginning or end of anyone's life. God is. God has a plan for the lives of all of his children, especially for those that are part of this generation and God will accomplish His will for you life regardless of whether or not you are on the worship team. Although it may feel as life began when you entered the worship team, it really didn't, but it can end there.

Character looks to God and his glory; it is not self-promoting or self-serving.

Another area that seems to have taken out a lot of musicians is the area of pride. Pride can show its ugly head in many ways, the biggest being in the area of submission. Most of the musicians that I know seem to feel that they have some special line to God and some may. But, when this special line begins to manifest itself in criticisms of the pastor or church leadership, I begin to question to whom this "special line" is connected. How many times have we said or heard it said of the pastors, "They don't understand what true worship is" or "They just won't let the anointing flow" or "They really don't support us or invest in the worship ministry"? I don't know how many complaints like these that I have heard over the ears from various worship people, but if I had a dollar for everyone, I could buy a pretty nice car. And to be honest, being a musician myself, if I had to give back a dollar for every time I said one of these phrases, I probably wouldn't come out much ahead. What is it about us musicians that leads us to believe that we are the central and most important part of the service? To put it plainly, we are prideful and full of ourselves. Ouch!

Let's be honest about these attitudes and complaints, they are nothing more than rebellion. We find ourselves in rebellion at these moments because we are not reflecting the character of a humble heart or submission to our leadership, rather we are criticizing them when we speak openly of what we feel is their lack of knowing what they are doing. This is not the humble heart of a servant for a servant does what is asked of him without complaining. And it is at this point that we need to remind ourselves that as members of a worship team, our job is to

serve. Perhaps we would be better off and less confused if we were to start calling the worship leader “worship server”, for that is really what his role is. He is to serve the pastor in the area of music. Yes he is leading the congregation in, but he is under the authority of the pastor who put him there and in all reality, a servant. The worship server is to serve the wishes of his leader, the pastor, not decide what would be best for the congregation at that very moment.

What happens many times is that a musician wants to be noticed, maybe even feels a need, and begins to show off his talents a bit, talents that God gave him. God will no more use a musician with that type of attitude than float a family of five across the ocean on a boat made of concrete, for this is nothing more than pride in its purest form. I can’t begin to tell of the numerous times that I have seen musicians fighting amongst themselves, in front of the church nonetheless, because someone’s microphone or instrument is louder than theirs. I personally feel sorry for the guys that run the soundboard. They are the least liked of all on the worship team. And for every look of death that is cast their way during the “worship time”, God have mercy on us. I find it very interesting, if not distracting, to watch the faces of those on the worship team, smiling with their lips and casting darts with their eyes. What a farce. Who do we think we are fooling? God? I personally think that all sound people should be taken out for a nice dinner every so often as they are the ones who work the hardest and receive the most abuse in the church with absolutely no recognition for their contribution. Their job goes beyond just turning a few knobs, they have the opportunity to turn the other cheek weekly, and usually during the times when most in the congregation have their eyes closed and are entering into God’s presence. God bless our soundmen.

As I said, I find myself while visiting other churches, looking a lot at the musicians. And to be honest, it is all too common to see a “holy war” taking place between the members of a worship team rather than against the powers and principalities of hell. This I find very sad. These attitudes and petty jealousies have no place on a worship team. These are the very things that impede the move of God during our worship times and impede Jesus from being glorified. If it has been a while since you have felt the presence of God during the worship times in your church, look no further than your worship team. Most of the responsibility lies with them. And I have heard too many worship leaders blaming the people for the lack of God’s presence in the services. This is not an act of character.

A leader of character assumes the blame for all things that do or do not happen underneath his area of responsibility. He does not look to blame.

Besides, blaming the people for the lack of God’s presence in the service is like blaming my dog for a lack of food on my family’s table. It’s not his responsibility. Neither is it the responsibility of your people to bring the presence of God to a service, but yours. So, quit with the poor excuses and find out where Achan has

hidden his treasure on your worship team. I can pretty much promise you that the problem lies within.

God is more interested in the heart of the worshipper than the talent. My friend, wake up to the truth, open your eyes and see the light, there are a lot of musicians out there and there are a lot of musicians better than you. Very few who read this would be able to argue with this and true it is. But that is not what it is all about.

The world is full of musicians, but there are few worshippers.

There are plenty of musicians out there who play great, but few who play with an anointing. If you want to set yourself apart, become a true worshipper; seek to be anointed. Seek to be one of the few! If you plan to be up front ministering, you need to have the heart of a worshipper. This is a basic requirement to be a part of the worship ministry and to lead God's people into His presence. This involves character.

Another area of character to note is as to whether or not a musician is involved in the activities of the church other than those that involve music. Are the musicians there only to play, or are they truly involved in the church? Do they help and participate? The individual who only is present when it involves them being up front singing or playing is not ready to be up front because he isn't in touch with the heartbeat of the church. He doesn't understand the vision of the church, what it is doing, or what he could be doing to help. And in this he disqualifies himself from being a part of any ministry as 1. One is never qualified to lead until he has served and 2. He shows through his lack of involvement, a lack of commitment to the church leadership. He is showing in all honesty a commitment to himself only and what he wants and likes to do. Life is not about what only we like or want to do. And people in leadership or visible positions need to be the first to understand and exemplify this. In order to flow in the worship, the musician needs to understand and be involved in the flow of the church. If you don't know me, it will be very difficult for you to help or minister into my life. It is the same with the church; you need to know it in order to minister to it.

Gifting

God has given to some the gift of being able to play or sing with little or no training. But, let this be said, a small few. Most of us have to practice and practice and practice. And to some, an even smaller few, he has called to be worship leaders. It is important to know how to play or sing as certainly this helps out, but this is not an indication of the calling to be a worship leader. Many

people know how to speak in public, but the majority of them are not called to pastors.

Yet, we cannot dismiss the necessity of musical talent in those who will be a part of the worship team any more than we can ignore the lack of being able to speak clearly in the pulpit. You need to know how to sing, or play, or clap your hands to the rhythm. Imagine the distraction of a singer who doesn't know where she is going or even if she will get there. And be honest, how many of us have seen some poor soul in the front clapping on the wrong beat if on any beat at all? And how many of us have practically fallen over trying not to laugh? This is not to make fun of those who have these difficulties, but to merely point out the fact that if God has called you to something, He will equip you. And if he has not equipped you, perhaps you should consider that perhaps it is not your calling. The attraction to be up front is appealing to many. But, many were not equipped with what is necessary to be up front and thus should not be. What is worse than the "holy war" up front is someone lacking the necessary gifts to be on the team. This is distracting. Cows die everyday, but I do not advise giving one a microphone and putting them up in front of your church to "lead the people into God's presence."

Musicians, be extra careful that during the times of worship, that your heart is on God and not your voice or instrument. How many of us have been caught by the Holy Spirit "showing off"? We have to be always on alert to make sure that our heart is one of worship. You know when you go a little bit off of the path with your voice just to do it or perhaps for the congregation to really notice that you are a little bit out of their league, you know, for the "ooooohhhh"; or musicians, that little extra, just because you can and maybe so someone might take notice. Danger!!! It is really all a question of the heart. King David was a very talented musician, but he was also a worshipper. This involves being sensitive to God at all times and to the moment. How you use your gift and whom you use it for is an issue of character

Anointing

This is probably the hardest area to qualify, but it is not hard to identify. You know from the moment someone starts if there is an anointing or not. Anointing is not something that grows, it either is or it isn't. And because it is something that God gives, we cannot reproduce it in ourselves. Anointing is the result of a life consecrated, set apart, to God. Anointing is the fruit of time spent in God's presence. It is His power and presence manifested through an individual. There is no way to fake it. And a worship leader without an anointing is nothing more than an empty milk jug in the refrigerator, a frustration for whoever grabs it hoping to get something out of it. Anointing is a non-negotiable with your worship team, without it, you have nothing but perhaps a beautiful sound of empty tin

cans. And let me tell you, the sound of an empty tin can satisfies the hunger of no one.

These three areas of character, gifting and anointing are of utmost importance if you want to flow and minister like God wants you to. They are indispensable. Being a musician is like being a tripod with each one of these areas representing a leg. In order to keep standing, you need all three. Yes, you can perhaps balance on only two for a while, but sooner or later, you will fall as many worship team members have before you. Don't follow their path. God has better things planned for you. God has given you the gift of the language of a generation. Use it to influence them in the ways of the Lord. That is you calling.

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23-24)

10. The Prophecies

“One of the most extraordinary characteristics of the harvest will be the youthfulness of the laborers. Teenagers will be the backbone of the revival, and preteens will be some of its greatest evangelists. Young children will cast out demons, heal the sick, raise the dead, and divert raging floods with a word.” (Rick Joyner - MorningStar)

There are a lot of prophecies about this generation: who they are and what they are going to do. So, I've decided to include some of them so that you can see and understand what it is that God is speaking to this generation through His prophets.

THE COMING WORLD-WIDE YOUTH REVIVAL

By Bobby Conner 12-2-99

There is coming a world-wide youth revival, the Spirit of God will release such **“passion”** for the **presence** of the Lord. This coming awakening will sweep across the earth, like a wild fire, nothing will be able to stop, nor stand in the way. These youth will be filled with resolve and vision of the harvest; they will be bound together with cords of love and faith that cannot be broken. They will gather together in mass gatherings, in different areas of the world, in some of these meetings there will be up to half million young people. These meetings will not be organized by man; they will be directed by the Spirit of God. This will be a time of release of such power from the throne of God. Signs and wonders will be happening on a level not experienced in the Church until now. This will be the normal Christian life for these end-time warriors. They will not look like we think they should look, they will not talk like we think they should talk, however the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit will be upon them. In this radical band of believers there will be no racism, boys and girls will share in leadership. There will be a unity that will astound the Body of Christ. Soon it will be evident to all why the enemy has attempted to kill this generation. He has somehow seen this emerging end-time army. They will be willing to **die** for what they believe. It has been hard to get my generation to **live** for what they say they believe in; however this end-time generation will be ready and willing to lay their lives down for the cause of Christ. There will be camps where these youth come together for training and preparation. It will be the wise pastor and people who will now begin to help prepare for the training of these leaders. Do not be afraid to open your homes and Churches to these young people. It is time now to begin to make preparations for their training, and equipping. Many of the leaders in the Church

will now spend most of their time helping train and prepare these coming leaders, they will find it necessary to pour their lives into these youth. These youth will begin to come together this year (2000) and by the year 2002 they will be on the move. Their message will be the words of Micah 3:8 "But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin." (NIV)

The Spirit of God is releasing an urgency in the hearts of the true intercessors to begin to pray for these youth on a new level. None of us can truly finish our course if we have not helped the next generation to accomplish more than we have.

SHEPHERD'S ROD 2001

Bob Jones and Keith Davis

October 9, 2000

ANOINTING FOR THE YOUTH

Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! Thou hast relieved me in my distress; be gracious to me and hear my prayer. O sons of men, how long will my honor become a reproach? {How long} will you love what is worthless and aim at deception? Selah. But know that the LORD has set apart the godly man for himself; the LORD hears when I call to Him. Tremble, and do not sin; meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and trust in the LORD. Many are saying, "Who will show us {any} good?" Lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us, O LORD! Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than when their grain and new wine abound. In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for Thou alone, O LORD, dost make me to dwell in safety. (Psalm 4)

There will be a measurable increase in the anointing falling upon young people. The Lord gave Psalm 4 as an outline for the attributes associated with this outpouring.

The youth are going to begin to convert the shame associated with this generation to honor and glory for the Lord and His anointing. Whenever the reference is made concerning youth, it is denoting those born since the 1973 United States Supreme Court decision of Roe vs Wade. This would include those 28 years of age and under. The Lord is going to lift His countenance upon the youth and allow His face to shine upon them with favor to prepare them for the great work ahead. It will be the role of this present generation to become "fathers" to the younger generation and disciple them in becoming the great army

the Lord desires to use before His return. Both are equally important. There will be no “sidelines” for the days ahead. Everyone will participate in the “game”.

These admonitions outlined in Psalm 4 are promises delegated to the righteous young generation. Conversely, there will also be those who reject the opportunity to walk with the Lord who will also be anointed with increasing measure by the spirit of this world. These two opposing anointings will continue to run concurrently with one another preparing the way for the great end-time battle of light vs darkness. Of course, the opportunity is given to “whosoever will”, however, there will be many who reject this incredible opportunity to walk closely with the Lord and be used mightily by Him.

Bob was awakened at 4:00 a.m. and informed Psalm 4 specifically applied to the youth. Furthermore, he was forewarned of the need for an emphasis to be placed upon the continued preparation of that generation for their high calling.

But know that the LORD has set apart the godly man for himself; the LORD hears when I call to Him. (Psalm 4:3)

In the vision, he saw **large gatherings of young people** whose character and nature was being forged and molded into the very image of Christ, thus imparting His divine nature qualifying them to carry the powerful anointing promised for the days ahead. On the other hand, those rejecting this extraordinary privilege were also increasing in their anointing through the spirit of this world and the depravity that results from a reprobate mind. Psalm 4 is a promise to awaken the youth to increased divine opportunities in the cycle of the Spirit prominently advancing.

The season surrounding the upcoming Day of Pentecost will be a point of demarcation for those identified as this generation of youth. The interval between Atonement and the Day of Pentecost will be utilized for indoctrination and consecration for those things following the release that should take place during the season of heightened spiritual intensity surrounding Pentecost. The first six months will be a preparation for the second. ***Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and trust in the LORD. Many are saying, "Who will show us {any} good?" Lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us, O LORD! (Psalm 4:5-6)***

There will be an increased measure of evangelism among the young as this generation is being turned back to the Lord and prepared for the great harvest. **The prophetic anointing will be a key in the conversion of this unique group. But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you. (1 Cor 14:24-25) A deep love for the prophetic power of God is being cultivated among the young.** When the secrets of the heart are revealed and the thoughts and intents of the heart are proclaimed, they will surely recognize the authenticity of the Word coming to Life and repent giving glory to God.

Generation Yes!

By Bobby Conner and Randall D. Kittle - January 12, 2000

Article 12

**"I will die for my God. I will die for my faith.
It's the least I can do for Christ dying for me."**

— Cassie Bernall

These were the words 16-year-old Cassie Bernall wrote to one of her friends in 1998. How often have we made similar strong declarations, which, fortunately for us, are never tested to see what they are really made of. For Cassie, however, they were tried and tested less than one year later.

When she walked into the library of her suburban high school, around 11:00 on the morning of April 20, 1999, she had little more on her mind than completing her latest English assignment. By the end of that hour, two classmates would storm into the school with guns blazing and kill as many people as they could. With a loaded handgun in his hand, one of these madmen confronted her with the question, "Do you believe in God?" She answered "Yes." She said yes even though she knew it would inflame the gunman and endanger her life. And in the end it was an answer that cost her life. The gunman put the gun to her head and pulled the trigger, ending her young and passionate life.

Modern-Day

Martyr

By any true definition of the word, Cassie was a martyr. According to the dictionary the word "martyr" comes from the Greek "martyria," which means "witness," and refers to someone who refuses, in the face of terror and torture, to deny his or her faith.

Reporting on this tragedy, the *Miami Herald* concluded, "*For Christian youth across the country, Cassie Bernall has become a modern-day martyr*^{1/4}*but her story is one of redemption rather than perfection*^{1/4}*her legacy: believe in yourself.*" They missed the whole point of this tragedy: Cassie had not just learned to believe in herself^{1/4}she had come to believe in something far beyond herself. Earlier on the morning of this tragedy she had handed her friend a note that ended "*P.S. Honestly, I want to live completely for God. It's hard and scary, but totally worth it.*"

Part of the problem is that we have grown to think of martyrs with a "Stained-glass" mentality, not as a teenager who carries a backpack and worries about how much she weighs and if she will pass her finals. The very word martyr congers up thoughts of ancient days and distant lands. When we look at Cassie's "yes" on April 20, 1999, we want to make a memorial or shrine—to make her some special, sanctified saint so we will not be held to the same standard.

Cassie struggled like everyone struggles, but she knew what she had to do to let Christ live in her^{1/4}and she was willing to do it! It's called dying to self, and it has to be done daily. Paul told us that this was a part of the Christian walk when he affirmed **"I die daily"** (1 Corinthians 15:31). Martin Luther King once said *"If a man hasn't discovered something he will die for, he isn't fit to live."* Dying daily means learning to break out of our natural, selfish life. Dying daily is not some warped death-wish that has been Christianized. In fact it is not a negative thing at all. It is the only way of freeing us to live life fully for Christ. Only a person who "dies daily" can truly live each day for the Lord. To understand Cassie's ability to say "yes" to her assailants, we need to look at the daily "yes" she was learning to say day after day, month after month long before that final "yes." Through this she was living life in such a way that she was able to face eternity at any time.

The Yes Generation

God is raising up a whole generation like Cassie. They live life "full-bore" with nothing held back. They are unwilling to do anything superficially. With them it is all or nothing. The Church will be amazed and uncomfortably challenged by this upcoming generation. The selflessness of this next generation is going to cause much of the Church to be discomfited and, unfortunately, some will declare their action too radical.

Many teen-age boys and girls will be stronger in their faith than their parents. They are not going to appease their conscious and excuse their actions by claiming that they can remain silent about Jesus and let their "lifestyle" do the talking. They will boldly speak out the truth about the great love of God to a lost world who doesn't want to hear their message. God has been speaking to this generation over and over again, like He did to Joshua, **"Be strong and courageous!"** (Joshua 1:6).

This end-times generation will live life passionately with an all-or-nothing attitude. Like David they will not run from the battle—but to it! They will be ready and willing to lay their lives down for the cause of Christ; willing to die for what they believe. Our generation didn't find God worth living for, while this next generation will find God worth dying for!

The last generation has been called by many Generation "X," which has led some to refer to this next generation as Generation "Y." This is a sign—for the "Y" stands for YES. They will be able to say yes to the downgrading and mocking questions of the world because they will first give an abandoned yes to God. They will not give a guarded, holding-something-back yes, but a full and hearty yes; the yes of someone who truly believes they have found something worth living for. They will say yes to God with a zeal that amazes older believers and overcomes the world. God is releasing upon this upcoming generation a "passion" for the presence of the Lord. It is this passion that will allow them to be filled with such a resolve.

It will be the wise church leaders who will begin now to help prepare for the training of these leaders. The Spirit of God is releasing an urgency in the hearts of the true intercessors to begin to pray for these youth on a new level. None of us can truly finish our course if we have not helped the next generation to accomplish more than we have. The question for many of us is this "Will we heartily say 'yes' to the Yes Generation?"

Generation Miraculous

Written by:

Evangelist Todd Bentley

This is a prophetic article, much of what I have seen and wrote came out of three months of burning and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

There will be a generation that grows up in the promise land and their destiny is the miraculous. We are crossing the river Jordan and we will take the land. God has promised revival and these are some prophetic insights to where I believe we are and where we are going.

The church in the wilderness, Gen x and y, what is this? I believe that the church in the wilderness speaks of the absence of Gods manifest presence which is the spirit of revival and I believe the promise land of abundance, fruitfulness milk and honey speaks of revival.

I believe that Generation X is a parallel to Joshua and Caleb who tasted of the fruit of the vine and were no longer satisfied with unbelief but wanted the full destiny of God. The church needs revival and in what God has done and is doing in Toronto, Smithton ,Pensacola ,Argentina and many other places is the fruit of the vine to make us hungry and desperate to push past the giants in the land of unbelief religion and a form of Godliness and go for the full land of fruitfulness. When you are in the Spirit of revival and moving with God you will declare like Caleb in Joshua 14:11 As yet I am as strong this day as I was on the day Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, for both going out and coming in.

It was in this move of the river that many Xers were greatly impacted and saved to be hungry for Gods power and not just religion. So many words were spoken that they would be the revival generation and that God would have a great youth movement. There has been a few of this generation X to really abandon themselves completely to God and be a voice of revival but for whatever the reason we only have the first fruit and not a whole generation of radicals, many voices like Nolan Clark Todd Atkinson, Judah smith, Chad Taylor and many, many more I have not named like Elijah there were seven thousand more.

The next generation of youth which they call Y when I was praying into their

destiny and asking God why? He said their purpose is the gospel with power miraculous. Y is Generation miraculous! What X had will come on them double portion and though those of the revival generation may not be in full revival and many of us still remember the desert we will cross the Jordan stir the church out of unbelief and make them hungry for what we tasted. There will be a generation that grows up in Revival, all they will ever know is being raised in the Glory [promised land] and miracles will be supernaturally normal.

We are at Jordan

In Joshua 3:1-4 its says that the children of Israel were lodged {camped} at the Jordan. I believe prophetically that is where we sit. Jordan is the new level where the heavens open and you step in to something fresh. We are at the Jordan we see and have a sense of what's coming and where we are going but how do we get there? Verse three declares this phrase [Go after it} were talking about the arc when it was moving upon the shoulders of the priests they were told to go after it. God is moving us deeper to another level and is calling us to desperation. Now is the time to seek Gods face with fasting and prayer like you haven't done before because he is moving us deeper and he wants us to go after his face not his hand. In verse 4 of this passage the word of God declares you have not gone this way before and where God is taking us in revival we have never been and will never be if we don't go after the arc now.

The New Oil

In Ps 133 it declares that the oil was upon the head of Aaron running down the beard and on to the garments. God is commanding the blessing and I believe that the new oil is about to not just be on the head [leadership] and the rest of the church be entertained but the head and God is putting the oil on the body {garments} the body of Christ will save souls heal the sick, move in apostolic oil and prophesy not just the pastors prophets teachers apostles and evangelists.

What is the new oil and how is it coming?

Fresh oil and new oil are different. Fresh oil is when God re anoints a ministry or gifting but new oil is exactly that, new; new ministries and anointings, God power on the flesh enabling us to do what we can't. There will be revivalists as young as 13 and 14 in the mantles of Jonathan Edwards and Charles Finney. God will release a healing anointing that will be as it was with Peter his shadow healed the sick. The sick will be healed across the nation walking by churches and in there homes as healing services are conducted. We have seen this many times, recently a lady healed at the altar in one of our meetings at quarter to eleven at that same time her daughter called to say at that same moment she was healed of the same condition 60 miles from the services. Another lady was healed of diabetes hundreds of miles from our service and many more.

God will release new preaching anointing music with new song being birthed out of heavenly experiences. The new anointing will cause those ministries that have died for whatever the reason to resurrect and cause there to be a great release of the saints for the work of the ministry. New oil means new wells not just the wells of our fathers but there are well deep wells we have not even dug, new anointings.

Be encouraged all you who have and are laboring fervently. We are crossing the Jordan into a new day. In no way do we forget about all those Moses out there and your faithful training you will see the promise land and God has said that those of the spirit of Joshua and Caleb despite the age in the natural will taste revival too and receive a great inheritance. A revival generation is one of the spirit of Joshua and Caleb lets not be satisfied with the dust of the desert when there is a vine full of the new wine of heaven. The old men will run with the young.

The Emerging Army February 2004

2004-02-25

by Jennifer Miller

For years we have heard the prophetic words over this younger generation. We have labored in the Spirit and traveled to see them come into their place in this vital hour. We've sung about it, we've prayed about it, we've prophesied it and now today before you—they are rising.

All over the earth there is movement of youth and children that are being fascinated by the King of the universe and are rising into a position of spiritual authority. They look like simple children but they are heavy-weights in the Spirit. From North America, to Asia, to Africa, everywhere they are rising. They have one desire—to know their God and to make Him known. They're willing to ask for nations...they're willing to be persecuted... they're willing to cry out all night for their schools and they're willing to take God at his word.

I have reoccurring dreams of a whole underground movement of children revivalists; children being deployed to the nations with young people risking everything for the Gospel. It's so much bigger than we can even imagine. There are over six billion souls on the earth and God desperately wants to break in. **Over half of the earth's population is under the age of 15!**

Who is this great multitude before the throne? Who are those that will be harvested in these last hours? The young— because they are the majority of who is on the earth. We've prayed to the God of the harvest to release laborers and he has heard our cry. He's raising them up; a whole army of children and youth.

A Prophesied Hour Upon a Holy Generation Part 1

by Shawn Bolz

God is doing something amazing in this generation. There is an expansion in the heart of this very generation involving a unique destiny. It is not just that a few people are called in a special way, but the whole generation is burning with purpose

In Isaiah 22, there was a man by the name of Shebna who was in charge of the palace of the King. He was an elder in Israel and he was wrongly using the riches of the palace by stealing for his own gain. This was a serious offense to the Lord because it was such a key position over the treasuries of God. The Lord rebuked him and took him out of his position because of this and appointed a young man, named Eliakim, which means "God of raising." God is "raising" up a generation of Eliakims where many in the church have been like Shebna.

Shebna prostituted his position, using for personal gain the very leadership role that the Lord had appointed him to that was holy. Eliakim was believed to be a young man, maybe not even of the age of an elder yet but he was given the position by the Lord over the treasury of the kingdom. It was demanded of Shebna to give all of his authority over to Eliakim which was a great dishonor to Shebna because of Eliakim's age and the fact that he was from a lesser family. Then the Lord told Eliakim an amazing thing in Isaiah 22:22:

"I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open."

This is the generation that God is raising up right now... a generation with a double portion. It will be a generation that carries a 22 pound heart; a heart that Isaiah 22:22 is written upon, that they can open a door that no man has ever opened to usher in the kingdom age of God! Also a generation that can shut a door to the old forms of religious expression that no longer are relevant; old wineskins, that no man will ever be able to resurrect with any anointing!

Vision of the star falling

Immediately following this experience I saw a star falling, it seemed like the brightest star in the universe. I heard the voice of the Lord internally audibly proclaim out of Isaiah 14:12, "How you have fallen oh morning star, son of the dawn!"

This speaks about Satan falling from his high position in the heavens. The Lord spoke to me and said "the spirit of Herod has fallen from this generation! No longer will the persecution from the enemy be greater than the release of my Spirit in churches, cities, and countries." I remembered Bob Jones' word to our

generation: Just like Herod tried to abort the promised child of Israel, there is a spirit like Herod that has been warring against this generation trying to take out anointed deliverers and his power is no more!

I heard the voice of the Lord; "How you have fallen oh Spirit of Herod." Then I saw a generation looking at this spirit saying "Is this the one who killed so many of us, who tried to abort our purpose? The one who had us trapped in the desert, who overthrew the justice of God in our nations and who brought us into captivity?"

Set the Children Free February 2004

2004-02-25

By Shawn Bolz

Youth Discipleship Ministries Will be Financed This Year

There is going to be a special burden on spiritual Josephs to finance ministries that aren't just a training ground for children and youth, but are a tactical release of real ministry to the Lord. Children's equipping centers and youth intern programs are going to spiritually prosper when they become spiritual boot camps that lead their disciples into real trenches. The Holy Spirit is going to move the hearts of financiers to build that which Heaven is burdened with.

God wants to fascinate young people with miracles and evangelism not entertaining programs.

Shepherd's Rod 2004

October 7, 2003

Bob Jones & Paul Keith Davis

Escalation Among the Young

There will be a marked increase in the grace and anointing upon youth groups and the equipping centers devoted to this segment of the Church. There is a divine grace coming to help escalate spiritual maturity in the development of their character and the utilization of spiritual gifts. Some will actually be launched into ministry at ages ranging from 21 to 25. The Lord will provide mature and seasoned overseers to help cover and protect these ministries allowing time for growth and experience.

It will be a consolidation of the generational mandates being inaugurated in this hour to facilitate a multi-generational--- multi-cultural unity. This day will see a merger of the young and old, rich and poor and a cross-pollination of race, color

and ethnic groups. The true definition of the one new man will begin to come more clearly into focus.

The youth movement that has been prophesied and is presently emerging will not tolerate religious zeal or traditions of man. Their heart will only be captured by Godly passion and the reality of the Lord Jesus Christ living and abiding in His people doing through them the works of the Kingdom. That will likewise be the banner and spiritual standard of all utilized in this expression of Heavenly reality.

"The Lord is NOW Releasing a Divine Commissioning to This Generation" - We've Just Entered Another Season of Transition

By Matt Sorger

Mar 9, 2004

Several years ago while attending a week of revival meetings the Lord moved upon my heart in a profound way for this younger generation. One afternoon I was standing in the foyer of the church when two young people approached me. From outward appearances they looked rough, with their spiked, blue hair and piercings. But when they opened their mouths they were full of love and had the fire of God burning in their hearts. Their passion for God struck me.

After talking with them for a few minutes I turned and walked into the sanctuary and suddenly my heart was rent with the heart of God. All I could do was weep as God's presence swept over me and as the Holy Spirit spoke to me about His plan for this younger generation.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH ARMY

This is a revival generation. There is great destiny about to be unleashed in and through the lives of young people all across the world. This revival will not be limited to one nation. I see God raising up a holy, radical army of young people from among the nations of the world.

God is shaking this younger generation with His presence and power, healing and restoring their hearts, refining them with His holy fire and anointing them to do the works He has destined them to do.

There will be several characteristics that will mark this new youth movement:

- Young people will have a radical passion and zeal for the pure manifested presence and glory of God expressed in a lifestyle of continuous prayer, worship and devotion.
- They will have an uncompromising spirit that will have no inward toleration for sin. They will forsake the pleasures of this world for the greatest pleasure of knowing God. The standard of purity and holiness will be raised up.
- There will be an outpouring of signs, wonders and miracles like they experienced in the early church.
- And they will carry a burden for souls that will mobilize and move the church beyond the four walls of a building out into the highways and byways reaching the lost not just with words, but with the love and real demonstration power of God.

THE OIL WELL FOR 2004: MASS MIRACLES, MASS HARVEST

I recently had a vision of an underground oil well with "2004" written on it. It also had "Mass Miracles" and "Mass Harvest" written on its side. If we continue to press in through prayer, and dig, we will receive a fresh anointing for mass harvest and miracles.

I believe the world's greatest youth revival is upon us. For several years now in America we have been gathering thousands of both old and young alike for massive gatherings of prayer and fasting all across America. The Call, a revolution of prayer and fasting, first gathered 400,000 young people in the mall in Washington, DC, America's capital. Since then The Call has gathered multiplied thousands more all across America in Boston, New York, California, Kansas City, and Texas. The last one was held in 2003 in Texas.

We've just entered another season of transition where the Lord is NOW releasing a divine commissioning to this generation to begin to move forward in the power of the Spirit to see signs, wonders and miracles for the purpose of mass harvest. Revival is upon us! Hearts are being stirred and an army is rising up. Will you be a part of this revival generation? I pray you will hear the call and respond with fullness of heart.

Conclusion

Do we really believe that it is coincidence that God is speaking the same things through so many men and women of God? I doubt it. It is apparently obvious that there is something that God is doing and He does not want to leave us in the dark about it. You don't really have to be that astute to see and understand the obvious. And it is obvious that this generation is special and that God is raising it up. We would do well to pay attention and get on board with what He is doing.

11. The Challenge

The bottom line is this, it really doesn't matter what name you put on this generation, so long as it is not "X". "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." (William Shakespeare, "Romeo and Juliet", Act 2 scene 2) And this generation by any other name would still be as powerful. It is obvious that God has great plans for this generation regardless of the name that you wish to put on it and He is preparing to do something that the world has never seen. This generation is going to make history.

Benjamin, prepare for take off. Your possibilities are huge and your future is bright if you continue to walk with the Lord. I want to encourage and challenge you to spend more time in God's presence. That is the key; the secret to being used by God and seeing His power operating in your life. You have to always be connected to Him. If you unplug your television, it will not work although that could be a blessing. It is the same thing with us as God's children, if you unplug your life from God, it also will not work; at least not in the way that God intended it to. Yeah, you can put your drinks or food on top of an unplugged television and in this way may argue that it still has a purpose, but I, for one, was not born to hold anybody's drinks, nor were you. God Has set you apart to impact the world, and for this, you need to be constantly connected to him. We have been given the awesome privilege to know our God. And for this reason we seek His face, hear His voice and obey His commands. The time has come to put your hands to the plow and not look back.

Benjamin, the future is now and the future is yours!

Leaders, invest in this generation. They are the now as well as the future. But, they need training and direction. Your task is large, but the harvest will also be large and you will see the results of your work. Speak to them about the things that pertain to where they are at: sex before marriage, abortion, homosexuality, masturbation, drugs, alcohol and intimacy with God. Don't be afraid to speak openly with them, they need and want to hear about these things from your mouth. The world is working overtime in these areas already filling their heads with every lie and distortion of the truth. If you are not willing to deal with these issues, your loss will be great as the enemy is merely waiting to lead those under your covering down the wide path. Make a point of knowing whether or not the youth under your covering truly know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Don't deceive yourself into believing that just because they are in the church that they are Christians. That is a huge deception of the devil and we for too long have gone along with it. What a shame it would be to have some who have grown up in our churches go to hell for lack of salvation. Leader, your youth need you and God is counting on you. In your hands is great potential. Use it!

Remember: Israel was saved during a time of hunger in the land in large part due to the efforts of Joseph, his dreams and his hard work, but, the salvation of Israel really happened because of the presence of Benjamin in Egypt. And this great revival that is coming in these last days is going to happen in large part because of the dreams and hard work of today's leaders, but will truly explode only when the "other" comes.

He has already come and his name is Benjamin!

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)