

THE TIMES OF REFRESHING
Overcoming the Fallen Eternity Within
By Paul M Hanssen

There is much debate within and between various religious groups concerning the church in the end times. Some declare a mighty outpouring of the Spirit, while others say that the Holy Ghost is already lifting off the earth and that the time of God's Spirit moving on earth is over. Some say we are heading toward a revival like the world has never seen, while others claim the Bible offers no such promise for the end times.

There are numerous indications of a final awakening and a sweeping move of the Spirit of God in the earth before the Lord takes His bride and overcoming church to the marriage feast of the Lamb.

- The awakening of the virgins - A Kingdom message - Matthew 25:1-13
- The calling of those in the highways and byways - Matthew 22:8-9
- The spirit and power of Elijah restoring all things - Mark 9:12
- The promise of the Spirit outpoured in the last days - Acts 2:17
- The falling of the former and latter rains - Joel 2:23
- The Tabernacle of David rebuilt - Acts 15:16

Then, we are also promised a “*time of refreshing*.” Acts 3:19 is the verse that God gave me as the motto or slogan of Seven Pillars Church over ten years ago. Our motto is **USHERING IN THE TIMES OF REFRESHING**. At that time, I didn't fully understand what that entailed, and I'm still not sure I do, at least to the fullest. But I see clearer now where this is all heading.

*But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. **Repent** ye therefore, and be **converted**, that your sins may be blotted out, when the **times of refreshing** shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until **the times of restitution** of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:18-21)*

There are four things I want to draw from these verses:

- **Repent** = to think differently (to exercise the mind, bending the thoughts in another direction)
- **Be converted** = to revert (turn around again, return to the starting point, back to where it started)
- **Refreshing** = recovery of breath (be filled again with inspiration)
- **Restitution** = restoration (to rebuild, reclaim)

There is rumble and talk among believers about this *time of refreshing*. A time of inspiration, when God breathes into His people the *new-sha-maw* breath of life that He breathed into man in the beginning. The final move of God will be marked by divinely inspired vessels whose breath is fresh and untainted by carnality, self-worship, pride, and ego. Emphasis is made on the refreshing itself, but very little is discussed about the prelude to the refreshing: namely, repentance and conversion.

Before the refreshing breath of God begins to blow and fill the hearts and spirits of those in pursuit of God with prophetic inspiration, repentance and conversion must take place. There is no way around it - dispute it all you want; nothing will change the fact that God is seeking repentant hearts that have reverted to the starting point. Their pursuit is God and His original eternal purpose - to dwell among His people. (2 Corinthians 6:16)

Repentance and conversion have to do with returning to the starting point, back to Eden, the first Zion, *the first stronghold within the fenced garden*. This is returning to the stronghold of Zion, the fenced citadel wherein the Kingdom of God is established, and the King of Glory enters to take His rightful place. The conquest of the stronghold takes place within the *o'lawm* eternity that God placed in the hearts of all His human creation.

1. ZION WITHIN THE HEART OF MAN

Ecclesiastes 3:11 NIV

*He has made everything beautiful in its time. **He has also set eternity in the human heart**; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*

God has set eternity, *o'lawm*, (God's eternal world and Kingdom) with the heart of man. Due to sin overtaking the heart of man, most humans exist with an absolute unawareness of the world within them. A whole vast expanse of eternity resides within **(The Kingdom of God is within you - Luke 17:21)**. Spiritual growth brings us

to an awakening, a conscious awareness, and the ability to see the eternal function of the Kingdom within - the stronghold city of God, the space designed for Him to reside and dwell within us.

Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion. (Psalm 84:5) ESV

The highways speak of a pilgrimage, a journey, a pathway walked and traveled.

This pilgrimage to Zion takes place within the heart, the center, the core of your spirit. Numerous Bible translations have rendered this verse in the same manner: the highways, or pilgrimage, to Zion. Before us is a destiny, Zion, God's Kingdom, the City of God, the eternal Jerusalem; however, what is within you must match your destiny. Your heart is a mirror reflection of your destiny. If the Kingdom of God is your destiny, then the Kingdom must exist within the heart. When you stand before God, what you are and where you are will be the same; your heart will reflect your destiny!

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3)

The Kingdom experience belongs to those whose spirit, heart, and inner self are void of spiritual clutter, idols, images, and have become like an infant child dependent on the Father. Your religion won't fill this space; your doctrines, ideologies, religious rituals, and church affiliations won't either. As a matter of fact, all these things shut the gates of Zion to the King of Glory. We have to empty ourselves of the idols that occupy Zion within. Our hearts must become poor, bankrupt of all human efforts to fill what only God can fill. Hence, unless we become like children, we cannot enter this Kingdom experience.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. (Mark 10:15)

As we proceed further into this lesson, be aware that we are speaking on an inner experience, a transformation within, a change of heart. Unless we become like a child, a newborn, poor, and empty of self-dependency, the Kingdom will not be ours.

2. THE FALLEN STRONGHOLD WITHIN

Since humankind's fall in the Garden of Eden, the eternal Zion within the human spirit has become a stronghold dominated and influenced by **human weaknesses and powers of darkness**. Every person has strongholds in their life that seem impossible to break free from, yes, even you, dear reader.

Many sincere Christians overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil to some degree. They defeat giants in their land and claim spiritual territory as they grow and develop in God. Israel defeated the giants after entering the land of Canaan. Each tribe fought for its assigned portion of inheritance. During this period of Israel's history, the Zion stronghold was never conquered until David came along. This story prophetically shows that even after overcoming many obstacles and "inner giants," there remains unclaimed territory—a stronghold citadel—where a stubborn spirit against God persists. It is here that God wants to establish His Kingdom - within. God desires to occupy eternity in your heart. This is the time of refreshing and the season of restoration - returning to the starting point, Eden.

While we excel in some areas of our spiritual lives, we struggle in others. A stronghold is something that keeps you chained and captive, such as feelings, deeds, actions, thoughts, desires, secret sins, addictions, the past, and various forms of bondage that we often feel too weak or unable to overcome. These are signs of existing unconquered strongholds within us. Typically, we try to hide our strongholds; we run from them, dismiss them, and avoid them, all the while they secretly control and dominate parts of our lives. We also try to hide our stronghold weaknesses from God, which is a very foolish and futile thing to do. For many Christians, failing to deal with their strongholds has led to their downfall.

What is often overlooked is that the strongholds within our inner sanctum are the very places where God desires to establish His Kingdom. This is where the King of Glory wishes to enter through the everlasting gates that shut Him out. The weaknesses and strongholds we avoid the most are actually the places within us where God wants to set His throne. This is Zion—the place He loves the most.

Do you have a stronghold deep within your core? If your answer is "no," then you are not only unaware of yourself but also deceiving yourself.

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high

thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

The church has interpreted this verse to mean that, as believers, we have the power to dismantle the devil's kingdom. Although true, this is not what Paul was referring to in this instance. He speaks of imaginations, thoughts, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of the sovereignty of God. This is not about external forces but about internal struggles within your own spirit and soul. Paul is explaining the stronghold within that must be cast down and brought under control through obedience to Christ and His Kingship.

3. OVERCOMING THE STRONGHOLD THROUGH OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST:

The first Zion Stronghold, Eden, was lost due to disobedience. The return to Zion and the conquering of the stronghold will take place with obedience. What was lost through disobedience will be gained by obedience. What fell into enemy hands through rebellion will be regained by submission to the will and purpose of God. This is what will bring in the "times of refreshing," conversion - to revert back to the starting point!

And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:6)

Obedience is what solidifies the stronghold unto the rightful Master and King:

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Romans 6:16)

Whatever or whomever it is that you submit to in obedience, that is your stronghold- it is to that to whom you are a servant. Can you see the importance of obedience? Never underestimate the power of obeying the voice of the Word and Spirit of God. However, realize that His Word and Spirit will most certainly contradict your will, purpose, ideas, and even your religion. Your thoughts, feelings, and imaginations need to be brought into the obedience of Christ for us to experience the refreshing and restoring of the first Zion, Eden's Paradise - the temple of God!

What needs to be brought into obedience? Imaginations (meaning, discussions [either external or internal], reasoning, dispute, thoughts, and doubts). Jesus

enumerated the 13 layers of wickedness that occupy the stronghold **(Mark 7:21)**. The first on the list was “*evil thoughts*,” which is the same word as “*imagination*.”

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (Romans 1:21)

You know what occupies your stronghold by considering your imaginations. The meaning of the word imagination in the English dictionary is: ***The faculty or action of forming images or concepts of external objects that are not part of the senses, the part of the mind that imagines things, and the ability of the mind to be creative.***

The stronghold is like an “image factory.” It is from this factory that all manner of evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness.

We breathe life into these images through acts of disobedience; in other words, we make the image come alive by doing it, working it out, and making the thoughts become reality through our deeds. This is what Jesus said defiles the man. Not that which is without, but that which comes from within.

Mark 7:21 read

This fortified fallen stronghold within can only be overcome by repentance, conversion, deliverance, and obedience to Christ, the Living Word of God.

If we continue to grow and progress in our spiritual journey, we will eventually face this fortified stronghold within us. The stronghold of our innermost being is the palace-temple from which we rule our own kingdom. We find comfort and security in this place. In times of crisis, we retreat into this dark and secret place while attempting to control our own lives. We create our own secret world within this inner, fallen sanctum. Most often, our inner strongholds are hidden from those closest to us. However, our weaknesses must eventually be confronted with honesty, humility, and obedience. This inner city of the Jebusites is what God wants to inhabit and where He desires to establish His Kingdom, if we prepare a place for Him. The eternity within will be filled with God’s Kingdom, *as it is in heaven*.

NEW YEAR'S EVE - 2025-26

DEPART NOT FROM THE TEMPLE - TEMPLE WORSHIP

By Paul M Hanssen

A few months ago, the Spirit of God spoke to me about the beginning of the coming year. As I pondered what He may require of us as a church in the New Year, the Spirit of God guided me to Acts chapter 2. There, we read about the time Jesus was presented in the temple in Jerusalem. No, it was not the day of His circumcision (as many of us have heard over the years). He was circumcised when He was 8 days old. At that point, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus would still have been in Bethlehem. However, forty days after His birth, according to the Law of Moses, Mary would have had to present herself before the LORD for purification as well as present her firstborn before the LORD in the temple (Leviticus 12, Exodus 13:12-15, Numbers 18:15-16)

*And there was one **Anna (or Hannah), a prophetess**, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; (Luke 2:36)*

Anna waited a long time. She was a *childless widow* waiting for the birth of the man-child, the Son of God. She was a widow to the husband of this world but entangled with and joined to her Master and Lord. She was now old, mature - I can imagine her often thinking, "Will I ever see the fulfillment of what I have been waiting for?"

*And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which **departed not from the temple**, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. (Luke 2:37)*

Anna was a prophetess (an inspired one). She was waiting for the coming of the Messiah, as we are today. Her life revolved around serving in the Temple of God. She did not depart from the temple because she was waiting, expecting, and anticipating the coming of the Messiah. Whether she actually lived in the temple or in the temple precinct is unknown. But either way, she chose to "be in the temple" day and night. She demonstrates a prophetic picture of the bride waiting for the birth of the man-child, Son of God.

Two things stand out about Anna: firstly, she *dwelt in the temple* day and night, with *fasts and prayers*. Departed not means to *remove from, revolt, to desist, desert, depart from, draw away, refrain, and withdraw self*.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. (Hebrews 3:12)

The great temptation in the last days is to *depart from the Living God*. Where does this departure stem from? - from an evil heart within the *o'lawm* eternal world, wherein reside resistance, unbelief, and revolt against God. Anna portrays those filled with divine inspiration who have chosen not to revolt or desert the temple but remain steadfast in waiting and believing in God's promise whilst remaining focused on temple worship.

Secondly, it is noteworthy that fasting and prayer are mentioned in the plural. There are many forms and ways to fast, and prayer is multidimensional as well. Because of what the Spirit of God has shown me, I believe the Lord is calling us to focus on *temple service (worship)* as we gather for times of *fasting and prayer* in 2026.

Can you imagine the commitment in this woman's life? She lived a life of "Temple Worship." Temple worship is the kind of worship that the Father seeks.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23-24)

We are entering this place of *Temple Worship*. The temple is the *o'lawm* world within you, also referred to as the bosom of the Father. Yes, it is in heaven, but you cannot inherit in heaven what has not been experienced and birthed within you on earth. What becomes yours eternally must be yours now. The glory you gain then is won now. The reward that will be yours then is earned by the race you run now. The Kingdom City of God you will enter then will be because you have walked that pilgrimage within your heart now. The eternity within will spring forth from your being and join the eternal existence of the heavenly.

*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the **Spirit reap life everlasting**. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Galatians 6:7-8)*

*And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as **his work shall be**. (Revelation 22:12)*

*For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and **eternal weight of glory**; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are **not seen are eternal**. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)*

*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, **there will your heart be also**. (Matthew 6:19-21)*

Clearly, our eternal destination, reward, and dwelling depend on what we do with the *o'lawm eternal* world within us. I'm not talking about being saved, but instead entering the Kingdom of God. Redemption lays the foundation to eternal inheritance, but what you gain then you must have now.

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. (Isaiah 57:15)

God dwells in eternity beyond space and time. However, He also dwells with the *eternity within* the spirits of the contrite (the crushed) - there He revives the spirit (*roo-akh* - *inspiration, breath*) of the humble and revives the heart (*the o'lawm world*) of the contrite.