

Filling of the Spirit & the Making Disciples

Acts 1:8

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Introduction:

A. **Future Global Event: Second Coming & Millennium**

1. Scripture promises us a new age coming that will be characterized by peace, justice, and righteousness –
2. **Isaiah 2:4 (ESV)** *He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.*
3. Isaiah tells us there will be a renewal of nature, for wild predators will not harm domesticated animals.
4. There will be spiritual renewal unrivaled in history to date.
5. While Pentecost, the Reformation, and Great Awakenings transpired in regions of the world, the coming outpouring of the HS and subsequent harvest will be world-wide in scope – never seen before!
6. **Isaiah 11:9-10 (NIV)** *The earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.*
7. What was promised in the Abrahamic Covenant – blessing to the nations – will be fulfilled during this incredible time!
8. It will happen when Jesus returns to set up His world-wide kingdom!
9. This will truly be a Global age of utopia!

B. **Coming Global Event: Tribulation**

First: God's pathway to the millennium

1. A divine King to rule the nations (Isa 2:4 above!)
2. A new humanity with new hearts and God's Spirit
3. **Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NIV)** *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

4. Thus, people would be enabled and empowered to love God and love people, thus paving the way for a golden era of peace and harmony!

Second: humanity's counterfeit pathways to utopia

1. The world also longs for a golden age of harmony but has turned to solutions and pathways which are manmade counterfeits!
2. **Progressivism** the 18th cent Enlightenment advanced that idea that humanity is progressing by charting its own course to a utopian age.
3. **Nazism** desired to bring this about by developing a superior race.
 - a. Their strategy was to eliminate undesirables & breed a master race
 - b. This was the counterfeit to God's solution of a new heart & indwelling Holy Spirit.
 - c. And they promised a golden 1000 year kingdom as a result!
4. **Marxism** said that if you change social conditions like the class system, it would equalize things, and then all of humanity's problems, pain, and brokenness, would go away.
5. **Communism** agreed and said that an authoritarian state could bring this about. Few saw it would quickly turn into a grisly nightmare of human purges & brutality under Lenin, Stalin (Soviets), & Mao Tse-dong (China)
6. However, progressivism not only advanced under authoritarian regimes it is now in the process of overturning the world's social democracies!
7. In Live Not by Lies, Rob Dreher said the following ...
8. **Soft totalitarianism** – the death of God in the West gave birth to a new civilization devoted to liberating the individual to seek their own pleasures – that's the new utopia!
9. This revolution is even more radical than the Bolshevik revolution, because it negates any binding transcendent order (design rules), such as definitions for marriage, family, or sexual ethics.
10. Not even communists believed that!
11. In this culture the great sin is to stand in the way of the freedom of others who find happiness (utopia, heaven) as they wish!
12. And it is being enforced by the cultural elite: media, education, gov't, and corporations.
13. Those in pursuit of such happiness are cast by the elite as the victims.
14. Those who disagree are publicly demonized as uncaring & unloving oppressors – read, Christians!
15. They are then ostracized and thrown out of social or professional circles, which is why it is called the "cancel culture."

16. Beyond cancel culture, which is reactive, institutions are embedding ideological tests within their systems to weed out dissenters!
17. Within the U of California system, for example, teachers who want to apply for tenure-track positions to affirm their commitment to: equity, diversity, and inclusion – and to have demonstrated it.
18. Loyalty tests to diversity ideology are common in corporate America.
19. **E.g.** Brendan Eich was one of the most important early figures of the internet, but in 2014 he was forced out of leadership of Mozilla, the company he founded, after employees objected to a small donation he made to the 2008 campaign to stop gay marriage in California.
20. Rod Dreher (Live Not by Lies) called this “soft totalitarianism.”
21. This totalitarianism appeals specifically to an internal hunger for harmony, happiness, and a just society. And it masquerades as kindness
22. Right now compliance is less by the state than by elites through public opinion and social media platforms.
23. However, communist China uses surveillance technology to enforce compliance.
24. They have what they call the social credit system.
25. They have used the technology to perfect the police state in ways that Mao and Stalin couldn’t do.
26. In China each person has an electronic profile and every day the gov’t collects this vast amount of data from every single person using the internet. You have to use your phone for your interactions because China is almost completely a cashless society.
27. So, every transaction you make you have to use your smart phone.
28. So, the gov’t computers know when you’ve done something socially positive like going to a communist meeting, but it can also track (GPS) you going to church or who you socialize.
29. The higher your social credit rating the more privileges you get in Chinese society.
30. But the converse is also true – your kids can’t go to college; you can’t travel; you can’t shop in certain places.
31. In fact, if your social credit system is low, your friends and relatives have to cut you off in order for them to protect their own social credit score.
32. This could happen here too!
33. The pathway to utopia for all social theories and religions like Islam, is to coerce or force people to conform for the good and harmony of all.

34. The pathway to utopia for Christians is for God to change the human heart (transplant) and fill it with His Spirit!
35. The growing unrest in the world today, and the coming Tribulation, is over a clash of ideas about how to get us to an era of peace & harmony
36. The conflict over these ideas will be unlike anything the world has seen!
37. **Matthew 24:21 (ESV)** *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.*

C. Current Global Event: Pandemic

1. Emperor Constantine officially recognized Christianity in the 4th cent.
2. Immediately, he **institutionalized** it, forming a professional clergy-laity system, pressing all citizens into the church.
3. Home gatherings were moved into church buildings.
4. This had two negative impacts:
 - a. Ministry was taken from the people & given to professional clergy
 - b. People no longer fed themselves but depended on the clergy
5. The current pandemic has exposed the weakness of this model.
6. **CT article (Mar 25, 2020): Pastors from Europe Tell North America: Get Ready Now – Ed Stetzer**
 - a. **Send Institute** hosted a Zoom call with pastors, church planters and missionaries in Italy and Spain
 - b. **Miquel Castillo**, church planting coordinator for **M4 Europe** **admitted** they hadn’t trained people to spiritually feed themselves
 - c. **Angela Jolley**: “We should disciple people in a way that if Zoom goes down, they will be equipped to lead without you (pastors).”
7. The Scriptures teach us that church leaders are to equip the saints to do this AND also be equipped to MINISTER or make disciples!
8. **Ephesians 4:11-12 (ESV)** *And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,*
9. We have trained people how to **SERVE** in the church, but we haven’t done a good job of training people how to **MINISTER** inside and outside the church. The two aren’t the same.
10. You don’t need apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers to train people how to serve. You need them to train people how to minister and make other disciples!
11. We are not called to make converts but disciples who obey!!

12. **Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)** *Therefore GO and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*
13. We must move back to a small group discipleship model to address the deficiencies of the institutional model, and to prepare for its demise!
14. **Story of Tomislav Kolaković** (Live Not by Lies – Rob Dreher)
 - a. In 1943, a Jesuit Tomislav Poglajen fled his native Croatia one step ahead of the Gestapo and settled in Czechoslovakia.
 - b. To conceal himself from the Nazis, he assumed his Slovak mother's name—Kola**KO**vić—and took up a teaching position in Bratislava.
 - c. Because he had studied the Soviet Union to prepare for missionary work, he believed that the defeat of Nazi totalitarianism could be replaced by the Soviets brand of totalitarianism – communism.
 - d. By the time Kolaković reached Bratislava, it was clear that the Red Army would defeat the Germans in the East.
 - e. In 1944, the Stalin promised the Czechs that after he had driven out the Nazis, he would give the country its independent freedom.
 - f. Knowing this was a lie, Kolaković warned Slovak Christians that Czechoslovakia would be subjugated by the Soviets.
 - g. He then dedicated himself to preparing them for persecution.
 - h. A Belgian, Joseph Cardijn, had started a lay discipleship movement called the Young Christian Workers.
 - i. Inspired, Kolaković also established cells of faithful young Christians who came together for prayer, study, and fellowship.
 - j. He also trained his young followers in how to work secretly, and to withstand interrogation that he said would surely come.
 - k. In 1946, Kolaković was deported and 2 years later (1948) the Soviet communists seized power, just as he had predicted.
 - l. Within several years, most of those who had been disciplined were imprisoned and the institutional church brutalized into submission.
 - m. But when they emerged from prison in the 1960's they began to build the underground church, as their spiritual father taught them.
 - n. This all ended in a democratic Czechoslovakia.
15. We are in a Kolaković moment in history!
16. **It's time to prepare the church by discipling it to make disciples!**
17. **In other words, you need to BE disciplined in order to make disciples!**
18. Church history teaches us that we have to have HS strategies for that.
19. **CR is a discipleship movement employing the ancient paths!**

- a. We have a robust discipleship pathway called The Way
- b. Phone Apps

D. **Filling of the Spirit for making disciples**

1. You say, "But that's not what I am good at or gifted at."
2. That's a key reason you need the empowerment of the Spirit!
3. **Acts 1:8 (NIV)** *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*
4. Obedience trumps "gifting," because the Spirit will fill you for whatever you will need to make disciples!
5. E.g. Fran's inadequacy about discipling ministry.
6. Following are some purposes for which we will need fresh fillings of the Spirit as we make disciples.

First: filling for boldness

1. Peter and John were arrested and brought to stand trial before Annas the High Priest & the entire Sanhedrin court
2. Annas, the High Priest, demanded by what name Peter had performed the miracle on the lame beggar
3. **Acts 4:8, 13 (NIV)** *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people ...¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John ... they were astonished*
4. One thing they got through the filling of the HS was courage!
5. Upon release, Peter & John reported to the church what had happened
6. The Church then raised their voices together in unison prayer ...
7. **Acts 4:29 (NIV)** *Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.*
8. And God hear their prayer for boldness by filling them with the HS!
9. **Acts 4:31 (ESV)** *And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.*
10. The Church will not only need this in the coming days – it needs it now!
11. Many have already fallen away from the faith because of social pressure

Second: filling for a message

1. When Peter and John stood before the Sanhedrin, they not only received boldness from the filling of the HS, they received the words to speak in front of these intellectual and educated leaders.

2. **Acts 4:8, 13 (NIV)** *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people ... ¹³ When they saw ... that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished ...*
3. This is precisely what Jesus had promised them!
4. **Matthew 10:19-20 (NIV)** *But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, ²⁰ for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.*
5. They got the very WORDS they were to speak! (cf. Acts 6:10)
6. But it's not only needed in persecution, it's needed when you are evangelizing and discipling people! The HS gives you incredible answers

Third: filling for comfort

1. When you engage in the Great Commission, you will experience great disappointments and sometimes even pain.
2. At the end of Acts we see Paul in a Roman prison
3. From prison he sent a letter to Philemon, which included greetings.
4. **Philemon 1:23-24 (NIV)** *Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. ²⁴ And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.*
5. Paul was released from prison but just a few years later, he was rearrested and imprisoned in Rome, where he was finally executed.
6. Just before his martyrdom, he wrote a letter to Timothy. In it he mentioned people who had abandoned him.
7. **2 Timothy 1:15 (NIV)** *You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.*
8. But even more painful was the loss of a close friend and colleague
9. **2 Timothy 4:10, 16-17 (NIV)** *Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me ¹⁶ At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me.*
10. Earlier in his letter to the church at Corinth Paul had this to say about the severity of his afflictions ...
11. **2 Corinthians 1:8 (NIV)** *We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life.*
12. Yet Paul was able to say that he was filled with comfort!

13. **2 Corinthians 7:4 (ESV)** *I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy.*
14. Comfort combines encouragement with alleviation of grief
15. Just like you can be filled by the Spirit so you have joy, love, hope, and boldness, so too you can be filled with the HS for comfort!
16. The Early Church experienced it during persecution!
17. **Acts 9:31 (ESV)** *So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.*

Fourth: filling for miraculous works

1. When the Hellenist Jews complained against the Hebraic Jews that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.
2. The apostles instructed them to choose 7 men full of known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom to resolve this issue.
3. One man chosen was Stephen, who ministered powerfully in peaching with accompanying signs and wonders.
4. **Acts 6:8 (NIV)** *Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.*
5. Philip, another of the seven chosen deacons, also evangelized powerfully with accompanying signs and wonders, so that it resulted in the Samaritans coming to Christ! (Acts 8:4-14)

Fifth: filling for martyrdom

1. Stephen's ministry and message were being greatly opposed. When arrested they falsely accused him of blasphemy against Moses & God.
2. When asked if the charges were true, Stephen launched into a Spirit-empowered sermon, ending with a charge of his own – that they were stiff-necked who always resisted the HS as their fathers had done.
3. When the Sanhedrin heard these things, they were enraged and ground their teeth at him! Look what happened next ...
4. **Acts 7:55-56 (ESV)** *But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.*

5. Jesus sat down at the right hand of God when He finished His earthly work, but here He gets up from the throne to welcome the first Christian martyr (though OT prophets were also martyred)!
6. And Jesus filled Him with the Spirit so that he could see into heaven and be encouraged to stand strong to the end!

Conclusion

1. This is NOT a false alarm!
2. However, mankind does not have the last say on the matter!
3. **Psalm 2:1-6 (ESV)** *Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, ³ "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." ⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. ⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, ⁶ "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."*
4. The millennial reign of the divine Davidic King over the earth will happen
5. And before that we're promised a 2nd harvest and 2nd HS outpouring!
6. **Acts 2:16-20 (NIV)** *THIS is what was spoken by the prophet Joel ... I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great & glorious day of the Lord.*
7. This is an End Times event, as seen by the signs!
8. This major outpouring of God's HS will result in the greatest harvest yet!
9. With the recent explosion of population in the earth, a global revival could easily produce more Christians on the planet than are in heaven!
10. **Revelation 7:9, 13-14 (NIV)** *Before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people & language, standing before the throne ... They were wearing white robes ... ¹³ Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" ¹⁴ I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*
11. Don't you want to have a part in this harvest? You can!