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TEXTBOOK (ACADEMIC VERSION)

Apostolic Ministry

COURSE: APOSTOLIC MINISTRY (AT103)

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APOSTOLIC MINISTRY



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CHAPTER 1

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

The Purpose of God

The plan and purpose of God is not merely to save as many people as possible and have them wait around to go to heaven. This is a popular Christian misconception, but it is not the plan of God. The purpose of God, through His church, is to reveal His glory over all the earth, as it says in Psalm 72:19: "Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory." It is the responsibility of the church to completely fulfill this task. The church in its present condition won't do this, but the church in the new apostolic reformation will do it. God won't be satisfied with isolated pockets of His glory filling church buildings in certain sections of town. His glory must fill the earth.

In order to understand apostolic ministry, there must first be an understanding of these two key Scriptures: Genesis 1:26 and Matthew 28:19, 20. In Genesis 1:28 God told Adam to fill the earth and subdue it, and to take dominion over every living thing on the earth, sea, and in the air:

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

And in Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus tells His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey everything. Basically, these

two Scriptures mean the same, which is for the church to go and take over, make disciples of all nations, rule other nations by God's standard—take dominion.

Some Christians have a hard time believing that the church will take dominion. However, every time we say the word "Lord," we proclaim His authority over every realm. The purpose of God is the purpose of His church on earth, which is to take dominion and authority over all power and principalities.

Adam

It was always God's plan to take dominion over the earth. God gave Adam that command when he was put on earth, but he failed. Adam was told to be fruitful and multiply and to subdue, and then he would be blessed.

Adam was to subdue what was in the garden, and also what was outside the garden. He was supposed to subdue and take authority over everything. He was to tame it, train it, change it, convert it; whatever was to be done in the way of taking dominion, he was to do so the garden would grow. Adam never took dominion inside the garden, so he certainly could not subdue what was outside of it.

When Eve had the dialog with the serpent (Gen. 3:1-7) in the garden and ate of the tree, Adam was right there with her. He could have said to Eve, "Hey, don't eat that." Or he could have said to the serpent, "Get out of here, now." Though Eve was deceived, it was Adam who missed the mark. He did not fulfill his purpose and responsibility. Adam had authority over the serpent (Gen. 1:19, 20), but failed to take dominion over the situation.

When the Lord told Joshua "I will give you every place where you set your foot" (Josh. 1:2-3 NIV), what he was saying was simply an extension of what God told Adam in Genesis 1:26, which is to go and bring a new thing to the nations of the world, and fill them with the glory of God. And what God told Adam and Joshua and the others in the Old Testament is the same thing that we see Jesus saying in Matthew 28:18-20 which is what we call the Great Commission. Nothing has changed from the Old Testament to the New Testament. God still wants His glory to fill the earth, and He still wants it to be done through His people.

Jesus is over all rulers, authorities, powers, and principalities (1 Pet. 3:22). If He has authority over all those, then so do we; we have authority over all politics, wealth, violence, etc. The problem in America is we'd rather claim dominion than work for it. The church in America is soft. In fact, much of the American church doesn't even know that it is in a war, and that every Christian has been commanded to take part in it (Rev. 19:19). While the church was sitting around claiming victory, the enemy entered the sanctuary and took down God's standards and replaced them with his own. Psalms 74:3-4 says, "Turn your steps toward these everlasting ruins, all this destruction the enemy has brought on the sanctuary. Your foes roared in the place where you met with us; they set up their standards as signs." The enemy has caused this damage subtly; he did not do it by bringing his full army against us in an all-out battle—he didn't have to.

Waiting for Jesus

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Col. 1:19-20 (NIV)

The most common interpretation of this Scripture is that Jesus is going to come back; and when He does, He will reconcile all things to Himself. What's happened is that the church says, "Well, our role is to just wait till Jesus comes. That is our function. Because when He comes, He is going to straighten this mess out (which is true), and He will eliminate all the evil (which is true), and He will rule and reign (which is true). He will reconcile all things in heavenly and earthly places (which is true). Therefore, our role is to wait until He comes." Most of what is said above is true; the part that is not true is for us to sit around like some dead weight and wait for Jesus to arrive.

The concept of waiting around till Jesus comes is hurting the growth and development of the church, and it is keeping the church from its purpose. This purpose of reconciling all things on earth and in heaven is to take what is our inheritance, now, while we are still alive and on the earth.

Jesus never said, "Wait till I come back," or "Wait till I come and then

take over.” There is only one time that Jesus said to wait, and that was in Acts 1:4 when He said, “wait for the gift my Father promised,” which referred to waiting for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus used a synonym in Luke 19:12-13 when He said, “A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, **occupy** till I come” (KJV). When Jesus said “occupy till I come” in Luke 19:13, He was saying to take dominion, subdue the land, and bring the Word to a lost world.

That word “occupy” is a military and economic word, or a word having to do with business. “Occupy,” as a business term, means to take over or make the biggest profits. “Occupy,” in military terms speaks of territory that has been fought for and won in battle and is now under Marshal Law or military law. Jesus was advising His apostles to conduct warfare and to occupy cities, territories, and nations.

During Marshal Law or military law, whatever the military general says is the law of the land. During hurricane Hugo, in Charleston, South Carolina, the mayor and the chief of police went on TV and declared Marshal Law. They warned anyone who was thinking of breaking the law of what it meant to be under Marshal Law; it meant that a looter had no legal rights and could be shot on the spot. The Marines and the Army were called in to guard the city.

Judea was under Marshal Law during the time of Jesus. Pontius Pilate was the Apostle General of Judea. “General” meant he was the leader of the military; “apostle” meant he was the authority. He was the totality of the law, and all rule and authority of Judea was under him.

In the Fullness of Time

In Ephesians 1:10, Paul is not saying that it is when we die that we receive our inheritance: “To be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.” He is talking about appropriating our inheritance now in this life by reconciling all things in heaven and earth, and having all things come under His feet. When every ruler, authority, power, principality, and all wickedness in high places is under His feet, it is under our feet. We are the body, and as the body,

all things are under us, for we are seated with him in heavenly places, far above every ruler, authority, power, principality, and all wickedness in high places.

Old Testament Prophecies fulfilled

Every generation, for the last two thousand years, has felt that Jesus is coming at any moment, and every generation has lived in the expectancy of His coming which is based on us fulfilling what He has revealed to us. Jesus is being held back from coming again until there is a corporate expression, a corporate bride, and a bride without spot or blemish. This is made plain in Acts 3:21. Jesus cannot come again until everything that was promised through the Old Testament has been fulfilled: "He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets."

Prophecies Not Yet Fulfilled

Jesus is held back from coming because it is not yet time; because all things that the prophets have said in the Old Testament have not yet been fulfilled. When all that the prophets have said, revealed, understood, and are acted upon, then we will see His coming. He will come like a thief in the night, and we will be totally surprised.

The apostles preached out of the Old Testament and primarily out of the books of the prophets. They taught the mystery in the Old Testament was Christ and Christ in the church. There is a great deal in the books of the prophets that have to be fulfilled. Until these things are witnessed on the earth (the visions in Zechariah and Ezekiel, etc.), we are not going to witness the fullness of His coming.

Inherit While Alive

In Ephesians 1:18 it says: "The eyes of your understanding may be enlightened that you may know the hope of His calling and what the riches of His glory of His inheritance is in the saints." All the saints have an inheritance, and we don't have to die before we get our inheritance. We get it while we are still living; it is the hope of our calling.

Many Christians are emotionally sick and have no hope because they have convinced themselves that they are not called to minister. We need to understand that every one of us is called to ministry; if it is not in a pulpit, it is certainly in the marketplace of the secular world. You may have a secular job, but that is your ministry. Your employer pays your salary so you can have a pay check and carry out the ministry to which God has called you. Your ministry may be as a car salesman, doctor, lawyer, or engineer. Why is it that we have such an overly religious view of ministry?

We have to ask ourselves, is reconciling all things important to the return of Christ? Yes, when Christ comes again, all things in heaven and earth will be reconciled. To reconcile all things is our inheritance in Christ. Adam was told to take dominion; Joshua was told to take dominion; and Jesus told us to take dominion. Therefore, our task ought to be our Father's business of taking dominion and reconciling all things.

A Subtle Shift

We are in a subtle shift of church leadership which is going on around the world. It is in the way leaders think of ministry, how they view it and how they function in it. This shift in thinking is called the Apostolic Reformation, and it has to do with the fact that we have the leadership, power, anointing, strategy, etc. to take dominion and take our inheritance.

The church is undergoing rapid change. If you're doing church the same way you did it ten years ago, you're already caught up in yesterday's movement and trapped in a religious system. Although God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, He is a God of change (direction, plans, etc.). Ministers' manuals can't lead us in the change that is happening in our day. Romans 8:14 says that those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. God is leading this movement. If God didn't change (direction, plans, etc.), there would be no need to be led.

The Apostolic Movement Is an Old Thing

The apostolic movement may be new to many, but it's not really a new thing. It is the restoration of a very old thing—the church. The apostolic

movement is bringing God's government to the church. It is the catalyst to take the church to its place of dominance. It will establish the King's domain and the kingdom of God on earth.

According to *Webster's Dictionary*, to *restore* means to "bring back into existence or use; to bring back to the original condition; to put (someone) back in prior position." Restoration simply means the act of restoring. This being the case, we need to take action to see that the apostolic ministry is brought back into existence. I believe that there are a few key things that we will see restored through apostolic ministry. First, the relationship between men, women, and the family and next will be the establishment of God's patriarchal pattern of government. Then we will see order come to the other ministries of the church such as missions, finances, translocal ministry and the structures that support these ministries and the church.

The Power to Be a Witness

Jesus said in Acts 1:5-8:

For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 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." (NIV)

This Scripture, which says that we are witnesses for the Lord is a prophetic proclamation of future events, as are the passages in Joshua 1: 2-3, Genesis 1:26, and Matthew 28:19-20, all of which speak of dominion and taking our inheritance in Christ.

Jesus tells us that we are going to be baptized in the Holy Ghost, and in Acts 1:8 He tells that we are going to receive power when we are baptized with the Holy Ghost which will enable us to be His witnesses in our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, which represents our locality, city, region, nation and other nations.

Jesus speaks in Matthew 28:18-19: "All authority in heaven and on