



2023

ARISE AND SHINE

PRAYER GUIDE

ISAIAH 60:1-2

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and
the glory of the LORD rises upon you."

Arise and Shine

Pray 21 Days in 2023
January 9-29, 2023

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.
Revelation 1:5b-6

Thank you for choosing to participate in this Pray 21 Days prayer focus as we move forward into the new year, 2023. God is at work establishing His ekklesia for the days ahead. As you read the scriptures and entries for each day, pray that the Spirit of God would awaken your spirit to receive the revelation He has for you. May you be strengthened, encouraged, awakened, and established in His call and purposes for you. May the Spirit of wisdom and revelation rest on you as you seek Him.

Blessings,

Sylvia Neusch

Read: Gen. 1:27-28

It is important to know that God had a specific intention and desire in the creation of mankind. This desire is first revealed in Genesis 1, but then weaves its way through scripture. His original intent was that a people created in His image, and out of relationship with Him, would then be fruitful, ruling and subduing the earth. Both male and female were created in His image, each representing aspects of His God nature and image. In His design, male and female would come together as “one flesh”, increasing in number to then populate and fill the earth.

The Hebrew word *kabas* in this passage is the word subdue, meaning *to subject, force, keep under, and bring into bondage*. It is clear God was wanting to partner with a people who would act to carry out His will and desires. From the beginning, God was empowering His created people to have a significant role in the earth. The fact that *subdue* is by definition a forceful word implies that there would be *forces* to bring into subjection. Nature, and the very elements of the earth were surely part of what they must subdue, but the Creator knew there would be more than this. Though man had not yet fallen into sin, God knew in His infinite wisdom that forces of evil would one day be opposed to Him and His sons and daughters. Ruling and subduing the earth would one day take on a deeper meaning for the children of God.

Pray: Thank God today that He is an empowering God and has given you significant roles of responsibility in His kingdom. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the things He would have you subdue in your arenas of influence. Pray for His grace and wisdom in how you can implement His plans.

Read: Ex. 19:5-6

Part of the thread of God's story of intention and purpose for His family can be found in this Exodus passage. Here, God reveals to Moses His destiny and plan for Israel. It was His desire from the very beginning to have a people who could approach Him and His throne to partner with Him in fulfilling His will on the earth. These people would function in a priestly way, not only intimately worshiping and connecting with Him, but reflecting and representing Him before the peoples of the earth.

God's use of the phrase *"you will be for me a kingdom of priests"* hints that one day we would no longer need a mediator. God reveals that He was not looking for just one or two who would function in this way, but He was desiring a nation of people who would step into their priestly role with Him. God saw these people as His treasured possession. These priestly people would love Him and release His dominion and rule to the earth.

Once again, we can see God's heart to empower and partner with His people. Yet the enemy has sought to malign and distort the character of God to us, often implying that He is controlling, uninvolved, distant, and unapproachable. Seeing God's original intent and plan for us, His people, removes the derogatory lies the enemy speaks and replaces them with the wonderful truth that God is altogether loving, intentional and empowering towards us.

Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any lies you may have believed about God's nature and character that have kept you from fully embracing His call on your life. If He reveals any lies, repent of partnering with those beliefs then ask Holy Spirit to reveal the truth. Ask Him for grace and greater understanding today to step into your priestly role with Him.

JANUARY 11

Read: Ex. 19:10-11 & Ex. 20:18-21

The people remained at a distance. These words are surely some of the most poignant in the recounting of this era in history. As God longed for a people who would come near to Him, the people rejected His offer out of fear, and Moses and the priests became the representatives of the people before God. Even though the people had chosen the wrong path, God still chose to protect and cover them by selecting Aaron and his sons to function as priests. The priests would represent the people before God, offering sacrifices and offerings according to the law.

Though we are now under the New Covenant because of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God still longs for a people who will draw near to Him. The barriers have been removed and the way made clear for us to enter His presence in full assurance of faith. The enemy's opposition towards us has always been about separating the sons and daughters of God from their Father. Each time we choose intimacy and moving toward the Father we defy the divisive plans of the enemy, bringing joy to the Father's heart.

Pray: Meditate today on the price God has paid for you to be able to draw near to Him. Sit with Him, enjoying His nearness, then ask what is on His heart today. Pray or act in accordance with the things He shares with you.

Read: I Sam. 16:7

Years had passed, and the priesthood remained that God set in place after the people withdrew. Then, a man named David came on the scene. His life was unique and full of interesting contrasts. He was both a shepherd and a king, a warrior and a worshiper. But God saw something in David that pleased Him, and He anointed Him to be King.

After Saul's failure, Samuel prophesied that his kingdom would not endure. He then says, "*the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart*" referring to David. What was it about David that captured God's heart and attention? A read through the Psalms unveils to us a man who passionately pursued intimacy with God. He was real and raw in revealing his emotions, discouragements, failures, and questions before God. In his writings, he usually moved to a place of worship, even in some of his darkest moments. Though David was not of the priestly tribe of Levi, he functioned as a priest in many ways, but not just a priest...a *kingly* priest. It was as if David lived outside of his time, stepping into the role of the royal priesthood that God longed to see.

What drove King David to pursue God's presence and step into the priestly role? David undoubtedly wanted to be near God and really know Him. Seeing that the priests were the ones who could go near the presence of God must have caused David to long to step into that place himself. David continued to pursue God with all His heart and God honored that pursuit by granting David favor and intimacy with Him.

Pray: Renew your commitment today to pursue God with all your heart. Take some time and bring to Him the struggles that you are facing, then purposefully end your time with praise and thanksgiving.

Read: II Sam. 6:12-23

One of the things we remember most about David was how he longed to have the Presence of God in the City of David. The ark of the LORD had been at Obed-Edom's house for three months bringing great blessing. David knew he must bring the ark to the City of David, so he made the journey wearing a linen ephod, a priestly garment. As they returned with the ark, all of Israel celebrated with shouts and trumpets, and David danced before the LORD with all his might. Then, David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, also a priestly task.

David walked in an uncompromising reverence for God that allowed him to worship and dance before Him without the fear of man. He truly gave God his all and didn't concern himself with what others would think. Michal, his wife, was embarrassed by his passionate display however, and berated him because of it. David wasn't moved though, and saw things through a different lens stating, *"I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes."* (2 Sam. 6:22a).

Michal judged her husband's extravagant worship and then we see that she remained barren for the rest of her life. She missed the moment by her false judgments and preconceived ideas of what was appropriate before God and man. David, on the other hand, continued to walk in increased favor and anointing. We often wonder how we can walk in increased favor and anointing with God in our own lives. The life of King David holds some significant keys for us as we grow in our journey.

Pray: Reflect today on where you are in your own pursuit of God's presence. Repent of any preconceived ideas or judgments that have kept you from giving Him your all in abandoned worship. Pray today that you would have a heart *"after God's own heart"*.

Read: Esther 4:14-17

The book of Esther also holds within its pages another type and reflection of the royal priesthood. Esther's cousin Mordecai points Esther to the significance of her royal position. He helped lead her to see that her position carried with it a Divine purpose that would require great courage to fulfill. Esther found herself strategically positioned to be a go-between for the people of Israel and her husband, the king, in a similar way that the priest was a go-between for God and His people.

Esther had to come to the end of herself to be willing to step into the risky role her cousin Mordecai was asking of her. It had been thirty days since she had been called into the king's inner court. The penalty for appearing without being called, unless the king extended his gold scepter, was death. Esther's acceptance of her assignment is revealed in her words, "*If I perish, I perish.*"

Esther's life reflects one of the keys for overcoming found in Revelation 12:11b, "*they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death ...*" It is noteworthy to see that overcoming is often preceded by laying down one's life, just as Esther did. **Part of learning to reign with Christ is learning how to overcome and the willingness to lay down one's life for His kingdom.**

Pray: Is there an area of your life that you have had to lay down for the sake of the kingdom? Pray today receiving grace for wisdom to discern how to navigate situations that require courage and sacrifice. Renew your commitment today to seek first the kingdom of God.

Read: Esther 9:29-32

The last week of writings has been about laying a foundation and uncovering the thread of God's heart and plan for a kingdom of priests to arise. We have had somewhat of an understanding of what our priestly function might look like. We know that it involves a life of relational intimacy with God and stepping into a place to represent Him to the earth. But what does the *role of the royal priesthood* look like?

The book of Esther has some clues for us, showing us that it is a chosen and consecrated life, one commissioned and set in place by God, and a life that is willing to be laid down for the sake of the kingdom. However, there is another aspect as we look at chapter nine of the book of Esther. Because she had stepped into her God ordained destiny of being royalty, Esther was now able to make royal decrees along with her cousin Mordecai who became second in rank to King Xerxes.

A decree can be defined as *an official order issued by a legal authority*. This was no small thing as it could only be released by those in the highest positions of authority. We have been seated with Christ in Heavenly places and now operate from a place of great authority given to us by Christ. Part of our role as the royal priesthood is to make decrees. To decree is to issue an authoritative command based on what the Spirit of God is saying. We come into agreement with Heaven, releasing powerful decrees that will shift atmospheres, and loose the authority of Jesus Christ into circumstances that need to change and come into alignment.

Pray: If you are a believer, thank God today for your royal identity in Him. Today, practice releasing some decrees that come in line with scripture and what the Spirit of God is saying. Some examples are:

- *I decree that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Hab. 2:14)*
- *I decree that every nation of the earth will experience a great harvest of souls.*

Read: Isa. 60:1-2

We don't often think of what it would have been like to live in a time of great darkness. Though our world situation can often seem bleak now, it would seem as nothing compared to the world before Christ was born. Jesus Christ was and is the Light of the World. Though Isaiah was prophesying to the people of Israel in Isaiah 60, the words remain true and prophetic for us as well. Our Light has come, and now His glory rises upon us, His sons and daughters.

Isaiah 60 is a significant wake up call for the people of God. **Just as a person rises from their sleep, the Church is awakening and rising from her lethargy to first know and believe who the Father says we are. Secondly, the Church is awakening to God's specific destiny and call that He set in place from the very beginning.** The world is in desperate need of His light, and now we are to reflect His nature of light to them. We are here for a purpose. We are royal and priestly for a purpose.

We are not to be overcome by the darkness, but instead, we are to overcome the darkness by the light and glory of God that we carry. In the natural, we lie down and sleep when it is dark, but when the light comes, then we rise. The Church is learning just how we are to rise and carry His light, and what it looks like to steward it well. We have often forgotten that light is exponentially more powerful than darkness. One little light in a vast darkness can change everything. How much more the supernatural glory and light of Christ that we carry.

Pray: Thank the Father today that His glory and light rises upon you. Ask Him for specific ways that you can reflect and be light in your arena and areas of influence. Ask the Holy Spirit to increase your revelation and understanding of what it means to bear His glory and light to the world around you.

JANUARY 17

Read: Isa. 60:3-4

As believers, the glory and light of God that we carry is meant to be attractive. When we truly reflect His light, many will be drawn to seek it out for themselves. The ways of the kingdom of God produce life and light and the world is hungry for it, even if they don't yet understand.

The prophet Isaiah tells us to "*Lift up your eyes and look about you.*" Many times, we forget that we are carrying a valuable commodity that is so greatly needed. **Our days need to be shadowed with this reality; we are on mission from Heaven as bearers of His light.** We need discerning eyes to see where that light needs to go and how best to release it so that thick darkness vanishes.

In Matthew 5:14 Jesus tells us, "*You are the light of the world*". He had formally called Himself the Light of the World, and now he shares that we are the light. He goes on to share that we don't put a light under a bowl, but we put it on a stand. His message is clear; our light is meant to be seen and bring needed relief from darkness. When we truly reflect and release our light, it brings glory to our Father in Heaven.

Pray: Spend some time today thinking about your role as a *light bearer* for the kingdom of God. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you discerning eyes so that you might see where your light needs to shine. Repent (change your mind) if you have often kept your light under a bowl and begin to look for ways and places that you can put it on a stand.

Read: Isa. 60:5-6

God is leading us, His people, to learn how to access His supernatural economy, one that is obtained by faith and trust in Him as our good Father. He doesn't want us to just *get by*, He wants us to flourish.

"The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God..." (Ps.92:12-13)

The word for *flourish* here is the Hebrew word, *parah*, meaning "to break forth as abud, bloom; generally, to spread; specifically, to fly (as extending the wings); figuratively, to flourish. When we flourish, we are not stagnant and there is life and movement. True flourishing is linked with God's favor as is seen in Isaiah 60. Though *thick darkness* is over the peoples, God's light and glory is rising upon His sons and daughters.

There is a supernatural realm of favor, blessing, and glory that we are just beginning to understand and tap into as the sons and daughters of God. Our Father can cause us to thrive and flourish even amid lack and famine. **But we must understand, His glory and favor, in us and on us, is not just for us to enjoy, but is for the benefit of others around us.**

When man first sinned and *fell short of the glory*, he gave up his place of influence. When we put our faith in Jesus Christ who was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead, He restored us to our place of glory, and with it our influence and favor. His goodness makes us radiant and our hearts full of joy.

Pray: Is there an area of your life where you feel you are just getting by instead of flourishing? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what mindsets might need to change so that you can embrace His abundance and truly flourish. Ask the Father for opportunities to share with someone out of the overflow of what He has done in you. Thank Him that His glory rises upon you.

Read: Joshua 5:9

We are in an exciting season of advancement to step into new territory and take new land for the kingdom. The feeling of movement and momentum is unmistakably all around us. But, for some, God is issuing a persistent instruction, *“Take new land, but first be healed.”* It can feel frustrating to be finally experiencing forward movement only to be forced to take time to focus on healing. Yet, God in His wisdom sees the beginning from the end and loves us too much to send us damaged and broken into our next season.

The children of Israel experienced this in Joshua 5 when God ordered the circumcising of all the Israelite men. God was doing something far beyond mere circumcision, though. Many of the Israelites bore the stigma and disgrace of those who were once enslaved by the Egyptians. Add to that the generational shame of their failures in the wilderness, and it becomes very clear that they needed a mass cleansing and deliverance. Reproach in the biblical sense means “discredit, disgrace or shame “. Once the circumcision was complete, how powerful and freeing to the ears of the Israelites to hear God say to Joshua, *“Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.”*

God removed the shame from their former season empowering them to be able to embrace who He was calling them to be. Likewise, God wants to position us both physically and emotionally to take the land He is giving to us. God wants to take away the sting and shame from your former seasons and breathe fresh life into your identity so you can move forward with confidence.

Pray: Today allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any area of your life where you need to experience his healing and deliverance from shame. Repent of any agreements you may have made with the voice of the accuser. Now allow God to roll away the reproach from your own life. Receive His empowering and energizing Spirit to breathe fresh life into your identity for your next assignment.

JANUARY 20

Read: Esther 2:19-23; 3:1-2

Earlier we read excerpts from the story of Esther. If Esther is the heroine of the story, her cousin, Mordecai, is the hero. Mordecai operated in a valuable prophetic watchman anointing. Often, we find Mordecai positioned at the king's gate not only watching over the life of Esther, but also the nation of his people, the Jews. Mordecai had his ear tuned to hear what God was doing so that he could partner with God's plans and purposes to see them implemented.

God is raising up His *Mordecais* in this hour. He is raising up those with the watchman anointing who will station themselves on the wall. These ones will have no need to be in the forefront, but instead have laid their lives down for the love of God and those around them. God will position them in strategic places of influence. Some will sit at the king's gate and serve as listening ears and ambassadors of influential light and truth into dark places. Others will be positioned in more obscure places, but it will not matter as their role is no less significant. They serve our King Jesus.

Mordecai would not bend his knee or bow before the evil Haman. Those operating in the Mordecai spirit will be unwilling to compromise and bow their knee to evil. Their hearts will not be drawn into the political spirit or cowardice that seeks to appease those in high positions for the purpose of their own advancement. They cannot be bought, persuaded, or manipulated into betrayal or disloyalty. They will not be worried about their loss of reputation, or damage to their platform, but will wisely discern and assess the path they are to take. They will be willing to release the tough messages and make the hard decisions because they have learned to walk in humility and integrity in stewarding God's voice.

Pray: As you pray today, offer yourself as a watchman on the wall and one who will stand in that place of listening and intercession for your King. Ask that the Holy Spirit would give you an uncompromising spirit and tenacity to not bow your knee to evil. Today, pray for your nation and its leaders asking that righteousness and truth would prevail.

Read: Isaiah 61:4-6

Isaiah 61, possibly better than any other chapter in scripture, sums up the redeeming work of Christ in individuals. Those described are taken from a place of brokenness to a place of radical healing and deliverance. These same ones are then catalysts to rebuild, restore, and renew ruined cities with the same grace and mercy they have received. Where they were once poverty stricken of spirit and body, they now walk in the wealth and health of the kingdom of God.

Tucked away in the middle of Isaiah 61, God once again echoes His destiny plan for His people, “*And you will be called priests of the LORD, you will be named ministers of our God.*” (Isa. 61:6) **God’s redeemed people now have a holy occupation. We have been called into a life of priestly service and ministry to our God and the ones He loved and died for.**

In Luke 4 Jesus stood and read from the scrolls in the synagogue. The scroll handed to him was the book of Isaiah, and he began reading from the familiar verses of Isaiah 61. It was as if he was reading his own job description. In a very real sense he was, as he said in Luke 4:21, “... *Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.*”

Can you see that as priests and ministers of our God, we are carrying on the works of redemption and restoration that Jesus Himself came to do? What an incredible honor to be able to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, binding up the brokenhearted, proclaiming freedom for captives, and releasing prisoners from darkness. What a joy to proclaim as his priests the year of our Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God!

Pray: Today, ask the Holy Spirit how you can partner with Him to pray for your city. Is there an area in your city that has been *ruined* by the enemy where you can now begin to release and declare God’s restoration and life? Spend some time dreaming with God about what He would like to do in your city, then pray accordingly.

Read: Ezekiel 37:1-4

The prophet Ezekiel lived in a time with some similar parallels to our present day. Ezekiel knew suffering and the suffering of the people around Him. He encountered the hopelessness of their situation where defeat, division, and loss of favor were a daily reality. It was in the middle of this reality that the Lord took Ezekiel into a vision where He showed him a valley of *dry bones*. Scripture describes the bones as *very dry* indicating that they had been dead for a while and there was no sign of life at all. All of this makes the Lord's question to Ezekiel shocking when he asks the perplexed prophet, "*Son of man, can these bones live?*" (Eze. 37:3a) Ezekiel must have grappled with the correct answer to give the Lord and landed on a reasonably safe reply, "*Sovereign Lord, you alone know.*" (Eze. 37:3b)

It seems we have been in our own valley season worldwide for several years now. Assault after assault has come for many, traumatizing and leaving many shell-shocked and numb from the battle. We are in a time right now where we can survey the dead things around us, marriages, churches, schools, relationships, and governments. The Lord is asking us a similar question as He did with Ezekiel, "*Son of man, can these things live?*".

The Lord was looking for faith from Ezekiel. He was looking for agreement! And He is looking for faith and agreement from His people right now as we survey the dead things around us. He wants us to see them with eyes that believe He can work miracles!

After Ezekiel answered the Lord, he was given his first assignment to command the bones to hear the word of the Lord. We don't need to miss the power of what is being released here. God's word was about to go forth through the mouth of Ezekiel and those words would carry the seed of the miracle that God was going to release.

Pray: What are some of the dry bones in your world that need the life of God? Ask the Holy Spirit which ones you should pray for, then prophesy to them, "*Hear the word of the Lord!*"

Read: Ezekiel 37:4-6

Ezekiel had to release a wakeup call before he released the word of the Lord. “*Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!*” (Eze. 37:4b) We are in an awakening time right now in the Body of Christ and many other arenas. There has been a numbing complacency and a *dumbing down* even of our faith that has caused a slumbering Bride to not step fully into Her place of authority and responsibility with Christ. So, Ezekiel was raising a war cry to the dry bones to come to attention and hear the word of the Lord. Many prophetic voices are now releasing a similar cry to “*AWAKEN!*”, rallying the troops to tune into God’s voice and the activity of Heaven that is being poured out on the earth.

God releases a phenomenal power-filled promise over the bones (Eze. 37:5-6), and He chose to use Ezekiel as His mouthpiece to convey His word. God is awakening His Bride to step into this place of partnership with Him to convey and release His words of hope and life into the dead and broken things around us. When we release His promises and words of life and hope, we are scattering seeds that will most certainly bring forth life and a harvest.

“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” (Isa.55:10-11)

We must remember the power of God’s word as it goes forth! It most definitely will accomplish the purpose for which it was sent. Imagine Ezekiel’s surprise as his prophecy is interrupted with the sound of rattling! **When God’s word goes forth it carries with it a miraculous creative force that holds the power to accomplish the word.**

Remember, God spoke the world into existence. He could have surely spoken to the bones Himself, but He chose to involve Ezekiel in a teaching and activating moment that reveals again His desire to co-labor with His people in accomplishing His will on the earth.

Pray: Today pray and prophesy that an awakening wind would blow upon the Church. Pray for your local church and the Church at large. Ask the Lord to release His Spirit of wisdom and revelation on the Church that we would be fully awakened, yielded, and empowered to move with Him in this new era.

Read: Ezekiel 37:7-14

The bodies that had formed as a result of Ezekiel's obedience to prophesy the word of the Lord only came to life when the breath of the Lord entered them. It is the *ruah*, Hebrew word for breath, wind, and Spirit of God, that entered them and caused them to come to life and stand to their feet as a vast army. It is only the energizing, and life-giving *ruah* or Spirit of God that will awaken and call forth His army in this hour as well. He has chosen to use us, His people, as His mouthpiece to release His seed-filled promises and breath that will accomplish the desires of His heart.

After Ezekiel had prophesied to the breath and saw the vast army arise, the Lord took a moment to explain the meaning of this interactive vision Ezekiel had just experienced.

"Then he said to me: "Son of man these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' (Eze. 37:11)

Many in the Body of Christ find themselves in this same place of feeling dried up, hopeless, and cut off. The enemy's attack has been relentless and even seasoned warriors need a time of receiving the re-energizing and life-giving *ruah* of God. God promised the children of Israel that He would open up the graves that had buried and covered them and bring them up from them. He is speaking a similar word to us today. We are not to give up on things that appear or look dead but listen to His voice and prophesy into those situations where He is calling forth life.

The life-giving Spirit of God will roll back the years that have been stolen and cause a return of youthfulness and life to people, situations, and relationships that have appeared as *dry bones*.

Pray: Do you know people who are struggling to find hope or who feel cut off from others or God? Prophesy the life-giving breath of God into those individuals and relationships today. Declare the recompense of God over these lives and a returning of all that has been lost and stolen.

JANUARY 25

Read: Isaiah 56:7 & Matt. 21:12-13

As Jesus cleared the money changers from the temple and quoted from Isaiah, it is evident He had something different in mind for His house than what was currently taking place. We are also in a season where God is building His house. Foundations are being repaired and reconstructed where needed and alignment with the heart and intention of Heaven is paramount as we follow His lead in this new era.

The Spirit is relentlessly persistent that our significance be found in the steadfast and astounding revelation that we are beloved sons and daughters of the Father. The deeper this revelation abides in our hearts, the less need we have to build and promote a kingdom that exalts us or someone else over Him.

God is zeroing in on the heart of His Church in this hour. The intent is not to shame, but to rebuild, redeem, and resurrect the Church to rise to Her full stature. Jesus Christ is not only the Chief Cornerstone, but the very foundation on which we are to build. God is sifting and shaking, recalibrating and realigning His Church to know that our greatest fulfillment and joy comes with deep surrender.

A surrendered Church will become a praying Church. When our hearts are yielded to Him, we begin to sense and hear what is on His heart and pray from that place. People and souls are on His heart. Nations are on His heart.

As the Church steps into Her place as a *house of prayer for all nations*, we will begin to see an increase of encounters and revelation flooding the earth, depositing the love of the Father into orphan hearts in every nation, tribe and tongue.

Pray: As you pray today, declare God's love and breakthrough over a nation(s) that is in your heart. Ask the Holy Spirit how to pray and what to release. Pray also for the Body of Christ that we would be aligned and recalibrated according to His will and desire in this hour.

Read: Matt. 16:18-19

In a critical moment of prophetic revelation, Jesus released to His disciples His heart for a powerful Church, His *ekklesia*, or ruling governmental assembly. Jesus' use of the Greek word, *ekklesia*, is significant in that it wasn't a specifically religious word. The participants of the *ekklesia* of that time in the Greek speaking world were those who were actively involved in legislation, electing officials, judicial decisions and other governmental matters. Jesus used the word *ekklesia* because it would be recognized and mean something to those who heard it. The understanding of Jesus' words and descriptions that follow are essential for us as we move forward to become the powerful Church He describes.

This *ekklesia* that Jesus describes is no wimpy gathering of people. The *ekklesia* would have the authority to use the keys of Heaven, binding and loosing to bring Heaven to earth as they were led by the Spirit. This would not be a defensive postured Church, but a mighty, offensive-postured, ground taking Church that the very gates of Hades would not be able to overcome.

We are stepping into a greater dimension and revelation of the Church's true authority as described in Matthew 16. This word was originally released to Peter who was given the revelation by the Father that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God. Our authority is also to rest and be built upon this foundation as well. Every other foundation will be faulty and fail to produce the fruit that will only flow from the powerful revelation that Jesus Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to Him.

Pray: Pray today asking that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation be poured out on God's Church, or *ekklesia* so that we might walk in the fullness of all that He has for us. Ask the Spirit of God to renew your mind where needed so that you can embrace your role in His *ekklesia*.

Read: I Pt. 2: 4-6

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Peter mentions the priesthood theme that we have seen running as a thread throughout scripture. As we are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, God is calling us to begin to own our spiritual positions in His kingdom.

We have been seated in Christ in heavenly places and it is for a purpose. Jesus Christ is on His throne at the right hand of the Father, and we are seated there in Him. A throne signifies governmental authority. The One on the throne has been given the right to rule, and as we own our position in Him, we must acknowledge and embrace our inherited authority to rule with Him.

"And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way." Ephesians 1:22-23

In the coming days, we are going to begin to see the Church embrace Her seated position with Christ and take up the gavels given to Her. From this place, the Church will not wrestle against flesh and blood as emphasized in Ephesians 6:12, but She will begin to enforce the sentence already written against our adversary, satan.

Pray: Thank God that as a believer you are seated in Him in heavenly places. Confess to Him your desire to embrace and step more fully into your inherited place of authority as a priesthood that is seated with Him.

Read: I Pt. 2:9

The radical statement of I Peter 2:9, made by Peter to the early Church, must have created quite a ripple in the culture of its day. In the Old Testament, kingly and priestly functions were strictly separated, and now Peter was joining the two in one groundbreaking statement. A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD! Chosen....royal.... holy.... God's special possession.... how these words must have stirred the hearts of those who heard them!

We step into our royal role by choosing to enforce the rule of God's kingdom from our seated position in Christ. As His ekklesia we take up our keys, binding and loosing, and bringing heaven to earth by releasing the decrees and declarations we hear from the Spirit of God. We recognize the power of agreement and covenant to come into alignment with what God is saying and doing both individually and corporately. **The corporate agreement birthed from the throne room will have great power to unlock families, cities, and nations to receive the transformation from the Kingdom of Light.**

We operate in our priestly role by standing in the gap as intercessors on behalf of people, places, and situations that need to know our King's dominion and goodness. Jesus taught us that now we are to pray for our enemies and those who would persecute us. We also step into our priestly role as ministers of reconciliation, releasing light to the darkest situations and corners of the earth.

What a powerful combination God is releasing now through His royal priesthood! As royal priests we will stand on behalf of those trapped in darkness and as ministers of reconciliation, releasing encounters with our good Father. We will take up our royal governmental authority by binding, loosing, and decreeing the King's dominion over darkness that has trapped and chained many.

Pray: Is there a family, city, or nation that you would like to see unlocked to the message of the Kingdom of Light? Partner with Heaven making declarations and decrees that bring light and the release of the kingdom into each situation. Bind those things that the Holy Spirit reveals to you that would hinder His work. Then, release or loose those things that you sense Heaven is loosing.

JANUARY 29

Read: Rev. 1:4-6 & 5:9-10

John the Beloved, or known also as John the Revelator, wrote the book of Revelation following a vision and encounter he had as He was led by the Spirit of God. John's prophetic entry is the culmination of our story with God that begins in Genesis. Our story with God unfolds throughout scripture as the cosmic battle between good and evil rages, ending with the book of Revelation.

Jesus, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, was the only one found worthy to open the scroll with seven seals mentioned in Revelation 5. But, instead of a Lion, a Lamb appears in the vision to John. This Lamb appears as if it had been slain yet standing at the center of the throne. The precious Lamb of God was slain for our sins and purchased people from every tribe and language and people and nation. The people He has redeemed and purchased by His blood, have now been designated for a purpose. *"You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."* (Rev. 5:10)

The blood of the Lamb made each one of us now a priest, no longer needing a mediator between us and God. We have been reconnected now to our Father and His royal family. We follow in the footsteps of Jesus, our great high priest (Heb. 4:14). Our honor and call now is to serve our God and reign with Jesus Christ as co-heirs with Him.

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified." Romans 8:29-30

It is now time that the *ekklesia* awakens to the reality that God's glory has risen upon us. We carry the very light of God that the nations hunger for. It is time to ARISE and SHINE to the world around us. *"The sun will no longer be needed to brighten the day, nor the moon to shine at night, for Yahweh will be your unfailing light; your God will be your glory!"* Isaiah 60:19 (The Passion Translation)

Pray: As you feel led, receive your role today as a priest unto Him. Ask Him to take you into new realms of intimacy and authority with Him. Spend some time reading the Revelation scriptures and worship Him as the Lamb who was slain. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a tangible way to share the light and glory of God that is in you with someone today.

Thank you for participating in this Pray 21 Days prayer journey for 2023. May you feel God's refreshing and energizing Spirit awakening your own Spirit to all that He is wanting to do in you and through His Church in the coming days.

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.”

Ephesians 1:18-19a

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