

Bill Johnson



when

HEAVEN

invades

EARTH

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO
A LIFE OF MIRACLES

EXPANDED EDITION
INCLUDES 40-DAY DEVOTIONAL

DESTINY IMAGE BOOKS BY BILL JOHNSON

A Life of Miracles

Dreaming With God

Center of the Universe

Momentum

Release the Power of Jesus

Strengthen Yourself in the Lord

The Supernatural Power of a Transformed Mind

Hosting the Presence

Bill Johnson

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HEAVEN

invades

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A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO
A LIFE OF MIRACLES

EXPANDED EDITION

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Some of the names of the people mentioned in this book have been changed. The author has done so where he felt anonymity is essential.

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DEDICATION



I dedicate this book to the two churches I have pastored: Mountain Chapel of Weaverville, California, and Bethel Church of Redding, California. You both embraced a life of discomfort—living with continual risk—and were willing to endure the unexplainable to obtain the unforgettable. I owe you more than I could ever repay. Thanks. I love you so much.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



Mom and Dad—thanks for honestly believing I could do anything.

Mark Sanders, John Montgomery, Kris Vallotton, Diane Brown, and Dr. Andre Van Mol—thanks for the consistent exhortation and encouragement to write. Diane—your ideas were very helpful.

Elders of Mountain Chapel—thanks for giving me room to grow, encouraging me to follow my vision, and for buying me a Mac.

Staff and Elders of Bethel Church—you are my heroes. Your willingness to pay the price for revival has paved the way for fruit beyond our wildest dreams. You are the Dream Team.

Dann Farrelly—thanks for honest evaluation of the materials written, and for your tireless efforts in editing my stuff.

Guy Chevreau—thanks for your candid suggestions and editing efforts. They were invaluable to me!

Bobby and Carolyn Conner—thanks for the use of the Angel Cabin for many days of writing.

Bob and Claudia Perry—thanks for the use of your Shasta Hilton as a writing hideaway.

To my wife Beni—you are for me a taste of heaven on earth. Thanks.

ENDORSEMENTS



Bill Johnson's book *When Heaven Invades Earth* is changing lives around the world!

We require everyone who attends our Iris Harvest School of Missions in Pemba, Mozambique, to read and practice it! It is a profound and moving teaching resource on life in the supernatural. While practicing the truths revealed in this powerful book, we discover that we are created to live every day in the miraculous Kingdom realms of God. All over the world as I travel, I find people whose lives have been transformed as they have begun to practice Bill's teachings.

It is a great privilege for my husband Rolland and I to know the remarkable man who authored this book and to count him as one of our dearest friends. One of my personal goals in life is to be a woman who demonstrates on every level the truths of Bill's Kingdom teachings!

Heidi Baker, PhD
Founding Director, Iris Global

Bill has written a book that is absolutely revolutionary. We have prayed the Lord's Prayer for over 2,000 years, but now we are seeing the realities of "on earth as it is in heaven." Bill's book, *When Heaven Invades Earth*, has been used as a catalyst into the supernatural for the average believer—like no other book that I know of. This book is already a classic that will impact generations to come.

Dr. Ché Ahn
Senior Pastor, HRock Church, Pasadena, CA
President, Harvest International Ministry
International Chancellor, Wagner Leadership Institute

This book has brought a vital revelation to the Body of Christ, and in its early editions was read by many thousands. I'm excited to hear that it's being reprinted and offered again because this life-changing message needs to saturate the Body of Christ; and who better to present it than Bill Johnson?

John Arnott

There have been few books written in the past 20 years that have had as great an impact upon the Church and the Kingdom than Bill Johnson's *When Heaven Invades Earth*. When it first came out, it seemed like everywhere in the English-speaking world I went, they were reading *When Heaven Invades Earth*. It is an honor to write this endorsement for the 10th anniversary edition. It has become a modern-day classic. If you haven't read it, don't put this book down. Instead, buy it and read it.

Randy Clark

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FOREWORD

WHEN I AM INTERESTED IN READING A NEW BOOK, I always have two questions: Is the life of the author consistent with the message of the book? Is his (or her) ministry supportive of the declarations of the book? If both questions are not answered in the affirmative without resounding definition, I will pass on reading the book.

In the case of *When Heaven Invades Earth* and Bill Johnson, I had prior knowledge of the author and his ministry before I read the manuscript. Therefore, with the aforementioned questions already answered in the affirmative, I happily read the treatise.

I first ministered in Bethel Church of Redding, California—which is pastored by Bill Johnson—in 2001, a few months after my wife died. I had heard several tapes by Bill Johnson a few months previous to going to Bethel. Being very much in the grieving process over the loss of my wife of more than 47 years, I found myself being greatly ministered to while I was ministering. I taught in the School of Supernatural Ministry and was exposed to a large group of radical seekers after the Kingdom of God. I

was informed that their subject was the Kingdom of God and that these sessions were only a part of their training. The sessions were geared toward preparing for Kingdom ministry. After the session the instructor told the students, “You have studied the Kingdom; now go out and do the Kingdom stuff!” And they did...in the malls, on the streets, in the bookshops and coffeehouses! They expected results and results happened!

I got the impression that this group represented the spirit of Bethel Church, which seemed to say, “Let’s seek the Kingdom, find it, declare what we’ve found, and give it away!”

When I returned to visit Bethel Church and Bill Johnson a second time, I had just learned that my fiancé, Jerry, had cancer. Jerry, who is now my wife, was scheduled to undergo major surgery a few days after our visit to Bethel Church. At Bethel, two separate healing teams and a staff member and his wife joined us in powerful seasons of prayer, each group without knowledge of the content and impressions of the others. The experience was joyful, faith-giving, and confidence-building as they all agreed, “She will live and join you in an enhanced ministry.” The surgery took place a few days later, and today Jerry is my wife and she ministers with me cancer free. To us this experience at Bethel was a demonstration of the validity of the message of this book.

The direction and perspective of this volume is essentially, “What happens when heaven invades earth?” This book you are holding is literally out of this world! It is about something unseen yet more real than the eyes reading these words. It is about the eternal realm, not yet fully seen or expressed but presently accessible and awaiting the obedience of anyone or any group to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33).

I love *When Heaven Invades Earth* and am excited that it is about to break upon the Christian scene. I love this book because it points us toward primary reality in a world almost totally preoccupied with secondary reality. The reader of Scripture is aware that it ultimately defines primary reality as “unseen and eternal” while secondary reality is temporal, that is, it doesn’t

last (see 2 Cor. 4:18). Bill Johnson's beliefs, teachings, and ministry center on primary or Kingdom reality and finds that reality sufficient to change the face of "that which is seen."

I love this book because it declares unapologetically that Kingdom living and power are a part of the normal Christian life. What is described in this volume is not some exotic and rare expression, only to be viewed on infrequent occasions; instead, it is the very heartbeat of the Kingdom believer's life and ministry.

I love this book because it includes the necessity of repentance or "change of mentality" as a prerequisite to seeing and entering the Kingdom. This is approached in the brief but pungent material in Chapter 1 and somewhat enlarged in Chapter 3.

I love this book because it is a call to spiritual revolution to change the face of the earth, and it reports on how one church is doing it by changing its neighborhood, city, and region "one person at a time."

I love this book because practical faith (is there any other kind?) is clearly presented as being anchored in the unseen and living from the invisible to the visible. Once we repent we see the Kingdom, and, upon that view, faith comes. This is ably presented in Chapter 4.

I love this book because it is framed in a setting of the miraculous! Its opening pages are taken up (much like Jesus at Cana) with a miracle at a wedding and its concluding pages narrate the healing of a child.

I love this book because it challenges me to Kingdom prayer as the gateway to power and the means of getting heaven down to earth. As the Kingdom of God sheds true and new light on all other truths, so it does to prayer.

I love this book because it makes clear the practical results and fruit of signs and wonders. We do not seek such things but are promised that signs and wonders will follow those who believe.

Finally, I love this book because it leaves me with an intense desire to know God better, to fellowship with Him more intimately, and to minister with Him in more power than ever before. This is coupled with a standing-on-tiptoe excitement about what the future holds for myself in particular, and the Body of Christ in general, in sharing Christ with the world.

I now read this volume with a real but fading regret that something like this was not presented to me 55 years ago when I began ministry. It is a fading regret because I know that God can make up for the years lost or limited by a lack of knowledge of these things.

It is with no small measure of expectation of what reading this work may affect in your life that I recommend it to you without reservation. Read it slowly, read it thoroughly, and walk out what God teaches you through it. The results, I believe, will be heaven invading earth in your life!

Jack R. Taylor
President, Dimensions Ministries
Melbourne, Florida

FOREWORD

BILL JOHNSON'S BOOK, *When Heaven Invades Earth*, contains a message greatly needed for the Church today. It challenges many of our "sacred cows." Like Gideon, Johnson had to begin by tearing down the Asherah poles in the backyard of the Church. He is a man with a mission to wake up the Church. Not since I first met John Wimber have I been so taken with someone's understanding of the significance of the Kingdom of God message. I have yet to meet a pastor who is more committed to "power evangelism" than Bill Johnson. The stories of the healings and miracles done through the "little ole me's" in his local church are truly amazing. This book is not about some theoretical possibility, nor some pie-in-the-sky theology, nor some rationale for the lack of power in the Church. No, instead it offers practical, tried-and-proven strategies for pushing back the kingdom of darkness and advancing the Kingdom of Light. I wish I had met Pastor Bill Johnson earlier in my life. I feel I would be farther along on the road to moving in the power of the Kingdom of God than I presently am at this time.

When Heaven Invades Earth is a must-read for every pastor and leader in the Church today. This book was written by a fifth-generation pastor from the

Pentecostal perspective—and, what better perspective to hear from when it comes to the working of the Holy Spirit, especially regarding the gifts of healings. I have had the privilege of meeting many pastors from the United States and Canada over the past nine years of traveling. Pastor Bill Johnson, I believe, has more to say regarding the concepts of “power evangelism” than any other pastor I have met. Though he is an Assembly of God pastor and not a Vineyard pastor, he carries the DNA of John Wimber more than anyone else I know, especially when it comes to his passion for healing and the activity of the Holy Spirit. He is a radical pastor, a great teacher, and an apostolic voice in the Church today. His message is not the sound of an echo; it is a voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare the way for the Lord’s kingdom, which is at hand.”

This book is full of powerful statements I wish I had written. So many wonderful quotes will be taken from this book—quotes such as the following: “One of the tragedies of a weakened identity is how it affects our approach to Scripture. Many, if not most, theologians make the mistake of taking all the good stuff contained in the prophets and sweeping it under that mysterious rug called *the Millennium*. . . . We are so entrenched in unbelief that anything contrary to this world view (the dispensationalist’s view of a weak end-time Church) is thought to be of the devil.”

Other great quotes from this book are: “Unbelief is anchored in what is visible or reasonable apart from God. It honors the natural realm as superior to the invisible. . . . Unbelief is faith in the inferior”; and “Faith comes by hearing. . . . It does not say that it comes from having heard. It is the listening heart, in the present tense, that is ready for heaven’s deposit of faith. . . . Hearing now is a key to faith.”

When Heaven Invades Earth is a wake-up call to the Church. It is a death-blow to “cessationism,” a challenge to “dispensationalism,” and it is a call to those within the Pentecostal heritage to return to their roots. The book is solidly based in Scripture and reveals the heart of a man who loves not only the Spirit, but also loves the Word of God. With fresh revelation Bill Johnson takes us to Scripture and lets Scripture speak a fresh word to us.

He forces us to see what the Scriptures actually say, instead of only seeing what our theologically correct blinders allow us to see.

I have been waiting for Bill to finish this book so I could offer it at my book table at my meetings. He has so much to say that I avoid missing any of his speaking times when we minister together. They are too rich to miss. In this day of so many principles and strategies, it is refreshing to hear one call us back to the strategy of Jesus for evangelism.

Randy Clark
Global Awakening Ministries
International Conference Speaker
Author, *God Can Use Little Ole Me*

INTRODUCTION

A FEW YEARS AGO I overheard a conversation that stirred me beyond words. It was during my uncle David Morken's 90th birthday party. Along with a sizable crowd of family members, several of his peers in ministry had gathered for the celebration. As a young man, Uncle David had been a soloist for Aimee Semple McPherson before becoming a missionary to China and Sumatra, and later he became a right-hand man to Billy Graham. His accomplishments are stunning, but are a subject for another time.

Toward the end of the evening I saw a few of the older saints sitting together, talking. Noticing the subject was the outpouring of the Spirit during Aimee Semple McPherson's ministry, I couldn't help but eavesdrop. With youthful enthusiasm one said to the other, "It was like heaven on earth." There they were, some 70 years after the fact, with eyes brightened by the memory of things that others seldom dream of. Their experience became the standard by which all other days were to be measured. I was pierced through.

My heart burns for the coming move of God. I live for the revival that is unfolding and believe it will surpass all previous moves combined, bringing more than I billion souls into the Kingdom. Yet, for this one moment, I wished I could go back in time.

As a fifth-generation pastor on my dad's side of the family, and fourth on my mom's, I grew up hearing of the great moves of God. My grandparents sat under the ministry of Smith Wigglesworth and other notable revivalists. (I remember Grandpa telling me, "Not everyone liked Wigglesworth." Of course he is well loved today. Israel also loved their prophets after they were dead.)

Grandpa and Grandma Morken received the baptism in the Holy Spirit in 1901 and 1903, respectively, and they loved to talk about what they had seen and experienced. They've been in heaven now for over 25 years. I only wish I had another chance to hear their stories and to ask them the questions I never had asked as a young man. It would mean so much more to me now.

The quest described in this book began in me many years ago. I needed to see the gospel in life as it is in print. For me it was an issue of being faithful to God. However, it quickly became clear to me that such a pursuit was costly. Many misunderstandings come when we pursue what others ignore.

I could not limit my values and pursuits to what makes others comfortable. Being possessed by a promise I live without options. I will spend the rest of my life exploring what could happen through the life of one who is willing to cultivate the God-given appetite to see impossibilities bow to the name of Jesus. All my eggs are in one basket. There is no "Plan B." And it's from this posture that I write.

Chapter I

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

*It is abnormal for a Christian not to have an appetite for the impossible.
It has been written into our spiritual DNA to hunger for the
impossibilities around us to bow at the name of Jesus.*

ON A COLD AND RAINY SATURDAY, church buses were sent to the neediest parts of our city, Redding, to find the homeless and the poor. The bride and groom eagerly anticipated their return and prepared a meal in their honor. The needy were to be the distinguished guests of their wedding.

Ralph and Colleen met while working in our ministry to the poor. They shared a passion for God and a love for the needy. Although it is common for the bride and groom to register for gifts at fine department stores, Ralph and Colleen did so at Target; and all they put on their *wish list* were coats, hats, gloves, and sleeping bags...to be given to their *guests*. This was not going to be a typical wedding.

In our pre-wedding meeting the bride and groom encouraged me to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in case He wanted to heal people during the wedding. If I received a word of knowledge for healing, I was to stop the

ceremony and pray for the sick. As a pastor I was excited to see what might happen. They had created far too great a *miracle opportunity* for God not to do something extraordinary.

The wedding began. Apart from an extended time of worship, followed by an evangelistic message and a prayer for salvation, the ceremony ended up quite normal.

It's very different to see among family and friends of the bride and groom people who are there simply to get a meal. It wasn't wrong. It was just different. Following the ceremony, the newly married couple went directly to the reception hall, got behind the serving table, and dished the food for their guests. The meal was excellent. The hungry became satisfied. God was pleased.

But before the wedding ever started, two or three people came to me with excitement in their voice. "There is somebody here who only has two-and-a-half to three years to live!" We had crossed a milestone. Miracles of healing had become more common...to the point that a life-threatening disease seemed more like a potential miracle than it did something to fear. That in itself is a dream come true for me—people in North America *expecting* something supernatural from God!

THE MIRACLE CONTINUES

His name was Luke. Like most of the folks from the streets, he and his wife Jennifer had come to the wedding because food would be served. Luke walked with difficulty, needing the help of a cane. He wore braces on each arm, and a large brace around his neck.

Following the meal, my brother Bob and I brought them into the church kitchen, asking him about the braces on each arm. He told us his problem was carpal tunnel syndrome. I asked him if he would take the braces off and let us pray. He said yes. (Whenever it's possible, I like to remove whatever that person might trust in other than God.) He did so, and we laid our

hands on his wrists, commanding the *tunnel* to open and all numbness and pain to be gone. He then moved his hands freely, experiencing the healing he had just received.

When we asked him about his cane and the obvious problem with his leg, he described how he had suffered a horrible accident. As a result he had an artificial shin and hip and had even lost half a lung. His walk was labored and painful. When the surgeons put him back together, his leg was an inch too short. I had him sit down and encouraged both him and his wife to watch what God was about to do. I held his legs in such a way that they could see the problem and would be able to recognize any change. We commanded the leg to grow. It did. When he stood, he shifted his weight from side to side, almost as though he were trying on a new pair of shoes, saying, "Yeah, that's about right." The response of the unchurched is very matter of fact...and very refreshing. I asked him to walk across the room, which he did gladly, without a limp and without pain. God was at work. He replaced one inch of missing bone and removed all the pain caused by Luke's accident.

Next we asked about Luke's neck. He told me he had cancer and was given a couple of years to live. He went on to explain that the brace was necessary because of the loss of the muscles in his neck. The brace held his head in place. By this time a group had gathered, not to watch, but to participate. At my request he removed the brace while another man in our church, a medical doctor, safely held his head. As we began to pray I heard the doctor command new muscles to grow. He called them by their Latin names. I was impressed. When we were finished, Luke turned his head from side to side. All was restored. He then placed his hand on the side of his neck and exclaimed, "The lumps are gone!"

His doctor gave him a clean bill of health, and the miracles continued long past the physical healing. Luke and Jennifer began to serve Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Within weeks Luke got a job, the first time he had worked in 17 years. Jesus heals the whole person.

JUST ANOTHER DAY

Although that kind of wedding remains unusual, our church's deliberate pursuit of the poor and the miracles are common. This story is true, and it is closer to the normal Christian life than what the Church *normally* experiences. The lack of miracles isn't because it is not in God's will for us. The problem exists between our ears. As a result, a transformation—a *renewing of the mind*—is needed, and it's only possible through a work of the Holy Spirit that typically comes upon desperate people.

The aforementioned bride and groom, although noble, are ordinary people who serve an extravagant Father. There wasn't a great person involved, except for Jesus. All the rest of us simply made room for God, believing Him to be good 100 percent of the time. The risks that the bride and groom took were more than God could pass up. In the midst of this marriage celebration, God invaded a home marked by hellish disease and established a testimony for His glory.

Stories of this nature are becoming the norm, and the company of people who have joined this quest for an authentic gospel—the *gospel of the Kingdom*—is increasing. Loving God and His people is an honor. We will no longer make up excuses for powerlessness because powerlessness is inexcusable. Our mandate is simple: raise up a generation that can openly display the raw power of God. This book is all about that journey...the quest for the King and His Kingdom.

The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power (I Corinthians 4:20 NIV).

Seek first the kingdom of God... (Matthew 6:33).

Chapter 2

COMMISSION RESTORED

Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst. . . (Acts 2:22).

JESUS COULD NOT HEAL THE SICK. Neither could He deliver the tormented from demons or raise the dead. To believe otherwise is to ignore what He said about Himself, and more importantly, to miss the purpose of His self-imposed restriction to live as a man.

Jesus Christ said of Himself, “The Son can do nothing” (John 5:19). In the Greek language that word *nothing* has a unique meaning—it means *nothing*, just like it does in English! He had *no* supernatural capabilities whatsoever! While He is 100 percent God, He chose to live with the same limitations that man would face once he was redeemed. He made that point over and over again. Jesus became the model for all who would embrace the invitation to invade the impossible in His name. He performed *miracles, wonders, and signs* as a man in right relationship to God. . . not as God. If He performed miracles because He was God, then they would be unattainable for us. But if He did them as a man, I am responsible to pursue His lifestyle. Recapturing

this simple truth changes everything...and makes possible a full restoration of the ministry of Jesus in His Church.

What were the distinctions of His humanity?

1. He had no sin to separate Him from the Father.
2. He was completely dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit working through Him.

What are the distinctions of our humanity?

1. We are sinners cleansed by the blood of Jesus. Through His sacrifice He has successfully dealt with the power and effect of sin for all who believe. Nothing now separates us from the Father. There remains only one unsettled issue—
2. How dependent on the Holy Spirit are we willing to live?

THE ORIGINAL COMMISSION

The backbone of Kingdom authority and power is found in the *commission*. Discovering God's original commission and purpose for mankind can help fortify our resolve to a life of history-changing significance. To find that truth we must go back to the beginning.

Man was created in the image of God and placed into the Father's ultimate expression of beauty and peace: the Garden of Eden. Outside of that garden it was a different story. It was without the order and blessing contained within and was in great need of the touch of God's delegated one—Adam.

Adam and Eve were placed in the garden with a mission. God said, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). It was God's intention that as they bore more children, who also lived under God's rule, they would be extending the boundaries of His garden (His government) through the simplicity of their devotion to Him. The greater the number of people in right relationship to God, the greater the impact of their

leadership. This process was to continue until the entire earth was covered with the glorious rule of God through man.

But in Genesis chapter I we discover it's not a perfect universe. Satan had rebelled and had been cast out of heaven, and with him a portion of the fallen angels took dominion of the earth. It's obvious why the rest of the planet needed to be subdued—it was under the influence of darkness (see Gen. 1:2). God could have destroyed the devil and his host with a word, but instead He chose to defeat darkness through His delegated authority—those made in His image who were lovers of God by choice.

A ROMANCE STORY

The Sovereign One placed us—Adam's children—in charge of planet earth. “The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth He has given to the children of men” (Ps. 115:16). This highest of honors was chosen because love always chooses the best. That is the beginning of the romance of our creation. . . . created in His image, *for intimacy*, that dominion might be expressed through love. It is from this revelation that we are to learn to walk as His ambassadors, thus defeating the “prince of this world.” The stage was set for all of darkness to fall as man exercised his godly influence over creation. But instead, man fell.

Satan didn't come into the Garden of Eden violently and take possession of Adam and Eve. He couldn't! Why? He had no dominion there. Dominion empowers. And since man was given the keys of dominion over the planet, the devil would have to get his authority from them. The suggestion to eat the forbidden fruit was simply the devil's effort to get Adam and Eve to agree with him in opposition to God, thus empowering him. Through that agreement he is enabled to *kill, steal, and destroy*. It's important to realize that even today satan is empowered through man's agreement.

Mankind's authority to rule was forfeited when Adam ate the forbidden fruit. Paul said, “You are that one's slaves whom you obey” (Rom. 6:16). In that one act mankind became the slave and possession of the evil one.

All that Adam owned, including the title deed to the planet with its corresponding position of rule, became part of the devil's spoil. God's predetermined plan of redemption immediately kicked into play, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel" (Gen. 3:15). Jesus would come to reclaim all that was lost.

THERE WERE NO SHORTCUTS TO HIS VICTORY

God's plan of rulership for man never ceased. Jesus came to bear man's penalty for sin and recapture what had been lost. Luke 19:10 says that Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost." Not only was mankind lost to sin, his dominion over planet earth was also lost. Jesus came to recapture both. Satan tried to ruin that plan at the end of Jesus' 40-day fast. The devil knew he wasn't worthy of Jesus' worship, but he also knew that Jesus had come to reclaim the authority that man had given away.

Satan said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours" (Luke 4:6-7). Notice the phrase "for this has been delivered to me." Satan could not steal it. It had been relinquished when Adam abandoned God's rule. It was as though satan was saying to Jesus, "I know what You came for. You know what I want. Worship me and I'll give You back the keys." In effect, satan offered Jesus a shortcut to His goal of recapturing the keys of authority that man lost through sin. Jesus said "no" to the shortcut and refused to give him any honor. (It was this same desire for worship that caused satan's fall from heaven in the first place. See Isaiah 14:12.) Jesus held His course, for He had come to die.

The Father wanted satan defeated by man...one made in His image. Jesus, who would shed His blood to redeem mankind, emptied Himself of His rights as God and took upon Himself the limitations of man. Satan

was defeated by a man—the Son of Man—who was rightly related to God. Now, as people receive the work of Christ on the cross for salvation, they become grafted into that victory. Jesus defeated the devil with His sinless life, defeated him in His death by paying for our sins with His blood, and again, in the resurrection, rising triumphant with the keys of death and hell.

WE ARE BORN TO RULE

In redeeming man, Jesus retrieved what man had given away. From the throne of triumph He declared, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore...” (Matt. 28:18-19). In other words: *I got it all back. Now go use it and reclaim mankind.* In this passage, Jesus fulfills the promise He made to the disciples when He said, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 16:19). The original plan was never aborted; it was fully realized once and for all in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. We were then to be completely restored to His plan of ruling as a people made in His image. And as such we would learn how to enforce the victory obtained at Calvary: “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (Rom. 16:20 NIV).

We were born to rule—rule over creation, over darkness—to plunder hell and establish the rule of Jesus wherever we go by preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. *Kingdom* means *King’s domain*. In the original purpose of God, mankind ruled over creation. Now that sin has entered the world, creation has been infected by darkness, namely, disease, sickness, afflicting spirits, poverty, natural disasters, demonic influence, etc. Our rule is still over creation, but now it is focused on exposing and undoing the works of the devil. We are to give what we have received to reach that end (see Matt. 10:8). If I truly receive power from an encounter with the God of power, I am equipped to give it away. The invasion of God into impossible situations comes through a people who have received power from on high and learn to release it into the circumstances of life.

THE KEY OF DAVID

The gospel of salvation is to touch the whole man: spirit, soul, and body. John G. Lake called this a *Triune Salvation*. A study on the word *evil* confirms the intended reach of His redemption. That word is found in Matthew 6:13 (KJV), “Deliver us from evil.” The word *evil* represents the entire curse of sin upon man. *Poneros*, the Greek word for evil, came from the word *ponos*, meaning pain. And that word came from the root word *penes*, meaning poor. Look at it: *evil*-sin, *pain*-sickness, and *poor*-poverty. Jesus destroyed the power of sin, sickness, and poverty through His redemptive work on the cross. In Adam and Eve’s commission to subdue the earth, they were without sickness, poverty, and sin. Now that we are restored to His original purpose, should we expect anything less? After all, this is called the better covenant!

We were given the keys to the Kingdom (see Matt. 16:19)—which in part is the authority *to trample over all the powers of hell* (see Luke 10:19). There is a unique application of this principle found in the phrase *key of David*, which is mentioned in both Revelation and Isaiah (see Isa. 22:22; Rev. 3:7). *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* states, “The power of the keys consisted not only in the supervision of the royal chambers, but also in deciding who was and who was not to be received into the King’s service.”¹ All that the Father has is ours through Christ. His entire treasure house of resources, His royal chambers, is at our disposal in order to fulfill His commission. But the more sobering part of this illustration is found in *controlling who gets in to see the King*. Isn’t that what we do with this gospel? When we declare it, we give opportunity for people to come to the King to be saved. When we are silent, we have chosen to keep those who would hear away from eternal life. Sobering indeed! It was a costly key for Him to purchase, and it’s a costly key for us to use. But it’s even more costly to *bury it and not obtain an increase for the coming King*. That price will be felt throughout eternity.

A REVOLUTION IN IDENTITY

It's time for a revolution in our vision. When prophets tell us, *Your vision is too small*, many of us think the antidote is to increase whatever numbers we're expecting. For example: if we're expecting 10 new converts, let's change it to 100. If we were praying for cities, let's pray instead for nations. With such responses, we're missing the sharp edge of the frequently repeated word. Increasing the numbers is not necessarily a sign of a larger vision from God's perspective. Vision starts with identity and purpose. Through a revolution in our identity, we can think with divine purpose. Such a change begins with a revelation of Him.

One of the tragedies of a weakened identity is how it affects our approach to Scripture. Many, if not most theologians, make the mistake of taking all the *good stuff* contained in the prophets and sweeping it under that mysterious rug called the *Millennium*. It is not my desire to debate that subject right now. But I do want to deal with our propensity to put off those things that require courage, faith, and action to another period of time. The mistaken idea is this: if it is good, it can't be for now.

A cornerstone in this theology is that the condition of the Church will always be getting worse and worse; therefore, tragedy in the Church is just another sign of these being the last days. In a perverted sense, the weakness of the Church confirms to many that they are on the right course. The worsening condition of the world and the Church becomes a sign to them that all is well. I have many problems with that kind of thinking, but only one I'll mention now—*it requires no faith!*

We are so entrenched in unbelief that anything contrary to this worldview is thought to be of the devil. So it is with the idea of the Church having a dominating impact before Jesus returns. It's almost as though we want to defend the right to be small in number and make it by the *skin of our teeth*. Embracing a belief system that requires no faith is dangerous. It is contrary to the nature of God and all that the Scriptures declare. Since He plans to do *above all we could ask or think*, according to Ephesians 3:20, His

promises by nature challenge our intellect and expectations. “[Jerusalem] did not consider her destiny; therefore her collapse was awesome” (Lam. 1:9). The result of forgetting His promises is not one we can afford.

We are often more convinced of our *unworthiness* than we are of His *worth*. Our *inability* takes on greater focus than does His *ability*. But the same One who called *fearful Gideon* a Valiant Warrior and *unstable Peter* a Rock has called us the Body of His beloved Son on earth. That has to count for something.

In the next chapter we’ll see how to use a gift to manifest His Kingdom—causing heaven to touch earth.

ENDNOTE

- I. *Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, “Key,” (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1957), 629.

ABOUT BILL JOHNSON

BILL JOHNSON is a fifth-generation pastor with a rich heritage in the Holy Spirit. Together, Bill and his wife serve a growing number of churches that have partnered for revival. This leadership network has crossed denominational lines, building relationships that enable church leaders to walk successfully in both purity and power.

Bill and Brenda (Beni) Johnson are the senior pastors of Bethel Church in Redding, California. All three of their children and spouses are involved in full-time ministry. They also have nine wonderful grandchildren.

RECOMMENDED READING

A Life of Miracles by Bill Johnson

Basic Training for the Prophetic Ministry by Kris Vallotton

Basic Training for the Supernatural Ways of Royalty by Kris Vallotton

Developing a Supernatural Lifestyle by Kris Vallotton

Dreaming With God by Bill Johnson

Face to Face by Bill Johnson

Here Comes Heaven by Bill Johnson and Mike Seth

Loving Our Kids On Purpose by Danny Silk

Purity: The New Moral Revolution by Kris Vallotton

Momentum by Bill Johnson and Eric Johnson

Release the Power of Jesus by Bill Johnson

Strengthen Yourself in the Lord by Bill Johnson

The Happy Intercessor by Beni Johnson

The Supernatural Power of a Transformed Mind by Bill Johnson

The Supernatural Ways of Royalty by Kris Vallotton and Bill Johnson

The Ultimate Treasure Hunt by Kevin Dedmon

When Heaven Invades Earth by Bill Johnson

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