

Sowing Seeds of Faith Newsletter

Straight Arrow Ministries

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Featured Item

Prophetic Purposes & the Zeal of the Lord

PROPHETIC PURPOSES AND THE ZEAL OF THE LORD

When Sovereignty and Free Will Meet

Kenneth L. Birks

Cultivating Newness

Let's face it: We all desire new things. They inspire us until the newness wears off. God's desire for us is to give us new hearts constantly springing forth with a sense of newness thrusting us forward into His purposes for our lives. However, it is our responsibility to cultivate our hearts so that we keep the essence of newness alive while engaging in His assignments.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*

The problem is that our hearts get trampled on by the world and its desires, along with life's circumstances. As a result, we tend to become hardened. Therefore, if we are to remain in a state of freshness with a constant sense of newness, our hearts need to be cultivated daily. We must continually break up the fallow ground of our hearts if we want the seed of newness to produce the desired fruit.

Hosea 10:12 *Sow to yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord till He comes and rains righteousness on you.*

The word cultivate means to prepare for raising crops, loosen or break up the soil, foster growth, and improve by labor, care, or study. The next verse in Hosea explains why our hearts get hard from being trampled on. It says we partake of the fruit of lies and trust in our ways. The worldly system of thought is full of lies because the father of all lies, Satan, controls it. Yet, we find ourselves attracted to his lies and ways of

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Cultivating Newness (Continued)

thinking by trusting in our ways rather than God's.

In John the Baptist's message, he came with the message, "*Prepare the way for the presence of Jesus,*" telling them to plow the ground or cultivate it to prepare for the newness that was about to spring forth into the entire world.

Luke 3:4 *As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD, make His paths straight."*

How did John cultivate their hearts for them to hear the message? He began by using shock treatment by calling them a brood of vipers. It helped them to see their hearts' condition and need for repentance. Even though we are new creatures in Christ, we change from glory to glory, which means, if we are to maintain a sense of newness, we must recognize and repent from the sin that holds us back from going to the next level of change.

John then stripped away their protective shields by telling them, "*Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.*" What is John doing? He's tearing away all that was secure to them. They said, "*We're good Jews. We obey the commandments. We're God's chosen people.*" He first attacks their sense of righteousness and belonging in God's sight as to who they are.

Many Jews expected God would deal extremely hard with Gentile sinners in the judgment, but the Jews would be safe. He denounced this attitude and removed their presumed security. By stripping away their protective shields, it allowed them to see the condition of their hearts. We must ask ourselves, "What kind of protective shields do we have around our hearts that need to be removed?"

John then invokes the fear of God to provoke responses when he says, "*And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees.*" So, they asked, saying, "*What shall we do then?*" He then hits on repentance, introduced earlier, which was also picked up by Peter when speaking to the crowd after He and John healed the lame man. He mentions it is repentance that brings times of refreshing and newness from the presence of the Lord — *Acts 3:19*.

In conclusion, we must ask ourselves, "What areas have we allowed our hearts to become hardened by worldliness and the pressures of life?" Then we must break up the fallow ground by applying His word to those areas that have become hardened by our sinful ways.

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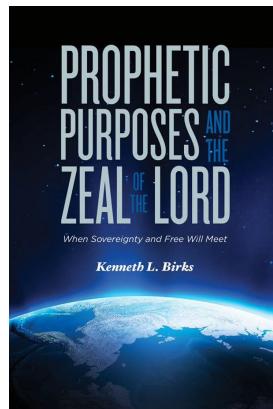


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About Ken's Book

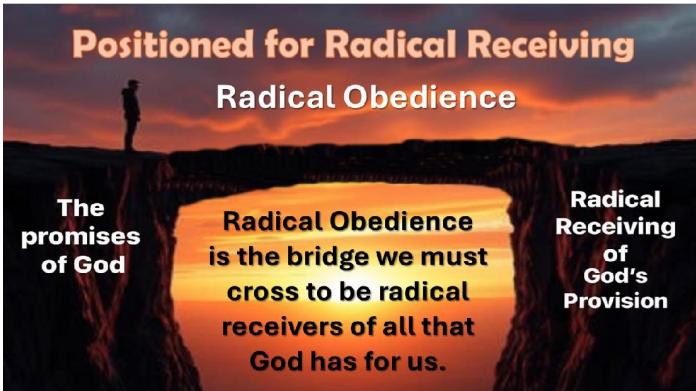


God reveals His prophetic purposes in every generation. The Book of Acts records how David served God's purposes for his generation. A quick look through biblical history shows how many patriarchs, judges, kings, prophets, and apostles also served the prophetic purposes for their generations. These were people whom God chose in His Sovereignty to call forth as His chosen vessels.

The essence of this book is that God has sovereign purposes on earth that He must fulfill through His sovereignty. While fulfilling them, He uses imperfect vessels like you and me. How does our free will work with God's sovereignty to bring forth His purposes as He fulfills them from one generation to another? This book explores these questions and much more. We discover that one of His most significant traits is His patience combined with our obedience which allows us to be involved with Him.

This book has three sections. The first section sets the stage showing how God has already brought His prophetic purposes into play throughout the Bible's history. The second section outlines His prophetic objectives for the Church that the Father must fulfill before the second coming of Christ. The third section discusses what we must do to prepare ourselves to be valuable vessels unto honor as we partner with Him in fulfilling all that was foretold by His prophets.

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Podcast Feature

In this message, we discover all of the wonderful promises God has given to us to be radical receivers of all that He desires to pour into our lives.

**Click Here to Listen
to the Podcast**

About Ken Birks



Ken Birks is an ordained Pastor/Teacher in the Body of Christ. He functions as an elder and one of the teaching pastors at The Rock of Roseville in California. He also serves as a wedding and funeral officiant in the Sacramento region. Prior to this, Ken was the Lead Pastor of Golden Valley Christian Center, a non-denominational, church in Roseville for twelve years. Ken has been married to his wife, Lydia for 45 years. They have two adult children and consider them their highest calling, along with the many teens and children whom they've been foster parents to over the past 40 years plus.

Website Features

Ken's website located at kenbirks.com has lots of features worth exploring. His website receives around 2000 visitors a week featuring Bible Studies, Sermon Outlines, Devotionals, Podcasts, Devotional Poetry, Books he has written, past Newsletters and more information about him and his testimony as well.



Cultivating Your Heart

by Ken Birks

Trampled by carnality, our hearts disengage.
Sensualism wearing, we cry for righteousness.
Disillusionment reigning, confusion acquiesces.
Cracked and broken, we yearn to be plowed.
Promises of righteous rain, prayers are heard.

Cultivating fallow ground, repentance is pursued.
Early rain falling, righteousness rains uninhibited.
Righteousness raining, His love softens the ground.
Cracks disappearing, righteousness unbounds.
Saturated in righteousness, newness emerges.

Newness transforming, sprouts appear shaping reality.
Watered and nurtured, increase gives way to vitality.
Joyfulness replenished; new fruitfulness reactivates.
Immersed in wisdom above empowerment emerges.
Plowing new fields, righteousness submerges.

As latter rain covering the earth, His mercy extends.
Made new, cultivated by His Spirit, anointed ones rise.
Fully ripened, harvest appears, beautiful and glorious.
Harvest completed, fruit is excellent and appealing.
Delivered from carnality, we stand ready for His return.



For information and pricing on all of Ken's books and how to order from the various online outlets such as Amazon, Barnes & Nobel, and other sources, click the graphic above.

Top Ten Bible Studies

The Ministry and Role of the Holy Spirit

This lesson describes and identifies the role of the Holy Spirit in the world, His relationship with the Father and Son, and how He functions in our lives.

Our Great Salvation

The Bible refers to our salvation as a Great Salvation, something the Old Testament prophets and righteous men, women, and even angels desired to look into, but could not. In this lesson, the goal is to look into this great salvation and why it is so great.

Water Baptism

Water baptism is a vital part of the Christian experience as we will see in this study. In fact, it is a very necessary part of the spiritual foundation that is being built in our lives. It is much more than a Christian ritual. Like everything else in the Christian life, we must apply the application of faith in order to experience what God has purposed for the Christian in water baptism.

The Healing Covenant

The purpose of this message is to show that healing is a part of God's divine nature that is being poured into the hearts of His people. It is also a part of the great covenants that God has established with His people throughout the ages.

Unraveling the Mystery of the Godhead

In the Bible, God is shown to be three distinct personalities: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The study of the Godhead is one of the major doctrines that orthodox Christianity teaches. It is a doctrine that separates Christianity from cults and so called Christian cults....

Predestination & Foreknowledge

The purpose of this lesson is to come to an understanding of what the Bible has to say concerning Predestination, Election and the Foreknowledge of God. We shall see what the Bible really says concerning this important study.

**Click Here Now
to View all Ten Bible Studies**

Top Ten Sermon Outlines

Dealing with Strongholds

This message deals with how you can pull down the strongholds that Satan has built in your lives. This message deals with how to cast off the works of darkness and to walk in the armor of light, while not giving place to the devil.

The Balance of Grace and Holiness

This message deals with God's grace in relationship to our holiness and sanctification. It examines the idea that God in His grace sees us as perfectly holy in Christ. He then sends His Holy Spirit to create a new heart within us as His Spirit helps to transform us into the likeness of His Son. We then come to understand that the work of Christ was finished at the cross, while the work of the Holy Spirit is an ongoing experience.

Striving for Moral Excellence

This message deals with our commitment to moral excellence. There is a great need for the church to exhibit a sense of moral excellence to the world in this critical hour in which we live — an era that condones and promotes sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, abortion and filthy coarse language.

Developing Faith Muscles

This message deals with the importance of developing faith muscles through our everyday circumstances. Faith is the essence of the Christian walk and unless we learn how to apply it in our daily lives we will not grow in it as God desires.

Healing for the Wounded Spirit

This message deals with identifying and getting healed from your emotional wounds. Are you tired of being chained to your past—emotional wounds, broken relationships, addictions and other areas of your life that keep you in bondage from being the successful person you would really like to be? If so, there is hope for you. Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted and the oppressed. His Spirit is with us today carrying out this important purpose in our lives.

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