

# Recapturing a Lost Generation

Eric Michael Teitelman

Pastor • Teacher • Worship Leader



House of David  
MINISTRIES

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Yeshua:

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter declared: *“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams” (Acts 2:17, NKJV).*<sup>i</sup> He was quoting the book of Joel verbatim.

The early disciples believed the return of the Lord was imminent. But nearly two thousand years later, we now understand they were not living in the last days as they thought. Most likely, we are. If this is true, then per the prophecy of Joel, the church should prepare to receive the most incredible outpouring of the Holy Spirit since the Day of Pentecost.

Contrast this understanding with the words of Paul, where he said, *“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [of the Lord] will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3).* And Yeshua said, *“There will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken” (Luke 21:25-26).*

These scriptures appear contradictory. Is the world going to fall away from God in the last days? Or will many turn to the Lord as He pours out His Spirit upon all flesh? The answer is likely both.

In the western world, Christianity appears to be declining. The Barna Institute recently reported: *“For understandable reasons, millions of millennials reject organized religion, or have qualms about religious leaders, and especially about religious people who may prove to be hypocritical. Their experiences, observations, and assumptions regarding religion, spiritual beliefs, and faith practices have produced a turbulent spiritual experience.”*<sup>ii</sup>

On the upside, the report notes that some fifty-nine percent of millennials see Jesus as at least “a little positive,” with some thirty-nine percent viewing Him as “very positive.” But on the downside, while sixty-five percent still identify as Christian, many do not embrace a biblical worldview on sexuality, the sanctity of life, and other Biblical issues. Nearly one-third identify as LGBT, a proportion roughly three times higher than all older generations combined.

The outcome of this study is revealing. The church has not entirely lost this younger generation of seventy-eight million (born from 1984 to 2002). This group is mainly at odds with conventional Christianity and is trying to forge their sense of right and wrong apart from the church. Humanism is the prevailing spirit over them, and if the church does not intercede quickly, it will not be long before secular humanism dominates their universal views. In other words, a world apart from God will soon become a world without Him altogether.

The Barna study goes on to say that *"The resultant spiritual illiteracy virtually resigns them to a superficial worldview in which they grasp at ideas and practices that provide immediate comfort rather than lasting truth and peace. The moral chaos that characterizes the generation can likewise be traced to a dearth of coherent and pragmatic religious instruction abetted by the absence of mature moral reflection.* He added, *"The widespread confusion among young adults regarding aspects of their identity—spiritual, sexual, and also related to their sense of purpose in life—are a direct outgrowth of that spiritual wisdom vacuum."* In other words, this current younger generation is spiritually confused due to a lack of Biblical discipleship and wisdom in the church.

I think it is essential for us to recognize that the Holy Spirit has never slumbered or ceased to work since the Day of Pentecost. God has continued to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh as the prophets declared, and the evidence is overwhelming. Untold millions are still being saved, albeit outside Western nations, most visibly in China, Africa, South America, and Iran. And still, we know that in the last days, the world will become darker, meaning deception will increase—*"For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people"* (Isaiah 60:2). But a falling away of America does not immediately conclude *the* falling away as Paul stated.

If we continue reading through this verse from Isaiah, the Lord further declares, *"But the Lord will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you."* Yeshua told His disciples, *"You [we] are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden"* (Matthew 5:14). If the Lord has arisen over His people and His glory is to be seen upon us, and the church *is* the light of the world to reveal His glory to the nations, then we presume that darkness can only cover the earth if the church is no longer shining. Therefore, the prophets are correct. God will continue to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, yet despite this great visitation of the Lord, many will choose to reject the love of His truth and fall away from Him.<sup>iii</sup>

Light dispels darkness the same way that truth removes deception. Thus, shining implies the revealing by speaking God's truth in a world filled with Satan's lies. In returning to the Barna study, if millions of millennials are indeed rejecting organized religion, then we once again presume that the church is the primary cause for the seeming loss of this generation. Not Satan, and certainly not God. No, the church is responsible because we have either not lived by God's word or openly spoken His truth. In measure, yes, but not to the degree necessary to overcome the pervasive darkness in this world. And the numbers from the Barn study confirm this to be correct.

It may require a more detailed study to determine the unique hypocritical issues that young people see within the church. The more obvious ones are the abuse of authority and hiding sexual misconduct. But in my opinion, there are likely other important issues that people observe. For example, our churches are segregated by socioeconomic, racial, and theological differences. We have rich churches and poor ones, white churches, and black ones. And many denominations hold theological views that are either gross mischaracterizations or antithetical to scripture.

I hear young people often ask: "if Christianity is the only true religion, then why are there so many differing opinions about it?" But the division in the church reveals an even deeper issue. The church lacks genuine love for one another. Yeshua said, *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13:35).

Love has so many attributes. As Paul writes, *"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things"* (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). If the church were unified in God's love, we would also be united in His truth.

With the condition of the church as it is, the question we need to be asking is: how can we possibly ever recapture this lost generation?

The Lord only knows, but I also believe the church does have a critical role to play. We must be united in the truth of God's word and the love for each other and all people. While we must labor towards this end, continuing to teach the truth in love and not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, I also believe it will ultimately require a supernatural outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church. We need another Pentecost.

After the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the early church came under intense persecution. The church, in desperation, cried out to the Lord in prayer, asking, *"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus"* (Acts 4:29-30). It was during this time that the church united, as we read, *"Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common"* (Acts 4:32).

It was at this time that the Holy Spirit came a second time in power to the disciples, as we read, *"And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 4:31 & 33).*

With boldness and power, signs and wonders, the apostles had been restrengthened in the Lord. They were ready to stand in the face of increasing adversity and persecution, to preach the truth of the Gospel, and to give witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. If we truly are living in

the last days, is the church poised once again to receive another incredible outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as the prophet declared, *"And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh" (Joel 2:28).*

The Holy Spirit initially fell on the Jewish disciples who tarried in Jerusalem. However, I believe this last and most remarkable outpouring of the Spirit will fall on a global remnant of the church in practically every nation. Notice I said "remnant." Because on the Day of Pentecost, only one hundred-twenty of the roughly five hundred disciples whom Yeshua appeared to, in obedience, waited patiently in Jerusalem for the Lord to reappear, uniting with one accord in prayer and supplication.<sup>iv</sup>

Love, unity, prayer, and obedience will be the hallmarks of the last-day remnant church, and I believe this current younger generation will take notice. The hypocrisy they see today will be washed away, for we know the Lord is returning for a bride that is without spot or wrinkle.<sup>v</sup> The church must preach the unadulterated Biblical truth and the whole counsel of God regarding His Kingdom. Consequently, Jerusalem and the prophetic destiny of Israel will be on the heart of God's people, as the early disciples asked Yeshua, *"Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).*

The spiritual forces of darkness will attempt to silence this last-day church from speaking God's truth. As we read, *"Since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin" (1 Peter 4:1).* Thus, I believe we will not only be strengthened and empowered but we will also be purified and refined through adversity and tribulation, namely persecution.

Wheat and tares, light and darkness, will live together until the appointed time of the end.<sup>vi</sup> And the Holy Spirit dwelling within His church, until the rapture, will continue to restrain and hold back the deception that seeks to consume the earth. Yes, darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people, but the Lord will arise over us, and His glory will be seen upon His people. The church has a narrow window to invite others into God's ark of protection before the tribulation, as Yeshua warned, *"The night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4).*<sup>vii</sup>

Therefore, let us labor together and recapture this lost generation as we live in divine unity with one heart and one soul, selflessly caring for all others and speaking the word of God with boldness and truth. And with great power, signs, and wonders, witnessing to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Amen!

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<sup>i</sup> All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.

<sup>ii</sup> *New Insights into the Generation of Growing Influence: Millennials in America.* A Research Report by George Barna, Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. Foundations of Freedom, October 2021.

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iii 2 Thessalonians 2:10.

iv Acts 1:14-15. 1 Corinthians 15:6.

v Ephesians 5:27.

vi Matthew 13:24-30.

vii Luke 11:17.