6 Replication and Convergence: On Earth as in Heaven

1. Introduction

a. God is bringing into clearer and sharper focus his strategy for transitioning the earth away from the destructive control of the god of this world, and into the righteous reign and glory of his Son. That strategy is the transitioning of the church into the house of prayer, the community of believers living in the tension of the now and not yet of heavenly realities coming to earth.

b. At the heart of the house of prayer is our understanding that we are to function as a royal priesthood, making ourselves ready as a Bride for Jesus, being prepared by God to rule and reign with him on this earth when he comes to establish his righteous kingdom. What we are doing now in seeking to replicate the heavenly realities that we have been looking at over the past few weeks, putting in place the building blocks that God will use for ultimate restoration.

   i Today is about how we translate the realities of heaven revealed in scripture into practical measures contributing towards the convergence of heaven and earth. What we do in the prayer room will make a lot more sense when we see it in the context of God's ultimate plan of bringing heaven to earth at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.

c. We're focusing on two words – **replication** and **convergence**. Replication is about how we can reproduce heavenly realities on the earth – we want to get as close to the nature, function and purpose of what we see in heaven as we can. Convergence refers to those times, places and seasons where heaven and earth converge, and where God's manifest presence is seen in greater measure.

d. Our prayer watches are not just a holding pattern to keep things ticking over until Jesus returns. We must gain a biblical understanding of God's greater purposes – it will keep us grounded and focused. And whilst our prayers and petitions that we pray from our imperfect understanding clearly do have an impact in the here and now, they are also filling up those golden bowls ready to be poured out on the earth at the end of the age.

Revelation 8:3-5 *And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, [4] and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. [5] Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.*

2. The principle of Replication

a. God's ultimate purpose is restoration; restoration requires there to have been an original condition that the subject in view can be returned to. What was the original condition that is in view here? We take the premise that the original condition is that of Eden which was a mountain-city; and the restoration in view is ultimately the New Jerusalem descending to the earth as described in Revelation 21 and 22.

Genesis 2:8 *And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.*

a. The garden that God planted was in Eden, but it wasn't the sum total of Eden. The garden was just a part of it, and that's where he put Adam. We know Eden was bigger than just a garden and the bible gives us some clues. First, we are told that a river flowed out of it and into the

garden, and there it divided into four rivers. And then there was a proximity to the garden that enabled God to come and walk with Adam every day. But perhaps the biggest clue comes in Genesis 4:

Genesis 4: 16-17 *Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. [17] Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.*

b. It says that Cain built a city and named it after his son Enoch. How did he know to build a city if he'd never seen one? We have to conclude that he was familiar with what a city looked like because at that time the mountain-city of Eden was still on the earth. In Revelation 21 and 22 the New Jerusalem is also described as a mountain city. The reality that the scriptures present us with is that in the same way heaven and earth were joined together at creation, so they will once again be joined together at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.

c. God's desire ultimately is to come and dwell on the earth; that is the future reality that is in view. In the meantime, scripture points us to heavenly realities that God has revealed that can bring about a convergence of heaven and earth even in our temporal time-frame. These are practical and spiritual realities that combine to replicate "on earth as it is in heaven" in such a way that the presence of God is manifest upon the earth.

   i But he doesn't come on our terms – he only comes on his own terms. God wants things done in a certain way – he is jealous for his name and for his holiness, and there are many scriptures that instruct us on how to approach God in an acceptable way:

Psalm 24:3-4 *Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? [4] He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.*

Jeremiah 29:13 *You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.*

d. We must be vigilant and careful that we build according to God's blueprint and not our own ideas. Moses was careful to build the Tabernacle exactly according to the pattern that God gave him. Not just in terms of its materials and its physical form – the pattern also included its function and purpose, how it was to be the focal point of the life of the community.

e. So we must be intentional in becoming familiar with what the bible has to say about heavenly realities. That's why we must study the Tabernacle and the Temple, they contain within them the elements by which we, today, can provide that place where God is pleased to come and show his face amongst us.

f. However, we mustn't take things beyond what God intends for us. For instance we no longer need a physical structure –a tabernacle or a temple – because Jesus has opened up a new and living way through his flesh and by his blood, so we can now come straight into the holy of holies in heaven. Similarly, we have no need of the Ark of the Covenant because Jesus himself, instead of the Ark, becomes the connecting point between heaven and earth. He is the mediator of the Covenant.

   i But we do need to understand the principles and practices that those structures teach us about how we should approach God. Understanding that will help us to comprehend more fully how God comes in greater manifestation of his presence on the earth.

g. The bible presents us with two facets of replication:

i **Structural replication**. That means what we can learn from heaven as the dwelling place of God – its physical structure, where it is located, its layout and furniture, what is its purpose, who is there and so on.

ii **Liturgical replication**. What we can observe about worship in heaven, the way things function in heaven, how things are done, what activities we can discern and how we can best seek to replicate these in our earthly prayer rooms.

h. Ultimately the story of replication is about God's relationship with His people bringing revelation of His own glory. God is seeking those whose lives are given to abandoned worship and prayer, and where he finds communities of people given to a life of prayer and worship he will draw near to them in greater manifestations of his power and presence.

Matthew 18: 20 *For where two or three are gathered in my name, <u>there am I among them</u>.*

i. It's in the context of community that Jesus manifests his presence in a greater way. That's not to say he won't draw near to us individually, but the context shows that there is a greater manifestation of his power and presence when we come together in agreement with each other and with him.

j. Replication is birthed out of God's heart, it's not just a blueprint that he is following. This maintains an element of mystery as we search out God's heart, and it also safeguards us from pursuing too enthusiastically anything that takes us beyond biblical bounds.

i There has been a tendency in church history to perpetuate places where there has been a convergence beyond what God intended. Like when Peter wanted to build booths at the transfiguration. That explains why we have so many denominations in the church – every move of God has resulted in a new denomination to try to perpetuate that move of God. God wants us to fully embrace and live in the fullness of his revelation – not build a memorial to it.

k. As a generalisation, the primary purpose that God wants reveal to us in the Tabernacle of Moses is the **structural replication** of the heavenly temple. The primary purpose in the Tabernacle of David and to a lesser extent the Temple, was the replication of the **qualities and order of worship** in the heavenly temple. The primary purpose in the Millennial Temple will be the **greater scope of the worship of the heavenly temple** being established in increasing measure on earth.

3. Structural Replication

a. In the Tabernacle of Moses everything had to be constructed according to a pattern that Moses had been shown in his encounter with God on Mount Sinai. The requirement for accuracy and faithfulness in replication was a reflection of the holiness and perfection of the originals that were being copied.

i God has purpose in everything he does, down to the smallest detail. There is a reason behind the way God has designed everything. The closer we can get to modelling in some way the glorious realities of heaven, the more we will comprehend the perfection and wisdom of God's ways.

b. David also received specific instruction from God concerning the building of the temple. Because he was close to the heart of God, he understood that God's greatest desire was to dwell amongst his people here on earth, which is why he desired to construct a permanent

place for God's dwelling. Like Moses, David also received similar detailed revelation written by the hand of God. Speaking of his plans for the construction of the temple he said:

1 Chronicles 28:19 *"All this," said David, "the LORD made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, all the details of this pattern."*

4. Convergence – the temple as heaven on earth

a. The temple was just a more permanent version of the tabernacle. The layout was similar, and the way it functioned was the same. And so it was also a copy – or shadow – of the real sanctuary in heaven. The heavenly sanctuary is the dwelling place of God; the temple was understood as the place where God dwelt in the midst of his people. It was understood that there was complete convergence between the earthly sanctuary – which was the holy of holies, described as God's footstool – and God's heavenly sanctuary which was his throne of glory.

1 Chronicles 28:2 *Then King David rose to his feet and said: "Hear me, my brothers and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and for the footstool of our God, and I made preparations for building.*

Psalm 99:5 *Exalt the LORD our God; worship at his footstool! Holy is he!*

b. The glory of God behind the curtain was not a separate glory or presence but actually the same glory of His Heavenly Temple. Due to the convergence there was no longer a ceiling – the Holy of Holies on the earth opened directly into the Heavenly Temple. "*The temple is the place on earth where God rests his foot—it still belongs to the heavenly sphere: Yahweh sits on his throne in heaven as well as in the temple*" (Rabbi Knierim, 1968)

c. There is a second way in which this manifest glory of God is described several times in the scriptures:

Isaiah 37:15-16 *And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: [16] "O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth.*

Psalm 80:1 *Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth!*

Psalm 99:1 *The LORD reigns, let the peoples tremble; He is enthroned above the cherubim, let the earth shake!*

d. These verses refer to both the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries with no distinction between the two. In both Moses' tabernacle and in the Temple there were golden cherubim over the Ark of the Covenant. These were intended to represent the living cherubim who dwelt in proximity to God's throne in heaven.

i Now, the cherubim are very different to the seraphim and not to be confused with one another. The cherubim in heaven are responsible for guarding and facilitating the convergence of heaven and earth. Cherubim are woven into the curtain to the Holy of Holies because that was now the only point of access that remained to the heaven on the earth

ii Angelic activity that is present in facilitating convergence between heaven and earth. We must not be so focused on the physical that we miss the spiritual dimension of how God manifests his presence in our midst.

5. Liturgical replication – the tabernacle of David

a. The tabernacle of David is an important episode in Israel's history that we look to as a model on which to build our own liturgical replication. In this pattern that was instituted by David we find a revelation of the liturgy of heaven being manifested in the national life of Israel.

I Chronicles 16:1-7 *"And they brought in the ark of God and placed it inside the tent which David had pitched for it, and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. 2 When David had finished offering the burnt offering and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. 3 He distributed to everyone of Israel, both man and woman, to everyone a loaf of bread and a portion of meat and a raisin cake. 4 He appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the LORD, even to celebrate and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel: 5 Asaph the chief, and second to him Zechariah, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom and Jeiel, with musical instruments, harps, lyres; also Asaph played loud-sounding cymbals, 6 and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests blew trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God. 7 Then on that day David first assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks to the LORD."*

a. 4,000 singers and 288 musicians were consecrated and set aside for the ministry of worship before the Ark of the Covenant. David himself financed these musicians and singers, and released them into their ministry as their full-time occupation. In his Tabernacle David was permitted to put the Lord on display in a context of worship and prayer, enabling him to establish a foretaste of the glorious, abandoned worship of heaven right here on earth. He released a generation into a place of day and night worship and prayer, a perpetual stream of incense rising before the worthy one. David's tabernacle was not so much about a model as it was about access to the presence of God and intimacy with the Lord.

b. Many of the Psalms were written in and around the tabernacle of David, and they are a rich source given to us where we can drink from the same fountain that David did in his tabernacle. David rightly said, "I will meditate on your glorious splendour and on your wondrous works." (Psalm 145:5)

c. As we position ourselves before the Lord in the prayer room and engage with God in worship and prayer, we become more receptive to all that God wants to impart to us.

6. Liturgical replication – the worship and prayer movement

a. Everything we do in the prayer room we describe as being in the spirit of the Tabernacle of David. We take the principles of David's Tabernacle and apply them to what the Holy Spirit is raising up globally today – the singers and musicians ministering in the context of the presence of God, day and night declaring the worth and glory of the one on the throne.

Isaiah 42:8-12 *"I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images… Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands and you inhabitants of them!... Let them give glory to the LORD, and declare His praise in the coastlands."*

Malachi 1:11 *"For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts."*

b. At the end of the age the deepest affections of the Church will be captured by the beauty of Jesus. It will be our greatest joy to offer the perpetual incense of praise from the rising of the sun to its going down, all across the world in every nation as these verses prophesy.

c. We live in the age where the point of convergence between heaven and earth is now in the person of Jesus. The Church now stands as an expression of his presence through our union to

him and the indwelling Spirit. Since Jesus is in the heavenly Temple there is no longer a specific place of convergence on the earth or a geographic location where devotion is centred on the earth.

Hebrews 9:24-28 *For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. [25] Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, [26] for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. [27] And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, [28] so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

d. Jesus took all those shadows of the tabernacle and the temple and in his body presented the once-for-all sacrifice before God. We no longer need the outward externals of structures and furnishings. We have a New Covenant in Jesus that transcends and fulfils all the regulations associated with the old covenant system.

e. In the New Testament there are virtually no formal commands for anything structural or institutional. One of the reasons why God made sure the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in AD70 was so that the worship of God was truly seen as something that was to be universal across the earth, not just centred in one place. The temple was not constructed of one stone, but many, the true temple of the Lord is now where we gather together to give him exclusive, incessant and universal worship.

7. The language of heaven

Revelation 11:17 *"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken up your great power and begun to reign."*

Revelation 15:3-4 *"Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."*

a. The songs or hymns of Revelation are a rich source of instruction in the language of prayer and worship. They are all positive in their expression, and are directed exclusively to God. They ascribe glory to God. They honour God. They give thanks to God. And they recognise God's eternal nature. They are rich in their theological understanding, yet simple in their expression, and if we embrace and adopt the language of heaven we will find that it is a well that never runs dry.

8. Conclusion

a. God's fundamental desire for "on earth as it is in heaven" has not changed. Every expression of night and day prayer throughout history stands as a prophetic sign pointing to the hope of Jesus' return, and the ultimate restoration of heaven and earth coming together as one.

b. The scriptures present us with many tantalising snippets of heaven and they are not there merely to satisfy our curiosity. They are there to draw us in to greater depths of love and devotion. We have such a rich tapestry on which to draw as we seek to replicate the glory of heaven in the midst of the darkness of this earth.

Hebrews 13:14-15 *For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. [15] Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*