

Chapter 1

Abandon the Old Paradigm

Two Battles

I was driving a very large piece of heavy equipment across a field. The machine I was driving was one of those front end loaders used in quarries or strip mines with tires about 10 feet tall. It was an awesome and powerful machine which crossed large gullies and ditches with barely a bump. There were at least two other people who were also driving their own machines.

As I drove across the field, two tigers, a small one and a large one, ran across the field in front of me. I nearly ran over the small one and it seemed to anger the large tiger, which appeared to be its mother. However, I felt safe since I was seated far above the field in the enclosed cab of the big machine.

As we crossed the field, we approached two buildings with a lane between them. The building on the right was a large wooden framework which appeared to be unfinished. Though the building was under construction, most of the wood was gray and weathered, as if it had been there a long time. There seemed to be no activity or progress taking place.

Then I noticed that the large tiger was chasing me and clawing at the giant tires of the machine I was driving. To me it seemed futile for the tiger to try to stop this huge machine but then, to my surprise and dismay, the tiger gripped one of the tires with its claws and the machine bogged down and stalled! I could hardly believe what was happening and commented, "Is this really happening?"

Sensing that we were in danger, we all jumped from our machines onto the wooden building, seeking a place of safety. We climbed up the framework of the building until we were on the beams which would have supported a future roof. I turned and looked for the tiger below and was again surprised. What used to be my powerful machine was now a dead antelope in the jaws of the tiger. Holding the antelope by its neck, the tiger began to climb one of the wooden posts of the structure where we had sought refuge. We realized that the old wooden structure was not a place of refuge since the tiger could easily climb upon it.

Realizing we were in danger we frantically began to think of ways to protect ourselves from the possible attack of the tiger. The next thing I remember was having several nuts and bolts in my hands and working quickly to assemble them. What I was trying to assemble was not clear. I just remember feeling very confident that we had a plan from God which would bring safety and security from the tiger.

Then one of the people with us, whom I only knew as a prophetic figure, said, "This plan is not from God. We need to abandon this plan and leave this structure now!" We paused and looked at each other in a silent moment; we knew it was true. We quickly jumped down from the wooden structure and ran to the building on the other side of the lane.

The other building was also under construction, but it was a steel structure instead of wood. We were able to climb the structure by grasping some of the horizontal beams. We knew the tiger would not be able to sink its claws into the steel as it had done with the wood structure and we knew we would be safe. Climbing to the top was a struggle and it was as though I had to make a choice of will to make it. Then we were sitting on the top of the steel structure in a place of rest and security. The tiger and the wooden structure now seemed irrelevant.

Watching from a place of rest, we looked down at a different field on the other side of the steel structure. From this field, people were emerging from the ground! As they came out of the ground, it was as if they were being birthed from the earth. At first they looked like an expanding bulge on the surface of the ground, but as they emerged completely, they morphed into living soldiers who marched toward a different section of the metal building that was actively under construction. In this construction area, the sounds of clashing swords could be heard and the soldiers joined a battle already in progress.

I awoke with a strong sense that this dream, which was clearly burned into my mind, was from God. As stated in the Preface, whether or not to regard a dream or vision as valid is totally up to each individual. However, I encourage you to prayerfully consider this dream and the interpretation offered below.

The Interpretation

Man's Ability

The large machines speak of the strength of man and man-made methods of progress and building. [1] Man's ability to build outside God's plan is quite remarkable. God acknowledged that just before He confused the language at Babel saying, "...nothing that they [mankind] propose to do will be withheld from them" (Gen 11:6). Though we may feel quite secure and capable operating our impressive machinery, the works of man can never accomplish the purposes of God.

The structure of an incomplete building is man's attempt to build God's house, which will never be finished. [2] It may have started out with the right foundation, but the builders decided to build with wood. The framework of old weathered wood, represents man's works using man's materials according to man's paradigm. Paul warned against building with flammable material like wood, hay and stubble instead of material that will withstand the test of fire like gold, silver and precious stones.

(1 Corinthians 3:10-15 NKJV) [3]

10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Nuts and Bolts

Having had real experience in the construction of steel buildings. The nuts and bolts I saw were for metal buildings, not wooden ones. In metal structures, these nuts and bolts are what holds the building together. Symbolically, the nuts and bolts in the dream represent basic concepts that hold the spiritual house together, things like organizational and administrative skills, counseling skills, etc. [4] Such things usually aren't too noticeable and aren't very exciting, usually the behind-the-scenes grunt work, but they are an essential part of the structure and it won't stand without them. But in the dream, we were trying to use nuts and the bolts (which were meant for the metal building) to continue building the wooden structure.

Several times over the years, I have heard of a powerful move of God, in one place or another, where many pastors and church leaders, myself included, would travel to take part and see what God was doing. Hopefully, most received valuable impartation. But it seemed to me that many missed the deeper lessons and focused on the nuts and bolts of what was going on and then came home and attempted to use the techniques they had picked up to build their existing structure.

I believe there are many God-given skills that we have tried to use in structures they were not meant for. But the newest program or the newest "how-to" concept added to an already dysfunctional paradigm still results in a dysfunctional paradigm. It ends up being just another attempt to salvage our man-made structures and make them functional. And how confident we are that we have God's insight on how to do it! After all, these were the nuts and bolts that worked across the road.

We may have confidence in our man-made structures and find it difficult to abandon them, especially if we have invested a great deal of time and resources into a certain way of thinking and doing. [5] But God sends us prophetic voices to help us see the futility of our own works and to save our lives from the dangers that easily navigate our structures.

We are also warned in the Psalms that man's thoughts, are futile. Only when we receive instruction from God can we rest in a secure place:

(Psalms 94:11 NKJV)

11The LORD knows the thoughts of man, That they are futile.

The Spirit of Antichrist

Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and so lions are often symbolic of Christ. But I have come to understand that other large cats, such as tigers, often represent the spirit of antichrist. [6] They are similar to the lion, but are different; they are the "other" cats, or "other christs." The antichrist spirit is a religious spirit and dwells in our man-made religious structures. The tiger in this dream easily captured the big machine and carried it into the upper portions of the wooden structure, just as a leopard carries its prey into a tree. The message here is that much of our machinery is easily captured and used by the enemy in our own structures. We think our buildings are for God, but in reality have become a lair for the antichrist spirit [7] (the antichrist

spirit will be addressed in greater detail later). God loves His people who are still laboring in the old structures and He will send prophetic messages telling them that these structures must be abandoned.

The Metal Structure

When we heeded the prophetic warning, we abandoned the old wooden structure and fled to the new metal one. It was not new, as it was already under construction; it was only new to us. It is a structure that the antichrist spirit cannot enter. This metal structure represents the house where the builders operate by the mind of Christ and His instruction instead of the futile thoughts of man. [8] Notice again Psalm 94.

(Psalms 94:11-12 NKJV) [9]

11 The LORD knows the thoughts of man, That they are futile.

12 Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O LORD, And teach out of Your law

Notice the similarity of Psalm 94:11-12 to what Jesus told Peter in Matthew 16. It was not the futile thoughts of man (flesh and blood) that revealed to Peter that Jesus was the Christ. It was a spiritual revelation (instruction) [10] and it was upon that revealed knowledge from God that Jesus said He would build His Church.

(Matthew 16:16-18 NKJV)

16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

18 "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

The Builder Warrior

Finally, in this dream, there were people being birthed from the earth who became soldiers. They marched straight into a battle that was underway in a portion of the building that was under construction. Oh, how we have labored hard and long and seen minimal results. Yet I believe the day is soon coming when we will watch from a place of rest as God births a mighty army! Once again, look at Ps 94 and notice that verse 13 speaks of rest:

(Psalms 94:11-13 NKJV)

11 The LORD knows the thoughts of man, That they are futile.

12 Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O LORD, And teach out of Your law,

13 That You may give him rest from the days of adversity, Until the pit is dug for the wicked.

This army will be birthed with an immediate understanding of spiritual warfare and will come forth as an army of warrior builders who operate from a new paradigm (the concept of the builder/warrior will also be addressed in more detail later). This is an army that operates from the instruction of the Spirit, not man's methods. It has only one goal: preparing the earth to receive her King! [11] "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory" (Psa 102:16).

[12]

Paradigm Builder

Many of the belief structures that Christians embrace today are of man's design and not God's. Though it might be difficult, these structures must be abandoned if we are to be effective in the Kingdom purposes of God.

Before reading this chapter, how would you describe your position regarding this concept?

1 Strongly Disagree - 2 Disagree - 3 Neutral/Unsure - 4 Agree - 5 Strongly Agree

How would you describe your position regarding this concept after reading this chapter?

1 Strongly Disagree - 2 Disagree - 3 Neutral/Unsure - 4 Agree - 5 Strongly Agree