

# **Revelation 3:2**

**A Call to Awaken!**

**by Zak Saenz**

**To God Be the Glory!**

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# Introduction

Having spent the last twenty five plus years in ministry as a pastor, church planter, ministry leader and missionary my focus has always been the gospel and preparing and leading others to awaken from their slumber and fulfill their calling to go out and share the gospel to the lost.

There is this fallacy that going out and sharing the gospel is a calling for specific individuals that have been gifted for this ministry but that is far from the truth and Jesus calls every single Christian to this mission not just some.

Churches are shrinking and closing more and more in America. I see the vast majority of churches more empty than filled and it continues in this downward trend. I see self professing Christians who have never heard the gospel or have only heard a portion of it. I see pastors ill equipped for their position and lack the gifts needed to lead their congregation in building the kingdom.

But there is hope, we can reverse this course and begin again to create churches, pastors and individual Christians who are capable if we dig deep into scripture and teach with strength and passion once again and restore who we were meant to be.

# Chapter One

After teaching through the book of Revelation once again and compiling those teachings into book form it became obvious to me that this book at the end of the New Testament moved me to bring about some clarity of an ongoing problem.

Restoration of what was supposed to be comes at what Jesus confronts the church of Sardis with in Revelation three. It is a call to this church to awaken, but really it is a call to all churches.

Revelation 3:2 ~ *Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.*

The first two words to “wake up” in verse two is an indication of where the church and the individual Christian is as a whole today, asleep. Yes we are asleep and so far nothing has been able to wake us up.

Statistics would show Christians have been asleep for decades so this is not a recent issue at all. Matter of fact it has become generational and this has been caused by several issues in my opinion.

The first issue I see is the lack of ability for the Christian to share a complete gospel message to an unsaved person.

Now as I said this is generational so we need to understand most self professing Christians today haven't heard the gospel yet themselves and I am not sure where that leaves a professing individual as far as even being a believer to begin with.

There is this interesting story in Acts 19:1-7 in which the apostle Paul came across a group of men that he calls disciples. But there must have been something odd about this bunch because Paul immediately asks them if they received the Holy Spirit when they believed and they replied they had not. Something about them made it obvious to Paul that they had not.

So knowing this are these disciples true believers if they didn't receive the Holy Spirit? I would say no they are not.

When we see the disciples who followed Jesus, they had not yet received the Holy Spirit and we see them much differently in comparison to when they finally did. They all were willing to deny Jesus as their Lord prior to the Holy Spirit when threatened with their life. Once they had received the Holy Spirit that changed as well as everything else in their life did. They now were willing to die for their faith in Christ and never denied Christ again from that point on, that's when they became true believers.

Matter of Fact in Acts 19 Paul asks them into what were they baptized and they responded into John the Baptists baptism.

These disciples had not been given the gospel of Jesus or not a complete one in which they had a full understanding of what they were being baptized in.

This is much like many believers today in which they never heard a complete gospel message so that their profession of faith was secured. Many times it's just believe in Jesus because He loves you and though that may be true there is much more in which we will discuss later.

Upon Paul hearing this there is no doubt Paul shares the full gospel message with them in which then the response would be a profession of faith in Christ as Lord and Savior and then he baptizes them properly.

The Holy Spirit indwells a person being saved upon the hearing of the gospel which leads that person to a profession of faith and baptism that is the biblical process.

## Chapter Two

So what is the gospel, the complete gospel? The gospel has to have several key components in it starting with the fall of man. Adam and Eve falling into sin (Genesis 3) was the beginning of the need for a Savior. Sin is always against God, it is doing the opposite of what God commands. Once sin corrupted mankind it caused separation between mankind and God because God cannot have a relationship with sin.

Mankind could not of their own will correct what has now become sinful desires (Romans 3:10-17). Scripture says all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God that being salvation (Romans 3:23).

Knowing that we could not correct our own sinful state that we have put ourselves in (Romans 5:12), God provided a means for the restoration of the relationship and a means for the payment of the sins against Him. God came to earth in fleshly form in Jesus who would live that perfect life that we could not for us. Jesus would also pay for our sins on the cross by his death. Both Jesus' perfect sinless life and payment of sin by His death would be credited to all who would believe in Him as their Lord and Savior (Romans 6:23)(John 14:6). This was acceptable to God and covered all aspects of restoration (Romans 5:15-17). Scripture says all who do not accept Jesus as Lord and Savior will by their actions spend eternity in hell (Revelation 20:10, 14-15).



As you read this refer to the verses given. We obviously don't need to give this long of a version but it is good that you know it.

## **The Gospel**

Here is my approach to it. We are all sinners and being we are all sinners we have created separation between ourselves and God. God being holy and righteous cannot have a relationship with sin and sinners. God requires a sinless and holy life to have a perfect relationship with him and to enter into heaven upon our death. As sinners being unable to live that sinless and holy life God sent His Son Jesus down from heaven to take human form and live a sinless and holy life for all those who would accept Him as Lord and Savior. Jesus lived that perfect, a sinless and holy life and payed for the sins of all who would put faith in Him by His death on the cross. For all those who believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior God now sees the perfect Jesus in every believer. God tells us that the only way to heaven is by our faith in Jesus and no other way. We are called once being saved to do our best to repent from our sins and live a life as much like Jesus as possible. The Holy Spirit is given to every believer to help them and guide them in righteousness. All who do not accept Jesus will spend eternity in hell.

I know that is still kind of long but it is complete and this is what is important.

## Chapter Three

In the church it is always important to identify those who are called to be leaders in the church. It is a gift of every true pastor and once these people are identified they need to be discipled so that they can then build up others.

Church leaders from the top down need to be experienced in sharing the gospel with others and be confident in doing it. They need to be able to show others how to do it as well out in the world. This is how leadership works, if you can't share the gospel effectively then you will never be able to lead others in doing it.

Also those who are pastors and leaders if they have never been discipled the chances are they will have a difficult time discipling others. These are basic requirements of being church leaders and ministry leaders.

Identify leaders and create discipleship programs to take part in with them. Christians need solid leaders to help them mature.

Replication is the key of Christianity. We have had the gospel shared with us and then we have been discipled and we then share the gospel with others and disciple them. Problem is it isn't happening.

So how do we fix this? If a pastor hasn't gone through discipleship with someone they need to because that's where they learn the hands on skills in doing it. You won't learn it in seminary during lectures. It is never too late to be discipled and the skills learned are a must.

Oversight in the growth of new leaders and providing opportunities to use their new skills is important. People learn through doing and at times failure is growth. It also gives final testing on if leadership is in fact meant for them. Do not promote a person who is not gifted in leadership, they will take down many with them including you.

## Chapter Four

Any time Christians can get together for the building up of each other it is a big plus. Once leaders are recognized and they begin to be discipled for this specific ministry, starting small groups with them as the small group leaders helps in replicating everything quicker thus becoming more productive.

These leaders would then disciple those in their small group and provide opportunities to go out and share the gospel with them. Watching the group leader do it is always part of the learning process.

In one of the ministries I oversaw for about 15yrs, I used to take them to different places to interact with non believers and one of the places was Mill Ave in the heart of Arizona State University campus. We would always go on a Friday or Saturday night to have maximum foot traffic and I would always tell them before we went not to worry about approaching anyone because God provides the opportunities for His willing servants.

Once we were on the street it never failed that in no time you would see each of them or two or three of them together talking with people. A smiling face, a great attitude and a hello or a quick comment just to connect with that person would be enough to start the conversation.

I always say let the conversation begin naturally so that the person feels comfortable talking to you first before you start in with the Jesus talk.

Once we have talked for a minute or two I will just say to the person that a group of us came down just to start conversations with people and that we are all Christians.

Once you are in the sharing the gospel phase I always start with do you believe in God, God is the starting point not Jesus. If someone already believes in God then you are half way to Jesus. If they don't believe in God then that would be the starting place and work towards the need for Jesus as you progress. Someone who doesn't believe in God will never believe in Jesus so that needs to be determined first.

I always say rather than trying to convince a non believer that they are a wretched sinner it is easier and less confrontational to tell them your pre-salvation life as a wretched sinner and how you came to the point of realizing your need for a Savior. They will see things about themselves as you tell your story.

Now this can be just a group of your Christian friends and does not need to be even church related. Do you have some buddies that golf, fish, hike or any common interests? If so make this the small group.

Common interests makes it even easier to make connections with non believers when you are out and about. Start a conversation with someone at the golf course or on the hiking trail. Talk to others while fishing together or riding mountain bikes. Anything you can start a conversation with to break the ice works great. Even hey that is a great looking dog you have, it can be anything. The point is to break the ice to help them feel comfortable. Be all things to all people Paul says (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

We need as Christians to be intentional in our sharing of the gospel to unbelievers. Once you have made it a point to be intentional several times then you will find yourself sharing it more throughout your day and it will come more naturally.

## Chapter Five

Knowing your testimony well is key, as I mentioned in the last chapter don't confront the unbeliever about their sin share about who you were as a unbeliever and what brought you to understand your sin and the need for a Savior.

Everyone has a testimony, even the person you think is the most godly person you know. All sin leads to death so it doesn't matter if you were a pencil thief or a mass murderer, all sin leads to hell (Romans 3:23).

Knowing this, it is extremely important so think about your salvation story and be able to present it well and with emotion to the person you will be sharing the gospel with. You don't need to be overly descriptive, they don't need to know you were a pencil thief just a thief. Make sense, do you get my point?

The unbeliever needs to know the need for Jesus and it is sin so your story will then cause them to think about their story and their own sin.

No matter how sinful you were understand God has used your sinful past so that it will help you connect with others who He is calling to Himself. We are not proud of our sinful past but we are now using it for good, for the kingdom, to plant seeds.

I also explain that we will never be perfect, that we still even after accepting Christ have sinful flesh and a mind that is being renewed. But once becoming a believer we hate our sin and want to be more like Jesus. Now that repentance is something we seek and strive for and that it is a continual battle for us.

It is within our daily battle with sin that we realize our daily need for Christ. Knowing this then allows for humility and humility is something unbelievers see well. They are drawn to it because humility makes the believer so much different from the unbeliever. It is one of the greatest attributes that a believer has so be aware of it and don't be afraid to show it to others.



## **In Closing**

In closing I may add to this more as God reveals the need. My hope is that you will draw something of use from this to use for your own work for the Kingdom.

Feel free to contact me with questions or advise, I am always available. You can submit questions from the Rev3v2 website and I will have my contact number there as well so use them as others have over the decades.

To God be the glory!

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