

The Destiny of the Philippines

God's Prophetic Calling for the Nation

by Norman Holmes

The Bible shows us that God has a plan or calling for each nation. Just as each person and church have a purpose to fulfill, every nation also has a destiny for which God has formed it. From Deuteronomy 32:8 we read, *"the Lord God gave the nations their inheritance."* We see a further glimpse of this in Amos 9:7 where the Lord said, *"Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, the Philistines from Crete, and the Syrians from Kir?"* Not only has God given a natural placement or inheritance to each nation, but also a spiritual destiny that they are to fulfill. Over 2,500 years ago God told a nation, *"For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope,'* Jer.29:11.

As we consider the Philippines, we can recognize the gracious hand of God has been upon the nation. However, exactly what is the future destiny of the Philippines? Fortune tellers and astrologists can only prophesy lies, but God can reveal from the Bible a true vision of His prophetic plan for the nation. So let us pray with the Apostle Paul, *"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation...that you may know what is the hope of His calling,"* Eph.1:17-18.

The Scriptures offer us several keys that can help reveal God's prophetic calling for the Philippines. As we understand the ways of God and how He has already worked among the nations, the Holy Spirit can then apply these principles to show us how they reveal God's future plans. Let us now use these keys to open our understanding of the destiny of the Philippines.

KEY # 1 - "First the Natural, Then the Spiritual"

In 1 Corinthians 15:46 the Apostle Paul gives us our first key to help understand how God acts. There we read, *"However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterwards the spiritual."* All throughout the Bible we see how the Lord works according to this pattern. The Old Testament is all about the natural children of Abraham, then the New Testament tells us all about his spiritual children of faith. The Old Testament tells us about natural temples that God dwelt in, but now God dwells in a spiritual temple, the Church. The natural wars the Israelites fought teach us how to fight our spiritual battles against evil spirits, Eph.6:12. Why was the Old Testament filled with natural things which are then spiritually repeated for us in the New Testament? God works this way to show us a natural model or pattern of what He wants to accomplish in the spirit. What we cannot see of the invisible plans of God we can begin to understand from His natural works, Rom.1:20.

One natural fact that has spiritual significance is that the Philippines is known as a nation of 7,000 islands. Seven thousand scripturally speaks of a faithful 'righteous remnant' according to Romans 11:4-5. In the midst of an ungodly continent and world, the Lord will reveal the Philippines as a righteous remnant in these last days. Another significant fact is that the nation is located in the center of South East Asia, with the result that many shippers and cargo agents want the nation to be a cargo and forwarding center. A spiritual fulfillment of this is that the nation is to be in the 'center of the action' in the missions thrust for S. E. Asia. This is already being shown by the many missions organizations who are basing their Asian headquarters here, as well as the fact that for decades the nation has hosted the largest school in the world for missionary children.

When we look at the natural resources of the Philippines, we see a nation that has been richly blessed of God. Many fishermen gather in an abundant harvest of fish. The nation also has an abundance of people, and is the 17th largest nation in the world in population. The spiritual connection between these two facts is that the Lord Jesus calls evangelists to be fishers of men, Mt.4:19. Just as there is an abundant harvest of fish from the nation, God is calling for many evangelists who will gather an abundant harvest of souls. First the natural and then the spiritual!

Many nations have few natural resources, but not so with the Philippines. The nation has some of the world's largest deposits of metals such as copper and chromium, and for centuries has been one of the world's major producers of gold. Is there a spiritual parallel for this? The Bible gives spiritual significance to many precious metals and treasures, such as gold being a type of the nature of God. So while the nation has exported gold, pearls, and precious treasures for centuries, we are looking forward to a spiritual fulfillment to this. May the treasures of God's grace and love soon be shown to the world from the Philippines!

Corresponding to this, in recent years large deposits of oil have been discovered in the nation. While the economy has heavily depended on oil imports for many years, now there is the expectation that the nation will become an oil exporter. Oil in the Scriptures is a type of the Holy Spirit. Just like the natural imported oil, the nation has for many years depended on the spiritual imported 'oil' of the Holy Spirit. Missionaries have brought the revelation and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, while many nations have prayed for the country. Yet God planned from before the foundation of the world that this would be changed in the last days. The Philippines has been called of God to become an 'oil exporter' in the spirit; sending revival, worship, and prayer to many nations before the second coming of Christ!

KEY # 2 - "Beloved for the Sake of the Fathers"

Another key that shows us how God works in the nations is shown by Romans 11:28-29. We read from there, *"...from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."*

In these verses Paul is talking about God's plans for the nation of Israel. He was saying that although the nation was far from God at that time; yet the Lord remembered them, loved them, and would restore them for the sake of their fathers. This shows us that the founding fathers of a nation leave not only a natural inheritance to their people, but also a spiritual inheritance and call.

Paul wrote about how his nation had rejected God's Messiah, yet God had not forgotten them. The Lord still remembered how He promised Abraham His friend that his descendants would be blessed. The Lord remembered the prayers of Moses, Samuel, and David; and loved the nation they had founded. Those prayers, and the love that God holds for these fathers of Israel, are still being remembered today. After waiting thousands of years, the Lord is restoring the nation of Israel in our generation. He is preparing them for the day when their Messiah will soon return to rescue them from the Muslim and Arab armies that will be conquering Jerusalem, Zech.14:1-4. The prophet Zechariah saw how they will repent when they see the nail prints in His hands, Zech.12:10 & 13:6. When Christ will be asked, *"What are these wounds in your hands?" Then he will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'"* In the eyes of the Lord the stubborn, sinful Jewish people are beloved for the sake of their fathers.

A modern day example of how this can work is shown us by the United States of America. Many of the founding fathers of that nation were godly men. Through George Washington, the Pilgrims, the early Baptists & Methodists, and others, a nation was founded that had many good spiritual fathers. However, the nation has largely forgotten God as it has become prosperous and great. America has used its liberty as an opportunity the flesh, Gal.5:13. Sin has filled the land. Will God forget such a nation and hand them over to total judgment? When Rev. Yongii Cho (the Korean pastor of the world's largest church) was conducting a seminar in America

in 1993, his heart was burdened for the nation. He prayed and asked the Lord, "God, are you going to send revival to America, or is she destined to judgment?" While he was praying the Lord spoke to him, "I am going to send revival." Why will the Lord remember the nation in mercy? One reason is because they are beloved for the fathers.

With these examples before us, let us now turn through the pages of history to study about the founding fathers of the Philippine nation. The great national and international leaders who helped form the nation have also contributed many valuable spiritual blessings, to make this a nation loved by God Himself. As Jose Rizal himself declared, "To foretell the destiny of a nation it is necessary to open the book that tells of her past."

The nation's first and greatest founding father is certainly King Philip II. His enduring contribution is confirmed every time we mention the country, as the 'Philip'ines bears his name. He was the first ruler to gather the islands into one united nation. However, he was also able to impart a common purpose and destiny to the islands that have helped enable them to remain united for almost 500 years. In these last days when the Lord is starting to shake all the nations, many other countries around the world are splitting up and dividing. Yet through the shakings, the Philippines has been growing stronger in national unity and culture.

King Philip II was a man that sincerely loved God and desired to build good spiritual foundations into the nation. In seeking to Christianize the nation he spent large sums of the Spanish treasury for many years. When his advisers plead with him to withdraw from the Philippines because of the financial costs, King Philip II repeatedly said that he was willing to spend all of his money to save souls and establish the Philippines as a gospel light to the Orient. The results of his efforts are that the Philippines has been known as the only Christian nation in Asia for almost 500 years. While this traditional Christianity has been full of mixture, it is better than the former paganism, and has also stopped Islam from expanding to control the nation.

Over the centuries, the continuing Spanish influence on the nation was often a corrupt mixture. Most of the Spanish did not have the noble intentions of King Philip II. As a result, some people look back at history to bitterly complain of the sufferings that the nation endured under Spanish rule. Yet those who have faith and vision like Joseph in the Bible can look beyond these injustices and declare, "as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good," Gen.50:20.

The Lord was not unmindful of the mixture in the Spanish Empire. God had made them a great world power as they sought to spread their knowledge of God. But when Spain increasingly used that power for their own greed and did not spiritually grow into a purer Christianity, the Lord changed His blessing into judgment. God cast Spain down from holding the world's greatest empire, and raised up the nation of England to become the next world superpower. The main reason was because England had embraced the Protestant Reformation to become a more Bible-based nation than Spain. While England has had little direct influence upon the Philippines, a nation that was a spiritual 'son' did contribute much to the destiny of the Philippines. That nation was the United States of America.

When Spain lost the Spanish-American war, it offered to give to the United States its international colonial claims to the Philippines. The American president, William McKinley, was left with an important decision to make. He told the story in his own words like this: "The truth is I didn't want the Philippines... I sought counsel from all sides, Democrats as well as Republicans, but got little help... Night after night I went down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance. Late one night it came to me this way... that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them as our fellow-men for whom Christ also died."

On the basis of hearing this direction from God, President McKinley started a massive American influence that has been built into the character of the nation. Some of the results of this influence are the many Evangelical

and Pentecostal Churches that have been started with the help of American missionaries. While much of the influence that the United States imparted to the nation has been full of mixture and corruption, a godly inheritance has also been given to the nation. Both America and Spain helped to start building a Christian foundation to the nation, and they have imparted their missionary callings to the Philippines. The nation has many advantages in culture, language, and religion to help her to fulfill the international destiny that King Philip II first started to give the Philippines when he dedicated his prayers, wealth, and influence to make the nation a gospel light to Asia.

When we go on to consider the national founding fathers of the nation, we first must consider Jose Rizal, the nation's greatest hero. What is his claim to greatness that the nation would praise and follow? Was he a bloodthirsty warrior like Gengis Khan, or a cruel dictator like Mao Tse Tung or Hitler? No, he was a doctor, a gentle man of peace, education, and of gracious life. He restored blind eyes as a surgeon, and opened the eyes of a blinded nation through his writings. In many good ways he was outstanding among the national heroes of the world.

Among the many national fathers who have helped shape the destiny of the nation since Rizal, several modern leaders have had a godly impact upon Philippine history. Ninoy Aquino will always be remembered as the man who awoke the nation to a sense of responsibility when he returned to the Philippines to lay down his life. Yet he returned as a born again Christian who had been fasting for 3 full days at the time of his return. His testimony that "the Filipino is worth dying for" will continue to remind the nation of the value that Christ Himself has given to the people.

In more recent years, Ex-President Fidel Ramos also sought to bring a godly influence to the nation. As the first Protestant president he helped lift the nation up economically and spiritually, while he also expanded the international dignity and influence of the Philippines. Many are praying that other leaders and presidents will yet arise to help fulfill God's plans for the nation.

Yes, the Philippines has had many good leaders who have helped shaped the destiny of the nation. Their prayers and godly influence will continue to be remembered both on earth and in heaven.

KEY # 3 - "As His Name Is, So Is He"

A third key to understand some of the ways of God is shown to us in 1 Samuel 25:25. There we read the statement "*As his name is, so is he.*" While this was spoken about a foolish man whose name means 'fool,' it is also a principle that can apply to numerous people, churches, towns, and nations. Names have a meaning and are often prophetic. We know that Abraham fulfilled his name to become a 'father of nations,' and that Jesus' name prophetically meant 'The Lord is Salvation.'

When I was a new born again Christian, I thought it disappointing that I did not have a good Bible name. I would have liked to have been named Joshua, or David, or perhaps Paul. But then I found out the meaning of my name from the French language. 'Norman' comes from the two words 'North Man,' and means 'man from the north.' As the Lord had already shown me that I was called to be a missionary, I found to my joy that even my non-biblical name had a prophetic significance. I was destined to be a 'man from the north,' a missionary from North America sent southward to Asia and Latin America!

When we apply to the nations the principle that names can be prophetic, we can also learn many things. Thailand means 'land of the free,' and history has shown that they were never ruled by a foreign nation. Singapore means 'city of the lion,' and speaks of their strong leadership calling. The United States, as its name suggests, could not be split apart by civil war.

Yet standing high above these names is the name of the Philippines. As we already noted, the nation was named after King Philip II, a godly king who sent missionaries to evangelize the nation. Yet we need to only look back one step to see a much higher meaning to this name, because King Philip's name came from Philip in the Books of Acts!

We first read about Philip in Acts 6 where he was appointed as one of the deacons (or servants) of the early Church. As Philip was faithful to his natural duties, the Lord promoted him to become an evangelist and missionary. He brought revival to Samaria, led a national leader of Ethiopia to Christ, and evangelized the province of Judea. King Philip II was aptly named after Philip in the Bible, because he also had a zeal to serve the Lord in evangelism and missions. This name and calling has now been imparted to a whole nation, the 'Philip'-pines!

Just as Philip began as a faithful servant and went on to become a great evangelist and missionary, even so the Philippines has the same prophetic calling. For many years the nation has been respected for the high quality of the millions of Filipino O.F.W.'s who have served throughout the world. While the world may rate this as a lowly position, we know that true greatness is to be measured in the sight of the Lord. Did not Christ come as a servant, and declare that the greatest among us shall be the servant of all?

However, Philip did not just remain a deacon or servant. As he was faithful, the Lord promoted him to become a great evangelist and missionary. And this is also the destiny of the Philippines! The Lord has purposed in these last days to raise up the Philippines to become a nation of evangelists and missionaries. The Lord will prepare multitudes of ministers to fill the nation with a knowledge of the true gospel, and to carry the good news to many nations. He will also use many O.C.W.'s as 'tentmaker' missionaries. If only 10% of the Filipino overseas workers go forth as committed missionaries, the nation will contribute more international missionaries than the rest of the world combined! The Philippines has a great calling from the Lord. You can look at the names of Japan, Malaysia, Russia, England, the United States... very few nations have a Bible name. Nevertheless, you have a Bible name and a Bible calling. *YOU ARE THE PHILIP -PINES!*

KEY # 4 - "To Whom Much Is Given, Much Will Be Required"

Our Lord Jesus gave us the words for this next key, as recorded in Luke 12:48. He was teaching about the responsibility that comes with authority and blessing. The higher our gifts and callings, then the more will be expected of us. God's privileges to us become our responsibilities to God.

In the Old Testament we see how the Lord singularly chose the nation of Israel for His purposes. They were the only nation of believers in an ungodly world. They were singled out to become a light to the nations. Yet with this high calling much was also required of them. Because they knew better than to follow the idolatry and corruption of the nations around them, the Lord declared that He would more severely judge them.

In Amos 3:2 the Lord declared to the nation of Israel, *"You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."* The Lord gave me this verse for the Philippines when I spoke for a national convention of the Intercessors For the Philippines (IFP). The way the Lord declared it was like this: *"You only have I known of all the nations of Asia; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."* For almost 500 years the Philippines has been known as the only Christian nation in Asia. The Lord has sent more missionaries to the nation than to any other country in Asia. When the Lord inspects the fruit of His investment, will He be fully pleased?

When the Lord inspected the fruit of His investment in ancient Israel, He found that they were lacking. They were raised up to be a light to the nations. But because of their idolatry and sin, the Lord declared *"The name of God is blasphemed among the nations because of you,"* Rom.2:24. When the nation would not become a shining light to the nations, then the Lord chose to send His judgments instead of His blessings to make them

fulfill their calling. Just as Jonah leaned to be an obedient missionary through his suffering, so the Lord sent out a multitude of Israelites to many nations as captives, refugees, and slaves! Yet in their distress, many of these Israelites fully dedicated their lives to the Lord and made a great impact among the nations. Naaman's servant girl helped convert a nation's military commander. Esther became a queen who brought revival, while the testimony of Daniel and his friends spread throughout many countries. The Lord dispersed millions of Israelites among the nations and helped prepare the way for the speedy growth of the Early Church. In the book of Acts we see that the church quickly spread internationally through the scattered Jewish communities as well as through the multitudes of God-fearing Gentiles whom they had already converted to the Jewish faith.

In a similar manner, the Lord has spread the knowledge of God through many nations by allowing many hardships in the Philippines. This has scattered millions of Filipinos throughout the world as OCW's and immigrants to other lands. Many have been used of the Lord to touch the nations. A princess was converted in Kuwait by some Filipina nurses. The largest Christian services in China are held by the 15,000 strong JIL gathering in Hong Kong. Newspapers in many Muslim nations have complained that the Filipina 'nannies' have caused many of their nation's children to love Jesus, because the Filipinas have sung them Christmas songs and talked with them since they were babies. Just as the dispersed millions of Israelites helped the early Church to quickly spread, the Lord will use the millions of dispersed Filipinos to help the Church of the last days to quickly fulfill its worldwide calling!

History shows us how God used his judgments upon Israel to help them to fulfill their calling. However, we know that the Lord also then showed His mercy and grace to them. After the Babylonian captivity many Israelites returned to help rebuild the nation. Just as the Lord used His judgments to spread the knowledge of God, His renewed blessing upon Israel also helped to prepare them for the first coming of Christ. Similarly, many are receiving from the Lord that He wants to send His renewed blessings upon the Philippines. The Lord wants to restore the nation to help enable the churches to spread the gospel. Already many groups are beginning to send out missionaries. The Philippine Assemblies of God has raised up a Bible school in Cambodia and are starting another one in Thailand. TNO (Tribes and Nations Outreach) has sent Filipino pastors to conduct many pastor's seminars in such nations as Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, Nepal, and China. The Philippine Missions Association, Asia Missions Network, Zion Ministries, CBN, World Outreach, Christ to the Orient, and many other groups and denominations are starting to raise up an army of missionaries to be sent forth from the Philippines. Yet the Lord is not only blessing the nation to enable her to become a missionary blessing. He is also preparing the Philippines to be ready for the Second Coming of Christ!

KEY # 5 - "The End of a Thing is Better Than Its Beginning"

This key which helps us to understand the ways of God is found in Ecclesiastes 7:8. The fulfillment of this principle is repeated many times throughout the Word of God and history. The Prophet Haggai declared that the glory of the latter temple would be greater than the former. When Jesus turned the water into wine at the wedding in Cana, it was declared that the best had been kept for the last. Even in natural entertainment performances, the finale should always be the height of the show. When we consider the glorious things the Lord has begun to do in our lives and in the nations, do you think He will leave us disappointed and let down at the end? No, He has declared His ways, that the end will be the best!

When we look at the start of the united Philippine nation over 400 years ago, we see many wonderful foundations. The nation quickly rose to unity, prosperity, and leadership in Asia through the inter working of the Filipinos and Spanish. The nation had a knowledge of God (however imperfect it had been) centuries before the other nations around. The Philippines was a leading nation in Asia.

The Lord is going to continue to build upon that foundation, and bring it to a glorious completion. Over twenty-five years ago the Lord gave a revelation to Brian Bailey, a respected prophet to the nations. The Lord said that He is preparing the Philippines to be a 'sheep nation' for the millennial reign of Christ upon the earth.

In Matthew 25 our Lord Jesus taught about His second coming. There He declared, *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats,"* Mt.25:31-32. This and many other scriptures show us that the Lord not only judges and rewards us as individuals, but also collectively as nations (see Ps.33:12, Prov.14:34, Zech.14:16-19, Is.60:12).

The book of Revelation shows us that some individual people from every tribe, people, and nation will be saved and be given eternal life. However, that does not mean that every nation will corporately as a nation and culture be allowed to enter into God's kingdom for the ages to come. Many will be classified as acceptable 'sheep' nations, while others will be rejected as 'goat' nations. The 'goat' nations will be judged as unredeemable nations and cultures that will be cast into hell, Mt.25:41; Ps.9:17. That is why, when the Lord wants to transform a nation and build Christian foundations, we must not heed the voice of 'ultranationalists' who would desire to return the culture to its prechristian, pagan roots. Returning to pagan sacrifices, dancing, music, and culture can again strengthen the demonic principalities and powers over a land which are cast down through the building of a Christian culture. We need spiritual discernment to see that a nation's cultural heritage should not be judged by whether it comes from national or international sources, but whether the culture comes from Christian or demonic sources!

However, the Lord has been building deep and ancient Christian foundations in the Philippines for many centuries. This is to do much more than only help prepare the nation for revival in these last days. It will also carry the nation into the Millennium, where as a 'sheep' nation the Philippines will serve the Lord!

Yet even this is not the end of God's wonderful plans. In Revelation chapters 20 and 21 we read that the Lord will create a new heaven and earth after the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment. We are told that after the New Jerusalem descends to the new earth, *"The nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light... and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it,"* Rev.21:24 & 26. There is a national inheritance and blessing that shall be given to many nations not only in the millennium, but in the ages to come. And one of these nations, according to a revelation given to Brian Bailey, will be the Philippines!

While we can now only see these things as *"through a mirror dimly,"* we can certainly expect from our knowledge of God's character and ways that His plans will continue to grow and unfold throughout all of eternity future. Truly, *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him,"* 1 Cor.2:9.

Conclusion

The Lord has placed His love upon the Philippines. He has given the nation a high calling among the countries of the world. As we let the Holy Spirit open our spiritual understanding to these truths, this vision will grow brighter and brighter. There is a glorious inheritance awaiting the nation!

The destiny for which the Almighty has prepared the Philippines is to become a nation of 'Philips.' The Lord is raising up an army of soul winners, preachers, evangelists, and missionaries. Their calling is to preach the gospel and help transform the nation into a truly Christian culture, while also spreading the light of the gospel throughout many nations. The Philippines must be prepared for Christ to receive it as a 'sheep' nation when He returns to rule the earth. After the Millennium, the Philippines will continue her national heritage in the new heavens and earth, where she will continue to bring her glory and honor to God in the New Jerusalem.

Yet to enter into a full attainment of God's gracious call, the Philippine Body of Christ must prepare itself. To whom much is given, much will be required. God's privileges to us become our responsibilities to God.

May the Lord help us to not stop short of His best. We must be gripped with the desire, like the Apostle Paul, to "*press toward the goal for the prize of the high call of God,*" Phil.3:14. We must not be deflected by other lesser goals or visions. God will give us the resources to accomplish His will when we fully dedicate ourselves to fulfill it. However, when we set our own agendas and make our own plans, we will find that our time and resources are insufficient to accomplish both the will of God and our own human goals. Just as the devil tried to deflect Jesus in the wilderness through offering Him comfort, pride, and worldly influence, we will also be tempted. Will we settle back in comfort to enjoy the blessings we can already receive -or will we walk the way of the cross and sacrifice our lives to fulfill His will? Will we grow proud, promote our own influence, and seek to build our own kingdoms -or will we selflessly serve together to build the kingdom of God? May we each hit the mark of fulfilling our own callings. Then together we will see the destiny of the Philippines brought to a full and glorious completion!