



# REVIVAL –THE SILENT REVOLUTION

“BUT WE URGE YOU BRETHREN...THAT YOU ALSO ASPIRE TO LEAD A QUIET LIFE, TO MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, AND TO WORK WITH YOUR OWN HANDS...THAT YOU MAY WALK PROPERLY TO THOSE WHO ARE OUTSIDE, AND THAT YOU MAY LACK NOTHING.” I THESSALONIANS 4:10-12

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Within predominately Charismatic and Pentecostal streams today, the church in the West is experiencing an ever-increasing appetite for what many are calling, *revival*. There exists a plethora of varying definitions for this *revival* and when pressed, many will offer up a multitude of expectations that can differ widely from one to the next as to what exactly we are to be anticipating.

Some, in keeping with their interpretation of such passages as John 14:12, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, **the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father,***” expect to see a great revival of healing. Others in keeping with their understanding of passages like Acts 2:18-21<sup>1</sup> are looking forward to a sweeping movement

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>18</sup> “*And on My menservants and on My maid-servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.*

<sup>19</sup> *I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke.* <sup>20</sup> *The sun*

of supernatural signs and Spirit-manifestations while still others anticipate the gospel being preached to all nations (Mt.24:14)<sup>2</sup>, the formations of a global prayer and worship movement (Ac.15:16-17)<sup>3</sup>, the church becoming purified in her love for Jesus (Rev.19:7)<sup>4</sup>, a great harvest of souls (Rev.7:9-14)<sup>5</sup>, reformations in society, culture and government (Hab.2:14)<sup>6</sup>, supernatural wealth touching the people of God (Hag.2:7-8)<sup>7</sup>, and the salvation of Israel (Rom.11:25-26)<sup>8</sup>.

To be clear, I believe in the increase of *all* of those things as legitimate indicators that the church is indeed in some measure of revival. Let me offer at least an introductory definition for revival from my point of view. Though not necessarily a biblical term, but certainly a biblical idea, revival can be defined as any unique moment or season in which the unusual and sovereign presence and power of the Holy Spirit working upon and within an individual or a corporate people is met with an earnest wholehearted response on behalf of those affected.

We often look at historic revivals of the past as a gauge for what God may do next. Sometimes we even try to recreate the scenario(s) in which these moves of God were birthed hoping to replicate a past glory. But when we examine the New Testament and look at the impetus of God in revival (Acts 2-7,8,10-11:18,11:19-30,13-14,15:36-18:22,19;1Thess.1:4-8) we not only see incredible words,

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*shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. <sup>21</sup> And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” -Ac.2:18-21*

<sup>2 14</sup> *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” -Mt.24:14*

<sup>3 16</sup> *‘After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; <sup>17</sup> So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does all these things.’” -Ac.15:16-17*

<sup>4 7</sup> *Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” -Rev.19:7*

<sup>5 9</sup> *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” <sup>11</sup> All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup> saying: “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” <sup>13</sup> Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?” <sup>14</sup> And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*

<sup>6 14</sup> *“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” -Hab.2:14*

<sup>7 7</sup> *“And I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,” says the Lord of hosts. <sup>8</sup> ‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts.” -Hag.2:7-8*

<sup>8 25</sup> *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup> And so all Israel will be saved...” -Rom.25-26*

works and testimonies in the immediate wake of visitation but we also see the culturing of prophetic gifts and spiritual manifestations (1 Cor.12-14) and the repeated exhortations that we learn to live quiet lives of self-control (1 Tim.2:1-4)<sup>9</sup>, humble obedience to God, sincere love for all believers (Rom.15:5-6) and sacrificial love for those outside of the family of God (Phil.2:5-8)<sup>10</sup>. This tells me that the end-goal of the manifestation of the Spirit is the restoration of the whole person, not just a spiritual light-show that dazzles and illuminates a city for a season of months or even years. God has ransomed us to Himself that we might have the image of Christ formed in us (Rom.8:29) and that we might become for Him the fragrance of Christ poured out (2 Cor.2:14-15).

I am convinced that if we are committed to seeing revival come, we must also be committed in equal measure to living in the *spirit of revival* long afterward. This is how I view many of the New Testament's apostolic exhortations -as creating a context for maintaining what God had emphasized during times of great Spirit-manifestation. For example, when Jesus, our Chief Apostle, speaks to the church in Ephesus He commands them to remember their past revival experience (Acts 19) and to continue doing, in the present tense, what He emphasized then. *"**Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works.**"* -Revelation 2:5 This is why it is so important for the church to become students of the scripture. The New Testament is, in a very real sense, a handbook for revival! It tells the history of historic, first-century revival, gives insight into the growing-pains, challenges and early successes of the church and grants us access to what the Holy Spirit earnestly desires for just such a people. We are to reflect on the experiences of the early church and to walk according to what God deemed as most important for people bearing both His image and His name.

This doesn't mean that we don't contend for greater and for a fresh outpouring of the Spirit's power in each season, but it does mean that while we prophesy, while we contend, while we dream, we are to continue to emphasize, and practice, in sincerity, the core values set in place in the scripture by the apostles.

Popular culture in America today drives much of what the church values and much of how we convey our values in the public arena. Often there is more clamoring over our opinions, preferences and personal rights by Christians than there is outgoing, sacrificial and humble interactions with our unsaved family and neighbors. Many of us have no qualms whatsoever about engaging publicly in language or behavior that brings disrepute on the name of Jesus, especially in this digital age when nearly everyone has a public profile. But what if Christians were known to those around us first as humble, caring, thoughtful, willing to listen-before-we-speak, helpful, respectful, honest and real.

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<sup>9</sup> *"Therefore, I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. <sup>3</sup> For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."* -2 Tim.1-4

<sup>10</sup> *"<sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, being in the form of God, did not consider it <sup>2</sup> robbery to be equal with God, <sup>7</sup> but <sup>3</sup> made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."* -Phil.2:5-8

This is certainly not the reputation that we currently have en-masse. Now, I'm not speaking necessarily about how we might be portrayed through the militancy of the secular media, I'm talking about the outright negative experiences that so many unbelievers have with members of the Christian faith. We have become known in large part, not for our sacrificial love, but more for our political beliefs, opinions on social and cultural issues and rigid, self-contrived personal doctrines.

As a result, the church in America is in a war for its voice. We desperately desire to be heard and valued in the public sector while many times our walk doesn't match our talk. But I submit that this is not the only arena in which our voice is needed. Public proclamation and private conversation are not at war with one another. I believe that we have a biblical obligation to raise our public voice in the midst of unrighteousness and injustice, but we also have an obligation to impact those closest to us in a much more personal way. I believe that in many respects modern American Christianity has lost its personal touch.

Recently, I have been leading a weekly study from the book of Titus. I am amazed at how frequently within its three short chapters Paul is exhorting young Titus to emphasize the importance of good works and proper conduct for the sake of the name of Jesus in the surrounding culture and community. It would seem that the Lord's strategy for impacting the local culture didn't include a public protest of any kind, an open-aired assertion of pet political preferences or even some colorful Christian principles decorating the social landscape. Instead the church was urged to be conscientious and upright citizens who obeyed the law and spoke honorably about those in authority.

*"<sup>1</sup>Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, <sup>2</sup>to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men." -Titus 3:1-2*

To, in whatever social or economic position they found themselves, maintain excellence of character<sup>11</sup> and to demonstrate by their observable conduct that they indeed have encountered the God of whom they claim to know.

*"<sup>9</sup>...Be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, <sup>10</sup>not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." -Titus 2:9-10*

*"<sup>7</sup>in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works...that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you." -Titus 2:7-8*

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<sup>11</sup> *"<sup>2</sup> But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: <sup>2</sup>that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; <sup>3</sup>the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—<sup>4</sup>that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, <sup>5</sup>to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded," -Titus 2:1-6*

<sup>18</sup> *...those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.*” -Titus 3:8

<sup>14</sup> *And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.*” -Titus 3:14

I believe that there is a legitimate place and definable need in our culture today for a radical outpouring of the Spirit's presence and power complete with dramatic signs, wonders and miracles like in many of history's powerful moves of God, but I maintain, from what I believe to be a soundly biblical perspective, that these are more cataclysmic in nature than we might give them credit for. Signs and wonders alone do not produce salvation<sup>12</sup> and enduring disciples and without proper oversight can actually create confusion for an unbeliever.<sup>13</sup> I believe that the greatest witness of the Spirit in this age is the transformed life of one who was formerly an enemy of God and who is now a voluntary lover and enjoyer of God willing to forsake all for the sake of the One who gave all.

<sup>20</sup> *“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; <sup>21</sup> that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”* -Jn.17:20-21

Too often emerging Christian leaders are clamoring for titles and recognition, public fanfare and friendship with secular culture as the means for which they and their movements may gain enough traction to eventually establish their own unique socio-spiritual footprint as the means for maximum spiritual impact and societal transformation. Today's prophetic church, ears attuned to the Spirit's whisper, must be diligent to temper itself with a heavy dose of pragmatic realism demonstrated in living out authentically biblical and sincere New Testament Christianity. The Kingdom *is* branching out and *will* eventually fill the Earth but we would do well to remember that this Kingdom is not a Kingdom of words and rhetoric<sup>14</sup>, but one of the Spirit's power manifested in the righteousness, joy and peace of those who lay hold of it.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <sup>30</sup> *And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ <sup>31</sup> But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’”*-Lk.16:30-31

<sup>20</sup> *But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.*

<sup>21</sup> *And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.”* -Rev.6:20-21

<sup>13</sup> <sup>22</sup> *Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. <sup>23</sup> Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?”* -1 Cor.14:22-23

<sup>14</sup> <sup>20</sup> *For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.”* -1 Cor.4:20

<sup>15</sup> <sup>17</sup> *for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”* -Rom. 14:17

*“<sup>31</sup> Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, <sup>32</sup> which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” -Matthew 13:31-32*

*“<sup>2</sup> In that day the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious.” -Isaiah 4:2*

*<sup>17</sup> for the kingdom of God ...righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” -Romans 14:17*