

Lesson 3

**Revival in
Jerusalem**

The Church of Jesus Christ was born out of true revival which only comes from God. The first Christian revival came on the Day of Pentecost and it was a revival from dead, cold, legalistic and traditional Judaism to dynamic life in Christ. Thousands of Jews and Jewish proselytes received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in just a short while.

Whenever true revival has come in the two thousand year history of the Church, it has always been characterized by certain phenomena. First, God moves on the hearts of Christians to pray for their own spiritual condition and the lost condition of those about them. Second,

Christians come under deep conviction about their own sin and the fragmentation of their own lives with other Christians. Third, Christians have their hearts melted and opened to one another, confessing their sins of indifference to God and their coldness to fellow Christians, and they begin to forgive one another, restoring broken relationships in love and graciousness. Fourth, God sovereignly moves upon the lost, bringing great conviction of sin and many non-Christians and nominal church members are saved. Fifth, in revival there is supernatural phenomena such as healing which are not easily explained but nevertheless real. Sixth, human emotions often run high in revival which often brings phenomena such as shouting, weeping, laughing and fainting which make people feel uncomfortable at first, but in time this behavior is accepted as a work of the Holy Spirit, especially when it happens to people who are personally opposed to any emotions.

Just to make sure we are all understanding where I'm coming from, let me repeat once again my definition of revival.

“Revival is a sovereign, powerful, extraordinary moving of the Holy Spirit through the preached Word which spiritually convicts, arouses and enlivens professing, backslidden Christians in the church and which results in a supernatural acceleration of the conversion process to the unsaved” (Jack L. Arnold).

PREPARATION FOR REVIVAL Acts 1:4-14

God was getting ready to do one of the greatest acts in human history - to bring into existence the New Covenant Christian church. But in so doing, He prepared His people for this great event which took place at Pentecost.

Jesus on one occasion during the forty days He was on this earth after His resurrection told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit which was promised by the Father. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ***“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about” (Acts 1:4). “Then Jesus said that they would be baptized in a short while with the Holy Spirit. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5).*** This baptism of the Holy Spirit was predicted by John the Baptist. ***“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt. 3:11).*** It was to be a baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire.

Jesus spoke about great power that would come upon the disciples and to all true believers in Christ throughout history. This was the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Because of what Jesus said, there was anticipation that God was going to do something. ***“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the world” (Acts 1:8).***

Before revival comes, God seems to put on the hearts of individuals that something unique, different and exciting is going to happen. There is a sense of anticipation.

“When Jesus ascended, the disciples (120) went to Jerusalem and they began to pray. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers” (Acts 1:14).

Prayer was part of God’s formula to prepare His people for Pentecost, a mighty revival. Whenever revival comes, people will be praying in preparation for the work of God. Many times people are put under heavy burdens, especially for the lost and the spiritual declension and sickness of the church.

PENTECOST, THE START OF REVIVAL Acts 2:1-13

The Day of Pentecost was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. ***“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place” (Acts 2:1).*** Actually this could be translated, ***“And when the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled.”*** The Day of Pentecost did not happen by accident. It was part of the infinite plan of God.

The Holy Spirit came to the church because it was time for Him to come. Even if the disciples had not been praying, Pentecost would have come. It was according to God’s own timetable. Does this mean prayer was unimportant for Pentecost to happen? No! God causes revival and uses

prayer as one of the main means to bring it about. Revival will not come without prayer, but prayer does not cause revival. God always causes revival.

God sent a powerful wind which represents the Holy Spirit. Tongues of fire set on the 120. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues. ***“Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:2-4).*** There were many works of the Holy Spirit which took place at Pentecost - the indwelling, the sealing, the filling of the Spirit. But the main work of the Spirit was that of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, even though it is not mentioned in Acts 2. But it took place at Pentecost because it was predicted by Christ and confirmed by the Apostle Peter. ***“As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord said: ‘John the baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit’”(Acts 11:15-16).*** My own personal conviction is the baptism of the Holy Spirit is that supernatural act of God which places each believer in Christ into the body of Christ, the church. ***“For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (I Cor. 12:13).*** The baptism of the Spirit can happen only once in the life of a Christian and at the moment of conversion. I do not understand the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second work of grace after conversion, or a second blessing, nor is it a special work of God to enable a person to speak in tongues. The baptism of the Holy Spirit puts a person into vital, spiritual union with Christ, forming the body of Christ, the church, and that process began on the Day of Pentecost. The baptism is not experienced but obviously the effects of the baptism will be experienced as one learns to walk in the power of the Spirit.

The question arises as to whether it is possible to duplicate the Day of Pentecost today? I don't think so. That was a unique day, a prophetic day. The Holy Spirit came to every believer in baptism and indwelling. The Holy Spirit comes to all Christians at the moment of salvation. However, this does not mean the Holy Spirit no longer brings revival. He does and we must not think otherwise. There are still visitations by the Spirit, out pourings of the Holy Spirit on the church, days of Holy Spirit refreshing which will have many of the same characteristics of Pentecost, but Pentecost in and of itself can never be duplicated.

God filled the 120 with His Spirit and in this one instance the evidence of the filling was speaking in tongues. However the filling of the Spirit is also mentioned in Ephesians 5 and there is no mention of tongues. Tongues is not necessary to evidence the filling of the Spirit.

Christians are divided over the whole issue of tongues and I do not think I can solve this problem today. The various views on tongues are:

1. Tongues are not here today because there is no need for them; they were used originally to propagate the gospel in the first century before we had a completed Bible;

2. Tongues are here today and are heavenly languages and anyone can have the gift of tongues;

3. Tongues are here today and are being heard in a language other than that spoken; a person could be saying one thing but be heard quite differently;

4. Tongues are here today and are literal languages which can be reduced to writing, and if used, must follow all the biblical criteria for tongues.

Recently, Charles McKenzie, a professor at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, shared with me an interesting story. He was in England preaching and three German women who spoke no English came to the meeting. I can't remember why they were there. He preached in English. The women after the sermon spoke to Dr. McKenzie through an interpreter. They told him they understood even word he spoke, and all three trusted Christ. Dr. McKenzie spoke in one language but was understood in another. He believes this was a type of tongues. He still has contact with one of these German women and she is going strong for Christ.

These tongues of fire from heaven were extraordinary phenomena and they were misunderstood then as they are now. These weird happenings caused people to be amazed and baffled. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "***Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans" (Acts 2:6-7)?*** In fact, their actions caused bystanders to say they were drunk. Some, however, made fun of them and said, "***They have had too much wine" (Acts 2:13).*** There was joy, excitement, staggering, strange speech and this made people feel uncomfortable. It was not what they were use to in traditional Judaism.

Andrew Murray was a famous preacher in South Africa. He prayed for years for God to bring revival to his church. In fact, every Saturday morning a group of thirty or more people prayed in the basement of the church for revival. One Saturday, Andrew Murray and his assistant were upstairs in his office and they heard this terrible commotion down in the basement. The assistant went down and saw they people doing some strange and weird things, but immediately he was struck down to the

ground by the Holy Spirit. Wondering the whereabouts of his assistant, Murray went downstairs to the basement. He saw and heard things that strange and offensive to him. People were shouting, crying, praising, laughing, staggering and he was appalled. He stood up on a chair and said, "Stop, stop, this is not right, this is not of God!" Then he too was thrown to the floor by the power of the Spirit. Then Andrew Murray realized that the revival he and others had prayed for those many years had begun.

Peter assured folks they were not drunk and what was happening was a fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32. In the last days, Joel said the Holy Spirit would be poured out on men in unique ways and there would be prophesy, visions and dreams. ***"These men are not drunk, as you suppose.***

It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams' (Acts 2:15-17). Notice the words "Sons, daughters, young men" which speaks of a youth movement.

Most revivals in history have revolved around the younger crowd and has been opposed by the older generation. Of course, there are exceptions where older people were deeply involved but the younger generation is always touched by revival.

PREACHING IN REVIVAL Acts 2:14-21

Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and he stood before thousands of unbelieving Jews to explain to them the supernatural phenomena which occurred on the Day of Pentecost. His sermon was plain, pertinent, personal, persuasive and positive. The message was so simple a little child could understand.

Peter preached this message for three basic reasons. First, he preached to explain all the supernatural phenomena at Pentecost, especially tongues. ***"Exalted to the right hand of God, he (Christ) has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear" (Acts 2:33).*** Second, he preached that Jesus is the Messiah and both Lord (God) and Christ (Messiah). ***"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).*** Third, he preached to the Jews they were under God's wrath for their sins and they must repent and accept the Messiah as their only hope of salvation. ***"Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the***

forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

True revival always connects the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit with the Word of God. Some times the work of the Spirit is so powerful that the preached Word does not take the prominent place but they are always connected. Revival which is not connected to scripture will end up in mass confusion and be totally experienced centered. Revival will also include preaching on God’s holiness, sin, wrath, judgment and hell, and man’s need to repent and believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

The result of Peter’s message was that thousands of people were saved. ***“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day” (Acts 2:41).*** A few days later five thousand were saved.

Revival is an acceleration of the conversion process for the unsaved. Great numbers of people come to Christ which distinguishes a revival from a renewal.

PRACTICES WHICH RESULT FROM REVIVAL Acts 2:42-47

Out of revival came a spiritually strong, healthy and vibrant church. ***“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).*** There was commitment to the Word, a faithful administration of the sacraments, genuine fellowship around Christ and persevering prayer.

Prayer prepares for revival and prayer results from revival, indicating the importance of prayer for carrying on revival.

The church born in revival was experiencing supernatural phenomena, a sacrificial spirit and deep commitment to meet together and an excitement to worship their God. ***“Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all people” (Acts 2:43-47a).*** This church was alive, exciting, dynamic and Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit was the center of it all.

The result of a dynamic church born out of revival is that the church kept on reaching people for Christ, or should I say God kept on sovereignly saving people and brought them into the church. ***“And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47b).***

PROFOUND SUPERNATURAL ACTS IN REVIVAL Acts 3:1-10

The church born out of revival experienced supernatural healing. There was a crippled beggar who was this way from birth. ***“Now a man crippled from***

birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts” (Acts 3:2). Peter, under the power of the Holy Spirit, was able to heal the man’s feet and ankles.

The result was the man was running, jumping, shouting and praising God because he was healed. ***“He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God” (Acts 3:8).*** The healing caused the unsaved to be amazed at this ex-cripple and they began to reconsider who Jesus really was. ***“They recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him” (Acts 3:10).***

Revival is usually accompanied by genuine healing that can be substantiated as true healing.

PURGING OF THE CHURCH IN REVIVAL Acts 5:1-10

Ananias and Sapphira were professing Christians but lied about giving all their money from the property they sold. They withheld some for themselves but said they didn’t. Keeping money for themselves was not the sin. but lying about it was the sin. Ultimately this was lying to the Holy Spirit. ***“Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land’” (Acts 5:3)?***

Both Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead by God for lying. This strong discipline by God caused the whole church to quake in their sandals. ***“Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events” (Acts 5:11).***

In true revival, Christians get convicted of hypocrisy, selfishness, laziness. materialism, lying and a thousand other sins, and sometimes God purges them from the church by physical death or by voluntary or forced expulsion..

PERSECUTION BY RELIGIOUS PEOPLE BECAUSE OF REVIVAL Acts 5:17-41

Great miracles were occurring, people were turning to Jesus in great numbers and Christianity was seriously threatening the existence of Judaism. This disturbed the religious leaders, and they commanded the Apostles not to preach Christ. ***“Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, he said. ‘Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood’” (Acts 5:27-28).***

The Apostles refused to obey the religious leaders because they were committed to Christ and His kingdom. ***“Peter and the other apostles replied: ‘We must obey God rather than men’” (Acts 5:29)!*** This infuriated the religious leaders so much they sought to put the Apostles

to death. ***“When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death” (Acts 5:33).***

The history of revival shows that religious people always persecute people experiencing revival. These religious people are Christian traditionalists who accuse Christians in revival of pure emotionalism. The religious claim they are the educated, sophisticated, spiritually enlightened people and folks experiencing revival are ignorant, uneducated people guilty of mass hysteria. Funny, that is exactly what they said of the early Christians experiencing revival. ***“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men (uneducated and untrained), they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).***

CONCLUSION

If God chooses to bring revival to your church or country, will it look exactly like Pentecost? No. Pentecost cannot be duplicated, but many of the characteristics of revival at Pentecost can be experienced by the church today.

If revival comes, it may be quite different than any of us expects, but however it comes, we must not quench the Holy Spirit by turning revival away, providing it falls under the criteria set in scripture.

Are you praying for revival at your church or denomination? Are you asking Christ to powerfully send His Spirit on you? Are you praying, “Father, bring us revival; whatever it takes, bring us revival!”