

Holy Ghost Revival

Greetings in the fellowship of the gospel! This is a teaching that has been on my heart! Most American Christians today don't even know what real revival is, much less experienced it. Acts 3:19 speaks of "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord". "Times of Refreshing" is Holy Ghost revival. Acts 2 and 3 shows us what a Holy Ghost revival is like. The Holy Spirit had fallen in supernatural power in Acts 2:1-4 with tongues of fire, a mighty wind, and great endowment of power: 3,000 people were converted as a result (2:41).

Then, a man lame from his mother's womb was healed in Acts 3:8. As a result of this miracle, 5,000 people were saved (4:4). In the midst of healings, salvations, and Holy Spirit baptisms, Peter calls the people to "repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (3:19). "Refreshing" best describes revival (i.e.: reviving dying and dead things). And, refreshing and revival is the work of the Holy Spirit of God as we'll see later.

There is only one other place in the KJV of the Bible where the word "refreshing" is used: "With stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, this is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear" (Isaiah 28:11, 12). This is a very interesting scripture. It was quoted by Paul the Apostle in his great defense of speaking in tongues in 1 Cor. 14:21. So, "stammering lips and another tongue" is without a doubt prophetic of the sign of speaking in tongues.

However, this verse in Isaiah is also a Biblical double entendre (double meaning). Isaiah was also here warning Israel that God would "speak to this people" with "stammering lips and another tongue" by bringing the Assyrians and their language upon them in judgment as they invaded the land. How fascinating that judgment is mentioned in the same context with "refreshing". It is where judgment for sin has been most severe that the greatest need for refreshing and reviving is needed.

Because of sin, we need revival. And, thus the pattern for revival is laid out for us in Acts 3:19-31:1) Repent ... 2) Refreshing ... 3) Presence of the Lord ... 4) Restitution (Restoration). True Holy Ghost revival always involves these four things. We'll describe them as 4 R's:

REPENTANCE

The first step to revival. It will always be present in any true revival. Sin is the problem! Sin grieves the Holy Spirit of God (Eph. 4:30, "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God"). If we expect him to "move" among us, sin must be dealt with. This command is given in a context surrounded by warnings against many sins (verse 22); deceitful lusts (verse 25); lying (verse 26); anger (verse 28); stealing (verse 29); corrupt communication (verse 31); "bitterness, wrath, clamor (shouting), evil speaking, malice". Talk about a catch 22 situation! Sin grieves the Holy Spirit and thus hinders revival, yet because of sin, we desperately need revival!

Here is where we can be very encouraged by the verse in Rom. 5:10, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound". At times, God will sovereignly bring conviction for sin upon a people, driving them to their knees in repentance which brings about revival. But, whether initiated by God or man, repentance is still necessary.

Thank God, no matter how deep the sin, true repentance can bring about revival.

The first revival in New Testament times came through the preaching of John the Baptist who proclaimed, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1). When the kingdom of heaven invades a life, that is revival! But, the kingdom of heaven cannot be established in one's life, as long as sin stands in the way. Thus John's message was to "repent".

When Jesus began his preaching ministry, what was his message? "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). I wonder if the reason we don't see more dramatic, life-transforming conversions today is because we are preaching an "accept Jesus into your heart" message and not including the prerequisite "repent". To repent doesn't just mean to confess a sin to God. Prov. 28:13 says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

True repentance is a choice to turn away from (Acts 3:19 "be converted") and to "forsake" that sin. This must be done to experience revival because Paul wrote in II Tim. 2:25, 26, "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them *repentance* to the acknowledgment of the truth. And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him".

Notice the word "recover". Recovery from the "snare" or bondage to the devil only happens when true repentance takes place. Doesn't recovery sound like reviving? Yes, revival involves recovery from Satan as well as sin. But, sin is Satan's hook in our lives. "Neither give place to the devil" Eph. 4:27 infers getting rid of these hooks. Repentance is the first step to this "recovery". If we have truly repented, then we are ready for the work of the Holy Spirit to bring revival.

REFRESHING

There are five major symbols or types of the Holy Spirit in scripture. And, all five of them are things that we use to refresh ourselves: Wind, fire, oil, wine and water. First the natural, and then the spiritual (1 Cor. 15:46). God left us in the natural world 5 elements we'd all know well, and then says, "the Spirit is like this":

1. WIND: This would also include air, breath, or spirit (They are all the same word in the Greek: *pneuma*). All are invisible, and can't be seen. But they can be felt. Wind moves things. Air can be felt, and let's one understand the temperature and the atmosphere (getting hot, cold, im pending rain, etc.). Breath, of course, maintains life. And, spirit is the foundational source of all life. As we study examples of these words in scripture, we understand better how the Spirit works in our lives bringing revival.

A. Wind: When the Holy Spirit first fell on Pentecost in Acts 2:1-4, the event was described as "a rushing mighty wind". The word "rushing" demonstrates how revival falls. It is a quick work, often totally unexpected. Revival isn't a person slowly but surely growing in the Lord and learning to overcome things. Instead it's quick, dramatic change. "Mighty" shows that this is an extraordinary work. This was a sovereign work of God, to be sure, but was it coincidental that the disciples had continued in prayer for 10 days before that wind fell? St. Augustine said, "God provides the wind, but we must lift the sails". We lift our sails by praying for the Holy Spirit wind to blow on us. Every day, I pray "wind of the Holy Spirit, blow on me!" Let that be your prayer too!

B. Air: Invisible molecules are all around us. They exert pressure and transfer temperature to our skin. By this barometric pressure we can predict rain. By this temperature we know the healthiness of the atmosphere around us. When someone says they "feel" the presence of the Lord, it is this "air" they feel. They probably mean in their spirit being, but our flesh too can be affected by it (i.e.: being slain of the Spirit). We sing, "this is the air I breathe", but are we breathing air that is

warming to the fire of the Holy Spirit, or pressure that is building up in the invisible realm that will soon break forth in rain?

C. Breath: God breathed into man's nostrils the "breath of life" (Gen. 2:7). However, man's spirit died as a result of the fall. Though our flesh continues to live through breathing Oxygen, our spirit is dead unless we experience a reviving. Salvation is the reviving unto eternal life. Revival is the refreshing unto "abundant" life now (John 10:10). Jesus "breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" John 21:22. When you receive the Holy Ghost, Jesus has breathed on you (John 14:18). Any further reviving will also be "breath" entering you as we see in Ezek. 37:9.

God told Ezekiel to prophesy to a valley of dry bones, "Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." This was more than just a resurrection from death to life, however, for they became "an exceeding great army" (v. 10) and would be placed "in your own land" (v. 14). This reviving would arm them for war and to retake territory. Hallelujah! This breath is the very Spirit of God, for He said he would "put my spirit in you, and ye shall live" v. 14. For the church to fight off the forces of secularism and terrorism in America today and to bring revival to "our own land", we desperately need the breath of the living God!

D. Spirit: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit" (Zech. 4:6). The temple was nothing but rubble. The workers were discouraged in rebuilding it. Thus, Zechariah prophesied that the house would be finished (v. 9), but it wouldn't be by human agency or strength, but rather by the working of the Spirit of God. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit now (1 Cor. 6:19). If our temple is to be rebuilt, it will only happen by the work of the Spirit.

Every day I pray for more of the Holy Spirit, claiming Luke 11:13 "How much more shall your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask". I pray the 9 fruits of the Spirit in my life and the life of my family (Gal. 5:22-24). Three times in the book of Rev. "the seven Spirits of God" are mentioned: (1:4, 3:1, 5:6). I believe these are seven distinct manifestations of the one Holy Spirit of God. Now, don't try to fully comprehend this truth.

We can't see this side of heaven. "Great is the mystery of godliness (several translations say "religion"). I do believe we find a clue, however, in Isaiah 12:2, 3: "The spirit ... 1) of the Lord (the very manifestation of God himself), 2) Wisdom, 3) understanding, 4) counsel, 5) might, 6) knowledge 7) fear of the Lord".

Could these seven unique aspects of the work of the Spirit be but seven facets of the seven Spirits of God? I think so. In fact, I now pray these into my life every day. I long for the manifestation of the Spirit of God, in all his splendor, in my life. Don't you? Join me in this quest for Holy Spirit revival!

2. FIRE: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Matt. 3:11). This happened on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-4, "There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost". Heb. 1:7 says, God "maketh his angels spirits (or a wind), and his ministers a flame of fire". I want to be a flame of fire for God, don't you? But, the primary purpose of the fire of the Holy Spirit is not, like we Pentecostal preachers like to emphasize, so that we might be "on fire for God". No, this fire is primarily a purifying fire, as I have written in past newsletters. (Compare Heb. 12:29, Rev. 3:18, Mal. 3:2, Isa. 6:7). Every day I pray that the fire of God will burn in me. And, his fire has indeed been purging me. It burns the flesh. But, oh, the spiritual energy it brings. Fire refreshes as it warms you, transforms raw and dead flesh into something of value, & burns away worthless things.

"Quench not the Spirit" (Thess. 5:19) is a warning to not blow out the flame the Holy Spirit has lit in our life. We do this by sin. The fire fell on Sodom and Gomorrah and destroyed them (Gen. 19:28). The fire burned off the ropes of the three Hebrew children, which held them in bondage (Dan. 3:21, 25). The fire fell on the disciples at Pentecost and refreshed them. The fire of punishment, the fire of purging, and the fire of power. Which fire falls on you is determined by what fire your life needs most today and for which fire you are prepared. Repent, so refreshing fire is your portion!

3. OIL: There was a New Testament tradition of pouring and rubbing oil on people to "refresh" them (Lu. 7:46). Anointing (Heb. Rubbing with oil) was a ceremonial event in the Old Testament. Utensils used in the Temple were anointed. Old Testament Priests, and kings were anointed for their office. (We too are priests and kings, Rev. 1:6). In fact, every New Testament believer is anointed by the Holy Spirit: "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (John 2:27). This verse tells us that the Holy Spirit has given us a safeguard: the ability to discern truth from error.

Though God has given us teachers and pastors to lead us and help keep us from false doctrine (Eph. 4:11-15), we are nevertheless ultimately responsible for our own eternal well-being (Rom. 14:12). At the judgment, we cannot blame others for the way we are. We will be judged for what we do with God's word and with the dealings of his Spirit. Repentance is simply saying yes to the commands of the Spirit. Through the Word, prayer, and the witness of the Holy Spirit, every believer is promised the "anointing" (personal touch and assistance of the Spirit) to find the answer to every personal spiritual pursuit, if he'll only "abide in him" (1 John 2:28).

When priests and kings were anointed, it was a symbolic gesture of the fact that God had especially chosen them for a work, and was gifting them with the authority to serve in that office. Those called to be a preacher of the gospel are anointed for that work: "He hath anointed me to preach the gospel" Luke 4:18. There is an anointing of power for signs to accompany the preaching of the gospel with miracles (Acts 10:38). There is an anointing to cast out devils and deliver people from bondages (Isa. 10:27).

The disciples anointed people with oil when they prayed for their healing (Mark 6:13). Elders anointed the sick in James 5:14-16. (When we anoint someone with oil, we are reminding ourselves that if anything happens in that life, it is only because of the work of the Holy Spirit.) There is an anointing which brings joy (Isa. 61:2, 3, Heb. 1:8, 9). There is an anointing which brings revelation knowledge (Rev. 3:18). There is an anointing which brings unity (Ps. 133:1, 2). Anointing is not a one time, one amount thing. There can be new anointings and greater anointings received (Ps. 92:10, John 14:12-14).

I pray every day the Lord will pour the Oil of the Holy Spirit on me. Oil refreshes, with added fragrances enhances our presence, it makes fire burn more easily, it is an essential ingredient in bread, the staff of life, and it lubricates hard things rubbing against each other (do you need a new lube job?). Oil was indispensable in Bible times. It is just as indispensable 2000 years later (think how much politics focuses on this issue). It will be even more indispensable in the last days ("Hurt not the oil" Rev. 6:6) If so true in the natural, how much truer in the spirit! Oh, don't short change the importance of anointing! Seek to be continually anointed with fresh oil (Ps. 92:10). Every day I pray for the oil of the Spirit to pour over me!

4. WINE: Alcoholic beverages change a person. Wine changes one's thinking, his walk, his speech, his vision, and his emotions, and even kills germs and helps renew health (Lu. 10:34, 1 Tim. 5:23). Before the days of refrigeration, wine was a very important commodity, as it preserved,

along with raisins, a primary crop grown in the holy land, making it's nutrition available year round. The fact that the Bible allowed for drinking wine, must be balanced by 2 truths: One - that many who desire to set themselves aside for God's holy purposes willfully relinquish this privilege (as I myself and most other Christians do- Lu. 1:15-17, Dan. 1:5-8, Prov. 31:4, Lev. 10:9, Num. 6:3); and Two - that drunkenness (the abuse of alcohol) is not only forbidden, but will damn a soul to hell (1 Cor. 6:10, Matt. 24:49, Lu. 12:45). That aside, wine symbolizes the Spirit of God.

Scriptural clues to this truth are found in the Old Testament in Job. 32:19 and Micah 6:15 most notably. In the new Testament, we have Jesus turning water into wine (John 4:46). At the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were accused of being "full of new wine" Acts 2:13. The effect of the Spirit in their lives was similar to the effect of wine. In the same breath, Paul commanded us to "be not drunk with wine ... but be filled with the Spirit" Eph. 5:18.

Finally, we are told that "new wine must be put into new wine bottles" (Luke 5:38). We have to be made new (cleansed from sin through repentance) to be vessels in whom the Holy Spirit can fill with new wine (refreshing, revival). As we become a yielded vessel to the Holy Spirit, his "wine" will change us, just as the fruit of the vine changes our:

Thinking: Wine makes a person bold, and removes inhibitions. The Spirit does the same. "They spake the word of God with boldness" Acts 4:31, "God has not given us a spirit of fear (timidity), but of power & of a sound mind" II Tim. 1:7 (also 1 Cor. 2:12-16).

Walk: Rom. 8:14, Gal. 5:1- "Walk in the Spirit".

Vision: "Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see" Rev. 3:18. (And 1 Cor. 12:7-11, 2:9-11)

Speech: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak" (Acts 2:4), "My speech . . . in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2:4).

Emotions: "wine that maketh glad the heart of man" Ps. 104:15, "filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost" Acts 13:52. Every day I ask God to fill me with the wine of the Holy Spirit. Want a drink too?

5. WATER: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive)" (John 7:38, 39).

There is no need for spiritualizing here. Jesus specifically says this special water is the Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit water is given to those who are "thirsty" for revival. I highlighted three words: 1) drink: This is an act of the will. We choose what we drink. It is wise to choose to "drink into one Spirit" 1 Cor. 12:13. There is a "well of salvation" Isa. 12:3, (John. 4:13, 14). All who drink at this well are saved. But, there are also "rivers" available through the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and further drinking more deeply of the Spirit. "I will pour water on him that is thirsty ... I will pour my spirit" (Isa. 44:3). 2) belly : this word actually means "hallow" in the Greek. Every Christian has a "hallow" in him. He can fill it with entertainment. He can fill it with sin. He can fill it with the Holy Spirit. Every day I pray for the Lord to fill my "hallow" with the water of the Spirit. Only when your hallow is full and overflowing with this water can it become... 3) rivers of living water: Rivers are water that is moving. They have an inlet and an outlet. The spirit of God "moves" on waters (Gen. 1:2). How much water are you allowing the Holy Spirit to dish out to you and move through you? Is there an inlet to your life? And, to what meaningful goal is the outlet?

Notice too they are "living" waters. Wherever the Holy Spirit is moving, there is life. Some pastors think their church attendance numbers prove the Holy Spirit is moving in their church. But, the real proof of the presence of the Holy Spirit is "life" (i.e. People are being saved, transformed, healed, delivered, renewed in their marriages and relationships). "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63). "The same spirit that raised Christ from the dead will also quicken your mortal bodies, by his spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11). The more the Holy Spirit is allowed to move, and fill, and pour himself through us, the more life we will have and the more life we will have to offer others.

Since water is inarguably a type of the Holy Spirit, that adds great meaning to water baptism, doesn't it? And, we see why Acts 10:45 says "poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost". Also, we see wonderful truths about the Holy Spirit "refreshing" our lives in water manifested as rain. (See Job 29:23, , Hos. 10:12, Zech. 10:1, James 5:7). It's clearest in Joel 2:23, 28: "He will cause to come down for you the rain ... the latter rain ... And it shall come to pass afterward (in the last days Acts 2:17) that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh". Are you praying for that last day rain, the final outpouring of the Spirit of God, which will reach "all flesh", all the members of your family that you have been praying for so long? The greatest revival and refreshing work of the Holy Spirit will be in the last days.

The great counterfeiter, Satan, tries to imitate the work of the Spirit. His priests turned the water into blood in Egypt. In the last days, "the enemy shall come in like a flood" (hasn't he flooded the world with pornography, false religions, Islam, drugs, etc.?), but when he does, "the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. 59:19). That standard will be a mighty flowing stream, a river of living water.

Ezekiel saw a vision of the type of river the Lord wants to flow out to his people in 47:5. It was "waters to swim in", covering every sin, sickness, and human frailty. As we are swimming in the waters of revival, leading people to Christ, enjoying great miracles of healing, we will at last see Christ break through the clouds of glory and set up his kingdom, where we will never thirst again, as we drink from the "river of the water of life" in Rev. 22:1.

But, revival is not the final goal of the Holy Spirit. There are two other important works of the Holy Spirit that are the desired by-product of his refreshing: Revelation and Restoration. Repent of anything in your life that might be grieving or quenching the work of the Spirit. Ask for refreshing in you, in your church, and in America. And, get in tighter with the Spirit of God.

There's a spiritual hurricane brewing on the horizon, an oil-well waiting to be struck, a fire ever ready to be kindled, a bottle of new wine to be drunk, and a river, though dammed up, that is bursting for a place to flow. And, can you feel the change in the weather? Isn't a warm wind starting to blow? And, can you feel the barometric pressure increasing on your spirit? The latter rain is coming. Get ready to drink and swim!!!

So far, we have showed that according to Acts 3:19-21, there are four steps to revival, represented by four "R's": Repentance, Refreshing, Revelation (Presence of the Lord), and Restoration (Restitution). We showed that repentance from sin is the very first step to revival. Then, the Holy Spirit will bring us "times of refreshing". He does this through pouring his Spirit on us bringing refreshment as water, wine, fire, oil, and wind, (types of His Spirit). But, this time of refreshing is not the ultimate goal. There are two further steps to revival: Revelation, and Restoration. We are examining these two words studies at this time.

REVELATION

"Times of refreshing" have an origination. They come "from the presence of the Lord". I don't believe this text is talking about the act of spending time in his presence, that is in faith believing that the Lord is there, with you, as you pray. He is of course. And, every time we pray, we do enter his presence (Heb. 4:14-16). But, it is not this time in his presence that insures revival. Rather, it is the manifestation of his presence that insures revival.

Every church and every Christian spends time in prayer "in his presence", but how many have revival? I wish I had a dime for every time I was in a service where there weren't very many people, but the pastor or worship leader tried to encourage us by quoting Matt. 18:20, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst". Was Jesus there that night? Absolutely! But, did anything happen? Usually not much, apparently. The sick went home sick. The discouraged were still discouraged. No one got saved. The crowd was still depressingly small. But, we had spent "time in his presence". Was it fun being there? Frankly, no. That's why decades ago churches stopped having "prayer meetings" and went to "Bible studies".

Many churches have canceled midweek church services altogether. People didn't want to come to church on Sunday night either, so we cancelled most of those services, making them "family nights". What's next: T.V. communion dinners? Anointing for healing by internet? Sunday sermons faxed to homes? David said, "in thy presence is fullness of joy" (Ps. 16:11). Are prayer meetings the happiest place on earth? Do you find complete happiness and total joy every time you spend an hour in your prayer closet? Let's be honest with one another. Prayer is usually hard work!

Could it be that "thy presence" doesn't just mean spending time with the Lord in prayer, but speaks of a possible glorious one time manifestation of his presence which brings such "glory" into one's life, that it brings lasting joy and revival? Why doesn't revival fall in every church where they are taking time to be in the "presence of the Lord".

What happened in Toronto, or Brownsville, or any other place where "revival" fires fall? Did they pray more? Did they have more faith? Were they holier? Did they just pile up enough time on their knees until they merited revival? I don't buy it! No, what happened was, they experienced the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit. What do I mean by the phrase "the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit?" Let's get some clues from places in the Bible where the Holy Spirit manifested himself. Luke 5:16 says, "the power of the Lord was present to heal them". Isn't God everywhere? Can't God heal anytime? Of course. But there are special times when the Lord manifests, unveils, or reveals his presence in such a special way, that it can readily be distinguished by the 5 senses.

Here in Luke 5, it's a healing that can be felt. An angel appeared unto Zecharias to announce the birth of John the Baptist. The angel introduced himself. "I am Gabriel, that stands in the presence of the Lord" (Luke 1:19). The manifestation of the presence of the Lord made an angel visible to man. His presence invaded earth. In the Acts 2 "revival", there was fire from heaven, a rushing mighty wind, and the supernatural ability to speak in a tongue they had never learned. God's power manifested birthed His glorious church. Jesus manifested his presence to Saul and the rebel against the church was so gloriously transformed that he immediately said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do" (Acts 9:6), and became perhaps the greatest Christian of all time.

John saw the glorified Lord in a vision which birthed the book of Revelation. In Exodus 34:28-35, Moses spent 40 days in the presence of the Lord, and as a result, his face reflected the glory of the Lord so brightly, that he had to put a veil on his face because the people were afraid of such a demonstration of God's glory. Isaiah felt so condemned because of his and Israel's sin, that he cried "Woe is me". But, he saw an angel take a live coal from off the altar and touch his lips,

declaring him purified. After this "revelation", when the invitation came for him to fulfill his call, he joyfully could respond, "Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6:1-8).

In all the above examples, it wasn't just spending time in prayer until they started feeling good. No, it was a glorious manifestation of the presence and glory of God, which transformed them and brought instant revival.

Is prayer a part of revival? Of course! The Word, testimony, and history is replete with examples of this truth. But, what I wanted you to see was that it wasn't this time in his presence that brought the revival. Rather, it was the sudden, unveiling of heaven, a revelation from the very presence of God that at last brought the revival.

While I was preaching in Tampa, Florida last week, a retired pastor shared an experience that he had that dramatically illustrates what I am saying. His church had been experiencing problems. He just didn't feel he could take it anymore. So, he had determined one Sunday morning at 10:15 AM, to resign as pastor of that church. Minutes before he got a chance to do so, a worship leader who had caused problems and left in anger, walked into the church weeping, and repenting for what he had done.

Suddenly, the pastor felt a wind at his back, and he felt it blowing toward the people. People in the first row began weeping, and praying. Then, the second row did the same. And, he watched as in row by row throughout the church spontaneous weeping and prayer commenced. Within two weeks, new people started attending, and the work and his pastorate there was rescued. Had he prayed? Of course. Had others spent time in God's presence and prayed? Certainly. But, it was at last the manifest presence of the Lord that brought revival.

Revival comes in different ways to different people and to different churches. And, prayer is basic to experiencing this revival: "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you" (Hosea 10:12). "Seek God . . . till he come".

This "rain" or revival will at last be experienced when "he comes" to us manifesting his presence. It may be just a voice saying "go". It may be a dream to "come over to Macedonia and help us". It may be an angelic visitation. It may be a dramatic healing. It may be a glorious sense of the wind of the Holy Spirit blowing on you. But, however he chooses to manifest himself to you, it is this "presence" and this "revelation" of Him that we seek. In this "presence", we won't have to pray for revival anymore. We will be the incarnated bearers of revival: "sons of oil" like the two anointed ones in Zech. 4:14. Like the wise virgins, our lamps will be full.

We have discussed the first four "R's: Repentance and the commitment to overcome sin; Refreshing from the Holy Spirit; and the Revelation of his presence in the church. These are glorious truths. But as wonderful as these things are, they're still not the final goal and purpose of God for our lives. All these things are but warm up acts for the grand finale: Restoration.

I think some leaders feel that getting people saved, cleaned up, and "disciplined" into effective ministry by contending for the spirit of revival is the primary purpose of the church. But I am convinced that restoration is the number one goal of God. Revivals wax and wane. People get close to God and then drift away. Why don't revivals last? I believe it is because the people aren't restored. Falling under the power, laughing, shaking: many wonderful things can happen in revival. But, there has to be a deeper work than this. To conserve a revival there must be restoration, or the "old man" or the old ways, or the old attitudes creeping up will eventually dry up the river. Jesus taught this in Matt 9:17. He said "put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved".

To preserve the wine of revival, the vessel itself must be restored. New wine will ultimately burst old bottles. For revival to "stick", we must become "new bottles". This is...

RESTORATION

"Heaven must receive (Jesus) until the times of restitution (several translations say "restoration") of all things" (Acts 3:19). Some think this restoration happens after Jesus returns. But, there is a key word in this verse. Notice it says "times" (just like "times of refreshing"). This can mean intermittent events. Couldn't some of these "times" begin in your life today?

God's heart has always been to bring restoration to his people. It isn't just for last day New Testament believers. He promised restoration to his people in the Old Testament: "I will restore to you the years which the locust hath eaten" Joel 2:25.

John the Baptist's ministry was a "restoration" ministry (Matt. 17:11). God wants to restore health to those who are sick (Jer. 30:17). God desires to restore people emotionally (Isa. 57:18, Ps. 51:12). He wants to restore to his people anything good that they have lost, anything that Satan has taken away from them, anything that is broken or bruised. God's goal is to restore man to his original state exemplified in Adam: without death, pain, sin, etc. But, he wants to do far more than that.

Do you know what God's highest destiny is for you? Do you know what his grand plan of restoration is for every single Christian? Romans 8:29 tells us: "for whom he did foreknow, he did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son." God wants to restore us to a state far beyond what Adam had. He wants us to be just like Jesus...

like him in every way! Of course, when Jesus returns to earth we will immediately become like him: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him" (1 Jn. 3:2).

The next verse adds; "and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure". This makes it very clear that we are not just to do nothing until Christ comes and does it all for us. No, verse 3 shows that we are a primary agent in this present process of being restored to Christ's likeness..."purifying ourselves". Every time we make a decision to repent of a sin, to study the Bible, to pray and obey, we are "purifying ourselves".

The challenge of Christianity is not to just patiently wait for the rapture when we will at last get victory over the limitations of the flesh. Rather, we are given the privilege and power to experience the transformation into Christ's character now, in this time, and will even be judged by how far we arrive in this process: "We labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted ("well pleasing to him" (New King James Version, Thomas Nelson Publ., Nashville, TN). For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body" (II Cor. 5:9, 10). The dissatisfaction you have sensed all your life, is not just some "spirit of heaviness" attacking you. It is your spirit longing to fulfill its destiny: restoration.

David said, "I shall behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness" (Ps. 17:15). You long to behold the Father's face: to see what he is doing, so you can do it too. This is how Jesus fulfilled his calling on earth (John 5:19). Your spirit longs for the righteousness which brings fullness of joy and his manifest presence (Ps. 16:11). You long to be like Jesus and please the Father in everything you do (John 8:29). You have an instinct that you are responsible to achieve this beckoning "perfection" (Matt. 5:48, II Cor. 13:9, Heb. 6:1, Eph. 3:14-19).

God knew it wouldn't be easy for us, so he gave us agents other than ourselves to help us experience restoration "conformed into the image of Christ".

Agents Of Restoration

I. God: Ps. 23:3 says, "He restoreth my soul". It is the great work of the Father to help us have our souls restored. To understand what this means, it helps to understand what the soul is. Our soul is comprised of the intellect, the emotions, and the will.

A. Our intellects need to think like Christ: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). "Let" implies it is an act of our will to submit to this working of the Holy Spirit. It is an act of faith to believe what our potential is: "We have the mind of Christ" (Cor. 2:16). If you aren't thinking the kind of thoughts Jesus would think, you need to meditate on the word and pray more (Joshua 1:8, 9, Ps. 119:97-100, II Cor. 3:18, II Tim. 3:15-17), letting his restorative power transform your thoughts.

B. Our emotions: Depression, anger, fear, hatred, rejection, pride, or discouragement were emotions Christ never experienced. The Lord wants to route these out of our lives: (Luke 4:18, Ps. 51:12, 34:4, Isa. 61:2, 3, Rom. 14:17, 15:13, 1 Jn. 4:17, James 1:4,). Refuse to accept your "inherited Irish temper" or the like. You're a "new creation" and "old things are passed away" (II Cor. 5:17). You've a right to in faith seek God until your emotions are perfected. But, you also have a personal responsibility to do so: "Let us. cleanse ourselves ... Perfecting holiness" (II Cor. 7:1).

C. Our will: We spank our children trying to break their will and make them change where they need change. Does anybody reading this sermon need to be changed? The Lord knows how to make change us; His chastening hand (Heb. 12:1-14). How much better to simply obey the Lord, and avert a heavenly spanking! By nature we are all selfish. But, Jesus "pleased not himself" (Rom 15:3). Our wills must be broken, yielded to the father in obedience, restored to Christ like unselfish service unto others. Our Father takes the initiative to help us make these changes.

2. The Spirit: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass (mirror) the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory; even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 13:18). No wonder the restorer John the Baptist, when announcing the first coming of Christ, announced above all that he would "baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (John 1:33). The Holy Spirit is a vital agent in restoration. In the same place where our predestination to be conformed into the image of Christ is mentioned, we are told in Rom. 8:27, 28 that the Holy Spirit "helps our weaknesses" and makes "intercession for us according to the will of God". Doesn't "helping our weaknesses" and "the will of God" picture this perfecting work in us? And, it is in this context the Spirit makes "groanings for us which cannot be uttered"?

There are sins, weaknesses, and invisible works of hell that if we could only see them from God's perspective, we would be "groaning" in prayer over them. But we can't "see" them as they are. It is because of this human "weakness" that God gave us tongues. When we pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit "groans" in intercession for these things "unseen" to us, helping "restore" them to "the will of God".

I want the Holy Spirit's help in this restoration process. I want God's will in 2004! This year I have made a New Years resolution to pray in tongues at least 7 minutes a day. I do this by the stop watch. This certainly isn't the only time I pray in tongues, but is a sure time! (7 minutes may not seem like much, but times 365 days, it is over a full 40 hour workweek. If you took a week of from work, and spent 8 hours a day for 5 days speaking in tongues only, would you feel like that was a pretty useful use of your time? I sure do!). The Spirit "guides us into all truth" (John 16:13). And,

a most important truth to me personally is how Dea can be conformed to the image of Christ and restored to God's best for me!

3. Christian leaders: "He gave some apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints ... till we all come unto ... a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13). Make no mistake, the focus of this text is not just to help you discover your personal "ministry" as some like to use these verses. No, a primary goal of ministries is to help Christians be "conformed to his image". Those who don't regularly attend church to take advantage of Church leadership and teaching are not only not going to "arrive" at God's destiny for them, but are in rebellion and disobedient to God's clearly revealed plan and purpose for their life (Heb. 10:25, I Thess. 5:12, 13, Heb. 13:7, 17).

4. Every Christian Worker: God restores us so we can more effectively restore others. God couldn't release me to my ministry as an evangelist, until I got "perfected" in some necessary areas. Now, I still haven't "arrived". I am still a "wounded healer". But, whereas in the past, maybe 90% of my prayers were for me, and 10% for others, now perhaps 90% of my prayer is for others and 10% for myself. The more you are restored, the more you can concentrate on restoring others. Paul's goal in ministry was to both "present every man perfect in Christ" (Col. 1:28), and to personally "win Christ" as he "pressed toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God" (Phil. 3:8, 14).

There is no higher calling than becoming like Christ and helping others become like Christ. As we become more "restored" and less "self-centered" and learn, like Christ, to take upon ourselves the "form of a servant" (Phil. 2:3-8), we can then become a "repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in" (Isa. 58:12). But this ministry only flows through people who have learned to die to "Pleasure" verse 3 (here exemplified through fasting with the goal of restoring others – verse 6). Repentance shows the acceptance of personal responsibility to be changed into his image.

Refreshing is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit to energize the pursuit of perfection, especially among the unsaved and the spiritually cold. Revelation is the gift of "his presence" to give you your personal "rhema", your clarion call to the pathway to your personal destiny. But, restoration is the grand finale. Those of us who experience it this side of the return of Christ are "satisfied" indeed. Thank God, those who don't still have the hope of restoration at his coming!