



There is

# FIRE IN THE CHURCH

Dale Rumble

## WHY WE NEED REVIVAL

When Jesus visits His people in revival, His presence bring times of renewal and refreshing to them. Our nation has been blessed with visitations such as the first and second great awakenings, the charismatic renewal, the Toronto and Pensacola revivals, etc. While the primary blessing of revival is the salvation of souls, God's people are also delivered from spiritual bondages and more fully established in righteousness. At times strange manifestations may occur, such as unrestrained laughter or weeping, trembling or falling under the Holy Spirit's presence! The fire of God is touching His people. . .

The following are three reasons why revival is so necessary today:

1. Spiritual darkness is deepening throughout the world and will continue to do so until the age comes to a close (Matthew 24:3-25).
2. The greatest harvest of souls yet to be gathered in by the church lies immediately before us. This harvest will mark the end of the present age (Matthew 13:37-43).
3. The church is not in the spiritual condition that will be necessary to gather in the great end-time harvest. Because of the magnitude of the harvest, it will require the entire body of Christ. Four fundamental deficiencies that exist today are:
  - Lack of love and true unity between believers and church bodies
  - Lack of compassion and mercy for the lost and backslidden
  - Lack of the power of God in ministry
  - Although not intentionally, we have placed God inside the box of our theological understanding. As a consequence, we fail to see or understand people and circumstances as He does, nor do we recognize our own lack and the seriousness of these days.

These deficiencies are not primarily a matter of wrong doctrine, rather, they reflect a lack in heart reality of doctrinal truth. In other words, we confess more than we possess.

Because of the above conditions, God is visiting His church to prepare her for what lies ahead. As Lord of the harvest, He is shaking everything that can be shaken and removing it, so that in the end, only His kingdom will remain (Hebrews 12:25-29). He is a consuming fire, and He is touching both the physical and the spiritual realms.

## THE FIRE OF GOD

The United States of America, which once esteemed the laws of God in her courts and schools, has removed Him from her social conscience. As a consequence, we are now a country spiritually crippled by sins of the occult, humanism, homosexuality, abortion, pornography, witchcraft, drug addiction, gang violence, etc. A spirit of materialism has resulted in great amounts of personal and government debt. As a result, the fire of God's judgment is upon the nation. This is evident in the plague of AIDS, earthquakes, hurricanes, drought, floods and other natural calamities! These evidences of God's fire are a call for national repentance.

At the same time, God is also beginning to pour out His fire in a sovereign visitation upon the church. Both fires are to bring to pass His purpose for the harvest. Crusades by leading evangelists in nations outside of America have drawn crowds of hungry people totaling in the millions! Miracles of healing take place as thousands turn to the Lord. Satellites are being used to broadcast the gospel by radio and T.V. to almost every nation on earth. This now includes Islamic countries. Who can grasp what lies ahead?

What is taking place in the church is altogether by the grace of God. No man or organization will be allowed to take credit for this revival. Too much is at stake!

Furthermore, it is only beginning! Greater demonstrations of God's fire will be seen in the days ahead. He will deal with pride and sectarian attitudes in His people, for humility is essential. The glory of God will arise on the church. I expect that, at times, the presence of angels will be visible in meetings. We are not to fear the fire of God, but our hearts must be prepared for what lies ahead.

One reason for an increase in the supernatural will be because many in the harvest will come from the poor, crippled, blind and lame of our streets, from converts in Islamic nations, from Asian and African peoples, from lands crippled by Communism; and many in Israel will come to their Messiah. This gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all nations before the Lord returns (Matthew 24:14).

The heart of this visitation is how much our heavenly Father loves us. He wants us to rest in His arms of love, for He knows all who belong to Him and He loves each one equally. There will be some who draw back and turn away from the light and truth He is bringing. At the same time, many backsliders will return home. As this occurs, it is vital that believers do not

manifest the spirit of the elder brother (Luke 15:11-32). It is time for rejoicing as the family of God is being completed.

The harvest to come will be the final great revelation of God's love, mercy and grace before the terrible day of His wrath.

## THE ANOINTING

Manifestations—how are we to understand or judge them? First of all, they are biblical (Daniel 10:7-11, 15-17; Jeremiah 23:9; Acts 2:13; 2 Corinthians 12:2; Revelation 1:7). I believe there are four guidelines of wisdom and safety.

- Believers are not to seek for manifestations
- They are always to seek the Lord
- Believers, and leaders in particular, are not to judge manifestations
- They are to judge the fruit that follows. This is important since demonic activity can also result in signs and manifestations.

In the case of salvation experiences, and in the operation of most spiritual gifts, there may be little or no unusual manifestations. However, there can be dramatic emotional and physical manifestations during instances of deep repentance and deliverance. Certainly, there ought to be a stirring of emotions when truth is received in one's heart. The historical record of the great revival in the 18th and 19th centuries is filled with accounts of many manifestations similar to those experienced in the Toronto renewal. The fruit that resulted from these visitations of the Holy Spirit suggests that a very deep work being done in hearts was responsible for the manifestations.<sup>2</sup>

The end result of any anointing of the Holy Spirit can be defined and explained by the anointing that rested upon Jesus in His earthly ministry. He received the Spirit without measure for specific ministry goals. These are the framework for judging the fruit of all manifestations today. Let us examine each one as they are listed in Isaiah 61:1-3.

- “to bring good news to the afflicted”
- “to bind up the brokenhearted”
- “to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners”
- “to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God”
- “to comfort all who mourn”

- “to give those who mourn in Zion, a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting”
- The goal of all this ministry is for God’s people to become oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, who will glorify Him.

When Jesus stood up in the synagogue and identified Himself as the One who would fulfill Isaiah’s prophecy, He read only as far as, “. . . to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19). The verses He read became the basis of His earthly ministry. The remaining verses address what He is doing today as Head of the church. Thus, we can expect emphasis in current visitations that prepare us for the “favorable year” of harvest, that warn of the day of vengeance to come and that replaces any spirits of mourning with spirits of joy, praise and worship in the church.

Thus the validity of any revival, as a genuine visitation of God, is not determined by manifestations but by the following ministries:

- The gospel will be proclaimed and people warned of the wrath to come.
- What God purposes to do in a specific day of visitation will be made known. Thus, prophetic revelations and visions should be expected.
- The Spirit will demonstrate the ministry of love, mercy, compassion and comfort to those who are emotionally and spiritually crippled
- Ministry of deliverance for those held captive by spiritual depression or oppression, the occult or other hidden works of darkness (i.e. sickness, dead traditions, pride, deceptions, fears, lusts of the flesh, etc.).
- God’s people will be set free from all that hinder prayer, worship, praise and rejoicing. Without the joy of the Lord and a commitment to prayer, the church lacks spiritual strength.
- Believers will be deeply rooted in Christ, not as reeds or willows, but as oaks of righteousness who will not be moved.

It is no wonder that great joy is manifested in the house of God when souls are saved, when backsliders come home, when bondages in lives are broken and believers return to their first love! Surely that is what we are beginning to see; and it is going to get even better.

## IT IS A DAY OF GLORY

As darkness covers the earth, the glory of God will begin to arise upon the church as He sovereignly takes the initiative in the harvest fields.

*Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and **His glory will appear upon you. And nations will come to your light . . .*** (Isaiah 60:1-3)

The glory of God plays a uniquely important role in the harvest of these days. First of all, His glory, which in this life is visible as His righteous character is the *only* basis for biblical unity (Exodus 33:18-19; 34:6-7). Unity has traditionally been based on agreement in doctrine. However, doctrine alone is not enough.

*. . . and the **glory** which Thou has given Me I have given to them; **that they may be one, just as We are one.*** (John 17:22)

Secondly, we must turn to the Lord and seek victory over anything that would hinder us from beholding His glory and from being changed into His image.

*. . . whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory just as from (by) the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:16-18)*

The Holy Spirit, as the fire of God, tests and reveals the quality of our spiritual lives (1 Corinthians 3:11-13). He searches hearts to expose such thing as complacency, apathy, deceit, pride, unbelief, unforgiveness, etc. While such ministry is a vital mark of any true revival, it is of paramount importance if the glory of God is to rise upon the church in the final great harvest of souls.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

What lies ahead will not necessarily be like revivals of the past. For one thing, it will be a time of persecution and great darkness in the world. I expect the following are important premises of that time:

- Many who the Lord anoints in powerful ministries will be those who are humble and hidden in the background. They are not the ones who most people would expect to be used. Those who allow Him to do a deep work in their hearts will then bring revival to others. The

Lord is sovereign in all that takes place, and He desires to use all of His body.

- It is important that leaders do not seek to hinder, control or manipulate what the Spirit is doing; they are to be bondservants who lead the way by example and who point people to the Lord and His purpose. They must give the Lord back His church.<sup>3</sup> The Lord will deal severely with those who oppose Him. It is not the time for maintenance mode; the church must prepare for and press on into the vision for this hour.
- Our emphasis in doctrine needs to be reassessed. All truth is important. However many truths that we emphasize pale in significance when compared to the emphasis Jesus places on unity in His body. One purpose of the anointing is to bring into reality the answer to His prayer—that all believers may be one in Him (John 17:21-23).<sup>4</sup> Jesus will have a united church.

*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! (Psalm 133:1)*

*By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:35)*

- As His servants, we need to readjust our criteria for success. Excellence in what we do is not the proper emphasis. We ought to be totally concerned with guarding our hearts, seeking Him in prayer, and walking in His anointing. Ensuring the preeminence and centrality of Christ is our criteria for success.
- It appears the two essential factors in any true revival is God's sovereign dispensation of mercy, grace and love, and the prayers of those in the church who intercede for revival. Lord, help us not fail in our responsibility to pray, and send your fire among us!

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