

Revival

God's Explosive Intervention

David Fleming



Disciples Ignited

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all prayer warriors who have been praying for revival. May the Lord answer your petitions immeasurably more than all you have asked for or imagined.

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” (Ephesians 3:20–21, NIV)

ENDORSEMENTS

Dr. Steven H. Puffpaff

Assemblies of God Missionary to Suriname and the Eastern
Caribbean

I highly endorse Dr. David Fleming's book, *Revival: God's Explosive Intervention*. I have known David for fifty years. He has consistently contended and hungered for revival. You feel Dr. David's deep desire to see the last day revival come forth in America. He presents a well-rounded Biblical overview of Revival as stated in the Word of God. The biblical background is supported with testimonies of actual revivals that transformed communities and nations throughout history. Dr. Fleming's study on the revival in Ephesus is particularly enlightening. His excellent study demonstrates the real essence of revival which is to transform society by the power of the Holy Spirit. "Lord, let it happen in our day."

Apostle Terry Ball

Five-Fold Ministry Global Traveling Network

As the Church forges ahead through this Laodicean Age, this phenomenal book will awaken a fire of God within you, and a genuine hunger and thirst for Revival once again. I applaud Dr. David Fleming for penning such a must-read book! Truly

you can feel the passion of his heart, as he cries out and simultaneously stirs the heart of every believer to cry out for Revival – God’s Explosive Intervention!

Dr. Mary Cerciello

Marketplace Apostle

Author of “Touching Heaven from the Empire State Building,
Glory Encounters in Heavenly Places”

I have known Dr. David Fleming for over 10 years. He is an amazing teacher and true Pioneer! His book, *Revival: God’s Explosive Intervention*, is rich with understanding about the coming revival! Dr. Fleming explores and reveals God at work, as He pours out a fresh glory presence upon those that are His and brings about a world harvest. This is a powerfully packed and timely book. “Revive us, and we will call on your name,” (Psalm 80:18, NIV).

Pastor Richard Sejour

An adoptive son of the living God!

Gateway Family Foursquare Church, Miami, FL

Finally! Since the day I met Dr. Fleming the word *revival* has always been in his heart, spoken through his lips and been a part of his daily personal prayer, as well as corporate praying. I am elated that he has felt prompted by the Lord to place the longing of his heart in a book and I am also pleased to have been asked to invite you to its pages. In this book Dr. Fleming gives us a reflection of what has characterized his life and desire for the 25 plus years that I have known him as a friend. He is keenly aware of the fact that true revival cannot be manufactured by men and that no charisma, enthusiasm, or personal will can ever bring about the revival that we truly

need; it must be born of God and initiated by the Spirit of God. As you read the pages of this book it is my prayer that you will experience the weight of God's promise and His intention to revive His people.

PREFACE

To help you better understand why I wrote this book I'll take you back to the 1970's to the Jesus Movement. Although I'd grown up in church that which I experienced during the Jesus Movement was different. I didn't know it then, but I was experiencing a revival awakening that God was pouring out on my generation!

So, what made the Jesus Movement effective in reaching a generation that the Church had failed to reach? Why was the Jesus Movement able to gain the attention of an entire generation which had been captivated by drugs, sex, witchcraft, and rebellion? The simple answer is that God was giving my generation a revival outpouring!

During the Jesus Movement the Lord put in my heart a spiritual hunger for Jesus that has never left me. But something else happened to me during the Jesus Movement; the Lord gave me a hunger for revival. Because of that I've devoted much of my adult life to praying for and studying revival outpourings. It's been exciting to read about how God has used revival outpourings to shape history, revitalize the Church, and change lives. However, the more I studied revival outpourings I was struck by the fact that the spiritual changes that take place during a revival outpouring rarely last beyond the generation that experiences the revival outpouring. That

fact gripped me and led me to the conclusion that every generation needs to experience their own revival outpouring!

Many share this understanding and that's why there are so many today who are crying out to the Lord for a revival outpouring! The Church realizes that it needs God's divine intervention. We recognize that our Church programs have failed and our motivational messages haven't made disciples for Jesus. We're desperate ... and that's a good thing ... because it's brought us to the end of ourselves and caused us to open our hearts to what Jesus has in store for this generation; a revival outpouring that will change lives and get the Church back in sync with God's purpose and plan for the ages.

I hope that as you read this book that you'll gain much more than knowledge about revival. I pray that you'll gain a spiritual hunger for revival that will motivate you to join the millions of others who are praying for the greatest revival outpouring in history!

“Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,” (Isaiah 64:1a, NIV)

Dr. David Fleming

ÉPIGRAPH

“And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” (Isaiah 40:5, NIV)

CHAPTER ONE

REVIVAL: INSIGHT INTO THE UNDEFINABLE

Prophetic voices throughout Christendom are proclaiming that revival is coming! Yet, what does that mean? To begin with revival is a supernatural phenomenon that transcends man's natural understanding. During a revival outpouring the Lord brings His heavenly Kingdom into the earthly realm, establishes His spiritual throne on earth, and sovereignly accomplishes His will! During revival, the LORD accomplishes in a moment that which His people couldn't accomplish, even after years of labor. A revival outpouring can take place in a church, city, state, or an entire region. Some revival outpourings have even covered nations as God poured out His Spirit globally! In many ways revival is unfathomable.

There have been several revival outpourings throughout the world in the past two hundred years: the Great Awakening, the Second Great Awakening, The Welsh Revival, the Azusa Pentecostal Revival, the Hebrides Revival, the Toronto Revival, the Brownsville Revival, just to name a few. However, many believe that as great as those revival outpourings were, they were only a foretaste of what we are about to experience across the globe. It's time for us to prepare ourselves, for the best is yet to come!

A BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF REVIVAL

Historically, the spiritual state of the Church and society at large have always been at their lowest point before a revival outpouring. That is probably why the word *revival* (which is derived from Latin and means “to live again”) has been the most widely used word to describe the massive outpouring of God’s Spirit which revives the Church and draws masses of people into the Kingdom of God. While the actual word *revival* isn’t in the Bible, there are numerous accounts in Scripture and Church history that exemplify the meaning of *revival*. *Renewal* and *refreshing* have also been used to describe what takes place in a revival outpouring for they give the sense that something old and tired is being rejuvenated.

Unfortunately, many believers in Christ mistakenly think that a “shower of blessing” from God is a revival outpouring! That is not the case at all! People aren’t just blessed when they encounter Jesus in a revival outpouring, they are dramatically changed! While all revival outpourings are full of God’s blessings much more is involved. During a revival outpouring conviction is stronger, spiritual perception is heightened, the Lord’s manifest presence is overwhelming, and people are transformed!

Studying about revival outpourings in the Bible and Church history will benefit you in many ways: it will help you learn what has taken place during revival outpourings of the past, what they accomplished, and why we need revival today. But studying about revival will do more than give you knowledge. Your heart is going to be stirred. In fact, I believe that your heart will be so stirred that you’ll join the millions of others who are crying out for the Lord to do it again!

“Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name. Restore us, Lord God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.” (Psalm 80:18–19, NIV)

To better understand what happens during a revival outpouring let’s look at four Hebrew words that are used in the Old Testament in connection to revival: *shapak*, *chalap*, *chayah*, and *chadash*.¹

Shapak literally means *to pour out* and is used to describe the awesome outpouring of God’s Spirit which changes people’s hearts and lives. This is the Hebrew word used in Joel 2:28 (NIV), *“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.”*

Chalap, when used in reference to revival, expresses how God renews His people with His awesome presence, as in Isaiah 40:31 (NIV), *“but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.”*

Chayah means *to have life* and is used when the Lord restores life to those who are spiritually dead or dying, as in Psalm 85:6 (NIV), *“Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?”*

Chadash means *new* and when used in reference to revival expresses the idea that the Lord is doing something new in the lives of His people, as in Isaiah 43:19 (NIV), *“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”*

Thus, in the Old Testament alone there is a clear sense that revival outpourings are a powerful outpouring of God's Spirit that changes, renews, and revives God's people. However, such special outpourings are never ushered in by way of "church as usual" type of meetings. They come when God does a "new thing" in our midst! Thus, we would be wise to pray that we will be desirous, perceptive, and open to Jesus when He comes in ways that we are not used to!

In the New Testament four Greek words that have a special connection to revival are *ekcheo*, *egeiro*, *anastasis*, and *anakainosis*.²

Ekcheo means to *pour out largely* and is used to express the times when God abundantly pours out His Spirit. It is used in Acts 2:33 (NIV), "*Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has **poured out** what you now see and hear.*"

Egeiro means to *wake someone up from sleep* and is used in Romans 13:11, (NIV) "*The hour has already come for you to **wake up** from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.*" When the Lord pours out His Spirit during a revival outpouring those Christians who have fallen into a spiritual slumber are awakened to the things of God.

Anastasis literally means *resurrection* and is used in Philippians 3:10 (NIV), "*I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of his **resurrection**,*" thus revealing that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is available to those who are

willing to receive it. A derivative of this word is found in Ephesians 5:14 (NIV), “*Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.*” which conveys the thought that the Lord will not allow His Church to decay in a state of spiritual slumber, but will raise it up to experience a revelation of Christ Jesus. That is exactly what happens when the Lord pours out His Spirit in a revival outpouring!

Anakainosis speaks of *renewal* and appears twice in the New Testament; once in Romans 12:2 where it speaks of, “*renewing of your mind*” and in Titus 3:5 where it speaks of, “*renewal by the Holy Spirit.*” The first passage stresses the willing response of a believer, while the second passage refers to the continual operation of the Spirit who dwells in the believer. While the *renewal* that this word speaks of is not limited to times of revival, it is an important part of every revival outpouring.

The New Testament clearly reveals that revival is a time when God abundantly pours out His Spirit, awakens spiritually lethargic people with a revelation of Jesus Christ, and raises them up with resurrection power to live lives pleasing to God. While Jesus is always working to accomplish this, it is during revival outpourings that more is accomplished in this respect than at any other time.

Since every revival outpouring is unique it is difficult to give a precise definition for revival. However, we will benefit by reading how others throughout Church history have defined and described revival outpourings based on their own personal experiences.

Malcolm McDow defined revival as, “**God’s divine invasion into the lives of His people** for the purpose of awakening them from their spiritual slumber and turning their hearts toward the eternal issues in life.”³

Duncan Campbell, who ministered in the great Hebrides Revival, defined revival as, “**a time when people are saturated with God.**” In an address to the students of Faith Mission Bible College in Edinburgh, Scotland he went into further detail. “*First, let me tell you what I mean by revival. An evangelistic campaign or special meeting is not revival. In a successful evangelistic campaign or crusade, there will be hundreds or even thousands of people making decisions for Jesus Christ, but the community remains untouched, and the churches continue much the same as before the outreach. In revival, God moves in the district. Suddenly, the community becomes God conscious. The Spirit of God grips men and women in such a way that even work is given up as people give themselves to waiting upon God.*”⁴

Arthur Wallis wrote that, “*revival is divine intervention in the normal course of spiritual things. It is God revealing Himself to mankind in awful holiness and irresistible power. It is such a manifest working of God that human personalities are overshadowed and human programs abandoned. It is man retiring into the background because God has taken the field. It is the Lord making bare His holy arm, and working in extraordinary power on saint and sinner.*”⁵

ALL REVIVAL OUTPOURINGS SHARE THREE MAJOR ATTRIBUTES

Every revival has its own characteristics and longevity, but there are three major attributes that are found in every revival outpouring, no matter how far the revival spreads or how long it lasts:

- Revelation (A supernatural revelation of Jesus)
- Repentance (Repentance from sin)
- Revolution (A spiritual revolution in which lives are radically changed)

A Revelation of Jesus

The Scriptures make it clear that the Holy Spirit has been sent to mankind to reveal Jesus.

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.” (John 15:26, NIV)

Not only that, the Holy Spirit gives mankind the spiritual perception that is needed to receive the revelation of Jesus that He brings.

*“He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what **he will make known to you.**” (John 16:14, NIV, emphasis added)*

While the Holy Spirit has always been busy testifying about Jesus, the revelation of Jesus that the Spirit brings during times of revival is extraordinary. During revival Jesus is made real to people as never before! The labors of God's people, which may have seemed to be ineffective and unfruitful before revival, suddenly explode with power, penetrating the hearts of people and making them open and receptive to the revelation of Jesus.

While some of the methods the Holy Spirit has used to reveal Jesus are unique to the revival outpouring in which they occurred, many of the methods used by the Holy Spirit to spread the gospel are found in every revival outpouring.

***During Revival the Holy Spirit Always Uses
Disciples to Reveal Jesus to Others***

While the use of disciples to reveal Jesus to others isn't unique to times of revival, the thing that makes the ministry of disciples so powerful and effective during revival is the anointing of the Holy Spirit that has been poured on them! The anointing of the Spirit not only gives the disciples of Jesus the boldness and power to share the gospel, it causes their gospel witness to effectively pierce into the darkest of places and into the hardest of hearts! A good example of this is found in Acts 2 which tells us how the Apostle Peter, newly baptized in the Holy Spirit, effectively and powerfully proclaimed the gospel of Jesus to a crowd that just a few days beforehand had demanded that Jesus be crucified!

“Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to

you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him."
(Acts 2:22-24, NIV)

That's why Jesus commanded His early disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Jesus knew that they would need the anointing and power of His Spirit to accomplish their God-given destiny to make Christlike disciples throughout the world!

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," (Matthew 28:19, NIV)

"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." ... "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 earth." (Acts 1:4, 8, NIV)

The anointing and power of the Holy Spirit, experienced by the followers of Jesus, has been a major part of every revival outpouring throughout history! And many believe that what has been seen and experienced in the past is just a foretaste of that which is before us!

During Revival Jesus Is Often Revealed Through Supernatural Manifestations

When revival comes the supernatural revelations that people have of Jesus are abundant and often overwhelming. What the Bible refers to as “visions” are often experienced by people during revival outpourings.⁶ Such was the case with the great Adullam Rescue Mission revival that took place in the early 1900’s.

“It seemed most wonderful how the Spirit revealed to these relatively untaught believers the things of Christ, His salvation, and the things of the future through visions of the unseen worlds. Many of these visions were given to several at the same time. Nearly all of the visions were seen by quite a number of persons. In many cases the children came to ask if the Bible said anything about certain things they had seen in vision. The visions, seen by even some of the children as well as by the older boys, were seen while they were under the power of the Holy Spirit, not as a dream but as real life. Some of the visions seen were: Christ tied to a post and scourged ... Christ bleeding on the cross ... the body of Christ taken from the cross, carried to the tomb, placed in the tomb, and the tomb closed ... Christ’s resurrection ... the ascension of Christ ... heaven ... detailed visions inside the New Jerusalem ... angels ... hell ... demons ... the devil ... the great tribulation ... the battle of Armageddon ... the coming of Christ with his angels ... the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in Paradise ... detailed views of our mansions in heaven and other heavenly scenes.”⁷

Some of the supernatural manifestations that have taken place during revival outpourings have been considered by some to be wild physical manifestations, such as loud groanings, falling under God's power, or uncontrolled physical shaking. We must be open to such manifestations, but it is important to stress the need to seek Jesus and not supernatural experiences. Those who seek after revival experiences are training themselves to rely on experiences instead of living by faith in Jesus. In such cases, the revival manifestations become a crutch instead of the blessings the Lord wants them to be. Therefore, when supernatural manifestations are part of a revival outpouring enjoy the revelation of Jesus that they provide, but don't become dependent on them, for not all supernatural manifestations experienced during a revival outpouring will continue to be a part of your everyday walk with Jesus after the revival outpouring has lifted! Be receptive to supernatural manifestations for they are used by the Spirit to impart a revelation of Jesus, but don't allow yourself to become dependent on them. Be a Jesus seeker, not an experience seeker!

***During Revival Jesus Is Often Revealed Through
Contemporary Christian Music***

Historically, wherever revival outpourings have occurred, music has played an important part; and the music written during times of revival has, in almost every case, been Christ-centered and worship oriented. For instance, the impact which music had on the Reformation can't be overemphasized. In fact, according to Schaff, "The most valuable contribution which German Protestantism made to Christian worship is its rich treasury of hymns."⁸ Concerning the revival outpouring in Britain in the seventeenth century, Ellsworth wrote: "Early in the Awakening the wide use of singing, particularly the singing of groups of young people

along the cities and roads of the countryside, had a profound impact ...”⁹ In the eighteenth century Charles Wesley wrote over six thousand hymns during his lifetime of ministering in revival. In the twentieth century there was a powerful revolution of Christian music during the *Jesus Movement* which swept nations during the 1960’s and 1970’s. In fact, contemporary Christian music was born during the *Jesus Movement*. The young people of the *Jesus Movement*, known as *Jesus People*, preferred their own version of Christian music, which was either styled after folk music or hard rock, instead of the old traditional hymns of the Church.

***During Revival Jesus Is Often Revealed
Through the Sacraments***

It is noteworthy that the sacraments, especially the observance of the Lord’s Supper, have often been an important part of revival outpourings. Before the twentieth century many of the revival outpourings were united to the observance of the Lord’s Supper. According to William DeArteaga, “Protestant evangelical revivals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were *deeply sacramental*.”¹⁰ That was certainly the case at the beginning of the Second Great Awakening in America.

“Revival began during the communion cycle celebrated in July 1799 at the Red River church. A deep spirit of solemnity and conviction spread in the area. The August sacrament at Gasper River Church, now pastored by John Rankin, also turned into revival, as did the September sacrament at Muddy River. McGready, Rankin, and McGee (all pro-revival Presbyterians) ministered together in these sacraments and formed the core leadership for

what was to come next. The sacramental season of 1800 was one of continuous revival. People were convicted and cried out in despair, and the ministers were kept busy leading them through the stages of salvation. The Gasper River Church sacrament of July was especially significant. Pastor McGready invited nearby Methodist and Baptist churches to attend, but he also suggested that they bring their supplies and camp out for the communion cycle. He understood that the resources of his frontier community were limited, and they could not offer hospitality in the usual Scottish way. People came from over a hundred miles. ... Thus began the first 'camp meeting' in modern history. The revival exercises appeared with great force, including the usual fallings and outcries, but also prophetic exhortations by young children and bodily movements called the 'jerks.' ... Revival spread among the frontier churches of Kentucky that summer, with hundreds awakened and converted. In addition, the Methodist and Baptist preachers became full partners in both preaching and administering the sacrament."¹¹

Repentance From Sin

Conviction comes when Jesus is revealed. However, there is a problem. Many people are presently calloused to conviction because they have repeatedly rejected Jesus and His Gospel in the past.

“... Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’”
(Matthew 13:13–15, NIV)

Added to this is the fact that many have been deluded with false teachings about Jesus that portray Him differently from that which is taught in Scripture. Jesus prophesied that this would happen.

“For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” (Matthew 24:24, NIV)

This was later alluded to by the Apostle Paul who wrote the Corinthians concerning those who were preaching a false Jesus and a false gospel!

“For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.” (2 Corinthians 11:4, NIV)

Thankfully, when Jesus is revealed, and His Gospel is taught, people are convicted of sin and motivated to repent! This is exactly what happened on the Day of Pentecost.

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” 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 2:36–38, NIV)

But it’s not just the unsaved that are gripped with conviction when Jesus is revealed, even those who have served the Lord for years are convicted of falling short of the glory of God. Listen to the response of Isaiah, a seasoned prophet of the Lord, when he encountered the Lord’s holy presence!

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King,

the Lord Almighty.” Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”” (Isaiah 6:1–7, NIV)

The same thing happened to the Apostle John when he encountered Jesus on the island of Patmos. John’s encounter with Jesus was especially interesting when you consider the fact that John was one of the closest people to Jesus during His earthly ministry. However, when Jesus appeared to John on the island of Patmos it was in a way that John had never fully known Jesus. Jesus was fully glorified, majestic in holiness, awesome in power, and fearful to behold! John could do nothing but fall before Jesus as a dead man!

“I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.” (Revelation 1:12–17, NIV)

The experiences of Isaiah the prophet and the Apostle John are common occurrences during times of revival. The revelation of Jesus during revival outpourings is so holy and powerful that people are convicted of their sinfulness and are given the grace and faith to repent. But that doesn't mean people don't have a choice. Far from it! God always gives people a choice. Those who experience the conviction of the Holy Spirit can repent and put their trust in Jesus or refuse and reject His mercy. However, those who reject the overwhelming conviction of the Lord during revival outpourings run the risk of experiencing the Lord's swift judgment. Such was the case with Elymas on the Island of Cyprus.

“They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, “You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun.” Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.” (Acts 13:6–12, NIV)

Often during revival, the conviction of the Holy Spirit is like a divine net that is drawing a person to repentance and faith in Jesus. But if God's powerful conviction is ignored, His overwhelming mercy is spurned, and His intense persuasion to repent is rejected, ... the Lord has no other recourse than to release His divine judgment! Why? Because His divine justice and righteousness demands it! Duncan Campbell, revivalist during the Second Great Awakening in America, tells of one such account.

“I will relate a very serious circumstance which I knew to take place with a man who had the jerks at a campmeeting, on what was called the Ridge, in William Magee’s congregation. There was a great work of religion in the encampment. The jerks were very prevalent. There was a company of drunken rowdies who came to interrupt the meeting. These rowdies were headed by a very large drinking man. They came with their bottles of whiskey in their pockets. This large man cursed the jerks, and all religion. Shortly afterward he took the jerks, and he started to run, but he jerked so powerfully he could not get away. He halted among some saplings, and, although he was violently agitated, he took out his bottle of whiskey, and swore he would drink the jerks to death, but he jerked at such a rate he couldn’t get the bottle to his mouth, though he tried hard. At length he fetched a sudden jerk, and the bottle struck a sapling and was broken to pieces, and spilled his whiskey on the ground. There was a great crowd gathered round him, and when he lost his whiskey he became very much enraged, and cursed and swore very profanely, his jerks still increasing. At length he fetched a very

violent jerk, snapped his neck, fell, and soon expired, with his mouth full of cursing and bitterness.”¹²

Some people will only see God’s judgment in the above case. But it is much more than that; it is a powerful example revealing the lengths God took to humble a man and bring him to repentance! Unfortunately, the man didn’t repent, but he couldn’t run from God! Such is the case in every revival. When the Lord pours out His Spirit in revival no one can get away from the revelation of Jesus that brings with it overwhelming conviction that motivates people to repent and surrender to Jesus!

I’ll never forget the masses of people that I personally saw run to the altar during the Brownsville Revival in Pensacola, Florida. Night after night Steve Hill, the evangelist leading the services, would make his appeal for people to turn their lives over to Jesus. Near the end of his Bible message he would say, “I’m going to bind the devil and all those of you who are bound by the chains of sin are going to be set free. But if you want to stay free, you’ll need to get down to this altar and repent and give your life to Jesus.” And with that he would loudly declare for the enemy to be bound in the Name of Jesus and for every chain to be broken. The atmosphere would turn spiritually electric! Then Rev. Hill would declare, “Now, if you don’t come down here and repent, you’re saying to the devil, ‘Put those chains right back on me because I don’t want to be free!’” Like a flash, hundreds every night would flood the aisles, some even jumping over pews, trying to get to the altar to repent and receive everything that Jesus had for them! Of the hundreds that filled the altars every service, many testified to having been bound to all kinds of sins and living decadent and deviant lifestyles, but through the revelation of Jesus the power to set them free was released and the grace to repent was given! Yes, repentance is a vital part of every revival outpouring!

A Spiritual Revolution

A revival outpouring always brings about a spiritual revolution led by people who have been radically changed by Jesus Christ. This, of course, is based on the powerful revelation of Jesus Christ that takes place during revival, which in turn, motivates people to repent and turn from their wicked ways. The Book of Acts records that when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost three thousand people responded to the preaching of Peter with repentance and were “born again.” A spiritual revolution ensued as, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” (Acts 2:42, NIV) They experienced an inner change in their lives which led to a spiritual, cultural, and social revolution.

A major revival awakening will influence at least five areas of the community in which it has taken place: new church directions, economic adjustments, social reform, political corrections, and educational alterations.¹³ An example of this is seen in the effect that the revival outpourings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had in America. The Great Awakening of the eighteenth century prepared the way for Independence and the New Republic and the Great Revival of the 1800’s saved the new nation from French infidelity, crass materialism, rapacious greed, godlessness, and outbreking violence on the frontiers.¹⁴

However, saying that a revival outpouring gives birth to a spiritual revolution doesn’t mean that revival leads to rebellion. “A revolution is merely a change in the affairs of men” ... (in the same way that) “The Reformation was quite the opposite of a revolt: it was the re-establishment of the principles of primitive Christianity.”¹⁵ In fact, a spiritual revolution that takes place due to a revival outpouring never

causes one to be rebellious. Dr. Che' Ahn explained it this way, "a spiritual revolution is birthed in the spirit and through a right heart. It is the same radical call to live as Jesus did ..."16

A true revival has not taken place unless people's lives have been changed, and such changes will become evident in the way that they conduct themselves in the community. Eldon Trueblood put it succinctly when he wrote: "The test of the vitality of a religion is to be seen in its effect on culture."17 This has been proven throughout revival history, where, for instance, "the Pietistic Movement in Europe, the Wesleyan Revival in England, and the awakenings in America served as catalysts for the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century."18 William G. McLoughlin, church historian, went so far as to say that the great spiritual awakenings in American history have influenced most of our nation's social reforms. In other words, revival outpourings are the "catalysts of social change."19

There is much to look forward to as we continue to prepare the way through prayer for a great revival outpouring! A supernatural and glorious revelation of Jesus will be given to God's people and the world; the holiness of Jesus is going to bring people to a recognition of their sinfulness and their need for repentance; and a spiritual revolution will ensue from the work of the Spirit in the lives of those who have committed themselves to serve Jesus wholeheartedly! The great revival before us is going to be awesome!

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GREATEST REVIVAL

As mentioned before every revival movement is distinguished by unique qualities that differentiate it from other revival movements. I believe that there will be at least four

distinguishing qualities of the great revival before us, which I will henceforth refer to as, “the Greatest Revival”.

The Greatest Revival:

- Will be a prophetic movement.
- Will receive a harvest from the word that was previously sown.
- Will take place during a time of chaos.
- Will have waves of outpouring that will be unprecedented in history.

The Greatest Revival Will Be a Prophetic Movement

Proclaiming that the “Greatest Revival” will be a prophetic movement is based on that which is declared in Scripture, especially the prophecy given by the prophet Joel.

“... I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.” (Joel 2:28, NIV)

Hundreds of years later the Apostle Peter quoted Joel’s prophecy to explain what was taking place when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost.

“... 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. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.” (Acts 2:16–18, NIV)

While Peter quoted Joel’s prophecy to give understanding concerning what was taking place on the Day of Pentecost, we must allow for Joel’s prophecy to be fulfilled in even greater ways in the future. Remember, Joel prophesied that God was going to pour out His Spirit on *all people*. On the Day of Pentecost there were Jews from many nations present, and some would say that those present were representative of all people, but it wasn’t a global outpouring as Joel had prophesied. Therefore, I believe that the outpouring on the Day of Pentecost 2,000 years ago was but a foretaste of that which will take place when God literally pours out His Spirit globally on *all people*! Thankfully, that glorious day is before us!

However, we need to be aware that the Kingdom of Darkness isn’t going to take the massive outpouring of God’s Spirit lightly; Satan is going to counter God’s prophetic movement with a false prophetic movement. Even though Satan isn’t original or creative in his evil schemes, he is a master counterfeiter. That’s why, whenever the Lord moves by His Spirit in a particular way, you’ll always find Satan counterfeiting and perverting what God is doing. Jesus warned us of this more than anything else concerning the end times.

“For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” (Matthew 24:24, NIV)

The Greatest Revival Will Receive a Harvest From the Word Previously Sown

The harvest received during a revival outpouring isn't always due to the efforts of those who are ministering when the revival outpouring takes place. Often the harvest is the result of the hard work of those who labor before a revival outpouring is given! A contemporary example of this is seen in the life of a modern day "Anna"²⁰, an elderly woman named Mary Calhoun, who pastored in the area of Brownsville, Florida in the late 1950's and early 1960's. For years Mary Calhoun, along with the store front church she pastored, prayed for a mighty revival outpouring. Years passed and her days of pastoring came to an end, but her prayers for revival continued unabated! In fact, Mary Calhoun gave herself exclusively to prayer, turning her bedroom into a sanctuary of prayer where she continued her prayers for revival. Although she never experienced the revival outpouring that later took place at Brownsville Assembly of God in the 1990's, her prayers were instrumental in helping to prepare the way for it. Few know about her labors in prayer, but her powerful and persistent prayers helped prepare the way for one of the greatest revival outpourings of the 20th century. This should motivate all those who are sowing seeds for revival through prayer, preaching, prophesying, and evangelism, to continue their Kingdom labors, for as the Word of God tells us:

"... Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:58, NIV)

A revival harvest is only possible because of the joint labors of God's people; labors which have often spanned decades and

even lifetimes! Some laborers are sent to do the hard work of sowing (usually in hard ground) while others are sent to reap the harvest. But the harvest is only possible because those who were sent to sow the Word were faithful to do so! This truth was pointed out by Jesus to His disciples.

“I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.” (John 4:38, NIV)

Understanding this principle should bring encouragement to those who labor without seeing the harvest, as well as keeping those who reap a harvest from becoming prideful.

“So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.” (1 Corinthians 3:7, NIV)

Understanding how and why this principal works will be helpful. When the Word of God is sown (through preaching, teaching, evangelism, etc.) it is sown as a spiritual seed. The important thing to realize is that the Lord promises that it will produce a harvest!

“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:10–11, NIV)

The spiritual seed of the Word doesn't always produce an immediate harvest. In fact, there are times when the spiritual seed of the Word will lay dormant for years before it becomes a harvest. The Lord revealed this truth to me many years ago through a prophecy which declared, "Although the Word of God which has been preached by previous generations in your city hasn't led to an immediate revival harvest, it was planted as spiritual seed in the spiritual ground of your city, waiting for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which will cause it to become a mighty harvest!" As I have pondered that prophecy over the years it has encouraged me to continue to proclaim the Word, no matter what I see or don't see, believing that it will eventually produce a harvest!

It is also helpful to understand that the Lord uses His people to sow His Word in two major ways: through the written Word (*logos*)²¹ and the prophetic word (*rhema*).²² The common denominator between the two is that they are both used by God to reveal Jesus the incarnate Word!²³ Historically the Church has been open to the fact that God uses people to sow His Word (*logos*) through preaching, teaching, and evangelism. But we must also be open to the Lord using His people to speak His prophetic word (*rhema*) which is also God's spiritual seed that will one day produce a harvest! In other words, the promise that God's Word will produce a harvest isn't limited to the *logos*, it applies to the *rhema* as well.

A good example of the *rhema* word being proclaimed is found in the prophetic ministry of Ezekiel who was used by the LORD to raise up a spiritual army out of dead bones.

"Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will

make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.” So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.” (Ezekiel 37:4–10, NIV)

The Greatest Revival Will Take Place During a Time of Chaos

Historically revivals have taken place during the most difficult of times, and in some cases, in areas that have become strongholds of darkness. That has led many to believe that when darkness has reached its peak the Lord will send a revival outpouring to overcome it. It is true that the Lord often uses revival outpourings to break the hold that darkness has over an area, with the result that masses of people enslaved by the bondages of sin are brought into the Kingdom of God through the redemptive work of Jesus. However, no revival outpouring of the past has ever totally gotten rid of the darkness and chaos that entrenched its area. Darkness has always been available to those who want to embrace it. That’s why, even during the greatest of revival outpourings, the conflict between light and darkness is constant, massive,

and intense! In other words, revival outpourings take place amid darkness and chaos!

I didn't always have this understanding. I believed that a worldwide revival would come first and that it would later be followed by chaos. Such thinking seemed to fulfill end-time prophecies such as Joel 2:28-29 where God promised to pour His Spirit on all people and Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24:12 stating that the love of many will grow cold. Basically, my understanding of end-time events was "revival first, then chaos." But as I continued to study the Scriptures and my understanding of God's ways in revival increased my views began to change. I realized that I had been viewing all the end time events (i.e. a revival outpouring, chaos, the great falling away) as a series of events that would take place in an ordered sequence. However, when I came to the realization that history doesn't take place in an organized manner, I began to change my views towards the end-times. I realized that the Great Revival won't be followed by chaos, but instead it will take place in the midst of chaos!

As the Lord pours out His Spirit in the end-times it will be awesome and glorious as masses of people are set free from darkness and brought into a relationship with Jesus. But at the same time conflict with the kingdom of darkness and those who propagate its evil will be intense. This is the pattern seen in the life and ministry of Jesus, the early Church in the Book of Acts, and the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Think of it this way, that which will take place during the Great Revival will in many ways be glorious like Isaiah's revelation of Jesus in the Temple (Isaiah 6:1-6 and John 12:41), coupled with the severity of Jesus' cleansing of the Temple (Matthew 21:12-16), in addition to the chaos which will be taking place all over the world during the revival outpouring (Matthew 24:4-31)!

Jesus Revealed

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”” (Isaiah 6:1–3, NIV)

“Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him.” (John 12:41, NIV)

Jesus Cleansing His Church

“Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. “It is written,” he said to them, “My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’”” (Matthew 21:12–13, NIV)

Revival During Chaos

“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.” (Matthew 24:6–8, NIV)

The belief that revival will take place during a time of chaos has Biblical precedent. The revival outpouring that took place on the Day of Pentecost was during a time of chaos; Jesus had just been crucified by the Roman government and Temple leadership, and the tension in the city had not yet died down. In fact, it was not long after the revival outpouring on the Day of Pentecost that imprisonment and persecution began to be unleashed on the followers of Jesus.

“... a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.” ... “Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.” (Acts 8:1, 3, NIV)

Yet, throughout all the chaos the Church thrived and continued to explode with growth as the life-changing gospel and miraculous ministry of Jesus Christ was taken throughout the Roman Empire.

The Greatest Revival Will Have Waves of Outpouring Unprecedented in History

Throughout Biblical and Church history outpourings of revival have often come in waves, or a series of outpourings, and thus have been likened to the rains the Lord sent to give His people lush and bountiful harvests. In fact, the prophets often used the autumn and spring rains as prophetic symbols of the outpouring of God’s Spirit which brings spiritual renewal, refreshing, and revival.

“Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth.” (Hosea 6:3, NIV)

The Agricultural Harvests of Israel Reveal Spiritual Principles About the Greatest Revival

The Lord promised to bless His people in the Promised Land with bountiful harvests, made possible by the rain He would send “in its season.”

“I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit.” (Leviticus 26:4, NIV)

This verse reveals two very important promises concerning harvests: the Lord sends rain at the right time (“in its season”), and the purpose of the rain is to make a harvest possible.

In the physical realm rain is needed to produce a harvest. And that which is true in the physical realm concerning the harvest is also true in the spiritual realm. Spiritual rain (a spiritual outpouring of the Holy Spirit) is needed to produce a spiritual harvest.

Those who live in arid places understand the remarkable effect of a single rain. Rain can, and often does, change everything in a single day, especially in desert areas! That is certainly the case in Israel. Although the land of Israel is extremely fertile, it relies almost exclusively on rain for a harvest.

Throughout the Old Testament the Lord teaches us how He made the Promised Land productive agriculturally: He gave

the land a special season of rain in the autumn, a normal season of rain in the winter, and another special season of rain in the spring. The first and last season of rain were each for a different harvest, which, when combined, met all the agricultural needs of God's people.

“Let us fear the Lord our God, who gives autumn and spring rains in season, who assures us of the regular weeks of harvest.” (Jeremiah 5:24b, NIV)

The interesting thing about the autumn and spring rains is that they aren't just a physical reality, they symbolize a spiritual reality. The Lord often uses His physical creation to teach us how He works in the spiritual realm. That is why the mention of the autumn and spring rains in the Bible is so significant. They not only tell us how God brings forth the agricultural harvests in Israel, they also reveal how the Lord is going to produce a massive harvest in the last days!

“Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.” (James 5:7, NIV)

The Agricultural Rainfall in Israel Reveals How God Prepares for a Bountiful Harvest

The **autumn rains** (*early rains*) start in September or October and last until early December, while the **winter rains** (*normal rains*) take place from December through February, and the **spring rains** (*late rains*) start in late February or early March and last until mid-May. The autumn rains and the spring rains

are very different from the normal rains that occur in the middle of the winter season (December to February).

- The Autumn (Early) Rains

The autumn rains were also known as the early rains. This was the season of intense preparation for a bountiful harvest. The ground, which was hardened during the drought and intense heat of the summer months, was softened by the early rains, making it possible for the ground to be plowed and the seed to be sown successfully. The rain during the autumn months was much lighter than that which would later be experienced during the spring “late” rains. This enabled the hard ground to absorb the rain without being washed away with flooding. During the autumn season the sown seeds would germinate and begin to grow.

In Israel the early rains are known as the *Yoreh* which figuratively means, “to teach.” This reveals a profound truth! If you want to prepare for a great harvest ... TEACH THE WORD! Teaching God’s Word is much like plowing the hard ground, planting the seed, and pouring rain on the seed, with the expectation that a harvest will come, which is exactly how the Hebrew word for “teaching” is used in Deuteronomy 32:2.

“Let my teaching fall like rain and my words descend like dew, like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants.” (Deuteronomy 32:2, NIV)

The early rains are an awesome beginning! The Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah), also known as the Feast of Trumpets, begins with the blowing of the shofar (ram’s horn), calling God’s people to repent from their sins. This was followed ten days later by the Day of Atonement, which was followed five

days after that by the Feast of Tabernacles. The progression of these festivals reveals something astounding! During the autumn rains the New Year is begun, God's people are called to repent, and the fruit harvest is gathered and celebrated! What a way to begin the new year, and it all started with an outpouring of rain!

- The Spring (Late) Rains

The autumn (early) rains are followed by the normal rains of winter, which are then followed by the heavy rains of the spring. The spring rains, which take place between late February until mid-May, are known as the *malkosh* and are much harder rains than the autumn rains. The Lord created this sequence so that the harvest would be optimum! If the *malkosh* came during the autumn instead of the spring the heavy rain would cause damage for the ground wouldn't be prepared to receive it. But with the ground prepared by the autumn "light" rains the heavy rains are able to penetrate the softer soil without causing flooding. The wisdom of the Lord in preparing for the harvest is astounding! The lighter rains at the beginning of the rainy season prepare the way for the heavy rains which bring in the final harvest!

"... I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and olive oil." (Deuteronomy 11:14, NIV)

Numerous eschatological teachings differ on how to interpret the spiritual significance of the "autumn and spring rains." However, the truth that the Lord used several stages of rainfall that culminated in the grain harvest cannot be denied. The early rains, the normal rains, and the late rains differ from

one another in intensity, but each one plays a part in helping make the harvests in Israel so lush and bountiful. Thus, one of the greatest spiritual applications that can be derived from the Biblical agricultural cycle of Israel is the fact that the harvests are dependent on several different stages of rain; each stage of rain unique from the others, but each one needed to bring in the bounty of the harvests!

Understanding that multiple outpourings are often involved in revival outpourings is seen in Scripture as well as Church history. In fact, Joel's prophecy concerning the great outpouring of God's Spirit (quoted by Peter on the Day of Pentecost) is said to have come after the Lord sent previous outpourings.

*“Be glad, people of Zion, rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given you the autumn rains because he is faithful. **He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before.** The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil. “I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten— the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm— my great army that I sent among you. You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed. Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the Lord your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed. “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men*

and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”
(Joel 2:23–29, NIV, emphasis added)

Concerning the “Greatest Revival” I believe that the revival outpourings will be so frequent that each one will converge with the next outpouring. Each spiritual outpouring will lead up to and intertwine with the next outpouring! This great convergence of outpourings of the Holy Spirit will give birth to a harvest that will be unprecedented.

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills,” (Amos 9:13, NIV)

The Initial Outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost Was Immediately Followed by Many Outpourings

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was soon followed by the outpouring of the Spirit in Samaria through the ministry of Philip the evangelist. That was soon followed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the home of Cornelius, a Gentile man whom the Spirit sent Peter to minister to, and that was followed by the explosive revivalist ministry of the Apostle Paul.

- The Outpouring on the Day of Pentecost

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 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 2:1–4, NIV)

- The Outpouring in Samaria Through the Ministry of Philip the Evangelist

“Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city.” (Acts 8:5–8, NIV)

- The Outpouring at the Home of Cornelius Through the Ministry of Apostle Peter

“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.” (Acts 10:44–46, NIV)

- The Outpouring at Ephesus Through the Ministry of Apostle Paul

“Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.” (Acts 19:8–12, NIV)

These multiple outpourings covered the scope of that which Jesus prophesied would take place when the disciples were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

“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 earth.” (Acts 1:8, NIV)

In fact, it was the Holy Spirit outpourings that took place at the beginning of the early Church that caused the gospel of Jesus to travel throughout the world as quickly as it did!

Multiple outpourings of revival fire have always been part of every revival movement. As was the case in the early

Church outpourings so it has been throughout Church history. More recently, at the end of the 20th century, there were several outpourings that covered the United States and impacted many different types of people of all ages. The Charismatic Movement, which started in the 1960's and continued throughout the 1980's, drew Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Catholics (etc.) into the fullness of the Holy Spirit and gave birth to a Spirit-filled movement that flowed with charismatic gifts, healings, and miracles. At the same time the Holy Spirit was poured on the youth of America, starting with the "Hippies" of California. The outpouring on the youth soon came to be known as the "Jesus Movement" and continued throughout the 1960's - 1970's and brought multitudes of young people into the Kingdom of God. Eventually these different streams of outpouring converged and became one massive Charismatic/Full-Gospel phenomena.

So, What Do We Do Now?

We need to continue to proclaim the Gospel and labor in prayer. As far as prayer is concerned, we need to pray that Jesus will do today what He has always done in the past, that is, pour out His Spirit through multiple revival outpourings that will bring multiple harvests into the Kingdom of God!

"Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near." (James 5:7-8, NIV)

Let's pray:

Oh Lord, in fulfillment of Your Word, we ask that You pour out Your Holy Spirit throughout the earth. Let no nation or state, county or city, neighborhood or street, hang-out or hiding place, be left without the powerful influence of Your Holy Spirit who is sent among us to reveal Jesus!

May Jesus be revealed in power and glory, and with such overpowering conviction that no heart will be left untouched. May the Gospel message of Jesus be planted in the hearts and minds of every person, and may it bring each person to the point of receiving Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior and Lord.

Jesus, Your Church needs revival! Our cities need revival! In fact, every nation on the face of the earth needs revival! Oh Lord, we beseech You, may the showers of revival be delayed no longer. May the prophecy of Isaiah which states, "the Spirit is poured on us from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field, and the fertile field seems like a forest" (Isaiah 32:15, NIV) be fulfilled as promised.

In accordance with Your Word, revive us, oh Lord, we pray!

CHAPTER TWO

PAUL'S EXPLOSIVE MINISTRY AT EPHESUS

Paul had been proclaiming the gospel of Jesus for many years throughout the Roman Empire before the Lord sent him to Ephesus as a catalyst of revival. The revival outpouring that took place at Ephesus was so powerful that it began the destruction of a demonic stronghold that had held much of the world in spiritual bondage for centuries. However, the revival breakthrough that took place in Ephesus didn't happen without planning ... God's planning! It took God's strategy, divine timing, and most importantly, God's Holy Spirit! Follow along and learn how Jesus used the Apostle Paul and his team to usher in one of the most remarkable spiritual breakthroughs recorded in Scripture.

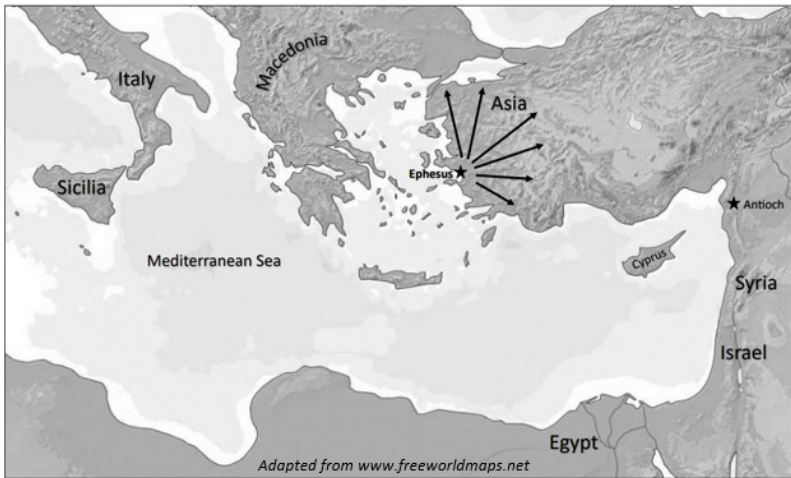
Let's start with Paul's missionary journeys that eventually led Him to Ephesus.

Paul's 1st Missionary Tour: (Acts 13 - 14) Paul's first missionary tour lasted approximately one year as Paul ministered throughout Cyprus, Pamphylia, Phrygia, and Lycaonia before returning to Antioch in Syria.

Paul’s 2nd Missionary Tour: (Acts 15:36 – 18:22) Paul’s second missionary tour lasted approximately three years with Paul and his team ministering throughout Lycaonia, Phrygia, Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia. During his second missionary tour Paul and his companions wanted to take the gospel throughout the province of Asia but the Holy Spirit kept them from doing so.²⁴ What they didn’t know was that the Lord was later going to use them to break the spiritual stronghold that held the entire province of Asia in bondage, but that wouldn’t take place until Paul’s third missionary tour. For the moment the Lord kept His plan hidden until everything was ready for it to be revealed.

Paul’s 3rd Missionary Tour: (Acts 18:23 – 21:17) During Paul’s third missionary tour he traveled “throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples”²⁵ and then “took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus.”²⁶ While the tour lasted four years Paul and his team spent three of those years in the city of Ephesus. Why did they stay so long in Ephesus? Because it was there that the Lord’s strategy for reaching the entire province of Asia was put into action!

*“Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that **all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.**”* (Acts 19:8–10, NIV, emphasis added)



THE CITY OF EPHESUS

Ephesus was the capital city of the province of Asia, located in the southwest corner of Asia Minor on the Aegean coast. It was the most easily accessible city in Asia, by land and by sea. At the time of Paul's visit Ephesus was the third largest city in the Roman Empire with an estimated population of 250,000 people. Because of its strategic location Ephesus became a major port and trading center with its roads spanning out from its coast to the interior of the province.²⁷ Being one of the most famous and beautiful cities of Paul's time, Ephesus drew in visitors and wealth from the entire Roman Empire. It was full of beautiful public buildings, including gymnasiums and theaters, as well as the famous Temple of Artemis. The location and popularity of Ephesus made it a prime location for Paul and his team to reach the province of Asia with the gospel of Jesus. But pioneering a church in Ephesus would be extremely difficult for it had been a spiritual stronghold in the kingdom of darkness for centuries!

Spiritual Strongholds in Ephesus

Since Ephesus was populated by people from all over the Roman Empire it became a city full of different religions as each people group continued to worship the religions of their homelands. However, none were as dominant and influential as Artemis of the Ephesians.

Artemis of the Ephesians

The belief system surrounding Artemis evolved over the centuries. The worship of Artemis by the Ephesians started as worship of a Lydian mother-goddess. Then, over the centuries, this was combined with the Greek worship of Artemis (viewed as a virgin goddess associated with fertility and the cycle of the moon) and the Roman worship of Diana (goddess of the hunt, the moon, and the underworld).²⁸ The combination of the above is what became known as Artemis of the Ephesians. The most important thing to understand from this information is that by the time Paul arrived in Ephesus the worship of Artemis of the Ephesians had already been a demonic stronghold for hundreds of years and still had the devotion and worship of people from Ephesus as well as the entire Roman Empire. The spiritual battle that Paul would have encountered would have been intense!

The Temple of Artemis in Ephesus

The great wealth of Ephesus was primarily due to the Temple of Artemis which drew in visitors from all over the world. The Ephesians took great pride in the grandeur and importance of the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus for it gave their city the distinction of being the primary “temple keeper” of Artemis.²⁹

The Temple of Artemis in Ephesus was originally built in 550 B.C. and rebuilt twice after that. It was still the largest building in Rome, Greece, and Asia a century after it was built. According to ancient records the temple was 425 feet long and 220 feet wide and it featured 127 columns that measured 60 feet in height.³⁰ That would make it much larger than a football field which is only 360 feet long and 160 feet wide.

The main feature of the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus was the colossal statue of Artemis, featured in Ephesus as a multi-breasted goddess associated with fertility. The religious worship which took place in the temple was often associated with lascivious activities such as temple prostitution. The temple also housed prized statuary and paintings and served as a cultural center holding special events throughout the year.

“One month every year was entirely devoted to impressive ceremonies in honor of Artemis. No work was done during this month, and there were athletic games at the Stadium, plays at the Theater, and concerts at the Odeon. The people made offerings at the sacred grove that was Artemis’ birthplace, gave great banquets, sang to the accompaniment of the flutes, and had a time of carnival.”³¹

The Temple even became the most important financial institution in Asia, serving as a bank for people to deposit their money. At its peak, the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

It’s easy to understand why the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus gave the kingdom of darkness such a spiritual stronghold in the city and the whole province of Asia. It was a place where all things related to, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes,

and the pride of life”³² were shamelessly available. Plus, the fact that it was a source of wealth for the entire province of Asia made its influence even more powerful! Every evil desire was promoted and provided for at the temple; it was a place of immeasurable evil!

PAUL’S MINISTRY IN EPHEBUS

Upon his arrival in Ephesus Paul met and baptized some previous disciples of John the Baptist. He then took the Gospel to the local synagogue where he ministered for three months. After that Paul moved to the lecture hall of Tyrannus where he ministered for two years.³³ Paul ended up spending three fruitful years in Ephesus pioneering and establishing a local church that helped catapult the Gospel to the entire province of Asia.

“... all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.” (Acts 19:10, NIV)

Reread that scripture and let it sink into your spirit. Paul wrote that the entire province of Asia heard the word of the Lord because of what was taking place in Ephesus! That means the move of God in Ephesus had to have been awesome! However, the revival outpouring that took place in Ephesus didn’t come easy. The powers of darkness never retreat from God’s Kingdom without a fight! Paul commented in a letter he wrote from Ephesus to the Corinthian church on how difficult and dangerous things were in Ephesus; he even mentioned fighting “wild beasts” in Ephesus.

“If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained?” (1 Corinthians 15:32a, NIV)

What were these “wild beasts in Ephesus” that Paul wrote about? Was he talking about physical beasts in the wilderness or was he referring to something else? Since Ephesus was a cosmopolitan city, highly populated, and wasn't a wilderness it is highly unlikely that Paul was referring to physical beasts in the wild. Paul was most likely using the term figuratively, either in reference to the human enemies who were ruthlessly fighting against him, or to the powers of darkness which were constantly coming against him and his ministry. Describing the powers of darkness as “wild beasts” is certainly in line with other Scriptures which use the same terminology to describe the powers of darkness and those they influence.

“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8, NIV)

“Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them.” (Revelation 11:7, NIV)

Paul's Ministry in Ephesus Was Life-Changing

New converts in Ephesus were responding to the gospel by bringing their scrolls of witchcraft and burning them publicly.

“A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas.” (Acts 19:19, NIV)

A drachma was a Greek coin made of silver that would have amounted to a day's wage at that time. Thus, fifty thousand drachmas would have been worth millions of dollars in today's currency. This indicates that the demonic stronghold was being broken! The fact that new converts were willing to destroy what they had invested large amounts of their money in reveals that they were serious and committed to the gospel of Jesus. Their hearts were not the same, their interests were not the same, their desires were not the same!

God was on the move and lives were being changed! A true revival outpouring was taking place!

Paul's Ministry in Ephesus Was Far-Reaching

“... all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.” (Acts 19:10, NIV)

The fact that the entire province of Asia (today known as the western portion of Turkey) heard the gospel message in such a short period of time (three years) reveals that God was doing something extraordinary in Ephesus and throughout the entire province of Asia!

As was noted earlier Paul had wanted to minister in the province of Asia during his second missionary journey but had been, “kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.” (Acts 16:6, NIV) But now, Paul’s ministry in Ephesus was being taken all over Asia! What happened? God’s strategy was in place, God’s divine timing had come, and the Holy Spirit was being poured out! Paul was seeing come to pass the very thing that he later taught the Ephesians.

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,” (Ephesians 3:20, NIV)

How did the word of the Lord spread throughout the province of Asia so quickly? The Scriptures don’t tell us. Most likely it was through word of mouth as people who had been in Ephesus traveled throughout the province of Asia. But the important matter is this: the powers of darkness in Ephesus had been broken and the gospel of Jesus was being heard!

Paul’s Ministry in Ephesus Was Exceedingly Fruitful

“In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.” (Acts 19:20, NIV)

The Greek word used in this verse for “power” speaks of prevailing power; power that has authority and takes dominion! This was what God planned on doing all along: He was going to take dominion over the entire province of Asia by planting faithful laborers in Ephesus who would boldly and

persistently proclaim the word of the Lord in the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit; the centuries-old stronghold of darkness would be broken, and people would begin to be set free! The Lord was turning a large spiritual desert into a fertile field for the Kingdom of God!

“... the Spirit is poured on us from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field, and the fertile field seems like a forest.” (Isaiah 32:15, NIV)

The proclamation of God’s Word is always fruitful for it will never return to the Lord without accomplishing that for which it was sent. However, during times of revival the results are remarkably fast and exceedingly fruitful!

“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:10–11, NIV)

During Paul’s ministry in Ephesus the gospel of Jesus was proclaimed, countless lives were changed, spiritual strongholds were broken, a powerful church was established in Ephesus, and the Kingdom of God exploded in growth throughout the province of Asia! A perfect example of a revival outpouring in action!

WHY WAS PAUL'S MINISTRY IN EPHEBUS SO SUCCESSFUL?

The success that Paul experienced in Ephesus can only be understood if we view it as a supernatural revival outpouring. With that in mind there were several factors involved in the revival outpouring that helped make Paul's ministry in Ephesus so successful:

- Jesus Christ Was Revealed
- Paul's Commitment to Ministry
- The Ephesian Christians
- The Body of Christ Was Involved
- Paul's Understanding of the Spirit's Leading
- Miraculous Ministry
- Discipleship Was Emphasized

Jesus Christ Was Revealed

Throughout Paul's ministry he exhorted people to call on Jesus in repentance and to follow Him by faith.

"I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus." (Acts 20:21, NIV)

In fact, from the moment Paul became a disciple of Jesus his message and ministry were always focused on revealing Jesus to his listeners. His ministry in Ephesus was no exception.

“... this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ,” (Ephesians 3:8, NIV)

Why was Paul so focused on Jesus? Because Jesus had given him a revelation concerning the gospel and he took Jesus seriously!

“I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.” (Galatians 1:11–12, NIV)

Paul uncompromisingly proclaimed that Jesus was the only way for salvation,³⁴ divine healing,³⁵ and deliverance.³⁶ While he had many debates with Jewish contemporaries³⁷, he chose not to mimic the popular orators of his day³⁸. His Christ-centered message was focused,³⁹ faith-based,⁴⁰ powerful,⁴¹ and full of spiritual depth.⁴² In fact, every theme Paul taught on revealed Jesus, whether it was marriage relationships,⁴³ family life,⁴⁴ relationships with others,⁴⁵ prosperity,⁴⁶ emotional well-being,⁴⁷ etc.

It can rightly be said that Jesus was the fountain of life from which Paul’s message and ministry flowed!

“For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.” (Psalm 36:9, NIV)

That was the message ... the message of Jesus ... that helped usher in and nurture the great revival outpouring that took place in Ephesus!

Paul's Commitment to Ministry

Paul was an extremely hard worker. Scripture tells us that Paul “was a tentmaker”⁴⁸ and that “through the work of his own hands”⁴⁹ he financially supported himself and his ministry team. Thus, it can be assumed that Paul financially supported himself and his ministry team by making and mending tents. He did acknowledge that he had the right to be supported by those he ministered to, but he rarely enforced it.⁵⁰

This all gives us insight into the financial responsibility Paul had taken on himself. Yet the Scriptures make it clear that Paul never put anything above Jesus and ministry.

“I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.”
(Acts 20:19–20, NIV)

The growth of God's Kingdom during the Ephesian revival outpouring was blessed by Paul's tireless efforts. It can truthfully be said that Paul, like Jesus, was committed to the work of God's Kingdom!

The Ephesian Christians

Anyone who has been involved in a revival outpouring understands that it takes a special group of people to be custodians of such a work of God. The fact that the Ephesian outpouring was sustained over several years and was able to reach such a massive area should partly be attributed to the Ephesian believers themselves.

The Ephesian Christians Were Receptive

Everywhere Paul went throughout the Roman Empire his message and ministry always revealed Jesus. However, the depth of what he was able to share, and the effect of his message largely depended on the faith, obedience, and receptivity of his audience. In other words, the spiritual state of Paul's audience had much to do with the message and ministry he was able to deliver. For instance, Paul's ministry to the Corinthian believers was never anything more than "spiritual milk" while his ministry to the Ephesians was spiritual meat for the mature.

Why was that? The Corinthian believers never grew beyond being baby Christians. This may seem odd since the Corinthian Christians were known for their powerful ministry in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. And the "spiritual milk" that Paul gave them through in his teaching was certainly enough to help them grow spiritually. However, their carnality kept them from growing. For the most part the Corinthian followers of Jesus refused to embrace the crucified life which Paul taught and exemplified.

“Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly?” (1 Corinthians 3:1–3b, NIV)

However, that was not the case in Ephesus. The Ephesian disciples proved to be extremely teachable and receptive. It is obvious from the results of Paul’s ministry in Ephesus that the Ephesian Christians were serious about following Jesus! But that’s not because the Ephesian believers had it easier than other disciples throughout the Roman Empire. In fact, the circumstances which the Ephesian Christians encountered were probably some of the hardest. The spiritual strongholds in Ephesus were centuries in the making, the pagan mindset of the city was obstinate, and the persecution was relentless. But the Ephesians took hold of the gospel message and grew! In fact, later when Paul moved from Ephesus and wrote to the Ephesians from his prison in Rome, it is apparent that he viewed them as spiritually solid and mature believers that were able to handle a higher level of Christian teaching.

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11–13, NIV)

***The Ephesian Christians Were in Love
with Jesus and with One Another***

Early on the Ephesian Christians became known for their fervent love for Jesus and one another.

“... to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.” (Ephesians 6:24, NIV)

“... your love for all God’s people,” (Ephesians 1:15, NIV)

It’s no wonder that the word of Jesus spread throughout the province of Asia as quickly as it did; the love that the Ephesians had for Jesus and one another became a bright light in a region known for its darkness! They were fulfilling the words of Jesus:

“You are the salt of the earth.” ... “You are the light of the world.” (Matthew 5:13–14, NIV)

***The Ephesian Christians
Were Hard Workers***

The Ephesian Christians became known throughout the Christian world for their hard work in the Kingdom of God. In fact, that was one of the main things Jesus commended them for in the Book of Revelation.

“I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance.” (Revelation 2:2a, NIV)

The willingness of the Ephesian disciples to work hard and to persevere amid difficulty would have been a great blessing to Paul during the revival outpouring in Ephesus. As was mentioned earlier it takes a special group of people to be custodians of a revival outpouring; it takes people who are willing to work! More specifically, it takes hard workers in love with Jesus and one another, because the work will often be long and demanding.

I will never forget the times I was privileged to visit the revival outpouring which took place at Brownsville Assembly of God from 1995 through 2000. During my visits it wasn't long before I realized how many "behind the scenes" people it took to keep things running smoothly. To begin with, news about the revival traveled quickly and people from all over the world began to visit. In fact, it was common for lines to start forming outside the church early in the morning as hundreds waited for the doors to open for the evening service. This all required the coordinated faithful effort of ushers who worked tirelessly to help manage the crowds: each night the ushers (some who had full-time jobs) would arrive at the church before the service to make sure everything was ready; an hour before the service they would open the doors and help usher in the crowds; during the service they would monitor the crowds helping to meet needs as they arose; then after the service, which often wasn't until the early hours of the morning, they would help the crowds safely leave the sanctuary. As time went on the ushers began to take shifts, but it still required coordinated work which they were willing and desirous to do. And that was just the ushers! Added to that were those who were involved in all different types of ministries which supported the revival outpouring: prayer teams, teaching, counseling, deliverance, people who cleaned the church for each service, building maintenance, etc. Yes, the revival outpouring was from God alone, but

the Lord needed those who were willing to work with Him to keep things running smoothly! I began to realize that a revival outpouring required a lot of dedicated and committed workers!

The Body of Christ Was Involved

While the Apostle Paul was instrumental in helping to usher in the revival outpouring that took place in Ephesus, he wasn't the only one involved. As always, the Lord used many people in the Body of Christ. For instance, He used Aquila and Priscilla to help prepare the way for Paul's ministry in Ephesus.

Paul originally met Aquila and Priscilla in the city of Corinth during his second missionary journey. They became business partners as tentmakers, but, more importantly, they joined forces in ministry, for Paul later referred to them as his co-workers in Christ Jesus!⁵¹

“After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.” (Acts 18:1-3, NIV)

During the year and a half that Paul worked and ministered with Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth they developed a relationship with one another and his appreciation and trust for them grew. Aquila and Priscilla proved themselves to be faithful and trustworthy disciples of Jesus as well as valuable members of Paul's ministerial team. Therefore, it's

not surprising that when Paul left Corinth for Ephesus, he took Aquila and Priscilla with him and planted them in Ephesus to establish a ministerial base there.

“They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila.” (Acts 18:19a, NIV)

In Ephesus Aquila and Priscilla were a force to be reckoned with as church planters, business owners, and networkers. They started a church in their home⁵² which was probably a satellite location. (The “lecture hall of Tyrannus” seemed to be the main gathering place for Christians in Ephesus.⁵³) They also continued to attend the Jewish synagogue which proved to be an excellent place to share the gospel of Jesus with the Jewish community in Ephesus.

“Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.” (Acts 18:24–26, NIV)

The fact that Aquila and Priscilla were able to help disciple Apollos reveals their spiritual maturity, ability, and desire to make disciples for Jesus!

Thus, when Paul and the rest of the ministry team departed from Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla stayed and paved the way for that which would take place a little over a year later when Paul returned to Ephesus on his third missionary tour. That year Aquila and Priscilla proved themselves to be invaluable pioneers as they established a church in Ephesus, networked with other Christians, and helped disciple new believers. They probably had no idea that the Lord was using them to prepare the way for one of the greatest revival outpourings to take place in the New Testament Church!

So, it was never the case that the Apostle Paul worked alone in Ephesus. When Paul lived in Ephesus, he was obviously the leader of the ministry team, but that was exactly what it was, a team of committed believers who shared a zealous love for Jesus, a burden for the lost, and a call to make disciples of all people.

Paul's Understanding of the Spirit's Leading

Another reason that Paul's ministry at Ephesus was so successful was due to his obedience to the Holy Spirit. Paul had a great understanding of the Spirit's ways: how the Holy Spirit speaks, leads, moves, etc. A good example of this is seen in how Paul, near the end of his stay in Ephesus, was compelled by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem.

“And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus

has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.” (Acts 20:22–24, NIV)

Yet, at the same time the Spirit used others to warn Paul not to go to Jerusalem. If that seems confusing, it would have been to many, but not to Paul. Paul realized that the Holy Spirit was warning him of the hardships that awaited him in Jerusalem.

“We sought out the disciples there and stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.” (Acts 21:4, NIV)

“After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, “The Holy Spirit says, ‘In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.’” When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.” (Acts 21:10–12, NIV)

Paul didn’t discount what others were sensing from the Spirit, nor did he ignore the fact that the Spirit was compelling him to go to Jerusalem. To Paul it wasn’t a matter of contradiction, it was a matter of properly understanding what the Holy Spirit was saying. Paul understood that the Holy Spirit wanted him to go to Jerusalem, but at the same time was using others to warn him that doing so would lead to severe hardship.

“Then Paul answered, “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord

Jesus.” When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, “The Lord’s will be done.”” (Acts 21:13–14, NIV)

Paul had learned the ways of the Spirit and understood that the only way to serve Jesus successfully was by the Spirit of Jesus! That’s one of the main reasons his ministry in Ephesus was so successful. So do what Paul did: live by the Spirit and start learning the ways of the Spirit! By doing so you’ll always be on the path of victory and success in God’s Kingdom!

Miraculous Ministry

Paul Understood the Importance of the Holy Spirit in the Life of Every Christian

When Paul arrived at Ephesus during his third missionary tour, he met some disciples of John the Baptist who had been baptized with John’s baptism.

“... Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?” “John’s baptism,” they replied. Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.” (Acts 19:1–6, NIV)

This passage is full of interesting elements that need investigating, but for this study we will concentrate on what happened immediately after Paul presented the gospel to these twelve men⁵⁴ and baptized them in water in the name of the Lord Jesus.

“When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.” (Acts 19:6, NIV)

Paul didn't just lead people to Jesus through repentance and faith, he knew it was important for every Christian to be filled with the Holy Spirit. That's why he immediately prayed for these twelve men to be baptized in the Holy Spirit after their conversion. Paul understood that being full of the Spirit wasn't just a blessing, it was a necessity for normal Christian living!

“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,” (Ephesians 5:15–18, NIV)

Paul Understood the Importance of Miraculous Ministry

Since his first missionary tour Paul had experienced miraculous ministry and was used by the Lord to perform signs and wonders. Such as that which took place in Iconium during his first missionary tour.

“So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders.” (Acts 14:3, NIV)

This reveals the importance of signs and wonders in the proclamation of the gospel. Signs and wonders confirm the validity of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That was the practice of Jesus in His own ministry, that was the case for Paul, and that should be the practice and expectancy of every Christian today!

While there were numerous ways the Lord confirmed His Word through the miracles performed by Paul some of the most interesting took place in Ephesus.

“God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.” (Acts 19:11–12, NIV)

This was similar to that which happened in the ministry of Jesus.

“And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.” (Mark 6:56, NIV)

Paul was flowing in the same miraculous ministry as Jesus! But to Paul, such miracles weren't extraordinary for a Spirit-filled Christian. Paul expected every Christian to be part of the miraculous ministry of Jesus. To Paul, miraculous ministry was normal Christianity!

Miraculous ministry almost always takes place during a revival outpouring. Why? Because during such outpourings the Holy Spirit is getting the Church back on track. During revival the Church begins to operate in the power of the Spirit instead of the power of man; the Church begins to function as the Body of Christ that it was created to be; the Church begins to represent Jesus Christ in life and ministry! So, as we look at the miraculous ministry that took place during the revival outpouring at Ephesus, we should anticipate nothing less during the revival outpouring the Lord has planned for the Church in these last days!

Paul Also Understood the Limitations of Miraculous Ministry

As important as miraculous ministry is, miracles do have their limitations. Paul learned early on, during his first missionary tour, that miracles, signs, and wonders don't necessarily make disciples out of those who observe or receive them. An example of this took place in Lystra during Paul's first missionary tour.

“In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, “Stand up on your feet!” At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.” (Acts 14:8–10, NIV)

However, the miraculous ministry performed in Lystra didn't make any disciples. Instead, the healing which took place was misunderstood and the people began to worship Paul and Barnabas! The problem was the crowd saw the power of the gospel but failed to receive a revelation of Jesus!

“When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.” (Acts 14:11–13, NIV)

That was a good lesson for Paul to learn early in his missionary work: miracles will get the attention of people, but miracles don't transform hearts, only the gospel of Jesus can do that! That's why it's vitally important to understand the purpose of miracles and their limitations. The Spirit uses miraculous ministry to get people's attention, not to disciple them. It takes a revelation of Jesus through His Word to do that!

People Soon Learned That the Power of God Isn't Released Through Ritual, But Because of Relationship

Often during revival outpourings things happen that grab the attention of people and put the fear of God in them. That certainly took place during the Ephesus revival outpouring.

“Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those

who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding." (Acts 19:13–16, NIV)

Remember, the mindset of the Ephesian masses had been taken captive by false gods, doctrines of demons, and witchcraft. So, when people saw Paul cast out evil spirits in the name of Jesus, they looked at it in the same way they viewed witchcraft, as if using the name of Jesus was a ritual that released spiritual power. This also reveals how much Judaism in Ephesus had been affected by idolatry since the men involved in using the name of Jesus as an incantation were sons of a Jewish priest!

What a powerful lesson the Holy Spirit taught through this incident! In an instant the whole city was gripped with a holy fear of Jesus. They saw that the power that had been released in the revival outpouring by the Holy Spirit wasn't something that could be harnessed or controlled by men through rituals, like they had seen in witchcraft. It was all based on relationship; the relationship that Christians in Ephesus testified was theirs with Jesus Christ!

"When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor." (Acts 19:17, NIV)

Discipleship Was Emphasized

Although we're not given any details about the content of the teaching Paul gave the Ephesian Christians during the revival outpouring, we are told that it was consistent and powerful.

"... He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord." (Acts 19:9-10, NIV)

"In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power." (Acts 19:20, NIV)

The letter that Paul later wrote to the Ephesian Church while he was in Rome also gives us insight into the depth of teaching Paul was able to share with the Ephesian Christians.

In the Book of Ephesians Paul Wrote About:

- Spiritual Blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1-2)
- Racial Unity in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22)
- God's Plan for the Gentiles in Christ (Ephesians 3)
- Ministerial Leadership (Ephesians 4:11-16)
- Christian Living (Ephesians 4:17 - 5:20)
- Christian Households (Ephesians 5:21 - 6:9)
- Spiritual Warfare (Ephesians 6:10-18)

Jesus' comments in the Book of Revelation about the Ephesian Christians are especially noteworthy.

“I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.” (Revelation 2:2-3, NIV)

While the Book of Revelation was written many years after the revival outpouring in Ephesus it does indicate that the Ephesian Christians had a strong beginning and continued to grow as Christians after the revival outpouring took place.

THE REVIVAL IN EPHEBUS TOOK PLACE IN CHAOS

One of the main results of the revival outpouring in Ephesus was how the gospel was heard throughout the province of Asia in such a short period of time.

“This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.” (Acts 19:10, NIV)

However, it should be noted that the move of God in Ephesus was not void of persecution and chaos. Paul's ministry in Ephesus was powerful and effective, but not everyone in Ephesus accepted the gospel. And many of those who rejected

the gospel fought against it viciously, especially those who were financially profiting from the worship of Artemis.

Thus, the spiritual battle which had for centuries been taking place in the heavenly realm between the Kingdom of God and the powers of darkness suddenly became physical as those who rejected the gospel began to fight against and persecute the followers of Christ. Eventually the rejection of the gospel and the persecution of the Church led to civil unrest and ultimately erupted into a mass riot that overtook the entire city!

“But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way.” (Acts 19:9a, NIV)

“About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way.” (Acts 19:23, NIV)

“And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.” When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” Soon the whole city was in an uproar. ...” (Acts 19:26–29, NIV)

That which took place in Ephesus is a good example of how revival can, and often does, take place in chaos. An even better example of ministry amid chaos is the ministry of Jesus! Just think what He went through! Throughout His ministry Jesus successfully battled against the kingdom of darkness, sent devils scrambling, and set people free. Yet, spiritual darkness was still present, and He had to function in a world full of chaos!

That's exactly what took place in Ephesus during the revival outpouring. While the revival outpouring in Ephesus broke the stronghold that darkness had over the area, the darkness wasn't totally expelled. Why? Because there were still people in Ephesus who embraced idolatry! This reveals an important spiritual principle: spiritual darkness has the legal right to remain as long as there are those who embrace it. The fact of the matter is this: those who choose to reject the light of Jesus automatically embrace darkness! There is never any neutral ground concerning this fact. Thus, even though the gospel had successfully been proclaimed in Ephesus with life-changing power, darkness had a legal right to remain through those who embraced it. This in turn created a spiritual and physical atmosphere of chaos which the revival outpouring had to function in and overcome.

And overcome they did! Despite the darkness and chaos that tried to destroy the Church in Ephesus it grew "strong in the Lord and in his mighty power."⁵⁵ The Christians in Ephesus were also privileged to see the word of the Lord spread widely and grow in power throughout the province of Asia!⁵⁶ In fact, the Christian presence grew so powerful in Ephesus and throughout Asia that the Temple of Artemis of Ephesus lost its world-wide influence and was totally destroyed by the Goths in 262 AD.⁵⁷

It will be no different during the greatest revival that is coming. The outpouring of the Spirit is going to be unprecedented and life changing. However, we must remember that one battle doesn't win the war! The revival outpouring in Ephesus was awesome, but the battle against the powers of darkness raged on for centuries! During revival we too will need to fight against the powers of darkness and function amid fierce chaos. But we will prevail! Like Jesus and the overcomers who have gone before us, the Church will prevail! The gospel will be preached, the word of the Lord will grow in power, the lost will be saved, demonized people will be set free, the sick will be healed, and Spirit-filled disciples will be developed. Yes, during the great revival outpouring we are going to witness multitudes of people who have been bound and broken by darkness come to Jesus and be washed, sanctified, and justified in His Name and by His Spirit.⁵⁸ It is going to be a time of great victory!

A BALANCED PERSPECTIVE CONCERNING REVIVAL OUTPOURINGS

The revival outpouring that took place in Ephesus gives a balanced perspective concerning revival outpourings.

Like most revival outpourings the revival that took place in Ephesus was full of dramatic and miraculous events which would have gotten the attention of masses of people. In fact, as soon as Paul arrived in Ephesus people started getting saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit with the physical manifestation of speaking in tongues and prophesying.⁵⁹ And that was just the beginning! Supernatural experiences abounded as the sick were healed and the demonized delivered!

“God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.” (Acts 19:11–12, NIV)

Yet, the revival outpouring in Ephesus was much more than supernatural experiences. From the very beginning the revival in Ephesus was focused on the Word of God.

“Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.” (Acts 19:8–10, NIV)

Therein was the balance! While the revival outpouring in Ephesus was full of supernatural experiences the Word of God was the foundation upon which the revival was built! Understanding this is vitally important for all those who long for revival! The Word must be the standard you hold to for your faith and practice. Without it you will easily be led into error! Remember, during a revival outpouring the heavenly realm joins with the earthly realm in unusual and wonderful ways,⁶⁰ and it takes an understanding of the Lord’s ways as revealed in the Word to be able to successfully navigate through it all.⁶¹

During a revival outpouring many Christians experience signs, wonders, visions, dreams, miracles, healings,

deliverance, and other supernatural manifestations. And because of the excitement of the experiences, it's easy to lean on them and emphasize them above the Word of God. But doing so is never wise, for our experiences can never measure up to the Word of God for equipping us to serve the Lord!

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16–17, NIV)

Concerning your need to achieve and keep a balance in your Christian life during revival outpourings: enjoy the wonderful and miraculous experiences you will have in a revival outpouring; there will be plenty of them. But, through it all, stay true to the Word of God!

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15, NIV)

CHAPTER THREE

PREPARING FOR REVIVAL

Some believe that God, who rules over all, sovereignly decides when, where, and how to pour out His Spirit on mankind. Others emphasize that it is the responsibility of God's people to usher in revival. In reality it's both! God created mankind to work with Him to accomplish His will. God's sovereignty and the cooperation of His people are both important factors in the birthing of revival outpourings. As Malcolm McDow wrote in his book *Firefall*:

*“God is always the grand architect of spiritual awakening. ... however, we also recognize that revivals are the products of the cooperative efforts between God and His people.”*⁶²

When the Lord pours out His Spirit in a revival outpouring multitudes of people become disciples of Jesus. However, before that can happen there have to be those who work with the Lord to prepare the way for the revival outpouring. Historically this has always been done by a small remnant in the Church: disciples who are zealously in love with Jesus and eager to work with Him to accomplish His will!

Thankfully, there's already a remnant of disciples in the Church who are actively working with Jesus to usher in a revival outpouring for this generation. And the exciting thing is, the remnant is growing, and you can be a part!

PRAYER

Preparing the way for a revival outpouring always involves prayer, and lots of it! It is through prayer that God plants the desire for a revival outpouring into the hearts of His people. Once that is accomplished prayer becomes the seedbed from which a revival outpouring is nurtured, blossoms, and grows. However, the type of praying required to prepare the way for a revival outpouring isn't what many people are used to. It isn't lifeless ritualistic prayer, or prayer that is self-centered and seeks only for God's blessing. It is prayer that takes place when a person hungers for the Lord Himself!

Prayers of Repentance

It is noteworthy that when the Temple was dedicated to the Lord by King Solomon the Lord told His people that if they rebelled against Him, they would have to pray with true repentance in order to be healed and restored. This type of praying is also needed to usher in a revival outpouring.

“if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14, NIV)

This verse makes it clear that only the Lord can send revival, but it also reveals that God's people have a big part in determining whether the Lord will do so. If the people of God do what they are supposed to do (humble themselves, pray, repent, and seek God's face) the Lord will do His part (hear from heaven, forgive sins, and heal the land). The lack of revival outpourings is never due to any unwillingness on the Lord's part, it is always due to the unwillingness of God's people to repent and pray!

The New Testament also speaks of repentance as being a prerequisite for revival outpourings.

“Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” (James 4:8–10, NIV)

In both these passages (2 Chronicle 7:14 and James 4:8-10) the Lord is calling His people to repent. But not with half-hearted repentance. The Lord is calling for true repentance. The kind of repentance that takes place when we come near to God and begin to see our sins as utterly evil! Take note at how the Lord wants us to repent: 2 Chronicles 7:14 says, *“humble themselves ... seek my face ... turn from their wicked ways”* and James 4:8-9 says, *“purify your hearts ... grieve, mourn and wail ... change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.”* We shouldn't read these passages without questioning ourselves on whether the repentance we often offer the Lord is lacking.

The heart-felt repentance spoken of in Scripture has often been the norm during revival outpourings. Below is an account of a service that took place in 1776 near the end of the Great Awakening in America. Thomas Rankin, the Methodist minister who was preaching, gave his own personal account of what took place:

“At four in the afternoon I preached again, ... such power descended, that hundreds fell to the ground, and the house seemed to shake with the presence of God. The chapel was full of white and black, and many were without that could not get in. Look wherever we would, we saw nothing but streaming eyes, and faces bathed in tears; and heard nothing but groans and strong cries after God and the Lord Jesus Christ. My voice was drowned amidst the groans and prayers of the congregation.”⁶³

Such cries of repentance are often the norm during revival outpourings, but they are also that which is needed to give birth to a revival outpouring in the first place! This was made real to me after spending thirty years laboring in prayer for revival in my present location. The Lord had sent me and my family to our present city to prepare the way for revival and we were doing all that we knew to do to help bring it to pass through praying, preaching, prophesying, etc. Then came a prophetic word that I will never forget: *“Revival will not come except through prayers that are full of tears.”* As I pondered and prayed over this prophetic word, I addressed the Lord and told Him I couldn’t produce the tears needed to bring forth revival. Then I began to understand! The prayers of repentance full of tears and groaning that will birth a revival outpouring can’t be produced by the flesh of man, they are the result of God

giving people the grace to repent! Since then, I have begun to cry out for the Lord's grace to truly repent. The grace to repent that comes as the result of seeing Jesus as the Holy One and sin as the utter evil that it is, like Isaiah experienced when he encountered Jesus in the Temple.

“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”
(Isaiah 6:5, NIV)

“Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him.” (John 12:41, NIV)

Such prayers of repentance not only help give birth to revival, but they also help fuel revival outpourings once they come.

It should also be noted that the repentance needed to bring a revival outpouring doesn't emphasize the prayers of individual people, the Lord is calling for corporate repentance. In 2 Chronicles 7:14 the Lord said, *“If my **people** who are called by my name ...”* and James 4:8-10 uses a plural you, *“Come near to God and he will come near to **you**.”*

Repentance will always be a key factor concerning the effectiveness of a revival outpouring, starting with the birthing of the revival outpouring and continuing throughout its lifespan. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit is with us and will continue to give us the grace we need to truly repent so that we can give birth to the revival we so desperately need!

Prayers and Petitions

“... by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (Philippians 4:6, NIV)

Generally speaking, prayer is communication with the Lord. However, not all praying is the same. There are different ways of praying with varying degrees of intensity. For instance, Philippians 4:6 uses two different words for prayer: *proseuche* (prayer) which is the general term used for communicating with God and *deesis* (petition) which can be used to emphasize the urgency of the request and the earnestness of the petitioner.⁶⁴ While we're supposed to be in constant spiritual communication with the Lord⁶⁵ there are times when we feel burdened by a need which requires us to dedicate ourselves to a serious, earnest time of praying wherein we request the Lord to meet the need. Elijah is a good example of this, he earnestly petitioned the Lord to send rain after several years of drought.

“The prayer (deesis) of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” (James 5:16b, NIV, transliteration of Greek added)

“Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees. “Go and look toward the sea,” he told his servant. And he went up and looked. “There is nothing there,” he said. Seven times Elijah said, “Go back.” The seventh time the servant reported, “A cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea.” (1 Kings 18:42b–44a, NIV)

Elijah's burden and the severity of the need motivated the type of praying Elijah dedicated himself to. The Lord had previously used Elijah to prophecy that rain was coming,⁶⁶ but to birth that prophecy into physical manifestation he had to give himself to earnest praying before the Lord sent rain! The earnestness of his praying is seen in how Elijah bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees; the physical position he kept throughout the day as he labored in prayer.

King Solomon is another good example of one who petitioned the Lord. After spending a fortune building the Temple King Solomon knew that it would never fulfill its purpose unless the Lord made it His dwelling place. That's why King Solomon petitioned the Lord to make the Temple His dwelling place; the place where the Lord would meet with His people, grant His forgiveness, and answer their prayers. Listen to the earnestness of King Solomon's prayer as he presented his petition to the Lord.

"... Lord my God, give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence. May your eyes be open toward this temple day and night, this place of which you said you would put your Name there. May you hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. Hear the supplications of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place; and when you hear, forgive." ... "Now arise, Lord God, and come to your resting place, you and the ark of your might." (2 Chronicles 6:19-21, 41a, NIV)

Now notice how the Lord granted King Solomon's prayerful petition!

“When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord ...” (2 Chronicles 7:1-3, NIV)

These two examples, and many more throughout Scripture, reveal what can happen when God's people pray! May we sense the urgency of the hour and get serious about preparing the way for revival through prayer. It's time for us to petition the Lord for a revival outpouring and plead for His divine intervention!

Spiritual Warfare

Tearful prayers of repentance and earnest praying are both needed to prepare the way for revival, but so is spiritual warfare. The powers of darkness are relentless in their scheming against revival outpourings. This calls for God's people, especially His tried-and-true remnant, to put on the full armor of God to battle against the powers of darkness.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle

is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.” (Ephesians 6:10–18, NIV)

It's noteworthy that Paul ends this passage concerning the armor of God with instructions that we're to use God's armor in prayer! In other words, it's through prayer that we engage in spiritual warfare against the forces of evil.

Spiritual warfare is, as the Apostle Paul put it in his letter to the Ephesians, a *struggle* which requires every prayer warrior to be full of God's power and fully clothed in God's armor. The intensity of the battle is emphasized by the use of the Greek word *pale* (translated “struggle” in English) which speaks of intense hand-to-hand combat, akin to wrestling a strong opponent. While this should cause no fear in those who follow Jesus, spiritual warfare should never be entered into lightly. In fact, spiritual warfare is best entered into corporately, with fellow believers joined together in prayer against the powers of darkness. It's noteworthy that the Greek words for “you”

and “yours” in Ephesians 6:10-18 are plural which means Paul was addressing a group of prayer warriors rather than one lone soldier! While an individual can learn much from Ephesians 6:10-18 about spiritual warfare, we must not ignore the fact that this passage is teaching a body of believers how to fight together against the powers of darkness! Nothing less will be able to successfully prepare the way for a revival outpouring as far as spiritual warfare is concerned.

PIONEERS

Throughout history pioneers have been among the first to blaze trails in uncharted territories. In the past they explored new lands and developed the routes early settlers traveled on. In essence, pioneers made it possible for settlers to start a new life and enjoy all the bounty of their new home.

In a spiritual sense those who prepare the way for revival outpourings are like spiritual pioneers. By preparing the way for revival outpourings spiritual pioneers make it possible for others to receive a new life and experience all that revival brings.

Three important characteristics of spiritual pioneers are:

1. Spiritual pioneers are forerunners.
2. Spiritual pioneers are fearless.
3. Spiritual pioneers are open to new things.

Spiritual Pioneers Are Forerunners

When people think of a forerunner in the New Testament, they almost always think of John the Baptist, and rightly so, for he was the one called by God to prepare the way for Jesus.

“As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: ‘A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all people will see God’s salvation.’” (Luke 3:4–6, NIV)

But did you know that Jesus was also a forerunner? In fact, He is the ultimate forerunner!

*“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our **forerunner**, Jesus, has entered on our behalf.”* (Hebrews 6:19–20a, NIV, emphasis added)

In the Old Testament only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies. However, Jesus, as our forerunner, went before us and made it possible for us to follow Him into the Throne Room of God, which was depicted by the earthly Holy of Holies.⁶⁷ Re-read Hebrews 6:20 and let the words sink deep into your spirit: “our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf.” Read it until you understand why Jesus took on the role of a forerunner. Jesus did it for us! That’s what a forerunner does; a forerunner goes before others for their benefit! And that is exactly what a forerunner of revival is commissioned by the Lord to accomplish: prepare the way for a revival outpouring so that others will be able to benefit from it! When you understand how desperately the Church needs revival, but that the vast majority of Christians are unwilling to pay the price for it, you’ll understand why forerunners are

so important. Forerunners are those who are willing to work with the Lord, no matter what the sacrifice entails, to birth revival on the earth ... for the benefit of others!

It's important to understand that a revival outpouring is never brought about by one forerunner, it's always a cooperative effort of God and His people, with each person fulfilling their responsibility. It's also helpful to know that forerunners aren't always at the forefront when the actual revival outpouring takes place. In fact, the Lord may even raise up others to reap the harvest of the revival outpouring.

“I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.” (John 4:38, NIV)

When this happens the birthing of the revival outpouring is almost always attributed to those who reap the harvest of the outpouring. However, truth be told, revival outpourings are mostly due to the labors of the spiritual pioneers who prepared the way for the revival. Thankfully, God's forerunners aren't looking for recognition or credit; they are compelled to prepare the way for revival for the glory of Jesus and the benefit of others. Yet, there will come a day in eternity when each person will be rewarded by Jesus Himself for fulfilling their part in His work. So, do the work that God has called you to and leave the recognition in His hands. The obedience of God's Spirit-filled forerunners will be remembered and rewarded!

The ministry of a forerunner is often unique, such as the ministry of Frank Bartleman who was instrumental in the spread of the Pentecostal revival that took place in the early 1900's. Frank Bartleman settled in Los Angeles in 1904 with

his wife and two children, perceiving that the Lord was about to send revival to Los Angeles. He, along with many others, gave himself to prayer, preaching, and witnessing to prepare the way for that which they felt was soon in coming. And come it did, with Pentecostal signs and wonders, to a small run-down building on Azusa Street under the leadership of William Seymour. The revival peaked during the years of 1906 – 1909 but its effects are still being felt to this day. While Frank Bartleman was one among many forerunners of the revival movement in Los Angeles, he was never a key leader in the revival outpouring. But his personal reports concerning the Azusa Street revival were read throughout the world and did much to spread the news about the revival outpouring in Los Angeles. In fact, history has shown that it was his reporting about the Azusa Street revival that did more for spreading the news about the revival outpouring than anything else and helped prepare the way for Pentecostal ministry throughout the world. Church historian, Vinson Synan wrote concerning Frank Bartleman’s life and ministry:

*“In many ways, Bartleman’s entire life had been spent in preparation for reporting the Azusa Street meeting. It is probable that without his reporting, the Pentecostal movement would not have spread so quickly and so far as it did. His journalism not only informed the world about the Pentecostal movement, but in a large measure also helped to form it.”*⁶⁸

While Frank Bartleman wasn’t the leader of the Azusa Street revival, he was the predominant person who sent reports concerning the revival to the rest of the world. His writings caused many from around the globe to travel to Los Angeles to experience for themselves the revival outpouring that was

taking place, and those who came and received carried the Pentecostal blessing to their own homelands and beyond. Through his writings Frank Bartleman helped spread the Pentecostal message throughout the world. He was a spiritual pioneer and true forerunner for world-wide revival!

Spiritual Pioneers Are Fearless

Those who are yearning for a revival outpouring need to be fearless, which means they have to be willing to step out of their comfort zone. Such as the time that Peter walked on the water towards Jesus. To do so Peter had to step out of the boat, which at that moment was his comfort zone.

“Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” And when they

climbed into the boat, the wind died down.” (Matthew 14:22–32, NIV)

Peter’s fearlessness was not only seen in the fact that he stepped out of the boat during the storm, but that he was the one who asked Jesus if he could do so, not vice versa. Why is that so important? It reveals that Peter wasn’t satisfied to stay in the safety of the boat while Jesus was walking on water! He wanted to experience the miraculous with Jesus! Thus, Peter’s desire for more of Jesus drove him to act fearlessly!

Those who are praying for a revival outpouring are revealing the same yearning that Peter had; they want to experience all that Jesus has for them! That was exactly what Paul was expressing when he wrote, *“I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, ...”* (Philippians 3:10, NIV). The Greek word which Paul used for “know” is *ginosko* which refers to experiential knowledge, i.e., knowledge that is gained through experience. In other words, Paul was saying that he wanted to experience more of Jesus! And that is exactly what every person who is praying for a revival outpouring is crying out for ... more of Jesus!

Therefore, based on the example of Peter walking on the water with Jesus, those who are praying for a revival outpouring shouldn’t be surprised when Jesus tells them to step out of their comfort zone! And that’s exactly what spiritual pioneers do to prepare the way for revival outpourings: they fearlessly step out of their comfort zone in answer to the call of Jesus, and by doing so they begin to walk with Jesus in the miraculous. Thus, by their example they are paving the way for others to do the same!

Fearlessness, born of the Spirit, is needed by all spiritual pioneers of revival. It’s developed in those who have such a

spiritual hunger for Jesus that they won't be silenced until their spiritual hunger is satisfied. It propels them to believe God for the impossible. It enables them to stand against the powers of flesh and hell until the battle is won! Such was the fearlessness of Maria Woodworth-Etter, one of the most dynamic and successful Pentecost evangelists during the 1880's to 1920's. Her Christlike fearlessness enabled her to stand against the norms of society as she preached the gospel of Jesus accompanied by miraculous signs and wonders. This is especially noteworthy considering the fact that women weren't even allowed to vote in the United States until 1920, long after her ministry had grown to national prominence. Added to this is the fact that when Maria Woodworth-Etter began preaching the vast majority of people didn't believe in women preachers! Yet, her hunger for Jesus and her burning desire to make Jesus known drove her forward as she boldly proclaimed the gospel with signs and wonders following. Her message that Jesus saves, heals, and baptizes seekers in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues drew thousands of people to her meetings. Plus, the trances which she, along with many others, experienced during her services put her in the national spotlight as they were written about in periodicals and newspapers across the country. During her first fourteen years Maria Woodworth-Etter traveled over 35,000 miles and held meetings in thirteen States, ministering to hundreds of thousands of people with many of them being saved, healed, and baptized in the Holy Spirit.⁶⁹ However, her miraculous ministry was not without opposition; she often faced ridicule, rejection, and treats from those who mocked the miraculous manifestations that took place in her ministry. Thankfully, Maria Woodworth-Etter remained undeterred and pressed on as a fearless spiritual pioneer, carrying the message and ministry of Jesus throughout the nation, blazing the trail for revival outpourings that took place throughout the twentieth century.

Christlike fearlessness is a characteristic that is needed in every spiritual pioneer that is preparing the way for a revival outpouring. The type of fearlessness that was seen in Peter when he stepped out of the boat and walked on the water with Jesus. The same fearlessness that was revealed in Maria Woodworth-Etter as she stood against the norms of society and preached the gospel of Jesus with miraculous signs and wonders. It's time to step out of your comfort zone and experience all that Jesus has for you! Let Jesus develop you into a fearless spiritual pioneer who will not only enjoy His fullness but use you to prepare the way for others to do the same.

Spiritual Pioneers Are Open to New Things

Most people who are praying for revival outpourings have specific expectations in mind. Often, they get their expectations from previous revival outpourings they witnessed, or revival outpourings they read about, or from the testimonies of others who experienced revival outpourings. But the fact of the matter is this, no matter what people expect a revival outpouring to be like, it will seldom, if ever, be the way they envision it. Each revival outpouring is unique and divinely orchestrated to reach the generation to whom it is sent. As taught earlier, there are three major attributes that are found in each revival outpouring: a revelation of Jesus; repentance from sin; and a spiritual revolution. Beyond that each revival outpouring must be looked at as a unique divine manifestation. Therefore, as you pray for a revival outpouring, don't expect God to repeat what He has done in the past, instead be open, for God is going to do "a new thing!"

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you

not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” (Isaiah 43:18–19, NIV)

Now what did the Lord mean when He said, “I am doing a new thing” when the Scriptures also tell us, “there is nothing new under the sun”?

“What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes 1:9, NIV)

When the Lord said, “*I am doing a new thing*” (Isaiah 43:19, NIV) the Hebrew word used for “new” can speak of that which is newly discovered as well as that which is newly created. The “new thing” that the Lord does in a revival outpouring speaks of that which is newly discovered. In other words, during revival outpourings the Lord reintroduces His people to the spiritual treasures He previously gave their ancestors, but which, over the centuries, were discarded and forgotten. Thankfully, when God pours out His Spirit in a revival outpouring that which had been abandoned by previous generations will be given again; and when it is given it will be “new” to those who are receiving!

This gives us a better understanding of what we’re praying for when we ask the Lord for a revival outpouring. We’re not asking the Lord to do something that’s never been done before. Instead, we’re asking the Lord to restore to a generation the things of God which they don’t know about or have never experienced. To them the revival outpouring will be full of new things!

The fact that the Lord said He's going to do "a new thing" also tells us that God is going to do something beyond what most people are presently experiencing, and it's going to be awesome! The "new thing" will be powerful and life-giving, and that which God does during the revival outpouring will bring many into the Kingdom of God. But how the Lord accomplishes all this will be up to Him!

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9, NIV)

In His parable about the old wine and old wineskins vs. the new wine and new wineskins Jesus was revealing that He was doing a new thing and that those who followed Him needed to embrace it!

"And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, 'The old is better.'" (Luke 5:37-39, NIV)

Take a moment and reread the above passage once more; but this time read it carefully and let it soak into your spirit. This passage makes it very clear that Jesus is going to be giving His people "new wine" but that He will only be pouring it into "new wineskins." That means, if you want to receive new wine, you've got to let Jesus transform you into a new wineskin! A

new wineskin that is expandable and able to carry the powerful new wine that Jesus will put in it; unlike old wineskins that are rigid and unpliable. The importance of this mustn't be ignored: new wineskins are necessary for revival outpourings! It takes new wineskins to adapt to the "new things" that God does in a revival outpouring. This message is especially important for spiritual pioneers who want to prepare the way for revival! So, don't get stuck in the trap of thinking "the old is better" ... stay hungry and open to what Jesus wants to give you, because He's already declared in His Word that it's going to be "new wine!"

Being open to new things will be difficult if you're expecting the Lord to replicate previous revival outpourings. That was what kept many older Pentecostal churches from embracing the Charismatic Movement of the 1960's and 1970's. Generally speaking, the traditional Pentecostal churches expected Jesus to send a revival outpouring that would be similar to the revival outpourings that gave birth to their movement generations earlier. However, the Lord did a "new thing" which was not generally accepted by the traditional Pentecostals. Thankfully there were some Pentecostal disciples who were open, such as David du Plessis, a Pentecostal minister from South Africa. It all began in 1936 when David du Plessis received a personal prophecy from the famed Pentecostal evangelist, Smith Wigglesworth, which foretold how God planned to use him:

"Laying his hands on his shoulders he pushed him against the wall and began to prophesy: "you have been in 'Jerusalem' long enough. ... I will send you to the uttermost parts of the earth. ... You will bring the message of Pentecost to all churches. ... you will travel more than evangelists do. ... God is going to revive the

churches in the last days and through them turn the world upside down. Even the Pentecostal movement will become a mere joke compared with the revival which God will bring through the churches.”⁷⁰

While the prophecy remained unfulfilled for ten years it slowly came into being as the Lord put David du Plessis in the paths of those who embraced his Pentecostal message and helped thrust him into the leading ecumenical Christian organizations of his day, such as the World Council of Churches. Although David du Plessis had spoken against such ecumenical organizations early in his ministry, he had a change of heart when he realized that they were beginning to be receptive to the Pentecostal message. In essence, David du Plessis became open to the new thing the Lord was doing among His people. As the prophecy continued to be fulfilled David du Plessis became “a leading speaker at hundreds of Pentecostal-charismatic meetings around the world” and became affectionately known as, “Mr. Pentecost.”⁷¹ His influence in helping shape the charismatic movement was world-wide, and it was all due to his willingness to embrace the “new thing” God was doing in His Church!

Spiritual pioneers are needed to prepare the way for revival outpourings. Spiritual pioneers who will blaze trails for revival outpourings using every means the Holy Spirit gives them. But make no mistake about it, Jesus isn't calling the strong or the mighty; He's calling the willing. And if you're willing, He'll make you into a fearless forerunner that He can use in new ways to prepare the way for revival. The Lord is calling. It's time to say “Yes!”

PERSEVERANCE

Every revival outpouring seems to come suddenly, but that is never the case. Revival outpourings come as the result of God's planning and those who work with Him to fulfill His plan. That's going to require perseverance ... and lots of it!

In the Bible *perseverance* is understood to mean *steadfastness*, *endurance*, and *patience*. Perseverance also implies that difficult circumstances will be faced and must be overcome. That's why spiritual pioneers who are preparing the way for revival outpourings must be willing and able to persevere, because preparing the way for a revival outpouring is often long, hard, and will test the most faithful. But it is always rewarded with the fulfillment of what God promised!

“You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.”
(Hebrews 10:36, NIV)

Perseverance and Time

The prophecy of Joel concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was given approximately nine hundred years before it was initially fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. It was the prophecy that Peter quoted to explain to the masses what was taking place in their midst.

“... 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. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.” (Acts 2:16–18, NIV)

Considering the time span between Joel’s prophecy and the initial fulfillment of it on the Day of Pentecost, there were multiple generations that missed out. Or did they? No, not at all. The fact of the matter is this: the Lord reveals what He’s going to do before He does it so that He can involve His people in the fulfillment of His plan. Concerning the prophecy of Joel, the Lord gave His people approximately nine hundred years to work with Him to usher in the revival outpouring. There’s always a period of time between the revelation of God’s plan and the manifestation of God’s plan. That gives God’s people time to work with Him to bring His plan to fruition. But the time involved reveals that those who work with the Lord towards the fulfillment of His plan must persevere. This truth needs to be understood by all those who are working with the Lord to usher in revival outpourings.

Some people have experienced a revival outpouring after having prayed for only a short season. However, some of you have been praying for a revival outpouring for years and you’re still praying for it to come to pass. If that’s you, be encouraged! Remember what the Lord said through Habakkuk.

“For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.”
(Habakkuk 2:3, NIV)

The very fact that you’re still praying for a revival outpouring means that the Lord has given you His grace to persevere in

prayer! There are many examples in the Bible of those who had to persevere in prayer before they received what they were praying for. Simeon and Anna of the New Testament are two great examples.

“Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.” The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.” (Luke 2:25–38, NIV)

Both Simeon and Anna gave much of their lives to praying for the Messiah. God used their prayers to help prepare the way for Jesus and all that took place during His ministry on earth. In every way Simeon and Anna were forerunners of revival! The Scriptures don't tell us much more about Simeon and Anna, but it is very evident that their perseverance in prayer was amply rewarded!

Another good example of perseverance is seen in the life of James Fraser, missionary to China in the early 1900's. James became a missionary with the China Inland Mission in 1908 at the age of 22. Although he spent his entire adult life ministering in China it was decades before he experienced a major breakthrough among the Lisu tribespeople. His perseverance in prayer and evangelistic ministry to reach the Lisu tribespeople of the Yunnan province in southwest China is astounding.

Fraser was "consumed with desire to see a work of God among the Lisu; a passionate, even desperate wanting filled him when he turned to prayer."⁷² After many years of ministry among the Lisu people he had little to no response. Yet, he continued to persevere in prayer and traveled the mountainous paths throughout southwest China to take the gospel to the Lisu villages. After years of labor signs of a spiritual breakthrough began to emerge. Lisu families began to respond to the gospel and turn from their demon worship. The power of God was demonstrated as demonized people were set free from the strongholds of darkness.⁷³ Through persistent prayer and tenacious evangelism Fraser prepared a path to the hearts of the Lisu people. God was on the move!

"Great spiritual stamina had been needed when James spent those first apparently barren years in

the mountains praying for a turning to God among the tribes. Years had gone by without visible result. Then, in the lovingkindness of God, family after family and village after village had begun to cry to Him for salvation.”⁷⁴

Not only was Fraser used by the Lord to advance the Kingdom of God among the Lisu in China he had a profound effect on people in England who became his prayer partners.

“... they grasped at once that God was at work among these tribespeople, and they wanted to be co-workers with Him. Many of these James helped draft into the Prayer Companionship: ten soldiers in prayer standing behind each man on the field. This grew to be an army of thousands in the following years; intimate partners in the whole work of the mission.”⁷⁵

James Fraser persevered through years of hardship before he saw a harvest. Although Fraser died on the China mission field at the early age of 52 in 1938 the work he began continued to grow and flourish! His Christlike perseverance not only enabled him to reach a whole province of China, it challenged countless others to persevere in their service to Christ.

Preparing the way for a revival outpouring will never be easy and it's always going to take time. In fact, we really don't know how long it's going to take. The revival outpouring we're preparing for may come to fruition in a short period of time, or it may be a lifetime before it begins to manifest. The Lord doesn't always share the times and dates concerning the fulfillment of His plan.⁷⁶ All the more reason we need to

persevere! But it's going to be worth it; revival is always worth it!

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:58, NIV)

Perseverance and Faith

Every spiritual pioneer will face multiple obstacles as they prepare the way for revival outpourings. That makes Biblical perseverance a necessity! And that will require faith, for perseverance is developed when faith is tested.⁷⁷ In other words, the perseverance you need to prepare the way for revival starts with your faith! Faith that is dependent on Jesus, not feelings; faith that doesn't give in to disappointment, delays, or discouragement; faith that will stand strong against carnal flesh and the powers of darkness. Thankfully that is exactly the type of faith that Jesus gives His disciples. How? Through His Word! Remember, “Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith”⁷⁸ gave His written Word to be His instrument of grace to impart His faith into your spirit.⁷⁹ So, get in His Word; read it, study it, speak it, live it! By doing so your faith will be strengthened and you'll be able to stand no matter what comes your way, and you'll remain standing, because your faith has produced in you a perseverance that won't quit!

The reality of a person's faith and perseverance are always seen in times of hardship and suffering. Look at Job; through all of his hardships and trials his faith in the Lord remained strong

and steadfast, and it enabled him to persevere until the Lord delivered him.

“As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about.”
(James 5:11b, NIV)

Just as the Lord brought about a great miracle in Job’s life, He’ll do the same for you! So, put your faith in Jesus, join Him in preparing the way for a revival outpouring, and persevere when your labor becomes difficult and disappointing. Don’t give up ... keep persevering ... Jesus wants to use you as a spiritual pioneer to prepare the way for something great!

One young man that put his faith in Jesus and persevered until he saw a revival breakthrough was Evan Roberts. The Lord used Evan Roberts in the early 1900’s to help usher in a revival outpouring in Wales. The revival outpouring was so great that news of it quickly spread throughout the world and encouraged other nations to start crying out to the Lord for their own revival outpouring. In the book, *The Century of the Holy Spirit* by Vinson Synan, David Barrett wrote the following details about the Welsh revival.

“1904 – Welsh revival through ministry of Evan Roberts (1878 – 1951) in Glamorganshire, Anglesey, Caernavonshire, with 100,000 converts in Wales in 6 months; short-lived (1904-6), but literally sweeps the world; worldwide publicity from the press; leads into worldwide Pentecostal movement including 1905 Switzerland and Germany, 1907 England.”⁸⁰

And the catalyst of this great revival outpouring was the persevering faith of Evan Roberts. From an early age Evan had a deep spiritual hunger for Jesus. Although he had to leave school to work in the Welch mines with his Father at the age of 12, he attended Church regularly (almost daily) and took advantage of every opportunity to grow in his faith and to share the Gospel with others. Evan prayed and wept for revival for eleven years after which the Lord, during the Spring of 1904, began to awaken him in the early morning hours to spend several hours in “communion with God.” It was then that the Lord gave Evan a glimpse into what was about to take place!

“During this “communion with God,” Evan saw, in a vision, Wales experiencing an unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit; 100,000 Welsh being swept into the kingdom of God and the Revival spreading throughout the world.”⁸¹

By faith Evan Roberts took hold of this revelation and persevered until he saw it come to pass ... and come to pass it did! The following account was given by a news reporter that visited one of the revival services.

“The scene was almost indescribable. Tier upon tier of men and women filled every inch of space. Those who could not gain admittance stood outside and listened at the doors. Others rushed to the windows, where almost every word was audible. When at seven o’clock the service began, quite 2,000 people must have been present. The enthusiasm was unbounded. Women sang and shouted till the perspiration ran

down their faces, and men jumped up one after the other to testify.” ... “Meetings such as this are being repeated every day, and the enthusiasm is still spreading. While there has been no organization, no elaborate preparation for this mission, there is a strong belief that it is the direct result of earnest prayer.”⁸²

The faith and perseverance that was evident in the life of Evan Roberts helped him prepare the way for a revival outpouring that covered Wales and was heard about worldwide. As spiritual pioneers we too have the opportunity to help prepare the way for a revival outpouring. Yes, our faith will be tested as we prepare the way, but that’s a good thing! The testing of our faith will produce in us the perseverance we need to keep going until the revival we’re preparing for is brought into manifestation!

Perseverance and Joy

“For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2b, NIV)

While Hebrews 12:2 doesn’t directly deal with revival it reveals a truth that can certainly be applied. During His ministry on earth Jesus was full of joy, in fact, He was anointed with the oil of joy!⁸³ But it was the joy that Jesus knew would be revealed when He fulfilled His mission that motivated Him to persevere. It is the same with all those who are spiritual pioneers preparing the way for a revival outpouring. The joy that will come from fulfilling our mission is set before us! Much like a mother who endures the pain of childbirth and

later rejoices in the birth of her child, so is the joy to be experienced by those who persevere through the hardships of ushering in a revival outpouring.

“A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.” (John 16:21–22, NIV)

Such was the experience of the early disciples when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost. The disciples were baptized in the Holy Spirit, given awesome power, and overwhelmed with joy!⁸⁴ It can rightly be said that on the Day of Pentecost Jesus crowned His people with beauty, anointed them with the oil of joy, and put on them a garment of praise!⁸⁵ The same thing happened at the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church in 1994. John Arnott, pastor of the church, invited Randy Clark to his church after hearing that he had received a fresh anointing in meetings held by Rodney Howard-Browne. On January 20, 1994, Randy Clark and a team from his church in St. Louis began services in Toronto. The Holy Spirit began to move in great power, and in the words of John Arnott, “The level of anointing in the room suddenly rose and people’s love for Jesus went off the scale.”⁸⁶ The services were noted for the overwhelming glory and joy that permeated the atmosphere as people laughed, cried, and soaked in the presence of Jesus. One of the hallmarks of the Toronto Blessing (which the revival became known as) was the outpouring of “holy laughter” wherein individuals would laugh joyously and uncontrollably.⁸⁷ During the services it was

normal for people to lie on the floor for hours soaking in the presence of Jesus!

That which was taking place at the Toronto Airport Church motivated people from around the world to attend. The Toronto Blessing continued for several years and became a spiritual oasis for millions of people who were looking for spiritual renewal from Jesus. It has been reported by many that the Toronto Blessing was one of the greatest moves of God to take place in the twentieth century.

During the Toronto Blessing the joy of the Lord became almost tangible as people were spiritually revived, emotionally restored, and physically strengthened. Many who attended testified of being healed of deep inner wounds and being rejuvenated by the Lord for further ministry. The outpouring of joy, which continued throughout the duration of the outpouring, was one of the major ways the Lord healed and refreshed His people during the outpouring.

As spiritual pioneers paving the way for future revival outpourings, we need to remember the power of the joy of the Lord. We need to set it before us to encourage us. Remember, the joy set before Jesus motivated Him to endure the cross. In the same way, understanding that supernatural joy will be revealed when revival comes will encourage us to persevere until it does!

Many of you are spiritual pioneers who have been impregnated with a vision and spiritual hunger for revival. Some of you have carried a burden for revival for a short time while others have carried a burden for revival for years. Whichever is the case, the joy of giving birth to revival is before us. Jesus has given His promise that a world-wide revival is coming,⁸⁸ and we have committed ourselves to work with Him until it does. Let revival fall!

“... Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.” (John 16:24, NIV)

Together Let’s Prepare the Way for Revival

*“As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. **And all people will see God’s salvation.**”” (Luke 3:4–6, NIV, emphasis added)*

It is obvious that our world needs a revival outpouring from Heaven. And that’s why, I believe, you have read this book. In closing I encourage you to take hold of this simple fact: just as God enabled John the Baptist to successfully prepare the way for Jesus, He is successfully using spiritual pioneers today to prepare the way for an unprecedented revival outpouring!

Together our collective voice is united, strong, and firm as we pray in the wilderness, “Revive us, and we will call on your name.”⁸⁹ Together, in the power of the Spirit, we’re making crooked paths straight and rough roads smooth as we prepare the way for revival! Together we stand before mountains of obstacles and hills of adversity, and we’re making them crumble as we pray, prophesy, and proclaim the mighty name of Jesus, all done in obedience to prepare the way for revival!

Yes, we're straightening the paths, smoothing out the rough roads, and preparing the way! Revival is upon us. Let's continue to blaze the trail together; there will be millions that will see God's salvation because of it!

“The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.” (Isaiah 52:10, NIV)

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21. (John 1:1, NIV) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
22. (Matthew 4:4, NIV) "Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'""
23. (John 1:14, NIV) "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

24. (Acts 16:6, NIV) "Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia."
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30. Seal, "The Lexham Bible Dictionary".
31. W. Lasor, "Artemis: The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised," (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979-1988), Vol. 1, 307.
32. (1 John 2:16, NIV) "For everything in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – comes not from the Father but from the world."

33. (Acts 19:8–10, NIV) "Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord."
34. (Acts 4:12, NIV) "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."
35. (Acts 3:16, NIV) "By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see."
36. (Galatians 5:1, NIV) "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."
37. (Acts 19:8, NIV) "Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God."
38. (1 Corinthians 2:4, NIV) "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power,"
39. (2 Timothy 2:8, NIV) "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel,"
40. (Ephesians 2:8, NIV) "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—"

41. (1 Corinthians 2:4, NIV) "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power,"
42. (Colossians 2:2-3, NIV) "... Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."
43. (Ephesians 5:25, NIV) "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her"
44. (Ephesians 6:1, NIV) "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."
45. (Ephesians 4:32, NIV) "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."
46. (Philippians 4:19, NIV) "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."
47. (Philippians 4:7, NIV) "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
48. (Acts 18:3, NIV) "and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them."
49. (Acts 20:34, NIV) "You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions."
50. (1 Corinthians 9:11-12, NIV) "If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ."

51. (Romans 16:3, NIV) "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus."
52. (1 Corinthians 16:19, NIV) "... Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house."
53. (Acts 19:9-10, NIV) "... He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord."
54. (Acts 19:7, NIV) "There were about twelve men in all."
55. (Ephesians 6:10, NIV) "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power."
56. (Acts 19:20, NIV) "In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power."
57. Britannica, "Temple of Artemis," (Encyclopedia Britannica, April 1, 2023), www.britannica.com/topic/Temple-of-Artemis-temple-Ephesus-Turkey.
58. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, NIV) "Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

59. (Acts 19:4–6, NIV) "Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied."
60. (Matthew 6:10, NIV) "... your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."
61. (Psalm 25:4–5, NIV) "Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long."
62. McDow & Reid, "Firefall," 3.
63. I. H. Murray, "Revival & Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism 1750 - 1858," (Carlisle, PN: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), 73.
64. R. Brannan, "Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament," (Lexham Press, 2020).
65. (1 Thessalonians 5:17, NIV) "pray continually,"
66. (1 Kings 18:41, NIV) "And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain.""

67. (Hebrews 4:14–16, NIV) "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."
68. F. Bartleman, "Azusa Street," (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1925), xii.
69. M. Woodworth-Etter, "A Diary of Signs and Wonders," (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1916), 128-129.
70. V. Synan, "The Century of the Holy Spirit," (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 362.
71. V. Synan, "The Century of the Holy Spirit," 362.
72. E. Crossman, "Mountain Rain," (Singapore: Overseas Missionary Fellowship, 1982), 22.
73. Crossman, "Mountain Rain," 121.
74. Crossman, "Mountain Rain," 150.
75. Crossman, "Mountain Rain," 195.
76. (Acts 1:7, NIV) "He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority."
77. (James 1:3, NIV) "because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance."

78. (Hebrews 12:2, NIV) "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."
79. (Romans 10:17, NIV) "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ."
80. Synan, "The Century of the Holy Spirit," 425.
81. Relfe, "Cure Of All Ills," (Montgomery, AL: League of Prayer, 1988), 76.
82. Relfe, "Cure Of All Ills," 83-84.
83. (Hebrews 1:9, NIV) "You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."
84. (Acts 2:1-15)
85. (Isaiah 61:3, NIV) "... to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. ..."
86. M. Fish, "Keep Coming, Holy Spirit," (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2001), 26-27.
87. While "holy laughter" occurred in many revivals throughout church history it became a recurring phenomenon in Charismatic Churches in the 1990's and was one of the hallmarks of the Toronto Blessing.

88. (Joel 2:28-29, NIV) "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."
89. (Psalm 80:18, NIV) "Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name."

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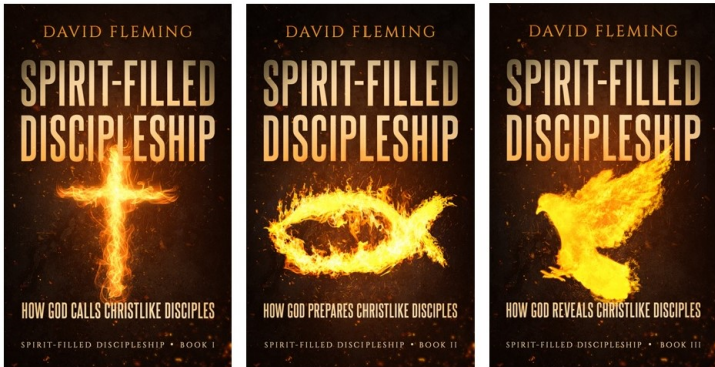
Dr. David Fleming is a leader at *Disciples Ignited*, a teaching ministry geared towards developing Christlike disciples. His first three books made up the *Spirit-filled Discipleship* series and were written to help followers of Jesus develop into faithful disciples, equipped with Biblical knowledge, and empowered by the Spirit to glorify Jesus, build the Church, and change the world.

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