

The Pattern of God's Working
Part Two
God Moves Through Mighty Surges of Reviving Power
Psalm 107

Prov 1:20-23

- 20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:
21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,
22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?
23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. KJV

Isa 44:1-3

- 1 Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:
2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.
3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: KJV

Joel 2:28-29

- 28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:
29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. KJV

Zech 12:10

- 10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. KJV

Acts 2:14-18

- 14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:
15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.
16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;
17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:
18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: KJV

These passages continue the thought of David in Psa 107, that one of God's preferred and primary methods of dealing with His people is to pour out upon them His Spirit in power.

Admittedly this is also one of the ‘sticky wickets’ of theology in our day given the catastrophic preponderance of error concerning Revival and the working of God’s Spirit that has surrounded this topic for the last 120 years or so.

The previous message laid out the pattern of God’s working among men specifically in relation to the powerful working of God’s Spirit at special times and for special purposes beginning with an Awakening among the sons of Seth and continuing down through the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ.

In this message we turn our attention to the operations of the Holy Spirit during the New Testament era which began either with the baptism of Jesus Christ or the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. I am not going to debate which because for the case before us, the point does not matter.

What we do notice is that after the Resurrection of Christ there was a specific promise of the Holy Spirit to the fledgling church, there was indeed a powerful outpouring of the Spirit on the Pentecost that followed that Blessed Resurrection Sunday, and that from this moment on the working and empowering of the Holy Spirit was upon the church exclusively and no longer upon Israel as an entity.

-----Parenthesis-----

Concerning this matter of the Holy Spirit and His Work a great divergence has taken place in Evangelical Christian over the last 125 years or so.

One party holds that the Work of the Holy Spirit continued unabated and unaltered from Pentecost until now and that the modern Charismatic movement is a revival of the Pentecost experience. Many of those in the movement point to that which occurred in what is known as the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles (1905-1916) as the modern event which re-introduced Pentecostal Power to our world.

In reaction to this movement, which is littered with profound theological and particularly Redemptive error, almost the whole of Evangelical Christianity moved to answer, denounce and discredit it, at least at the beginning. The theology of modern Christianity was adjusted and tweaked in the efforts to refute the claims of Holy Spirit power made by the adherents and then the heirs of the movement.

One of those ‘tweaks’ was a relatively new position that the Day of Pentecost marked the beginning of a new era of God’s dealings in the world, called a ‘Dispensation,’ AND that Pentecost was a once-for-all event that was never to be repeated. Since that was so, they said, none of the claims of being “filled with the Spirit” could possibly be true. Everyone, they claimed, who came to Christ had as much of the Holy Spirit as he would ever have. (I know this was the claim for I have often heard it from Baptist pulpits.) Among many the idea of seeking for a powerful visitation of the Spirit was essentially laughed to scorn.

If you hold that position please know that I disagree with you on that matter, but I am not angry with you.

-----End of Parenthesis-----

Let me state clearly and for the record before I continue that I reject the Charismatic Movement and its claims that incoherent babbling is a manifestation of being filled with the Holy Spirit. I have no ties nor affinities with this movement at all and never intend to. The closest thing I have ever personally had to a direct revelation of God concerning anything occurred in a Charismatic Meeting concerning the personality of the spirit that was operating there.

The Charismatics claim adherents among every denomination of so-called Christianity in our day. If you think about it this means it has no coherent theology and does not hold as sacred Salvation by Grace nor Justification by Faith nor most of the other core doctrines of the Christian Faith. A movement which embraces everything from Baptists to Roman Catholics cannot have any doctrinal cohesion.

If we are clear on my rejection of the Charismatic movement, let us return to the idea that the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was a ‘once and done’ thing. I want to show you what an 18 year old, First Year Bible College student was able to find.

Not long after Pentecost, Peter and John encountered a lame man at the Temple (Acts 3) who was healed by God’s Power moving through them. They preached Christ to the assembled multitude with the effect that five thousand men were converted, more than at Pentecost. Peter and John were arrested and questioned by the Sanhedrin which would find no fault in them but which commanded them not to preach in the name of Jesus, to which Peter gave his famous response.

Acts 4:19-20

- 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.
- 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. KJV

Luke mentioned a change which came over Peter at that moment which he designated as “filled with the Holy Spirit.” After they were released they went and reported the incident to the church and Luke recorded what happened then.

Acts 4:23-31

- 23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.
- 24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:
- 25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?
- 26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the

- Lord, and against his Christ.
- 27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,
- 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.
- 29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,
- 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.
- 31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. KJV

Acts 8 records a visit of Philip to the Samaritans and a two-fold visitation of God upon them. First of all, the Power of God fell upon them to bring them to repentance and then, through the work of the apostles, the Holy Spirit was given in power.

Acts 8:5-8

- 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.
- 6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.
- 7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.
- 8 And there was great joy in that city. KJV

Acts 8:14-17

- 14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:
- 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:
- 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)
- 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. KJV

Next in our line of stories is the matter of Cornelius and the Holy Spirit. You will recall that Cornelius was a man of faith even before the gospel was preached to him but when it was he embraced it with his whole heart, as well as those who lived in his house under his spiritual ministry and guidance. But something incredible happened even before he was baptized. Remember?

Acts 10:44-45

- 44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.
- 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Then, Peter explained the events to the church at Jerusalem.

Acts 11:15-17

- 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.
- 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.
- 17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

Notable here are Peter's words "God gave them the like gift as He did unto us..."

Then there is that strange passage in Acts 19.

Acts 19:1-6

- 1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,
- 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.
- 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.
- 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.
- 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. KJV

Again, my purpose here is not to finely parse the text into all of its elements but to point out that there was a pattern. The upshot of this event was stated a few verses later.

Acts 19:10 ...all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. KJV

Perhaps this would be a good point to stop and notice that the giving of the Holy Spirit was always and ever a function of the publication of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was never given nor intended as some private spiritual entertainment event for believers. Every time we have found evidences of the moving of the Holy Spirit in power, especially in the NT era, it has been associated with the conversion of souls, the growth of churches and the expansion of the influence of the Kingdom of God.

What we are asking during this time of prayer for an Awakening, when it come to pass, will most assuredly be the same thing, a great ingathering of souls to the churches of Jesus Christ.

This idea points back to the original statement concerning the Spirit by the Lord Jesus Himself.

Luke 24:46-49

- 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to

- rise from the dead the third day:
- 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
- 48 And ye are witnesses of these things.
- 49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. KJV

The Power of the Spirit was to enable the preaching of “Repentance and Remission of sins” and everything the Spirit Himself has done has been to that end.

The pattern then, to this ignorant mind, seems to be so very similar to that we established from the OT - one of God’s Primary means of dealing with men was the Powerful Outpourings of His Spirit.

We cannot leave the NT, however, without asking some questions concerning the seven pastors and churches of Asia addressed by the Lord Jesus Christ through the pen of John the apostle.

- How was the pastor of Ephesus going to recover his lost first love for the Lord? (Rev. 2:1-11) Was there some mental gymnastics he could learn that would set his soul afire again with love for God? Was there a book newly published that was going to point him to his problem and the solution? You know the answer. The only thing that was going to take him back to those early days of devotion to Christ was a powerful visit of the Spirit of God upon his soul. And if, as many think, this was addressed to the church as a whole, only a Renewing Visit of the Holy Spirit, such as we might call an Awakening was going to recover them from their loss of love for Christ and cause them to reject the Nicolaitan doctrines.

-How was the pastor at Smyrna and the church going to survive while persecuted and be ‘faithful unto death?’ Were they able, in and of themselves, to endure torture and execution faithfully? Are you? If this was us, with a word from Christ that we were going to be treated in this way, what would we do? You know what we would do, we would cry out to God for the enabling Power of the Holy Spirit knowing that we would not be faithful unless He helped us. By the way, those who have studied the persecutions of God’s people know that it is an almost universal testimony that the Spirit did indeed visit them and strengthen them during their sufferings.

-How was the pastor at Pergamos going to see his church recovered from the Balaamites and the Nicolaitans? Was he to develop some clever Sunday School scheme that would show the error of the false theology or was his hope that God would so enable him in his preaching, so visit the souls of those who heard him, that Truth would prevail over error and his people be brought back to the gospel?

-How was the pastor at Thyatira going to wrest control of his church back from ‘Jezebel?’

-Under what construction was the pastor of Sardis going to “strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die? Anyone who has ever pastored a dying church knows that unless

God comes to rescue her she will not survive. The Holy Spirit must make Himself known with power or the doors will surely close.

-How was the pastor at Philadelphia going to be so successful as Jesus said and “keep the word of My patience?” We all know that any success of ours which might be noticed in heaven by the Lord God will be that which is powerfully enabled by the Spirit of God Himself.

-And how was Laodicea going to recover from lukewarmness in the pastorate as well as the pew? Everyone with any experience at all knows that what Jesus said is the absolute truth, it is better to be cold than lukewarm. What stirs the lukewarm heart? What revives concern when indifference reigns? What creates the powerful sense of need for God when all is well and there is no perceived danger? Even the most immature saint should be able to figure out that this is a problem only God can solve and that with a mighty stroke of His Power.

What I am saying is that the NT ends with the Lord Himself calling for Awakening and Revival among His churches. This is always His plan. This is the only solution He has for what ails His people. It is His universal cure.

The call to Revival and Awakening has ever been the voice heard by the church during times of declension and falling away.

The controversy at Carthage.

It was the voice heard by the ancient Donatists when the persecutions of Rome finally ended and they were reassembling the shattered remnants of their scattered church, fending off those who had forsaken them while they were being murdered and betrayed them to the Romans. Some of those traitors were being forced upon them as leaders and they refused to bow to state and ecclesiastical authority in the matter. Empowered by the Spirit of God, they “loved not their lives unto the death.”

It was the voice, the Call of God to Awakening and Revival, that was heard by the ancient church in Italy during the fourth century when the popish Antichrist was seeking to unite Christianity under his authority and brave souls stood adamantly against him. Many of them died under persecution and countless others fled Italy for the wilderness of the valleys of the Alps. There the fire of Revival burned for many years as they sent wave after wave of missionaries through Europe, keeping the Evangelical Faith alive during centuries of darkness.

It was that same voice that was heeded by Claude of Turin in the ninth century as he proclaimed an Evangelical faith and removed from the churches under his authority all idols and symbols, pointing people rather to the realities of the faith and away from the superstitious use of pictures and statues. He could not have done that on his own. It had to be that his messages were pressed powerfully home upon the people of that time and they responded by cooperating with his efforts to destroy paganism from the church of that area.

We might mention Peter Waldo, falsely assumed to be the father of the Waldenses, but an earnest and faithful Christian who abandoned the falseness of Rome for a sacrificial and godly

Christian life, having an impact upon thousands in northern Italy.

Over and over again through history the Spirit of God visited His people in power, not only keeping alive the evangelical faith but blessing them at times with waves of souls coming out of the world to confess Christ simply and in purity.

Many of the Reformers, no doubt, should be included in the list as well as many from outside the Reformation, Minno Simons, Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians, until we come to the well documented times of the Awakenings that swept around the world until the beginning of the 20th century.

Most of us know of the First and Second Awakenings in our country and have read the stories of how God's Spirit moved, how He sometimes so overwhelmed a church that people would faint and cry out under the pressure of conviction of sins, how churches which barely had anyone in attendance on any Sunday would suddenly be filled with those concerned for salvation.

We read of Awakenings in Wales and Scotland as well as England, times when churches would share buildings so that the largest building could house the crowds who came.

We also read of how people feared when they heard that Revival had come to a neighboring city or county but had not come to theirs, how they would cast themselves before God for concern that Revival might pass them by.

Up through the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, God's people ached and longed for the visit of God upon their souls, upon their churches and upon their countries. It is humiliating to read the stories of how they sought God's face for mercy upon them, realizing how indifferently the subject is generally treated in our day, and sometimes in our own lives.

I want to encourage you to continue to seek and pray for an Awakening in Our Time. It is truly the only hope for us, but more especially for our children and grandchildren. All is not well and you know it. There is no political solution to our problem unless God visits our world and changes hearts. In fact, it seems to many that all is lost unless He does and does so quickly.

We are forced into the prayer that David often lifted up, "How Long, O Lord, How Long?"

Psalms 13

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

- 1 How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?
- 2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

We considered in our prayer sessions today how that there is a place and a time for believers to express a holy dissatisfaction with what they are seeing, with prayers that have gone unanswered. Many of the Awakenings of the past record that such prayers were stirred up in the hearts of God's people, almost to the point that it seems that had a controversy with God.

The people of God are never to accept as matter of fact any time of spiritual decline in themselves, in their churches or in their nation. The examples we have in scripture are that people vigorously and with determination stormed the gates of heaven, insistent upon an answer of God in power.

They were concerned not only for the restoration of their own souls and their own people but for vindication for the Lord's name. The wicked should not be able to arrogantly boast against the Lord because of His powerful visitation and deliverance of His people.

- 3 Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;
- 4 Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.
- 5 But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.
- 6 I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me. KJV

We have trusted and are trusting in the Mercy of God. We do not believe that we control Him but we cry to Him for help, knowing that He has often visited His people in their need and that this is exactly what He has done many times in the past.

He brings His people to times of trouble that He might pour out fresh renewals of Grace upon them.

Ps 107:1-8

- 1 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.
- 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;
- 3 And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.
- 4 They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.
- 5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.
- 6 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.
- 7 And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.
- 8 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! KJV