

Restoration, Revival and Renewal

In the prayer of Habakkuk the prophet (which we have all been praying), he asks the Lord to do again in our times the great things that He has done in the past (Hab.3:2). And for us, this request is being directed specifically at the signs and wonders experienced by the early church, as documented in the Book of Acts. We want God to restore the church to its former glory. Lamentations 5:21 says, *“Restore us to Yourself, O Lord, that we may return; renew our days of old.”*

I believe there is a clear and direct correlation between restoration, revival and renewal. According to the NT Greek words; “to renew” is “to make brand new” or “to make fresh (young);” “to revive” means “to regain life” to “flourish anew.” In these words we can immediately see the ministry of the Holy Spirit at work.

What about restoration?

Restoration in every dimension of human experience is at the heart of the gospel. It is woven through both OT and NT Scriptures and should be kept at the forefront of the things we teach. In Acts 3, Peter makes the most pointed reference to restoration and urges a return to God. He also adds that this returning would pave the way for a period of refreshing renewal that would result directly from the presence of the Lord with His people.

I’m convinced that the restoration prophesied in OT and NT Scriptures has already begun. God’s presence in the congregation of His people is on the increase. The restoration I am talking about is the return of the church (the bride of Christ), to the majesty and glory God intended for her. And to accomplish this, God has begun to release His awesome power without measure to and through His church. The rain has come and His Spirit is being poured out on all flesh!

Hosea 6:3 says, *“Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth.”* God is coming to us like the latter and former rain, and again this is the work of the blessed Holy Spirit. The prophet Joel foretold a day when God would pour out His Spirit on “all flesh” (Joel 2:28-29). For what purpose; so that His power may be shared with all His people and not limited to any chosen individual, denomination or dispensation.

This is why Jesus told his disciples that it was to their advantage for Him to leave the earth and go to the Father (John 16:6), because then the Spirit could be sent to indwell in all believers – to fill us and enable us to do the supernatural works that Jesus did, and even more. Remember, in Acts 1:8, Jesus tells the disciples to do nothing until the Holy Spirit has come. Then, He promises, they will be empowered for ministry! The early rain began on the Day of Pentecost, and the restoration of God’s people was started. Now, it’s the latter rain that’s begun to fall, and even greater things should be expected. Note rain is a symbol of God’s abundant blessings. Therefore, the abundant life that Jesus promised is being restored in His church.

According to the dictionary, “to restore” means “to bring back to former or original condition.” However, when something is restored according to Scripture, it is always increased, multiplied or improved so that its latter state is significantly better than its original state (ref. Joel 2:21-26).

God always does more (or up and above) when He restores. Therefore, in this fresh move of restoration, God is not simply restoring the church to the glory it displayed in New Testament times, He is seeking to

restore it to a state more powerful, more majestic, and more glorious than anything the world has yet seen! God wants to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we may ask, think or imagine!

For today's church restoration means more than merely becoming a reproduction of the early church. It means becoming all God originally intended it to be. Above all, the restoration of the church means that it will display the kind of love and compassion Jesus demonstrated during His ministry here on earth. And the consequence of this action is reaching more and more people.

However, restoration also means the release of God's power in a measure never seen before. This release will come through His people, and in the church, as the gifts of the Holy Spirit operate without restraint or restriction under the direction of the Holy Spirit Himself. As He wills, significant signs and wonders will be seen and experienced and multitudes will get to know that Jesus is alive, and that He is Lord!

Through the full operation of the gifts and ministries that God appoints, and operating in the love essential to His own divine nature, the church will reach a new level – a level where it is inhabited by a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, and having all men drawn to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Then, at last, the world will see the glory of the Lord in His church (His precious bride) – until the restoration of all things has taken place.

Peter said in Acts 3:21, *"Heaven must receive (or retain) until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."* The Message says, *"For the time being He must remain out of sight in heaven until everything is restored to order again just the way God, through the preaching of his holy prophets of old, said it would be."*

In these last days, "everything" prophesied is being fulfilled, and restoration, revival and renewal are all taking place in the church. It is the most exciting time the church has ever known. Nothing can compare with this season of superabundance! And the Holy Spirit is both orchestrator and conductor of this extraordinary phenomenon.

Restoration & Authority

Restoration of the fellowship with God that was lost in the Garden of Eden must include restoration of the dominion that God gave to Adam. The Bible tells us that in Christ Jesus, God restores His people to the Father-child relationship that was broken by Adam's transgression. All who believe in Christ are brought back into the household of God and share in the same privileges as the true Son. They are destined to be conformed to His image and have become joint-heirs – ruling and reigning as kings and priests on this earth.

During the restoration of the church, when the gifts of the Holy Spirit are operating in superabundance, the prerequisite for any human vessel to be fully effective under this fresh anointing is the correct application of authority. Before any signs and wonders can manifest, an atmosphere that's conducive to "God's authority" must exist. In the Book of Ephesians, the apostle Paul earnestly prayed that the Church at Ephesus would receive the revelation of who they are in Christ, and especially, what authority this position secured for them (Ephesians 1:18-23 and Ephesians 2:4-6).

One of the things that the eyes of their understanding had to be enlightened to was; *"the exceeding greatness of His mighty power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power."*

Literally, *“His express and effective reigning authority concerning us who believe, as demonstrated by the application of the might of His strength.”*

But how exactly does Christ apply this reigning authority and mighty power? Through us who believe! This is confirmed when we join two key phrases in the marvellous prayer which Paul prayed. The first appears immediately after the verse we’ve just examined, *“...And seated Him [Jesus] at His [God’s] right hand in heavenly places.”*

The second key phrase is found in Ephesians 2:6, which says, *“And has raised us up together...”* In the mind of God the Father, we were raised when Christ was raised. Notice also that God not only raised us up together, but He made us sit together in heavenly places! Therefore, in the mind of God we were raised when Christ was raised, and when Christ sat down, we sat down too – the enemy under our feet. That’s where we are right now – in a fixed position with Christ and consequently, all the authority that has been given to Him now belongs to us – joint or co-operative authority.

Authority is an active word, as it implies the use of power. And as we have just agreed, this authority is directed primarily against the operations of evil forces. Note, Jesus came to destroy the ‘works’ of the devil – not destroy the devil himself. If the devil was destroyed, the earth would be just like heaven! Jesus did however, defeat the devil and make a show of this openly. In war, if you defeated an enemy, that enemy is not necessarily destroyed. Therefore, if you do not keep that enemy in check [enforce his defeat], he could push on and overthrow a lesser power. We are God’s instruments of power here on earth especially during restoration.

Remember, not only have we been made to sit down with Christ, but we have also been positioned, “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion.” Though we wrestle with these instruments of evil, we have total authority over them through Christ. This authority belongs to us whether we know about it or not. Therefore, every blessing, any right, any privilege and all authority can belong to us, but if we don’t know about it, we can’t act upon it. Knowledge on its own isn’t enough, because it’s only knowledge acted upon that brings results!

Romans 5:17 tells us that we should *“...reign as kings in life through one Man Jesus Christ.”* When a king gives an order, he is confident that it will be carried out because he is the ultimate authority. We should employ this attitude toward the devil and his demons, in order to destroy his works. Many of us use the authority that’s legally ours but when circumstances don’t change immediately we become discouraged and back off. We then start talking unbelief and bring about our own destruction. Unconsciously, what we’ve done is we have given the devil dominion over the situation. The result being, he brings about our ruin.

James 4:6 tells you to resist the devil and he will flee from you. Notice, you are not supposed to get someone else to resist the devil for you. What’s more, can you resist something that you don’t have authority over? No! And James does not say the devil will flee from Jesus. He says the devil will flee from you. The authority is yours – provided you draw near to God.

When Jesus handed all authority over to the church (His bride), He wanted her to rule and reign in this life until the restoration of all things. This is part of the majesty and glory God had always intended for her. I’m

convinced that the restoration prophesied in both the OT and NT has already begun. A period of refreshing renewal has started and this is as a direct result of God's divine presence with His people.

However, God is a consuming fire, and His awesome presence, in the midst of the congregation, will establish complete dominion and total authority over all the works of the devil – sickness and disease, rulers of darkness, principalities and powers. And over everything that is named (Ephesians 1:21).

Philippians 2:9-11, *“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*