

The Last Revival



David Wilkerson April 11, 1988

The New Testament church was born in a blaze of glory. The Holy Ghost came down upon it with fire, and the first Christians spoke with tongues and prophesied. They experienced smiting conviction, and multitudes were converted. They broke out on the right and on the left and were greatly enlarged. The fear of God fell upon them and upon all who saw them. There were signs, wonders, and miracles. The dead were raised. Fearless evangelists went everywhere preaching the Word. Jails could not hold them. Storms could not drown them. When their possessions were seized, they continued to rejoice. When they were stoned, hanged, burned or crucified, they went out singing and praising God. It was a triumphant church, unafraid of Satan, irreverent toward idols, unmoved by plagues or persecution. It was a blood-washed church, living and dying in victory.

What is the last hour church going to be like? How will the church go out in its final hour? Will it go out as a fat, prosperous, self-seeking church, counting heads, getting out the vote? Will it be just a handful of true believers holding on, watching death and apostasy eat away at it like a cancer? Will the last day church live in dread and fear as AIDS and other plagues ravage the masses? Will fewer and fewer overcome the world? Will coldness and apostasy leave it weak, mocked, and powerless? Will the church go out of this age full of hypocrisy, with great praise, worship, and prayer meetings where unclean hands and impure hearts offer strange fire?

To be sure, there is going to be a great falling away or apostasy. There will be spiritual harlotry on all sides. Because sin abounds, the love of many will grow cold. There will come deceivers, teaching doctrines of demons. People will have itching ears and will flock to hear soft preaching. Deceptions will get so bad that even the elect will be tested severely.

But the church of Jesus Christ is not going out with a whimper or a limp. It is going out victorious, with joy unspeakable, riding a river of peace. It is going out in freedom from all bondage, with its foot on Satan's neck. And every member of this true church will live and die without fear. The tempter's power will be broken. Christians will be holy and will tear down idols. They will be just as strong in the Lord as the first Christians.

Is there going to be a great ingathering before Jesus comes? Can we expect to see one last powerful outpouring of the Spirit, greater than anything in history? Is it not said that only a remnant will go on with Christ? Does not Joel prophesy "to the remnant which the Lord shall call"? Is it not true that at present only a small remnant wants to hear about holiness? We need to understand what is meant by "a remnant." It is true that it will be but a small percentage compared to the billions of people on the earth. But even 10% of New York City would be over one million overcomers. The remnant also means "that which remains of the original." Those who sew understand that a remnant is a piece of the original cloth. A remnant church is one which has the same character as the original New Testament church.

A Great Revival of Righteousness Is Coming

I want to make a statement with the greatest spiritual authority possible; I make it backed by a covenant as sure as the one made to Noah. There is going to be a final, midnight hour revival, one which shall break forth on all sides. Zion will travail and many, many children will be given to her. There will be great singing and shouting, and Zion will

say, "Where have all these come from?" It will be a revival of righteousness.

I have heard old-time preachers speak of a last revival for years. One dear friend has been preaching it for over 60 years. Now the young preachers are praying for revival; they want to see God work in this day, not just read about it in books. It is not enough to simply preach on past revivals. Why pray, why seek revival, if it is not promised in the Bible? If the Bible says we are beyond hope, let's just evangelize and preach, and not be concerned about results. But, if revival is promised, Christians need to see it, lay hold of it, and pray with faith knowing that God has promised to do it. Is it in the Word? The promise is found in Isaiah 54. This is one of the most important chapters in God's Word for this generation. We are clearly told here what God intends to do with His church, His people, in the last days. This chapter prophesies what is going to happen at Times Square Church, as well as everywhere else there are hungry hearts. It will happen in Russia, in China, in every land, every island of the sea, from the North Pole to the South.

The church is going to experience an undeserved outpouring of love, mercy, and kindness. It is going to come in a time of great affliction, with a tempest raging, with anxiety on all sides, when society is being tossed about. God swears he is going to reveal Himself in great kindness: "...But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you, says the Lord your Redeemer.... My kindness shall not depart from [you], neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, says the Lord that has mercy on you" (Isaiah 54:8-10). What God is saying to the church, He is also saying to individual believers. God is speaking to those "...afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted" (Isaiah 54:11). Is that you? Are you experiencing a sudden, violent disturbance? Yes, this includes the economy. It also includes the alarming world situation.

God Will Have an Overcoming People

But God's greatest concern is for those who have at any time been His beloved, even backsliders and those overcome by a sudden, violent storm of temptation. His promise is to those who are right now in great affliction, tossed in a storm, not comforted, hopeless, helpless, and lost. God is going to woo back to Himself a backslidden, forsaken people. "For your Maker is your husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the Lord has called you as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when you were refused, says your God. For a small moment have I forsaken you, but with great mercies will I gather you. In a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you, says the Lord your Redeemer" (Isaiah 54:5-8).

Some would argue this refers to the Jews, to Israel of the flesh. But the Word proves otherwise, for Paul calls this chapter an allegory or symbolic representation. (See Galatians 4:22-31.) This is about the Jerusalem which is above. If these promises were for the Jew, they were never fulfilled. About 42,000 came out of the Babylonian captivity, and they multiplied to less than three million by the time of Christ. They did not "break forth on the right and on the left" as promised in Isaiah 54:3. This is a prophecy to the last day church — a church He momentarily forsook.

Who is this he refused and for a while forsook? From whom did He hide in a little wrath? You can be sure God would not withdraw without a reason. What would make Him hide His face? "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). God has not divorced the present day compromised church, but He has had to hide His face. She has left Him, her beloved. "Thus says the Lord, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have you sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away" (Isaiah 50:1).

God said, "You walked out on Me. You had other lovers. You cheated; you committed adultery. I didn't leave you — you left Me! I had to refuse you because you sold yourself to prostitution." The church ran off to Babylon, but it is not yet divorced. For God says, "Show Me the papers! Show Me the bill of sale where I sold you to the devil!" God is saying, "We are not living together, but the divorce is not final. The marriage is not hopeless. I still love you! You left Me; yet I called and called, and you refused to listen." "Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? When I called, was there none to answer?" (Isaiah 50:2).

To this harlot, sin-corrupted, backslidden, wandering wife, God swears, "I am going to call you back." "For thus says the Lord, You have sold yourselves for nought; and you shall be redeemed without money" (Isaiah 52:3). And again, "For the Lord hath called you as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit..." (Isaiah 54:6). There is even now

the sounding of this final recall: "...with great mercies will I gather you" (Isaiah 54:7).

Many Sinners Will Be Saved

First, He will call the wicked who never knew Him. "Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, you shall call a nation that you know not, and nations that knew not you shall run unto you because of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you. Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:4-7).

This happened in the New Testament church when the Gentiles ran to Christ. The heathen saw the light and responded. But once again, in one last revival of mercy and kindness, the wicked are going to hear. Multitudes will run to Him. They will forsake their wicked ways and call upon the Lord. Those who refuse Him will blaspheme and become violent.

Second, He is going to offer comfort, healing, and restoration to all who walked out on Him. "I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners" (Isaiah 57:18). How thrilled Isaiah must have been to bring this message. Remember, his commission was to go, "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed" (Isaiah 6:10). Now God is saying, "For My own name's sake, I will forgive this polluted bride and call her back."

"I, even I, am he that blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and will not remember your sins" (Isaiah 43:25). Think of the millions of backslidden Christians worldwide. In our street meetings half the converts are backsliders, those who walked out on God. So it is in Times Square Church. What a revival it will be as multitudes of backslidden Christians come back! Backslidden preachers will be wooed back, and they will become the holy ones of Zion. Children, bound by drugs, alcohol, sex, doubt, and fear, will hear His call, and multitudes will return. Addicts, alcoholics, prostitutes, homosexuals, AIDS victims, and the backslidden destitute will be called by Him.

Will His outpouring of mercy overlook sin? Never. Those who walked out on God are those who once tasted of the Holy Spirit. They once knew Him. The Lord will send the Holy Spirit, His messenger, with a word of love, calling them to remembrance. He will send the Holy Spirit to bring to their minds all His loving words and how lovely their relationship once was, to remind them of how He once protected, loved, and blessed them. "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 mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10).

The Church is the house of David, and Christians are the Jerusalem from above. Think of it! God has promised to pour out the Spirit of grace and prayer. Many shall mourn for Him (including Jews) seeing how their sins have put Him to open shame, crucifying Him again. They shall experience bitterness and weeping. This refers to the ministry of the coming Christ of whom Zechariah prophesied, but also of the Spirit God will send upon His last hour church which will produce a great mourning for sin and a revival of repentance. We can preach strong, powerful messages on sin; we can blow the trumpet and warn the people, but only a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit can cause a weeping and mourning for sin. And He has promised to do just that.

A Barren Church Is Going to Travail and Bring Forth Many Children

"Sing, O barren, you that did not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you that did not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, says the Lord. Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of your habitations: spare not, lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes; for you shall break forth on the right hand and on the left; and your seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited" (Isaiah 54:1-3). Some would argue that this last day church is not barren. They would point to all the super churches, all the ministries, and the many multitudes who attend religious seminars, conferences, and the concerts and who devour religious books, tapes, and videos. But what God calls spiritual children and what the church has been calling children are two very different things. While the church has focused on growth in numbers and influence and success, Paul is crying out, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Galatians 4:19). Paul would say, "Don't tell me how many attend your

church. Don't tell me how many attend your functions, how much literature you distribute, how many Bibles you send out, how many witness on the street — tell me how many are being formed into the likeness of Christ! How many are going on to purity?"

Amos prophesied to a people of God who worshipped Him with sin in their hearts, "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not appreciate your solemn assemblies. Though you offer Me burnt offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard your peace offerings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs; for I will not hear the melody of your instruments. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (Amos 5:21-24). And Isaiah, speaking God's Word, said, "...your incense is an abomination to me...it is iniquity, even your solemn meeting...Your appointed feasts my soul hates: they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary of them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you: yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear...Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doing from before My eyes; cease to do evil" (Isaiah 1:13-16).

Some boast we are in revival, that the prosperity message packing auditoriums is God's Word, that many spiritual children are being born. I believe God will look upon the past 20 years as a famine of the Word, as years the cankerworm has eaten, years of self-seeking, years of strangers being exalted in God's house, years of devilish music, proud preachers, money madness, empire building, years of shallowness. "They have dealt treacherously against the Lord: for they have begotten strange children..." (Hosea 5:7). "Yet I had planted you a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then are you turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine to Me?" (Jeremiah 2:21).

Many Christians have become barren from sitting in a barren church and listening to a barren pastor with no anointing from God. In the process they have become spiritually starved, with no spiritual authority. Families suffered; children backslid; marriages fell apart. Or else, they went to a church where many Ishmaels were born. Ishmael stands for flesh. Even though Abraham prayed, "Oh, that Ishmael could stand before You," God said, "...Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman" (Galatians 4:30). There are many Ishmaels being born in churches today — Christians bound by flesh, claiming to be heirs of righteousness.

God is going to cleanse, heal, and embrace His wife and give the church true Isaacs, children after His heart. "Sing, O barren, you that did not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you that did not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, says the Lord" (Isaiah 54:1). God is not talking about simply switching crowds, emptying the houses of Ishmael and giving the crowds to the righteous. It is much deeper than crowds, numbers, and success. God is going to do the counting, not man. "Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?" (Micah 6:11). "The Lord shall count, when He writes up the people, that this man was born there" (Psalm 87:6). You can look at any great gathering of Christians — there may be thousands, and they may all be praising God with upraised hands, singing loud praises, but God does the counting. He knows who is holy. He knows those who mourn for sin. He may have but a few there, born of Zion. God is not impressed by crowds, for rock musicians draw the biggest.

But God promises that holy Zion is going to give birth to more children than the house of Ishmael. This is His ironclad promise of a great ingathering. "Enlarge...spare not...lengthen...strengthen...you shall brake forth on the right hand and on the left..." (Isaiah 54:2-3). God is going to remove the shame and reproach of His church. "Fear not; for you shall not be ashamed: neither be confounded; for you shall not be put to shame. For you shall forget the shame of your youth, and shall not remember the reproach of your widowhood any more" (Isaiah 54:4). What is this shame and reproach? It is the lack of spiritual authority over the powers of Satan. When he was surrounded by the wicked Assyrians, Hezekiah said, "...This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke (shame), and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth" (Isaiah 37:3). There stood the enemy pouring contempt on the Israelites, mocking their weakness, heaping blasphemy upon their God. This is a type of what we have seen in Christian work — birth pangs, but no birth. It seems the devil mocks our every attempt. The church has been taunted and ridiculed for its weakness. How many Christians know what it means to be almost victorious, almost an overcomer? And Satan laughs. But God promises, "I will remove that shame. You will bring forth. An army will come forth out of your womb. A victorious army."

The reproach of the church is its powerlessness before enemy giants. David asked, "...What shall be done to the man that kills this Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (1 Samuel 17:26). It was a reproach to be cornered and cowered by the enemy. It was shame and reproach to see God's people wallowing in fear. But God has promised to bring forth children without this shame and reproach upon them. They will bring down their Goliaths. They will be glory and honor to His name. No shame of hiding or running.

These kind of children are born only out of the consecrated womb of a faithful, loving, intimate wife. This wife came back because she was grieved in spirit, desolate, lonely, longing to be back with her Lord. Now she is established in righteousness. (See Isaiah 54:13-14). There is no false doctrine in this church, nor is there fear. But there is great peace and confidence in the face of terror all around.

This last revival will come because God will pity His own name. He will sanctify His name before the whole world. Let me share with you a great prophecy from Ezekiel. "But I had pity for Mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the heathen, whither you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which you have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes" (Ezekiel 36:21-25).

I believe God still has a covenant future for the Jews. But the prophets saw our day and all these prophecies are dual in application. An undeserved revival of holiness — one last gathering of a pure remnant — is already happening. *It is because God has determined to close out the ages with a mighty exaltation of His name. What a display of power it will be!*

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