

February 20, 2009
Please, Don't Fall Away

***"In the last days, God says,
I will pour out My Spirit on all people...
Even on My servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy" (Acts 2:18).***

We've written previously that the synagogue probably originated during the Babylonian captivity as people gathered at the home of a prophet. It was evident, as seen by their distressing circumstances, that Israel's religious leaders had led them astray in regard to an uncompromising way of life and undivided devotion to the One True God that would bring them His protection and blessing. The religious shepherds who looked only to their own earthly interests brought darkness upon the flock of Israel (Ezekiel 34), resulting in God dispersing the people among the heathen nations. Far from their homeland, the refugees recounted how God had sent prophets to warn them again and again, but they'd refused to listen. Maybe it was time to pay attention to what the prophets had to share: ***"Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets"*** (Amos 3:7).

We today who follow Jesus need to understand the prophetic times we live in. God uses the various gifting of His people to prepare them to serve His purposes. In that way we build up each other into maturity in Christ: ***"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, to prepare God's 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). There's little doubt that the dominance of clergy over giftings within congregations is the fruit of the Nicolaitan spirit that rules westernized Christendom today. But our Father is not sitting idly by as those He has given to edify the body of Christ are being squelched. The counterfeit god of man-centered, system-dominated "Christian" religion is now in God's cross-hairs.

People have for so long looked to their clergy for all their spiritual input that the enactment of biblical prophecy is foreign to them. Yet, the Bible is replete with accounts of our Lord both speaking to His people through His prophets and warning them through prophetic words. There are prophecies yet to be fulfilled, a number of which are coming to fruition in our day. The Hebraic Restoration is just such a prophetic fulfillment (Acts 3:21). Before our Lord ever revealed to us the Hebraic foundations He was assigning us to share, He'd been preparing people both in Israel and in the US to prophesy to us, "You do know that God is sending you back to the United States with a *prophetic message* for His church, His called-out ones." We *didn't* know that at first, but the Spirit made increasingly clear that disseminating prophetic messages was His plan for us.

It is our desire that you become comfortable with our Lord's use of prophecy, since it permeates both Testaments. While you're familiar with Bible studies and Sunday morning sermons, these methods are limited in helping you to press on in Kingdom

living. They educate you through conveying information, adding to your head knowledge. But you've also been influenced by your previous experience in the education system in which you were graded on content you've memorized. You may think that the more Bible knowledge you have, the better Christian you are. However, that's far from the truth. God commends us for what we *put into practice* (Matthew 7:24), not for what we *know* (Matthew 7:26).

True prophecy is revelation from God, and we want to anchor some important points pertaining to its function. First, our Lord Jesus is King of an ever-expanding Kingdom. As King, our Lord *reveals His will*: ***"For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"*** (Revelation 19:b; see also 2 Peter 1:21). Biblical prophecy is Divine revelation that helps you to know His will, or to warn you when you're not in His will. Listen to Paul as he opens the eyes of *your* heart regarding prophecy: ***"Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. ... Everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort ... Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy..."*** (1 Corinthians 14:1,3,39).

How *commanding* do Paul's words sound to you? And why shouldn't they be, since he knows how essential it is for the family of Christ to partake of this spiritual gift, whether by speaking or hearing. True prophecy brings forth the very words of our Lord. But not all are eager to hear what He is saying. The rebellious who want their own way and those who are still controlled by their sin nature and/or strongholds despise the thought of hearing direct guidance from our Lord. Hearing implies *obedience*, and those who are disobedient already in their heart have no intention of following through in what they hear!

If you're embracing the Hebraic foundations that the Spirit has been quickening to your life, then consider this: ***"You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone"*** (Ephesians 2:19,20). The construction of God's "spiritual house" didn't just take place two thousand years ago. (See 1 Peter 2:5.) This very process of "living stones" who are being built up on the gifts of apostle and prophet continues as the Hebraic foundations are being restored.

Our Lord has permitted NO ONE to just *teach* the Hebraic truths He's restoring as if they're only an academic subject. Each person must rely on and be guided by the Spirit of Jesus Himself (Matthew 18:19,20) in order to make the various facets of the Restoration their way of life. Then, out of that *way of life*, they can come alongside others with what our Lord is restoring. Each of you will need prophetic guidance as to how our Lord wants to you live these truths out in your home, your workplace, your faith family. There is no canned program, no one-size-fits-all. There are no creedal hoops you have jump through — only a trusting and love-motivated heart that's determined to obey His revelation.

When you hear a prophetic word, it's important that you don't just ditch it because it sounds contrary to your own inclinations: ***"Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good"*** (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21). A true prophecy will always align with God's Word. And, in the biblical pattern, our Lord will use two or three others in Him to confirm it (see 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Corinthians 14:29). You'll recognize and appreciate biblical prophecy and other forms of revelation our Lord uses, such as words of knowledge or wisdom, if you have full participation in your gatherings: ***"When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for strengthening"*** (1 Corinthians 14:26).

We seem to be reliving some of the darkest moments of history. Sadly, too many in this nation are relying on the schemes of men to restore the pleasure-bent lifestyle they've grown accustomed to. You've noticed that from Wall Street to Main Street to Pennsylvania Avenue, no one is calling for repentance for the sins that got us into this economic mess. Instead, the income of hardworking taxpayers is being poured out like ***"government play money"*** to the same greed-based financial and business leaders who precipitated this catastrophe. Future generations yet unborn are being robbed of their livelihood. But our Lord isn't waiting for our posterity to curse us for the financial misery they'll inherit from our greed. He will chastise this nation for its sins until enough of us repent in humility. Are *you* clean before Him?

We want to recommend to you David Wilkerson's book, ***Hallowed Be Thy Names***. During the times of chastisement and stress coming on this nation, we believe you will be greatly encouraged by a thorough discussion of various Names of God. Each chapter not only enlightens you, but clears any misunderstanding you may have about our Lord and how He intends to use you.

We end with this thought: ***"Where there is no revelation, people give in to their sin nature"*** (paraphrase of Proverbs 29:18).
Mike & Sue