

Pentecostal Revivals

by Martin Knapp

Pentecostal revivals are cloud-bursts of salvation, caused by the spiritual atmosphere being electrified by the Holy Ghost, leading to full sanctification, sinners' conversion, opposition's confounding, and the devil's repulsion.

Scripture: Acts 8:6

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Revival Movement"

Description

Martin Knapp preaches about the characteristics of Pentecostal revivals, emphasizing that they are cloud-bursts of salvation, fully sanctifying believers, converting sinners, confounding opposition, and repulsing the devil. These revivals are conditional, requiring human compliance with spiritual laws, and are Holy Ghost revivals that honor the Holy Spirit's guidance and work. They are fruitful, miraculous, protracted, opposed, continuous, contagious, and genuine, leading people into both initial and uttermost salvation by meeting Pentecostal conditions and honoring the Holy Ghost.

Transcript

Full-orbed Pentecostal revivals are cloud-bursts of salvation, caused by the spiritual atmosphere being so electrified by the Holy Ghost that believers are fully sanctified, sinners converted, opposition confounded, and the devil repulsed.

Pentecost was such a revival. By studying it and other New Testament revivals we can learn the principles which govern these mighty movements. They are the Pentecostal Church, like a mighty army, in motion against a determined and entrenched foe.

The difference between true revivals and the mechanical efforts of Christless clubs to secure members is seen from the following facts:

Pentecostal revivals are conditional revivals. They are cloud-bursts of salvation, caused by the Holy Ghost, yet the precipitation is conditioned upon human compliance with certain spiritual laws. Plural as well as individual Pentecosts are promised, and must be proclaimed. Given one hundred and twenty persons as dead to sin and the world, as absorbed in Christ, as loyal to His instructions, as united, prayerful, obedient, earliest and expectant, as was the first Pentecostal Church, and such revivals would be the rule instead of the exception, varying in quantity of converts with character of surroundings. It is impossible to have Pentecostal revivals without Pentecostal material. A fire can not be built with

sea-soaked wood. World-soaked preachers and churches must be kiln-dried before they are fit for revival kindling wood. A box on a street corner is a better site for a Pentecostal revival than a fine cathedral full of spiritual mummies. Prayer, fasting, the baptism of the Holy Ghost upon the church, Holy Ghost preaching, testimony and personal work are all conditions of Pentecostal revivals. Sham revivals are those in which these conditions are either aped or ignored, and result in a fizzle instead of a Pentecostal deluge. A refusal to meet Pentecostal conditions on part of preacher or people, or both, has caused the criminal abortion of many a revival. Perpetrators of the crime are guilty of soul-murder. Meeting the conditions precipitates Pentecost. As they are so simple, reasonable and clearly revealed, all churches may embrace them, and thus share the rich results that follow.

They are Holy Ghost revivals. At Pentecost the Holy Ghost was honored. He was given the place assigned Him by Christ. The church welcomed Him, and yielded to His guidance. Through the Word and fire-baptized workers people were convicted of "Sin, Righteousness, and coming Judgment." Penitents were regenerated, and believers fully sanctified. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" was the first question propounded by Paul at the great Ephesus revival. A genuine revival is impossible without the supremacy of the Holy Ghost among its promoters as daylight is without the sun. Man-made revivals substitute foxfire for sunlight and human manipulation for the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and compromises in the place of conversions and sanctifications! Possession of the graces and gifts of the Holy Ghost are absolutely indispensable to the highest type of Pentecostal revivals. Where He or any of His offices are ignored He is grieved, and the work stopped or greatly marred. The omission of all mention of Him and His sanctifying work among believers in multitudes of revivals and revival reports do Him great wrong. Out of one hundred, five are seldom found who thins honor Him. Many want the Holy Ghost to help them out of a difficulty, who are not willing to accept Him as their Divine Captain. They are willing to instruct Him what to do and how to do it, but are unwilling to commit all fully to Him and crown Him leader.

They are fruitful revivals. Multitudes were saved and sanctified through them. Thousands were added to the Church. Sins were exposed and forsaken. Sin was confessed and cleansed away. Wrongs were righted and Christless business abandoned. A revival which stops short of such fruits needs reviving. God will not accept a revival of tears, and songs, and sentiment, for righteousness. A revival which does not make men right with God and man is a cloud without water. One whose climax is church-joining instead of salvation is a death trap. Substitution of card-signing for the altar of prayer is one of the marks of an apostate church and hireling ministry. When God unites men to His Church they will not long withhold their names from proper officers where they exist. The time has come for people to discriminate between meetings for stuffing church statistics and those for saving from sin. A revival that a Scriptural sermon oh sanctification will spoil is not from the skies. The lightning of Scripture-truth never kills a genuine Scriptural revival, but increases the intensity of its downpour. Pentecostal revivals are characterized by the manifestations and fruits of the Holy Ghost. A reform in reporting revivals is needed. It is customary to report persons joining the church as converts. A diagnosis of an ordinary church membership will find less than one in four giving evidences of conversion. Some say one in ten. Where people simply hold up the hand, or rise for prayers, or unite with the church, instead of passing through the Bible experiences of pricked-to-the-heart conviction, tear-blinding, wrong-righting, sin-forsaking heart-repentance, and assurance-giving, joy-imparting regeneration, the report would be nearer the truth to read, "One hundred dupes deceived," than "One hundred souls converted." A lie in the shape of a deceptive revival may be "ever the blackest of lies."

They are miraculous revivals. Evidently they are embraced in the "greater works" than His which Jesus declared His followers should perform. Pentecostal revivals originally were frequently attended by healing of the body and other miraculous manifestations. "And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did. For from many of those which had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed" (Acts viii. 6, 7).

"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them" (Acts xix. 11, 12). Inspired men possessed this power, and used it for God's glory. The presence of modern fanaticism and skepticism in regard to divine healing, such as characterizes this period, had not then circumscribed its influence for good. The apostles, divinely led, recognized it a helpful auxiliary of the "Holiness movement" in its incipency, and doubtless, as the movement regains its Pentecostal purity and power, the exercise of this and other kindred gifts will shine as then. But gifts all fail in the presence of graces. The Pentecostal healing and wonder-working signs which accompanied the revival efforts of the primitive church, compared to the greater works of regeneration and entire sanctification, which were its crowning glory, were like the lighting of a summer shower compared to the falling cloud-burst. Like the lightning bolt they accomplish a God-given work, and, like it, they sometimes cause more comment than the shower, but they can not be substituted for it in time of drought, and there may be mighty spiritual cloudbursts, as at many Pentecosts, ancient and modern, with no such lightning at all. The absence of any record of it at the first Pentecost proves either that it did not then occur or else that the importance of the shower itself so superlatively transcended it that it was not mentioned.

They are protracted revivals. If the opposition did not yield at once a "Long time therefore they tarried there speaking boldly in the Lord, which bare witness unto the word of his grace" (Acts xiv. 3). Many promising revivals are nipped in the bud because they will not sprout, grow, bud, blossom and ripen in "ten days." A plan which allows an evangelist to adjust his appointments to providential circumstances and leadings seems to have been the apostolic example.

They are opposed revivals. They were mocked, derided, and hindered in every way that Satan and his allies could devise. "But the Jews that were disobedient stirred up the souls of the Gentiles, and made them evil affected against the brethren" (Acts xiv. 2). There is a radical defect in every revival that neither the world nor hypocrites oppose. Satan will not see his kingdom invaded and souls captured without a struggle. Sham professors are among the first and most bitter soldiers to fight true revivals. They declare that they "don't believe in them," "too much excitement," "converts don't hold out," "extravagance," "magnetism," "hypnotism," etc. In many ways they often oppose, and divert by dances, private parties, lectures, entertainments, social visits fairs and festivals. Or possibly they will seek to substitute a shallow, sham revival instead. From the many Pentecostal revivals recorded in the New Testament we note the following revival truths which clearly shine from them

The Revival At Jerusalem shows that the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire is the mainspring of all true revivals; that revival leaders should tarry until this comes; that Pentecostal revivals are holiness revivals; that genuine revivals cause unity of believers, and benevolence; that they magnify the Word and give God all the glory.

The Revival At Iconium (Acts xiv.). -- This revival immediately followed the great Conference at Antioch. It was conducted by Paul and Barnabas. From it we learn, --

That Spirit-filled men may so speak that multitudes will be saved (ver. 1).

That unconverted church members are among the greatest revival obstructions (ver. 2).

That revival opposition should lead to bold, persevering revival effort (ver. 3).

That holy Ghost revivals make divisions, the sheep following one Master and the goats the other (ver. 4).

That Jews and Gentiles, i. e., unconverted people, in the churches and out, sometimes unite to stop a genuine Holy Ghost revival (ver. 5).

That God grants marvelous displays of His power to confirm the work of His true ministers (ver. 3).

That opposition sometimes succeeds temporarily, so that workers wisely withdraw to other fields (ver 6).

That if powerful Paul and eloquent Barnabas, full of the Holy Ghost, working with "signs and wonders," were apparently defeated and driven from the field, and led to take a circuit appointment (ver. 6), sample treatment should not discourage workers today.

That removal from one field should stimulate to greater zeal in the new one (vers. 6 and 7).

The Revival At Lystra (Acts xiv. 8-21) -- Paul and Barnabas, fleeing from the persecutions of the Iconium revival, found refuge in Lystra and the surrounding country circuits. Here they preached the gospel. From their sojourn here we learn, --

That success is attended by the peril of man-worship. Few men can stand success (vers. 11, 12).

That occasion of human flattery and praise should be turned into occasion for preaching repentance and giving all glory to God (vers. 13-18).

That successful Holy Ghost revivals awake the enmity and persecution of Pharisaical professors.

That when the enemy stones a Spirit-filled man to death in one place, God enables him to arise and have a greater revival in another (vers. 19-21.)

That if the opposition can not hug a Holy Ghost movement to death by the bear of adulation, it will try to tear it to pieces by the tiger of persecution.

That Spirit-filled workers avoid needless controversy; are too busy to needlessly talk back or fight back.

The Revival At Ephesus, (Acts xix.). -- From this we learn that the children of God have an affinity for each other. Paul in Ephesus drew the believers there around him as a magnet the iron.

That a Pentecostal revivalist unfolds the gift of the Holy Ghost to believers, and leads them to receive it.

That they then become the storm-centers of mighty revival cyclones.

That Holy Ghost testimony is a mighty factor in revivals.

That such revivals stir up great opposition from Satan and his minions.

That Paul persevered and pushed the battle to victory, even though it took two years.

That his bitterest opposition came from unconverted church members.

That it was overwhelmingly defeated.

That repentance was genuine, men publicly burning their false books, though it cost them thousands of dollars.

That God was given all the glory. "The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."

That the gift of the Holy Ghost in preacher and people was the mainspring of the revival.

That a Holy Ghost revival makes a Holy Ghost church. The church of Ephesus was one of the strongest of apostolic days.

The Revival At Samaria (Acts viii. 5-13). -- It was a sweeping work, "the multitudes ... with one accord" receiving the Word.

It was a genuine work, so that there was "much joy in that city." Spurious revivals and mere church-joining meetings may excite congratulation over numbers, but never beget deep spiritual joy.

It was a Christ-honoring revival. The evangelist did not preach himself or human creeds, but he "proclaimed unto them the Christ."

Healing did not hurt, but helped, the work (vers. 6, 7). We learn from this that the genuine gift is not a side issue, to be ignored, but a power to be employed, and that its proper use, when really possessed, instead of hindering, is helpful. Philip evidently considered it a power to be utilized, and not fanaticism to be feared, and so utilized it as one of the spokes in the wheel of revival success. However, it is wise for workers to remember that, to have Philip's success in the exercise of this gift, they must possess Philip's possession of it.

The Holiness Revival At Samaria (Acts viii. 14-17). -- From this revival we further learn,--

It was customary in the early church to hold special meetings for the promotion of holiness.

That receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost is subsequent to conversion. These people had first been converted in Philip's revival.

That sanctification is not a state to be grown into, but a gift to be received.

God uses human means to lead his children to receive this gift.

That early preachers did not allow fears, frowns nor fanaticism to frighten them from pressing this Pentecostal experience.

That young converts should be led at once to receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost, God's remedy for worldly amusements and backsliding.

That religious pretenders are found among professed seekers for the Holy Ghost.

That wrong motives will defeat earnest seeking.

That this kept at least one minister out of the Gift. Simon evidently had been a proud ecclesiastical preacher. Giving out that he "himself was some great one," also a popular preacher who had so bewitched the people that "they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is that power of God which is called Great." He had affected conviction in Philip's revival, and now coveted the apostles' power in order to do their deeds. He was not willing to meet the rightful conditions. "He offered them money." The Simon Maguses of all ages seek this gift in a similar way. They want it as a gift of power, or "higher life," or "endowment for service" or for some selfish motive, and upon their own terms. They desire it, but not intensely enough to confess the remaining carnality which its fire would destroy, or to abandon time, friends, appointments, salary, reputation, self and all unconditionally and eternally to Jesus. They desire it, seek it, weep about it and go to the altar, but offer substitutes for complete abandonment and faith in Jesus; and instead of being swept into its glorious experiences, they sink deeper into "the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." Such preachers should be rebuked and warned of their danger (verses 20-23). Pentecostal revivals bring them to the front, and faithful Peters Should deal with them according to their folly.

They are continuous revivals. Not the scratching of a match, but the gleaming of an electric light. God never designed that His army should close the fight until the war is over. A revival spurt for a few days, and then a relapse into a restaurant, side-show business, was not born at Pentecost, and is a burlesque on the true Church of Christ. There needs to be a great waking and shaking of God's people at this point. "All at it, and always at it," is the Pentecostal motto.

They are contagious revivals. Their promoters were magnetic centers of revival power. Full of God and His gifts they stormed the citadels of sin wherever their conquering Captain led. The fortifications of sins and superstitions and carnality which defied them, were shattered by the dynamite of divine power. The works of the devil were burned up under the blazing fire of revival truth. Sparks flew from one place to another until the Pentecostal fires spread over the known world, and have been spreading down all the centuries notwithstanding the floods of water with which the devil and his aids have sought to extinguish them.

They are genuine revivals. They come by meeting fixed Pentecostal conditions, and result in leading people into salvation, both initial and uttermost. So-called revivals, which do neither of these, are not worthy of the name. Genuine revivals are beautiful trees, laden with choice, ripe fruit; sham revivals are trees with dead leaves, and full of painted, sham fruit tied to the branches. Genuine revivals alarm the wicked and convince them of their condition; spurious revivals amuse them, or give false comfort, or disgust them. Genuine revivals produce healthy Spiritual children; spurious revivals leave the churches barren or crowd them with bastards.

Genuine revivals honor the Holy Ghost and all of His offices. Spurious revivals ignore Him and spurn His fruits. Genuine revivals welcome the sobs of the penitent, shouts of the saved and demonstrations of the fully sanctified; spurious revivals are strangers to all such manifestations. Genuine revivals may utilize the altar, the inquiry-room, rising for prayers, and every other available expedient to awaken and lead into salvation, hilt they rest in none of these things, and are satisfied with nothing less than clear experiences; spurious revivals rest in the use of means, and leave their victims on the quicksands of a dry profession. As the fog and mist of ecclesiastical darkness clears away, and believers regain primitive Pentecostal simplicity and power, true revivals will doubtless rise to climaxes of power now unknown.

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