

THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH?

Recently we were preparing for the 1993 convention and had to make room in our basement for people to stay. In rearranging some boxes, we came across several old New Wine magazines from the early 1970's. These were from the days of expectation and excitement in the Charismatic renewal. Denominational people by the thousands were receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Many were being excommunicated from their churches and many new assemblies were being formed.

The anticipation was that we were beginning the last revival before Jesus would return for His church. The Russian anti-Christ was in place to attack Israel and all the pieces were falling in place.

A brand new teaching revival accompanied the Charismatic renewal of the Church. New and a more positive emphasis was placed upon the gifts of the Spirit and solid teaching about how to properly exercise these gifts. There was much teaching about the " five fold ministries" and trans local authority. At the same time there was tremendous opposition and criticism by "spiritual experts". Their emphasis was that all the outward manifestations of the Holy Spirit had passed away when the last Apostle died.

New forms of singing, praise and worship seemed to erupt in these Charismatic meetings as the presence of God stood in the midst. There was a new found freedom and anticipation that we were living in the time of the fulfillment of prophesy. What began on Pentecost in fulfillment of Joel 2 was coming to additional fulfillment before our eyes. The outpouring on the day of Pentecost was localized while this outpouring was over the whole earth. Reports of astounding miracles and even walking on the water were received from as far away as Indonesia, with whole tribes of pagans being saved and filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking with tongues.

Even though many of the fundamental churches fought this renewal with so much fleshly zeal, the movement continued to gain momentum. The 1960's drop out generation of hippies came into the Charismatic movement by the thousands. Many were set free from drugs and alcohol instantly. These were called "The Jesus people".

After such a tremendous outpouring of God's grace and power, we have to ask " What went wrong"? Why do we not see this same excitement and expectation today? In those times there was a real confidence that finally the church was going to make a difference and vitally affect society. There was a new confidence that at last the church would be the salt of the earth and a light unto the world. There was a sudden realization that " Pentecost" was not a denomination but an experience. It was not some wild fleshly demonstration peculiar to the pentecostal church but a real , vital life changing experience available to all who ask. Because of the life changing power and magnitude of the outpouring, it would surely have world changing affects.

The fact is, society has deteriorated without interruption. Today it is much worse than in the 1970"s. The increase of filthiness and corruption is seen in more violent crime, more sexual perversion, suicides, divorce, mental illness, drugs, alcohol, racial hate and strife, and a general

moral decay that is incredible. Society doesn't seem to know that killing, rape, stealing and violence is wrong. Spiritualism and occultism is promoted by well known people as normal and exciting and promise great help for sufferers. All this is not remaining static but is increasing at an alarming rate.

Before the Charismatic renewal the church had become institutionalized. A system of having church. Man made programs. Try one thing then try another. Try to develop a system of entertainment to hold the people. Develop a continuing plan of new activities that people can contribute to so they will feel like they are participating. Form more committees so more can be involved. Bigger buildings will attract more people. In many places there was furious activity but no power.

The problem is the church has gone back to the place it was before the Charismatic renewal. Once again it has become institutionalized. The power that we are to receive with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit has again become a doctrine about power. We have doctrines about gifts and ministries. The experiences that were supposed to result in life have reverted back to doctrines without life.

Many are recognizing the problem. Some are proclaiming a new form of discipleship. Others are promoting a system of home churches where every one gets involved. Others are active in teaching about spiritual warfare because they feel that is the reason for the church's ineffectiveness. Other are saying the true ministry of the prophet must be restored to the church to bring the "new word of God" directly into the church. They feel God will now restore the church through the prophetic word of God.

All these things may be valid and may be a part of God's plan. However we are still living in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Without total dependence upon Him the church is going nowhere. It appears evident to me that once again the Holy Spirit is not being given His proper place in the activities of the church. An institutionalized church can function without the Holy Spirit and not know the difference. Human zeal and fleshly hype is accepted as the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The word we received in the 1993 convention in Ohio was "SANCTUARY." Sanctuary speaks of dwelling in the presence of God and entering into fellowship with God. Living in a conversational atmosphere where we communicate with God and He communicates with us. This is all the work of the Holy Spirit in this church age. If we ignore or try to by-pass the Holy Spirit, we fail to communicate with God. The gifts and ministries do not precede this ministry to God but follow our communicating with him. We still only receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon us. That is not a one time experience but a lifetime experience. Without the work of the Holy Spirit we can only function as orphans. Every man for himself and by himself. The work just consists of what man himself can do.

If we took the Holy Spirit out of the early church they would have had what we see in the church today. They would be just like us. The word "Sanctuary" is all inclusive and defines the difference between what the early church accomplished and what we are accomplishing. They turned the world upside down while we are not affecting the world very much. They hardly know we exist as

a light, for the revelation of God, or as salt, to stop the decay. This study then is to look at the ministry of the Holy Spirit in and through the church. Restoration then must restore the pre-eminence of the Holy Spirit to the church. This, of course, is easier said than restored.

The church has largely failed simply because she has not appropriated the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised to the church. ACT 1:6 And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, " Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel? " ACT 1:8 but **you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;** and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. " The church has side-stepped this truth by saying " That was a promise given only to the Apostles and the first church. When they passed away, the power was no longer available". If the early church needed that power, we need it even more.

Jesus spoke this truth to about 500 believers after the resurrection. Only about 120 showed up to receive the power of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. 380 believers didn't bother or rationalized that what He said was not what He meant. In Peter's first sermon, he said this same promise is universal. ACT 2:17 #"\And it shall be in the last days\," God says, '\That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind\; \And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy\, \And your young men shall see visions\, \ And your old men shall dream dreams \; ACT 2:18 \Even upon My bondslaves, both men and women\, \I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit\ And they shall prophesy. ACT 2:38 And Peter {said} to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ACT 2:39 "**For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.**" This is all inclusive and includes believers in all ages. The same promise that was given to the Apostles was also given to us. All the Gifts are promised to the church throughout the church age. 1CO 1:6 even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, 1CO 1:7 **so that you are not lacking in any gift**, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1CO 1:8 who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. The gifts should function until the second coming of Christ.

Every honest child of God who has any understanding will readily confess that in themselves they have no power to carry out the plan of God. The flesh only has great power to do its own will and please itself. Then where will the power come from? It must be supplied by God, through power of the Holy Spirit. Those who preach by the intellect and minister by the understanding, will create more problems than they will solve. " The flesh profits nothing" is eternally true. This is not just true for the first church. It applies to us also! Those who preach that the Holy Spirit is no longer actively involved in the church, giving inspiration, manifestations and personal guidance and anointing leave themselves no alternative, except to functioning in the flesh.

ACT 19:2 and he said to them, "**Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?**" And they {said} to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." In so many places this is still a valid question. The standard fundamental response is " This is not speaking about believers in Jesus but believers in John the Baptist. However it is clear that Appolos was preaching Christ. ACT 18:25 **This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord;** and being fervent in spirit, **he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus,** being

acquainted only with the baptism of John; Apollos' problem was not that he didn't preach Christ accurately, but that he had no revelation of water baptism or of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He was only practicing a baptism of repentance, like John performed. This baptism of repentance is still quite common in the church today. The result is that the candidate does not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Even though the candidate may have received the Holy Spirit in regeneration, he does not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the power Jesus promised.

LUK 24:49 "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are **clothed with power from on high.**" ACT 1:4 And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what **the Father had promised,** "Which," {He said,} "you heard of from Me;" ACT 1:5 for **John baptized with water,** but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

It is clear that the Promise of the Father is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. John baptized with water. That was the extent of John's ministry. Bringing people to an act of repentance. The New Testament baptism in water should result in the believer also receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. ACT 2:38 And Peter {said} to them, "Repent, and let each of you **be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ** for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." ACT 19:5 And when they heard this, they were **baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.** ACT 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the **Holy Spirit came on them, and they {began} speaking with tongues and prophesying.** This promise is for all who will believe, ask and receive.

Multitudes have received this experience of the promise of the Father in our day. This means "The baptism of the Holy Spirit". Now the question that must be answered is this; Why have we not seen the accompanying manifestation of power that was promised after the Holy Spirit comes upon you?

When we try to illuminate this problem of power, it is imperative that we define the area of responsibility. Where does the initiative lay, with man or with God? The church has a tendency to pray that God will pour out His Spirit according to the promise of scripture. The implication is that we must overcome God's reluctance. If we pray long enough and hard enough we can convince God to act. True revival depends upon God. Man cannot generate revival. All this seems to put the responsibility upon God.

Now let us go back to the 1970's. God really did pour out His Spirit over a period of about 15 years. God opened the windows of Heaven and poured us out a blessing that was difficult to contain. God certainly did His part. Now the question remains; what did the church do with what God gave? Of course, a large number, in the church, fought against every new move of God. That didn't stop what God was doing and literally multitudes received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The promise was " You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon you". Well, the Holy Spirit came upon several million believers. Did God fail to keep His promise of power? We never really saw a broad expression of "power" manifested in the charismatic movement.

Perhaps, we have a wrong concept of what "**POWER**" really is? One of the criticisms of the

charismatic movement, by those who refused to participate, was that the charismatics didn't manifest any more "power" than the fundamentalists. MAR 12:24 Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures, or the power of God? This, most likely, is our problem. We may think the power of God is something that it is not.

In making a print out of the verses on "the power", it is clear we have a very narrow view of the power of God. First it is clear that the power of God is the Holy Spirit. ACT 1:8 but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. " Since the power of God is the Holy Spirit, it is logical that we receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us.

Then we could conclude that we hold the potential of the power that created the universe. We have resident within us the same power that Jesus had. Then why don't we do the same works or greater works than he did? John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah, yet he did no miracles or he never raised any one from the dead. However he did come with great boldness to give witness to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. John was filled with the Spirit of God from his mothers womb.

LUK 6:19 And all the multitude were trying to touch Him, **for power was coming from Him and healing {them} all.** MAR 5:30 And immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that **the power {proceeding} from Him had gone forth**, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My garments?" LUK 5:17 And it came about one day that He was teaching; and there were {some} Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting {there,} who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and {from} Jerusalem; and **the power of the Lord was {present} for Him to perform healing.**

One aspect of the power is that it goes forth to heal and perform miracles. Jesus didn't do these things on His own initiative. When the Holy Spirit called for healing, Jesus started to heal the people. Now, the same Holy Spirit dwells in us. If we never pray for people or co-operate with the Holy Spirit in faith, no one gets healed. There is also " The gift of healing". That operates on a different basis. What we are speaking of now is any believer having the potential of releasing the power of the Holy Spirit. MAR 16:17 "**And these signs will accompany those who have believed:** in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; MAR 16:18 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly {poison,} it shall not hurt them; **they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.**"

LUK 9:1 And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases. ACT 3:12 But when Peter saw {this}, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? It is by the anointing of the Holy Spirit that all these things are done. ACT 10:38 "{You know of} Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and {how} He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him.

ROM 15:18 For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, ROM 15:19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. If we fully preach the gospel of Christ, the power of signs and wonders will follow the ministry. We can't separate the power of signs and wonders from the message of the gospel of Christ. They are one and the same.

ACT 8:5 And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and {began} proclaiming Christ to them. ACT 8:6 And the multitudes with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. ACT 8:7 For {in the case of} **many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out {of them} shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed**.

1CO 2:4 And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 1CO 2:5 that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. 1CO 4:19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant, but their power. 1CO 4:20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power.

The message and the preaching are in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The logical fact remains: If the Holy Spirit has not passed away and He is present, healing, signs, wonders and miracles are still present with us. The problem is not with God. The problem must be with us. Some of us may just be too strong for the power of God to work. 2CO 12:9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, **for power is perfected in weakness**." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. MAT 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The Kingdom is in power but that power cannot be released through the proud or the arrogant. The power is best released through those who know they are poor, weak, ignorant and of no reputation.

Besides the objective manifestation of the power of God there is also the subjective working of the power of God within us. EPH 1:19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. {These are} in accordance with the working of the strength of His might EPH 3:7 of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. EPH 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; EPH 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, PHI 3:10 that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; COL 1:11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously COL 1:29 And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me. 2TI 1:8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with {me} in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, God's power is also manifested in a less visible way, in the inner man. It requires the power of God in order to suffer for the gospel. We must be strengthened with the power of God to attain to steadfastness and patience, joyously giving thanks to the Father. We must labor

in God's vineyard according to the power of God, which works within us.

In order to protect us, it is necessary for God to first work in us, subjectively, before he can work through us, objectively. Otherwise, the power of God might destroy us through pride and arrogance.

The failure of the Charismatic movement could be in not going on with God to the place where He could permit the objective power of God to be manifest. Many got so involved in the Charismatic parlor games that they didn't submit to God's subjective work, by the power of the Holy Spirit. When a Charismatic labors according to the flesh, they are no different than a fundamentalist who labors according to the flesh. The Charismatic has the power but still labors according to the flesh. The flesh still profits nothing, even if you speak in tongues. The only two choices that are available to us is either flesh or Spirit. We can't use both. Flesh releases no power, even if you speak in tongues and proclaim the name of Jesus. When the power of God is present to heal, He still has to find someone to use. The deficiency is in man not in God. He knows what He is doing. We are the ones who are confused!