



The Traveling Pulpit

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God's Prerogative in Revival (Part III)

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” (II Chron. 7:14)

Opening Remarks

This edition of *“The Traveling Pulpit”* concludes our three-part study on **God's Prerogative in Revival** as we focus our attention on a very popular, but sometimes misunderstood passage from the Old Testament.

Closing v.14f

God's promise to His **“people”** if they turned back to Him was that He would, **“hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (v.14f)**. Forgiveness for the Christian is both a one-time as well as an on-going need in our lives as we discover in the doctrines of Justification and Sanctification. In Justification, we find forgiveness of our sin through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and the imputation of Christ's righteousness. In Sanctification, we find God's ongoing work of forgiveness as we spiritually grow in grace and a life of holiness being **“conformed to the image”** of Christ (**Rom. 8:29**).

Their **“land,”** spoken of in our text, was the nation of Israel with Jerusalem being the capital and location for Solomon's temple. We need to be careful how we treat this passage of Scripture and stay in context as we try to make appropriate application in the New Testament. The **“land”** to which Scripture speaks is the nation of Israel in

which the Messiah was to be born. This is NOT a promise to just any nation that can be brought about through political means. However, we can interpret this as a spiritual promise that can be applied to the church of today. Because of God's "**people**" getting right with God, the nation in which they live may benefit. But, most definitely the local church which is a gathering place for God's New Testament "**people**" will benefit.

The remedy of a nation's moral and spiritual problems does not begin with the government, but with God's "**people**" getting right with the Lord. It's true that the context of this passage is referring to the "**land**" of Israel, but the truth remains that God's "**people**" are to be "**witnesses**" in the country where they reside (**Acts 2:8**). If God's redeemed "**people**" do not live "**holy**" (**I Pet. 1:15-16**) and be the "**salt**" and "**light**" (**Matt. 5:13-16**) that God has left us here to be, then there will be no message of healing to our spiritually sick nation. If God's "**people**" don't speak the "**truth**" (**Jh. 14:6, I Tim. 2:7**) in "**love**" (**I Jh. 4:8**), then it won't be spoken by any other. If God's "**people**" don't oppose such wickedness of our day as abortion, homosexuality, and other immoralities, then there will be no one to speak against these evils in our society. For there to be healing in our nation, there must be a witness of God's presence through God's "**people**." This healing must first begin in the church of the living God if we want to see the spiritual decay of Christendom stopped along with the apostasy that is upon us. Therefore, the church of today needs a return to the timeless truths of God's Word. Spiritual gangrene is contaminating our "**land**" and unless it is amputated (in other words, counteracted or stopped) then the end result is inevitable, which is death. Spiritual poison is running rampant throughout our "**land**" from the rich house to the poor house and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only remedy.

As we think about the history of revivals on a mass scale, we first think back to the Old Testament when Samuel called Israel to repent and confess their sins (**I Sam. 7**). The greatest spiritual awakening ever recorded in the Bible was at Pentecost soon after the death and resurrection of Christ (**Acts 2**). The last great awakening recorded in Christian history was when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the church doors of Wittenberg and the Reformation began. In America, there are four revivals that have gone down in the history books; although, the authenticity of some have been questioned. The first one is known as the Great Awakening of 1734 that spread with preaching like that of Jonathan Edwards. It's believed that the second Great Awakening occurred in 1792 and was born out of a period when American Christianity was said to have had less vitality than at any period in history. The Awakening of 1859 is said to have followed an organized prayer meeting. Between 1904-1905 an Awakening broke out in Wales and spread to America at a time when there was compromise between Christianity and Humanism. This is considered to be the last wide-spread Revival known in American History; however, it was not the last wide-spread Revival in world history.

The last Awakening on record in the world was the Shantung Revival in China during the 1920's and 1930's. Some have rightly questioned the orthodoxy of the Shantung

Revival, but after separating the true from the false, there is no doubt that it was a time when God walked in the midst of China and performed a work of great grace. Whenever God works, the devil often tries to perform a counterfeit work. It cannot be denied in the ranks of Christendom that the Shantung Revival was used by God to prepare China for the dark days ahead when the doors closed to the missionaries. We need to note that at the time China closed to missionaries, there were estimated to be about 7 to 8 million Christians. After China was reopened in 1979, the church was discovered alive and well with an estimated 25 million believers.

The underground church continues to thrive with many suffering persecutions for their faith. It's estimated that today, there are about 67 million Christians in China, which is a figure that also includes Catholics. In the past, government officials once tolerated the unregistered Protestant house churches, but now things are beginning to change for the worse, resulting in oppression and suffering for believers. Experts and activists say the Chinese government is now waging the most severe suppression of Christianity in the country since religious freedoms were granted by the Chinese constitution in 1982. Some have speculated that if the persecuted church continues to grow at the rate it is currently, China will become the world's largest Christian population in several decades if Jesus tarries His coming. Once again, this simply shows how persecution does not destroy the church of Jesus Christ, but only strengthens her.

As we look at these awakenings of the past, maybe God will allow us to catch a vision of what He can do today. Our nation is in the depths of degradation and the church of Jesus Christ as remained silent too long. The lost world must see a contrast between the people of God and the people of Satan. When genuine revival comes, then pure evangelism will follow. So much of what passes for evangelism today is pathetic and I'll go so far as to say, much of it is of the devil. Easy believe-ism is a tool of Satan. It makes people think they are saved, but remain lost in their sin. Evangelism is good, but it's not REVIVAL and it's important that the Church of the Living God have a correct doctrine of both. It's been said that the kingdom of God is not going to advance by local churches becoming filled with people, but people becoming filled with the Holy Spirit (**Eph. 5:18**). Easy believe-ism is producing a harvest of infidels rather than genuine converts. Raising a hand, walking an aisle, quoting scripture, or saying a prayer never saved anyone. To be saved, a sinner must throw himself on the sovereign mercy and grace of God in "**faith**" (**Eph. 2:8-9**). Only God can save a sinner and only God can revive a cold calloused believer.

I believe most of us in the ranks of the conservative evangelical circle would agree that we need an old-fashioned Holy Ghost revival like unto that of Pentecost. I personally believe that if we soon don't have revival in the churches of America, then there will not be anything left worth having in our nation. Therefore, we need to pray that God will burden the hearts of His "**people**" for revival and that spiritual awakening will once again visit the churches of our day. Today, we have many ministers in pulpits

who are infidels and congregations filled with lost church members. Many churches have been poisoned by liberalism and modernism having torn the Bible into pieces. The moral condition of the church as well as the world is disgusting with worldliness running rampant, prayerlessness abounding, the Bible being rejected, gross immorality prevailing, fornication is commonplace, adultery is accepted, and licentiousness is flourishing.

Let us pray that God will do for us what He has done in the past and send spiritual awakening to His **“people”**. We need to get honest with God and with ourselves as we search our hearts, asking Him to expose our sins. We need to be willing to suffer, if necessary, for our doctrinal beliefs in the Word of God. We need to see things happen in the churches of our land that cannot be explained in human terms which only God can explain and only the Holy Spirit can accomplish in the church. We need to pray, “Lord, do it again, do it again, please, Lord, do it again, and let it begin in me, show me the sin that has crept into my life, help me to discover the mighty truths of your Word that I’ve neglected, let your light shine through me for your glory, help me to have a spiritual impact upon the community in which I live, and may it spill over into the land where I live, Lord, send a revival and let it begin in me.”

A Ministry Update

To better benefit from this three-part study of Second Chronicles 7:14, it would be advantageous to go back and read the last two previous editions of **“The Traveling Pulpit.”** If you didn’t save your written copies, all three parts will be downloaded to our website under the publications page very soon. As of this past August, we passed our ten-year mark broadcasting over radio. We thank God for the opportunity that He gave us in serving Him in this manner. However, changes are in the making for COGM which includes our radio ministry. As of the end of September, our radio broadcasts with Wilkins Radio Network will cease; however, all radio programs will continue to be available over our website. Wilkins was an excellent group with which to do business, but the time simply came for us to better use the limited funds that God provides. Besides, I’m ten years older and feel that it’s time to think about my future role in this ministry. Therefore, several changes are in process as we approach the close of this year. In our next and first edition of **“The Traveling Pulpit”** for 2019, I’ll be sharing with you all current changes that are being considered at present.

With this publication, we come to the last quarter of 2018 and have celebrated the twelfth anniversary of COGM. As we face the future of this ministry, we would appreciate your prayers that we’ll know and follow God’s will.

We deeply appreciate the encouraging words and donations that help support and keep this little ministry reaching the World with the Word. May the Lord continue to richly bless you and build you up in the **“most holy faith” (Jude20)**.

Because of His Sovereign Grace.....BWM