

# Word of Prophecy Fellowship



SPRING 2008

## THE GOOD NEWS - LETTER

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# A TIME OF REFRESHING

## Part 2 of 2

### OPPORTUNITY

We must never let an opportunity for God's mercy to pass us by. The prophet Isaiah wrote about an opportunity God had ordained for His people in which He would pour out mercy and grace upon them, and grant them a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord (Isaiah 43:18-19): "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert." That blessed old song "Showers of Blessing" by Daniel W. Whittle has a beautiful reminder at the end of each refrain of how vital it is that we lay hold on those opportunities from the Lord, for it says, "Mercy drops round us are falling, **but for the showers we plead.**" Praise God! We should not settle for anything less than those showers—and you should not remember the former things, nor consider what happened the last time you made an effort, and failed. *Do not remember that!* God will do a new thing if you need it; He will do something that you have never seen before, and cause something to happen to you—an experience that you have never before partaken

of—if you will prepare your heart to seek God earnestly, with fasting and prayer.

### FASTING AND PRAYER

Isaiah 58:6-12 reveals the absolute necessity of fasting and prayer in preparation to receive the grace of God when it is poured out upon us. God declares, "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?...And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Here God is telling us that those who fast and pray are the ones who will receive the grace to build the old waste places! If you fast and pray faithfully, God will use you to raise up the foundations of many generations; you will become a restorer of paths for people to dwell in, because once you have been refreshed, revived, refilled, renewed and restored by the Spirit of God, **then you will be strong**

*enough to lead other people in straight paths, so their feet will not stumble.* Praise God! And when you walk, you will not stumble. When you run, you will not faint—once you get in that right path.

## PATHWAYS

You must watch, and ponder the path of your feet, and not allow yourself to be led into a place that you are not acquainted with. We have to be aware of those unmarked paths which lead us out of the way of righteousness, and be wise enough to avoid them! Proverbs 12:28 says, “In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.” *Do not go someplace where the paths are not clearly marked, or you may find to your sorrow that there is no way out!* This is what happens to a lot of Christians; they get themselves into places where there are no guideposts and no beacons, and they lose site of the lighthouse—that glorious light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the doctrine that is according to godliness.

Isaiah warned God’s people about these unmarked pathways, wherein they would be led astray: “As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, *and destroy the way of thy paths.*” (Isaiah 3:12). “The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: *they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.*” (Isaiah 59:8). When Christians wander into these unmarked paths, they get swallowed up in a wilderness of heresy and a maze of error which have no guideposts to lead them back to safety. Consequently, they become confused and disoriented, and go hopelessly round and round in search of a way out. But “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace,

as in all churches of the saints.” (I Corinthians 14:33).

## SHORTCUTS

That is what happened to the children of Israel in Moses’ day. God led them around and around in the wilderness of Sinai, because they would not hearken to his voice and take the shortcut to Canaan’s land where the milk and honey flowed. *A lot of Christians do not want the shortcuts God has provided them!* They reject the shortest, most direct pathway into the righteousness, peace and joy of the kingdom of God, because they are sometimes fainthearted, fearful, and filled with unbelief. And then God has to drag them through the wilderness until He wears them out and leaves them hungry, exhausted, and famished! “They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. *And he led them forth by the right way,* that they might go to a city of habitation. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” (Psalm 107:4-8:). *Praise God!*

## MERCY

That historical record of the church in the wilderness is a reminder to us that God’s mercy is greater than his wrath. Beloved, the Bible says it is not by works of righteousness which we have done that God has saved us, *but according to His mercy;* by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Renewing, refreshing, reviving, refilling, restoring—praise God!—these are manifestations of God’s mercy that we all need! The prophet Habbakuk prayed, “A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon

Shigionoth [that was a type of a musical instrument]. O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; *in wrath remember mercy.*” (Habakkuk 3:1-2). God was angry in the days of Habakkuk, which is why the prophet cried, *In your wrath, remember to have mercy on us!* And there is a little scripture in the book of James which also tells us that “**mercy rejoiceth against judgment.**” (James 2:13). A wise-hearted man will discern God’s time and judgment, because he knows he must be prepared against that day according to Ecclesiastes 8:5 (“Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man’s heart discerneth both time and judgment”), but he still does not underestimate the mercy and compassion and grace that God manifests to us because of the great love he has for us. Oh, that love!

## LOVE

The love of God is just like the songwriter of old expressed it, when he exclaimed,

Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made,  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade,  
To write the love of God above,  
Would drain the ocean dry;  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
Though stretched from sky to sky!

*Praise God!* That love is the reason God acts with compassion and mercy in sending us a time of refreshing from His presence; so we can be turned away from iniquity, and the trifling sins which so easily beset us. Even in the gathering storm of God’s sore judgments upon this ungodly world, He will not forget the love which

He has toward us, or the mercy and grace which proceed from that measureless love.

## SONSHINE

In the 80<sup>th</sup> Psalm David sought the Lord for mercy and grace to be poured out upon his people, and he repeats this supplication three times (in verses 3, 7, and 19): “Turn us again, O God, *cause thy face to shine*; and we shall be saved.” This is what we are seeking, for God to show us favor in sending that time of refreshing through the grace of Jesus Christ, so that His face will shine upon us. We used to sing that song, “When Jesus shows his smiling face, there is sunshine in the soul,” and that is exactly what we need...S-O-N-S-H-I-N-E in our soul. So let us be wise, and revel and rejoice in receiving this blessedness that God in His mercy has in store for us, if we will only receive it graciously.

## CONVERTED

On the night of the Lord’s betrayal, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and *when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*” (Luke 22:31-32). Being “converted” does not mean to be saved, or born again; “converted” means to be turned back after you are saved, when you have wandered, or when you have failed or been wrong, or sinned. When you are as spiritually dry as the Sahara desert, that is when you need refreshing, reviving, renewing, refilling and restoring! God wants you to be converted like Peter, so that afterward He can use you to strengthen your brethren. That is what revival is for—a time for us to be *converted*, for God to accomplish a mighty work of grace in our lives and restore us to divine favor.

## RUN TO DEATH

Jesus said, in Matthew 11:30, “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” What a stark comparison this is between the burden Christ gives you, and the burden the devil will put on you, trying to run you to death. ***God is not going to run you to death!*** There is a story I once heard a preacher tell which very effectively illustrates how Christians are often run to death by the devil. This preacher said he knew a farmer who had begun to raise a large number of pigs on his farm. In order to keep the pigs from wandering off and escaping into the nearby woods, the farmer had built a large electric fence around part of his property. Each day, when it came time for the pigs to eat, the farmer would stand at a certain place near the fence and beat on the pigs’ feeding trough with a big stick, so he could get their attention...*Bam! Bam! Bam!* The pigs would hear it and come running from everywhere at the sound of that stick hitting their trough. Then after some weeks had passed, the farmer began to notice something strange: his pigs were steadily losing weight, even though he was feeding them just about everything he could get his hands on. No matter how much food the pigs were given, they just kept getting thinner and thinner, until finally the farmer decided he would watch them very closely for a few days and see if he could find out what was causing them to lose weight.

It was not long before he discovered the culprit—a big, redheaded woodpecker that lived in the nearby woods, who spent most of the day flying from one tree to another, noisily pecking holes into the hard wood. Whichever tree the woodpecker was pecking on, all the pigs would run to it, expecting to get food: *they thought the noise they were hearing was the sound of the*

*farmer’s stick beating on their food trough!* They would follow that noise, and run swiftly to toward it—but there would be nothing there to eat, nothing but a woodpecker. And this is how many Christians are! Everywhere they turn there is a preacher who has just come to town, pecking hard and making a big noise to attract their attention, and that is the direction in which they run. Each time a new preacher arrives and makes a big noise, they go running to meet him, expecting to find something good to eat. But if you take a good look at those Christians, you will see that they are nothing but skin and bones! They have become just like those pigs who were nearly run to death by a woodpecker. I think this is a very, very wonderful illustration, may I say. Praise the Lord!

## TRIFLES

We need a refreshing because God’s people are often run to death with spiritual cares they mistakenly believe are from God. And added to that there are family cares, worldly cares, social cares, business cares, and—the biggest drama in American society—after work, when everybody is stressed out, here come the chemical solutions, the TV, the videos, and all kinds of exotic forms of entertainment. I want to tell you something folks: ***If you are stressed out and stretched out, this refreshing is what God mercifully sends to you to correct some of the abuses you have allowed to creep into your life.*** You may have let the devil deceive you into thinking that a lot of the things you get involved into are absolute necessities—***but they are really just trifles.*** I preached a message on *The Tragedy of Trifles* that talked about many of the essential things that Christians neglect and treat as if they were trifles—things like prayer, Bible reading, attending church, and living right—but

when the Almighty God sends us a time of refreshing from His presence and visits us with an outpouring of His Spirit, neither is that a trifle! You have to be able to discern the time of God's visitation.

## DISCERNING

In Luke 18:35-43 there is a wonderful story about a blind man who discerned his time of visitation from God—a time for him to be with Jesus—although there were also those with Jesus who did not recognize God's timing for that blind man: "And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. *And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more*, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God." You have to be able to discern your time; and when you know that it is your time to receive something from the Lord ***do not let somebody get in your way***. Fanny Crosby understood this when she wrote, "*Pass me not O gentle Savior, hear my humble cry! While on others thou art calling, do not pass me by!*"

## TIME AND JUDGMENT

As Jesus was passing through Jericho, he met a man named Zacchaeus who also recognized God's time and judgment. The Bible says in Luke 19:1-9 that Zacchaeus "was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, ***This day is salvation come to this house***, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham."

## SALVATION

When the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth in II Corinthians 6:1-2, he also spoke about a day of salvation. "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and ***in the day of salvation have I succoured thee***: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)" That word "succoured" means that God has delivered you, and has saved your life from destruction; and Paul is actually quoting this from the book of Isaiah, where it says in Isaiah 49:8, "Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable

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time have I heard thee, and *in a day of salvation have I helped thee*: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages.” In both these references the Holy Ghost is very definitive in describing a certain time element, a specific day in which the Lord will pour out the Spirit of Grace upon us. But in order for God to help us, and deliver us from those trifling things that sometimes choke the Word in our lives and make us unfruitful, we must be able to discern that time of refreshing, and that day of salvation; and diligently seek the Lord that we may obtain the full measure of grace that He has in store for us.

## PRAYER

*Father, we thank you that the Word of God has gone forth. You said “My Word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it!” Stir hearts, O God, and prosper that Word to create an incentive, a drive, a hunger and thirst, even within people that have lost their first love. You wrote to the church in Ephesus, in Revelation 2:4-5, and said, “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” Lord, many Christians have lost that first love—and that necessitates having revival, refreshing, renewal, refilling, restoration. O God, turn our hearts! Lord, visit us! Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we will be saved. Make that man at your right hand strong so that we will not go back from thee. We ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

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