

HOLINESS & REVIVAL

By Angela Gassaway

The Great Awakening was a spiritual renewal that swept the American Colonies, particularly New England, during the first half of the 18th Century. This awakening was characterized by great fervor and emotion in prayer. It began with evangelists like the Wesley brothers and George Whitefield in England and crossed over to the American Colonies during the first half of the 18th Century. Unlike the somber Puritan spirituality of the early 1700s, the Awakening allowed people to express their emotions more openly in order to feel a greater intimacy with God.

The church of England was established as the reigning spiritual authority in the colonies. From a political perspective, this led to stability. But instead of being a positive driving force for religious belief, it created complacency and spiritual “dryness” among believers. Religion became a pastime in which people would “go through the motions” during religious services without deeply-felt convictions of the heart and soul. It was only after some decades of this kind of complacency in both England and the American colonies that the spiritual “revival” of the Great Awakening came about.

Through the Awakening, the Colonists realized that religious power rest in their own hands, rather than in the hands of the Church of England, or any other religious authority. After a generation or two passed with this kind of mindset, the Colonists came to realize that political power did not rest in the hands of the English monarch either. Consider the religious wording of the Declaration of Independence. By 1775, even though the Colonists did not all share the same theological beliefs, they did share a common vision of freedom from British control. Thus, the Great Awakening brought about an atmosphere that made the American Revolution possible (the American Revolution 1775-1783).

AMERICAN REVIVALS

The Great Awakening – 1734-1743 – lasted 9 years – North Hampton Massachusetts
Solomon Stollard, Jonathan Edwards, and British Evangelist George Whitefield.

Second Great Awakening – 1800-1840 – lasted 40 years – Kentucky
Thousands of people came from all over the U.S. And 500,000 people were saved.

Azusa Street Revival – 1906-1908 – lasted 3 years – Los Angeles California
Lead by holiness preacher, William J. Seymour. Large inter-racial crowds. Church services were held everyday for 3 years. Birthed the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements.

Post WWII Revival – 1947-1948 – Latter Rain and Healing Revivals
Billy Graham started in 1949

Jesus Movement - 1960's – Spread to college campuses in the 1970's
God's answer to the debauchery of the hippie movement.

1990's Revivals

The Toronto Blessing, The Melbourne Revival in Florida, Brownsville Revival in Florida (100,000 saved in 2 years.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF REVIVAL

1. All of these Revivals started with a strong prayer movement, sometimes by just a handful of people.
2. Each revival was centered around holiness, repentance, and many salvations resulted.
3. Signs and Wonders were displayed, and these manifestations drew great crowds from great distances.
4. These revivals of the past only lasted for an appointed time, and seem to come in cycles.

HOLINESS

Many people in society and even churches today consider holiness to be a dirty word. Many holiness preachers are labeled legalistic or controlling, when in actuality, God is holy, and he demands holiness from us. In fact, His holiness is beautiful!

When David brought the ark back to Jerusalem and placed in in the tabernacle, he sang a song of thanksgiving in **1 Chronicles 16:7-36**. Verse 29 says, *“Give to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!”*

Why should God’s holiness matter to us? God commands us to be Holy, even as He is holy...

1 Peter 1:13-17 says, *“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; [14] as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; [15] but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16] because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” [17] And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.”*

Hebrews 12:14 say, *“Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, [13] and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. [14] Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: [15] looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.”*

2 Corinthians 7:1 says, *“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”*

1 Samuel 15:22-23 *“...Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king.”*

The American Church is deceived. Many believe they are right with God, but they have so much compromise in their lives, you can’t tell them apart from unbelievers. **Isaiah 5:20-21** says, *“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!”*

Sins that lead to hell - Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and Colossians 3:5-11:

sexual immorality (fornication, adultery, homosexuality, orgies, etc.), impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, anger, hatred and fits of rage, murder, jealousy, greed, and envy, selfish ambition, gossip, discord, dissensions, factions, etc., drunkenness (alcohol and drugs), theft, slander, lust, evil desires, malice, filthy language, lying, and blasphemy.

People say “don’t judge me.” **Matthew 7** says get right before you judge. Pull your brother out of sin. **Ezekiel 33** says if we don’t, then their blood is on our hands. But there are other sins we keep as pets and allow to run rampant in the church. **1 Corinthians 6:12** says all things are lawful, but not all things are good to do. **1 Corinth. 10:23-24** says we have the right to do anything, but not everything is beneficial or constructive. We should seek the good of others at the expense of our own desires or freedoms. **Romans 14:1-23** speaks about not adding burdens to people or judging them if they don’t live exactly how you do.

There is a balance between these two extremes. As we learn to live a holy life, God reveals holiness in all the different areas of our life. However, we must be sure we don’t heap burdens on those who have not yet received those revelations of holiness. **Romans 14:19-20** says we must make every effort towards peace and edification, even when we don’t agree. It says DO NOT destroy the work of God for the sake of food, or any other questionable practice or belief. If it is not a sin that leads to hell, we need to be very careful how we approach the situation, give grace, and handle it with care and prayer.

The tongue – Our Words - James 3. Our words are like a bit in a horse’s mouth or the rudder on a ship. It sets the course for our whole body. What we say determines our course, and we can’t bless God and curse people by speaking negative. Complaining, being critical, gossip, offense, etc.

Relationships – 2 Corinth. 6:14-15 – Don’t be bound to unbelievers
James 4:4 – a friend of the world is an enemy of God

Movies and Music – **Psalms 101:2-3** says, *“I will behave wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me.”*

Colossians 3:1-2 says, *“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. [2] Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”*

Ephesians 5:1-33 says to be separate from the world, not to touch anything unclean, and then God will receive you. **Ephesians 5:11-12** says, *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. [12] For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.”*

But what about all the taboo “grey” areas?

Drinking & Smoking – **1 Timothy 5:23** says use a little wine for stomach illnesses. **Eph. 5:18** says don't get drunk, but rather, be filled w the spirit. Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost! Even the world views it as sinful. A Christian who drinks or smokes in the sight of unbelievers only proves to them you're like the rest of the world. And doing it in front of other believers gives your stamp of approval.

Tattoos & Piercings – **Leviticus 19:28** says not to mark or cut your flesh in grieving for the dead. **1 Samuel 16:7** says God looks at the heart, not the outward appearance. In Bible Times, some piercings were given to mark slaves, and still carry similar attachments in the spirit realm. We must consider God in these decisions, even in the financial cost of these things.

CONCLUSION

In most churches across America, God's power is not being displayed. When His manifest glory fills a place, the lost will be drawn in and will be completely transformed. When you truly encounter God, you don't have to be told to change your life. You supernaturally start desiring holiness, without even fully understanding what it is....or WHO it is. Many struggle for months or years after they accept Christ, finding it hard to let go of the world's influence. Others, however, find themselves thrown into an all out war against everything that offends God, running from evil, throwing it away, burning every bridge!

If you look too much like the world, you will not know the sting of persecution. If you are walking in holiness you know all too well how painful the rejection is, even from other Christians. But God honors holiness. When His true GLORY fills your temple, you will want to be on HIS side of holiness. And when the evil day of tribulation comes, it will be the only anchor that keeps you from being swept away with the wicked!