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# ARE YOU HEADING FOR THE RUIN OR RESURRECTION OF REVIVAL?

by Jonathan

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## REBELLION, RELIGION AND FALSE IMPRESSIVE PIETY

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12).

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Galatians 5:4).

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Whenever an individual follows a system or code of ethics to please God and man, he or she has fallen into the bondage of religion. The fact that a person appears holy and does all the right things in the eyes of the law does not equate true spirituality.

In fact, he or she can be so blind to the error of his or her way as pride and self-righteousness eats up the soul like a cruel disease. Does it shock or surprise us when Jesus said these words to the Pharisees, “...That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you? (Matthew 21:31). Why? Was Jesus condoning the sins of the publicans and harlots? Far from it! But what was actually implied was that it was easier for them to see the corruption of their hearts and quickly repent than do the Pharisees whose religion was more concerned with keeping laws than in having a relationship with God.

For example, before his conversion, Paul (also called Saul), a Pharisee from Tarsus (Acts 9:11, Philippians 3:5), was one such who persecuted the church (Acts 9:1-2, Galatians 1:13) and even approved the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8:1). He no doubt has all the marks of “outward conformity” according to religious loyalty and standards and yet missed God. I call it “inner rebellion”, like a dormant volcano, just waiting for an appointed time to erupt, when the “lava” of the sin-sick soul is too intense to contain within itself. But praise God, when Jesus revealed Himself to Paul (or Saul, as he was better known then, according to Acts 9:4-9), there was a complete turnaround in his life and he subsequently became a great Apostle and a major writer (under the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit) of the New Testament. Even though Christianity is not a religion, but a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, I am concerned that some of you reading this call yourself a Christian on the basis of your background and heritage of your family or friends. And even if you were born into a family of some other religions or systems of the world, there could be a mixture of some philosophies of good works and moral ethics that you inadvertently intertwine with your new walk of faith in Jesus Christ.

Yet perhaps, worst of all, the spirit of religion can subtly invade the church to where we who are consecrated or mature Christians think that we can win the applause of God and the praise of men and women (just like the Pharisees) when we are faithful in spiritual services such as church attendance, missions giving and ministry involvement. We are speaking to spiritual leaders, pastors and shepherds who are self-confident and man-centred. We also refer to the average Christians who run from one seminar to another, from one preacher to another, buying hundreds of dollars worth of books and tapes. No, I am not against such programs or tools. Many of them are highly-informative and productive and we thank God for these great blessings and provision. However, it has gotten to the place where total dependency on the Holy Spirit has been replaced by educated knowledge on self-help and self-improvements. And while I do not want to question the motives of various professionals who use behavioral science, such as psychology and sociology to help others, they can only treat the symptoms of the problems associated with human nature. Only the Word of God, delivered under the anointing and the power of the Spirit can break the yoke of bondage and set the captives free!

Friend, God wants us to know that the foundational key that will open doors for people to know and grow in Christ is not more educated teaching or skilful preaching, but what we do on our faces before God in the secret prayer closet, crying out for a move and a touch of God to bring life out of spiritual death! Unless the Spirit of God anoints the message, it remains a cold and lifeless letter!

A church service may be impressive, filled with music that produces emotion and may even cause you to weep, preaching that may be doctrinally and theologically right; but without the Holy Spirit in control, little or no lives would be saved or transformed! Or you may even sing superbly in choir, a graduate from some great Bible College or a leader in some church hierarchy and yet remain shallow and not spiritual. What then is genuine spirituality? I believe it can only spring forth from a cry and desire for...

### **REPENTANCE, RELATIONSHIP-BASED AND FERVENT INTIMATE PRAYERS**

“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from mine sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest ... Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me ... The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psalm 51:2-4,11,17).

"I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Se'lah. I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me" (Psalm 3:4-5).

"Whom have I in heaven *but thee?* and *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire beside thee. My flesh and heart faileth: *but* God *is* the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever" (Psalm 73:25-26).

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I do not know about you and I do not want to disappoint you. But there are probably more times that I feel unholy and unworthy of the Lord's blessings than I do feel otherwise. Fortunately though, this Christian experience is not based or dependent on *my* feelings or sight as much as it is a walk of faith.

Others may speak words of kindness concerning this brother, but I know what a flawed vessel I am, apart from the grace of God operating in my life.

Are we sick and tired of our spiritual barrenness to where we cry to God to use us to bring into His kingdom more children in the spiritual sense what Rachel pleaded in the natural, " ...Give me children, or else I die" (Genesis 30:1). And if we do not want to bear fruit in Christ, the vine, we might as well be taken home to glory!

### **THE DESIRE FOR A RENEWED REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST PUTS US BACK ON THE ROAD TO RADICAL REVIVAL!**

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness ... the redeemed shall walk *there*: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:8-10). In fact, I encourage you to read the entire chapter 35 if you can.

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Even though there is a place for the counselling chair where Spirit-filled counselors who have a deep and abiding love for fellow Christians provide advice from the Word of God, there is nothing quite like the old-fashioned altar service where many are kneeling, some standing, still others sitting in a position of prayer and crying out to God, oblivious to what their friends or neighbours in church may say or think. Whether individuals weep profusely or silently, it is not so much the outward posture as it is the attitude of the heart that yearns for the reality of God that will be honoured. To desire and receive a touch from God is all that matters!

Just as the woman with an issue of blood pressed onto Jesus even though the thronged of the crowd could have restraint her, her despair and desperate condition to clutch Jesus could not be denied (read Mark 5:25-34).

Likewise, you might be a leader or shepherd in the church, but there will be times you will be spiritually-attacked or even experience

weakness and you will need to surround yourself with fellow believers who will hold you up before God. Will you take the cup of humility and the step of faith in going before God, men and women who will band and stand with you?

Perhaps, you are discouraged in spirit or even hurt by certain church people. There is a release for you as you reach out and “touch” Jesus in faith, prayer and sincerity. Initially, you may tremble and stumble but there is healing and restoration in confession, “Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

“As pilgrims travelling on this narrow way  
Consider it pure joy when trials assail  
Like labour pains, in anguish and in travail  
On all occasions, to watch and pray  
The gates of darkness against us will not prevail  
For His banner over us will never fail to avail” (Jonathan).

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