

*** MARCH 2018 ***

THE PROMISE OF RESTORATION

The outpouring of the Spirit

A very well-known passage of Scripture from the Old Testament is **Joel 2:28-29**, promising the outpouring of God's Spirit "*on all flesh*". This passage is quoted by Peter in **Acts 2:17-21**, to explain the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. God has promised, and God intends to pour out His Spirit on all people, male and female, young and old, and regardless of social standing. And this is still happening today!

In the Old Testament

However, before the outpouring of the Spirit is prophesied in **Joel**, there is the promise of restoration. God says, "*I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you*" **Joel 2:25**. The King James version says: "*the years that the locust has eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm*". This is interesting because locusts eat from the outside and destroy the plant, but worms eat from the inside, destroying the plant from the inside out, and rendering the plant useless. It is good to keep this alternate translation in mind and to know that God is committed to the restoration of the whole person, body, soul and spirit, no matter what has been lost or destroyed in the past.

Times of refreshing

The word of God to us in this current season is that God is doing a work of restoration in our hearts. All that has been lost or stolen or destroyed God is going to give back to us, even double! The end is going to be much better than the beginning but we all begin somewhere in our walk with God. It is interesting that God promises in Joel that the work of restoration precedes the outpouring of the Spirit. We need "*the times of refreshing*" promised in **Acts 3:19**, and again the times of refreshing come before the return of the Lord, to prepare us and enable us to be doing the work and walking in wholeness (**verse 21**).

In the New Testament

In the New Testament the theme of restoration is very strong. In prophesying the ministry of John the Baptist, the angel messenger said, "*He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord*" **Lu.1:17**. John the Baptist came with the anointing to preach restoration, preparing a people for the advent of Jesus. Again today the spirit and power of Elijah is upon us to "*restore all things*" (**Matt.17:11**). The Elijah ministry began to be fulfilled through John but is yet to be fully fulfilled "*before the coming of the great and dreadful day of YAHWEH*" (**Mal.4:5b**). Part of the great restoration that is taking place is that the members of His body are once again receiving the spirit of adoption [sonship] and realising by revelation that we are predestined to be the sons of God (**Eph.1:5, Heb.2:10**). As the Scripture says, the spirit of Elijah "*will turn*

the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers” (Mal.4:6).

God’s people are robbed and plundered

The people of God are in a terrible state. Isaiah says, *“but this is a people robbed and plundered; all of them are snared in holes, and they are hidden in prison houses; for plunder, and no one says ‘Restore!’”* (Isa.42:22). But God says ‘Restore’. This does not just refer to the Old Testament people. We see many today who are locked away and snared, hiding but still being oppressed by the enemy, but to them also God says ‘Restore’.

We need the Kinsman Redeemer

The Hebrew word for ‘restore’ is *shub*; it means: *to turn back, to turn, return, restore, bring back, retrieve, and reverse*. This word is used in **Ruth 4:15** when the women were speaking of the child that had been born to Ruth. They said, *“May he be to you a restorer of life”*. But this child could never have been born if Ruth had not met her ‘kinsman redeemer’.

In **Ruth 4:14**, Boaz was referred to as *“a close relative”*, but the margin says this word is also translated *‘redeemer’*. Boaz was Ruth’s kinsman redeemer [a type of Christ Jesus]. As Ruth’s kinsman redeemer, he had the right and the responsibility to bring restoration to Naomi and her family line. Through the kinsman redeemer the Godly line was able to continue: *“Boaz begot Obed; Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David”* (Ru.4:22). This is a great example of God restoring.

Restore

In the Old Testament the word ‘restore’ can also mean: *to live, or to revive*. When used this way it means being restored to life; it means ‘living again’. This is the basis of true revival: to live, to come alive because of the presence and anointing of God.

The New Testament use of the word ‘restore’ is beautifully described in **Luke 6:10**. This is the story of the man with the withered hand in the synagogue. *“When Jesus had looked around at them all, He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.”*

This Greek word is *apokathistemi* and means to *reconstitute one’s health* [as in **Luke 6:10**], *one’s home, or one’s organisation* [as in **Acts 1:6** – the restoration of the kingdom].

What is the major area of restoration?

Psalms 23 gives us the answer: *“YAHWEH is my shepherd ... He restores my soul”* (v.1-2). The Hebrew word for ‘soul’ here is *nephesh* and literally means *a breathing creature*, but is mostly translated as *soul*, referring to the human person. The Hebrew view of the human person was one of a whole person. It was the Greeks and the Latins who later began to divide the human person as being tripartite, that is, body, soul and spirit (**1Thess.5:23**) and the Scripture confirms this; and the division of soul and spirit is referred to in **Hebrews 4:12**. Therefore, the soul is mostly a reference to the whole human person but including that part of our being that we call the soul [the inward being], the seat of mind, will and emotions. This is the soul that needs restoration.

God began that great restoration by becoming our Kinsman Redeemer, revealing Himself to us as the Saviour. The new birth is the beginning of the restoration, but there is so much more that God wants to restore to us.

In **Isaiah 54:4** God says, *“Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; for you will forget the shame of your youth and will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.”* God is able to bring us all out of shame! God is able to restore that which we have lost and all that has been taken from us.

Restoration in the New Covenant

God introduces the new covenant in **Jeremiah 31** with many promises of restoration. For example: *“YAHWEH has redeemed Jacob and ransomed him from the hand of one stronger than he. Therefore, they shall come and sing in the heights of Zion, streaming to the goodness of YAHWEH. For wheat and new wine and oil, for the young of the flock and the herd; their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, and they shall sorrow no more at all”* (v.11-12).

Isaiah 58:12 *“You shall be called ... the Restorer of Paths [streets] to Dwell In”*. This is a Messianic reference to Jesus coming and restoring our lives and giving us a place to dwell in. Remember He said *“In the house of My Father are many dwelling places ... I go to prepare a place for you”* (**Jn.14:2**). Many think this place is referring to heaven but if you read the context carefully Jesus is referring to Him coming and living in us so that we can fulfil our destiny and purpose in the earth.

There is another picture of restoration in **Amos 9:11** of the restoration of the *“tabernacle of David”*. This is a reference to the dynasty or the kingly line of David and is quoted in **Acts 15:16-17** in terms of the gospel going forth to the Gentiles because through Jesus the throne of David has been restored (**Lu.1:32-33**).

A major theme

The Scripture reveals the absolute importance of restoration in the plan of God: *“Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began”* **Acts 3:20-21**. Jesus Christ cannot return at any time, but His coming is fully planned and includes that the church is fully involved in restoration. The Greek work used here means *to set in order*.

This restoration includes the restoration of the five ministries of **Ephesians 4:11** and the fulfillment of their function to bring the church *“to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”* (**Eph.4:13b**). Such a bold plan that God has!

The word ‘perfect’ is the Greek word *teleios*, also appearing in **James 3:2**. It means: *reaching an end, finished, complete, perfect. It signifies consummate soundness in the soul and includes the idea of being whole; it denotes maturity.*

Galatians 6:1 speaks of restoring one who is *“overtaken in any trespass”*. Such a person is to be restored spiritually *“in a spirit of gentleness”*. The word for restore here means *to complete thoroughly, to render fit or complete*. It refers to *mending a net, restoring a soul,*

and being perfectly trained (Lu.6:40). The goal of discipleship is that we be perfectly trained, that is, to be fully like our teacher – remember our teachers are representing the Teacher, Jesus.

The word ‘restore’ used in **Galatians 6:1** is also used in **1 Peter 5:10**. This is an amazing reference. It is already a well-known verse among many of us, but now it has even deeper and greater meaning. Peter prays for us *“May the God of all grace who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strength and settle you.”* The word ‘restore’ in this verse is translated ‘perfect’. God wants us to be perfect [restored], that is, perfectly trained.

The reality of restoration is a core theme for the whole work of discipleship. Luke was able to say, *“It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first” (Lu.1:3)*. While the word ‘perfect’ in this verse has the sense of ‘accurate’, it suggests that Luke was in the process of being a perfectly trained disciple. He knew the word of God so well that he was able to write the gospel.

WHAT DOES RESTORATION LOOK LIKE?

From **SHAME**

to **FAME** [in the sense of a good reputation,
a life touched by the glory of God]

From **LOSTNESS**

to **FULLFILLING DESTINY**

& **PURPOSELESSNESS**

[God has a good purpose for every life]

From **INSIGNIFICANCE**

to the **THRONE** [the life of David – he was not

even

invited to be part of the special family

celebration

with Samuel the prophet].

From **JUDGEMENT** [which we deserve]

to **JUSTIFICATION** [which is a free gift]

From the **DISOBEDIENCE** of **SIN**

to the **RIGHTEOUSNESS** of **JESUS CHRIST**

These are some areas of restoration. You could add many others to the list. It is good to meditate on the restoration that God has already done in our lives, but it is also good to meditate on the areas of restoration that God wants to complete in our lives. God’s goal is for fully restored people being His body in the earth, fully representing and manifesting His awesome glory in Christ.

This message of restoration was first preached by Pastor Debbie Van Lathum at a Shiloh Sunday meeting and then Paul picked up on the theme and brought a further word. This newsletter is seeking to express what the Spirit was emphasising to us. Paul Galligan