

Lesson #12

Impartation of Power

(The 20th Century Revivals)

The Two Great Awakenings and the different waves of revival associated covered approximately a 200 year period. The breath of God's mouth was continuing to consume the antichrist systems of centralized religious hierarchy and foundational truths were being restored. The emphasis on personal salvation and the priesthood of the believer in the reformation, coupled with personal holiness and Christlikeness in the Great Awakening, resulted in a new paradigm of thought regarding the intrinsic value of the individual and individual rights. The result was an elevated value of people resulted in a new and unique kind of government in the United States, a government which derived its authority to govern from the consent of the governed.

But the restoration of foundational principles was not complete. The 20th century would be the stage for a revelation and restoration of power to the Church through the principle referred to in scripture as the doctrine of laying on of hands. In this lesson we will see how this foundational concept is essentially the concept of *equipping the saints for the work of ministry*. With the priesthood of the believer and sanctification being restored, the concept of *hands on impartation* was next. It would provide a doctrinal foundation for acceleration of the Christian cause through multiplication by impartation. God was about to pour out His Spirit on all flesh in a way that could be called the Second Pentecost.

Parham's Bible School

Charles Parham began preaching at age 15, working with the Methodists, but was never officially ordained. He was a pioneer of sorts, always seeking the cutting edge of what God was doing. He traveled widely before starting his own Bible training school in Topeka Kansas where he taught that a deeper experience with God was available. Late in 1899, Charles Parham gave an assignment to his students: "What are the Biblical evidences of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit."¹

As Winkie Pratney states it, "This innocent directive planted the roots of what has now become the most powerful movement in modern missions."² The students concluded that the single most biblical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was speaking in other tongues and they immediately set themselves to seek it. Then, on January 1, 1900, the first day of the new century, their diligent seeking was rewarded. The Holy Spirit poured out the gift of other tongues on one of the seekers. Parham began holding meetings with some success and began teaching in his school that God was restoring the spiritual gifts to the Church.

¹Pratney, *Revival, Its Principles and Personalities*, Huntington House Pub., p.128

²Pratney, p. 128

Though there had been isolated occurrences of speaking in other tongues as recorded in Acts Chapter 2, one of which may have been Finney's account of being baptized in the Holy Spirit ("*I bellowed out the unutterable gushings of my heart*"), the time had come for God to go mainstream with restoring such gifts to the Church.

World-wide Awakening Begins

Starting in 1904, what some have called *The New Century Awakening* began. Things were kicking off in Wales where a young man named Evan Roberts, through extraordinary prayer, saw the birth of a revival that not only swept his nation, but had effects worldwide. The Welsh Revival crossed the Atlantic, started on the east coast and moved westward. In Atlantic City, New Jersey, it is claimed that, of the nearly 60,000 population, only 50 adults were left unconverted! In Burlington, Iowa, the whole city basically ceased operation and businesses closed their doors while people attended prayer services. Similar effects were felt in Denver, Colorado. Stories such as these were common and swept westward where Azusa Street Revival would serve as a kind of official unveiling of the Second Pentecost.

Azusa Street Revival

The year was 1906 and the wave of revival that was sweeping across America was about to hit the small church in Los Angeles where William Seymour was now the pastor. Seymour, a poor one-eyed black man, had been one of Charles Parham's students in his Oklahoma bible school. Segregation was still common in those days but Parham liked Seymour and had allowed him to sit outside the classroom with the door purposely left ajar so Seymour could listen in on the Bible lectures.

In an old dirt floor building in Los Angeles, during a ten day fast, The Holy Spirit was poured out on Seymour's congregation. The gift of tongues and other "charismatic phenomena" was also poured out. Starting in April 1906, the meetings went on every night for three and a half years. The following from Pratney's book sums it up.

Glossolalia [tongues] was considered integral but not primarily the mark of individual spiritual attainment. Rather it was seen as a kind of energy to be released and directed to break the barriers blocking full Christian fellowship in the new community. ... Glossolalia proved sensational, but the truly revolutionary thrust from Azusa Street depended on overcoming the color line which opened up the possibility of turning a racist world upside down. Azusa is a key not only for the church renewal but also for social transformation, simply by its own witness to the surrounding culture. The deepest truth of Azusa lay not in the simple fact that diverse people came together but in *how* they came together. The whites came with love and true repentance for the way they felt about blacks and had treated them. The blacks came with love and genuine forgiveness. Orientals, Hispanics, native Americans and others participated similarly. It was a revival of brokenness and bridge-building. ...

— Nelson: PH.D. Thesis, U. Birmingham, 1981, pp. 66-67 n.10)

People came from all over to witness what God was doing. Many who came to scoff at the revival and the strange manifestations that were taking place left as believers, having witnessed or experienced dramatic healings and conversions. Because of the multi-cultural nature of Los Angeles and the Azusa

Street revival, the effects of the revival took root worldwide and gave birth to the Pentecostal Movement.

More Waves of Revival

The twentieth century started out with the revivals mentioned above and continued with the healing revivals in the 1940s and 1950s with names like William Branham, Oral Roberts, and A.A. Allen . Then came the Charismatic Movement of the 1970s, which tore down denominational walls and brought Pentecostal experience to literally every denomination. The Charismatic Movement led to the Vineyard movement founded by John Wimber starting in the early 1980s, and the century closed with phenomena such as the Toronto Blessing (1994) and the Brownsville Florida Revival (1995). These revivals were marked with, not only the gift of tongues, but increased healing, miracles, and unusual manifestations of power.

The Charismatic Movement

One significant movement of the 20th century was the Charismatic Movement of the 1970's. By this time, the mystery of iniquity had made inroads into the Pentecostal movement and “Pentecostal Institutions” had appeared. The racial healing initiated at Azuza Street took a step backward when the movement split along racial lines. The result was the Assemblies of God denomination (which is primarily white) and the Church of God denomination (which is primarily black).

God continued to work within these different divisions and bless them, but through the Charismatic Movement, God addressed denominational barriers in a broader way. With Holy Spirit Baptism as the common denominator instead of denomination affiliation, this movement cut powerfully across virtually every denominational barrier and dealt another major blow to institutional hierarchies that had hindered the priesthood of the believer.

The Charismatic movement manifested in many ways, including home-based fellowships and many independent churches setting up shop in vacant storefronts, warehouses, etc. The result was rapid multiplication and today, literally every major institution of Christendom has an element of charismatic Christians who believe in Holy Spirit Baptism and the manifestation of the supernatural gifts. Charisma Magazine is a popular publication that continues to be a voice of the Charismatic Community at large.

The Discipleship Movement

Lacking structure, the new fellowships and independent churches generated by the Charismatic Movement needed training and some form of order. This need had been evident ever since the Azuza days. Order came in the form of the Discipleship Movement which became popular in the 1970s largely through a group based in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. The five basic leaders of the group were, Derek Prince, Don Basham, Bob Mumford, Charles Simpson, and Ern Baxter. A magazine, called *New Wine*, was the flagship publication.

As with most new acquisitions of truth, the church did not know how to apply discipleship very well. Though mentoring and accountability are valid and needed aspects of Christianity, young, inexperienced leaders often exercised heavy-handed authority over others. Instead of pointing people to a relationship with Christ and helping them grow in it, the emphasis of the believer's relationship to the human "shepherd" became too strong in many cases. What should have been the seeking of advice

or counsel from elder brothers often became seeking permission from earthly leaders. The negative aspects of the discipleship movement were simply the same old tactics of the antichrist spirit trying to usurp individual priesthood.

The result, of course, was the typical knee-jerk reaction and many threw the baby out with the bath water. Discipleship was rejected in many places and became the unspeakable "D" word to many. Nevertheless, human leadership and discipleship remain valid concepts and God desires that we be disciples who make disciples (see 2 Tim 2:2).

Apostolic/Prophetic Movement

The Discipleship Movement may have been the seeds that produced the apostolic/prophetic organizations that would emerge near the end of the century. Out of the need for discipleship came an increased awareness of the five-fold ministry as described in Ephesians 4:11. The recognition of apostolic and prophetic oversight ministries, which were recognized because of their gifting and not because of structural hierarchy or position, began to be more common as supplements to the traditional pastor in the local setting. These ministries gave rise to Christian teaching conferences which continue to be popular.

House Church Movement

The home-based fellowships spawned by the Charismatic movement became a sub-movement of its own. People who longed for deeper relationships and were tired of being "Christian spectators" found the simplicity of the House Church attractive. These groups also became a valid alternative for people who had experienced Holy Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts but were no longer welcome in their traditional church.

The house church concept goes a long way toward erasing the clergy/laity barriers that have prevented the vast majority of Christians from being active in the work of God. Yet many house church efforts have faltered due to a lack of direction, vision and leadership. Some churches have incorporated a variation of the concept, often called cell groups, with their traditional structure as a way of providing a relational component and a venue for deeper study.

A Foundational Principle Established!

Azusa Street and the subsequent waves of revival restored the power of the Holy Spirit to the church, and the Charismatic Movement cut through denominational and institutional barriers. As a result, the 20th Century saw a paradigm shift from institutional churches with professional clergy to the release of the individual believer-priest.

In every new move of God, there are those from the old move who have difficulty receiving it. True to this pattern, there were many who persecuted this new Pentecost calling it heresy. Though there have certainly been and continues to be abuses of its principles and counterfeit manifestations of spiritual gifts, we must remember that revivals are always messy and always have examples of excess and error. Nevertheless, churches and Christians who believe and practice these things are now an established part of the Christian landscape. Even though some still reject the Pentecostal movement and its common practices, the foundation of the Holy Spirit empowered believer has been restored and it will not be

stopped. The Lord continues to consume the “man of sin” with the breath of His mouth (2 Thess 2:8) where ever he shows up.

Defining The Laying on of Hands

A study of “laying on of hands” reveals this practice was used for healing the sick, baptism of the Holy Spirit, imparting of spiritual gifts, ordination of church officers, and the sending of believers for specific purposes (see Mark 16:18; Acts 8:17; Acts 19:6; Romans 1:11; Acts 6:5-6; Acts 13:2-3). All of these applications can be summed up in the concepts of impartation and discipleship, i.e., *equipping the saints for the work of ministry*. See Ephesians 4:11-15 below.

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--

Ephesians 4:11-15 (NKJV)

In this lesson we saw how the restoration of power brought about the need and the activation of the five-fold ministry. The purpose of these five expressions of leadership is to equip the saints for ministry. As a result, we will grow in maturity and no longer be manipulated by antichrist leaders who love preeminence among men. We will know where we came from, where we are going, and will be able to align ourselves with the purpose of God in this present age and prepare the way for the resurrection, the return of Jesus, and for the Kingdom of God to appear on earth.

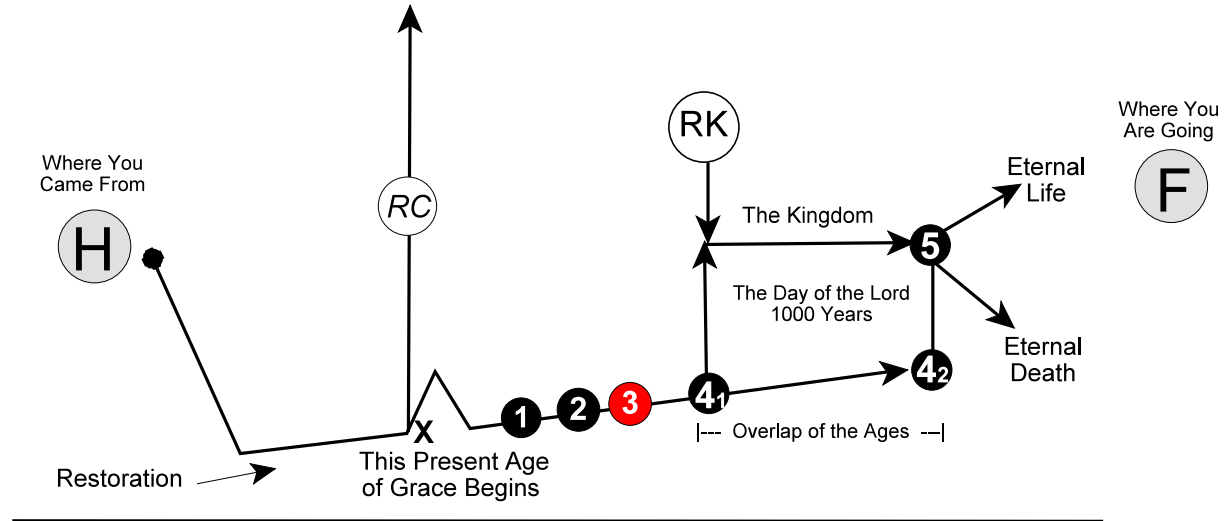
Note:

The steps of restoration that have been cited over the centuries should be understood in general terms. There were certainly people who were justified by faith before the reformation, there were men and women of God who understood holiness before The Great Awakening, and the Holy Spirit has never been bankrupt concerning His gifts nor has He ever been without disciples. Nevertheless, the revivals and movements described here brought these things forward and caused them to be restored as accepted elements of Christian practice in all parts of the world.

It should also be understood that this is a view of history based largely on the moving of God in Europe and North America. This is not to deny the significant work of God in other places around the world. However, the working of God in Europe and North American in the last 200 years generated a missionary movement that has had an significant impact on Christianity in nearly every part of the world. The restoration of these elementary principles are significant to people everywhere.

Now we can add number 3 to our Destiny Diagram: The Laying on of Hands. The concept of Laying on of Hands is the foundational truth that embodies impartation of power through hands on ministry.

Destiny Diagram 12



- RC The Resurrection of Christ
- 1 Repentance from Dead Works and Faith Toward God
- 2 Doctrines of Baptisms (washings)
- 3 **The Laying on of Hands**
- 4₁ The First Resurrection & RK- The Return of the King
- 4₂ The Second Resurrection
- 5 Eternal Judgment

