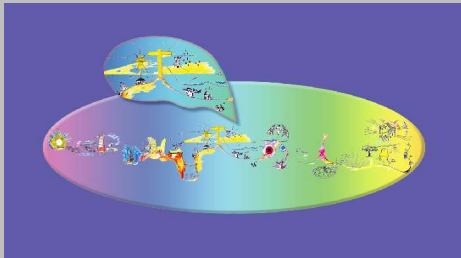


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We believe in one GOD, in three persons; FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT. We regard the Bible (both Hebrew Bible and New Testaments) as the only infallible authoritative WORD OF GOD.

HULDAH MINISTRY aims to return to the Word Of God, founded on Hebrew background and to interpret it from Hebraic perspective, acknowledging that Jesus is a Jew and the Jewish-ness of His teaching as a continuation from the Hebrew Bible. The Ministry also aims to put His teaching into practice, to have a closer relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ, and to regularly have a Christian fellowship so that this-worldly kingdom of God will materialise in the midst of the followers of Jesus here and now, as well as earnestly seeking Christ's Return to establish the otherworldly Kingdom of God on earth.

All activities are free of charge and no obligation whatever. Just enjoy our fellowship!

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HULDAH MINISTRY

LETTER TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

【 MEANING OF 'REVIVAL' 】

Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock; you who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.

Awaken your might; come and save us.

Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

O LORD God Almighty, how long will your anger smoulder against the prayers of your people? You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have made them drink tears by the bowlful. You have made us a source of contention to our neighbours, and our enemies mock us.

Restore us, O God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. It sent out its boughs to the Sea, its shoots as far as the River.

Why have you broken down its walls so that all who pass by pick its grapes? Boars from the forest ravage it and the creatures of the field feed on it. Return to us, O God Almighty! Look down from heaven and see! Watch over this vine, the root your right hand has planted, the son you have raised up for yourself.

Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire; at your rebuke your people perish. Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have raised up for yourself. Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name.

Restore us, O LORD God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

PSALM80

It is amazing that there are many myths surrounding and influencing us that have been believed as biblical doctrines or statements without appropriate scrutiny. Today, among many, the legend of the “Ten Lost Tribes” is worldwide with its mystical fascination, whose primary appeal is that the ten tribes of Israel, after the Assyrian captivity when the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom ‘Israel’ in 722 BCE, were lost and scattered all over the world. Despite the existence of some claims that the legend has become part of the doctrine on the basis of misconceptions about some biblical passages, the idea that the majority of the lost tribes’ offspring must be found somewhere on earth seems to appeal to the curiosity of the secular world.

In Japan, a TV programme recently picked up this theme and presented it with enthusiasm and mystification. While it may well be possible that a flock of the lost tribes, after wondering and travelling along the Silk Road from west to east finally reached the then almost empty island, Japan, and remained there to establish a small community, and that they originated two different Japanese alphabets; “Hiragana” and “Katakana” out of Hebrew letters, it would still be myth that the majority of the ten tribes have still been lost since the Assyrian captivity, and that Japan has been birthed by one of the lost ten tribes. Concerning the issue, investigations are said to have been initiated by the Israeli authorities under the “Law of Return” that was passed to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Israel.

This month I would like to examine another popular belief of the doctrine of “revival.” Today many Christians continue to believe in a worldwide revival. Many prophecies have been uttered about a mighty and imminent revival, and they continually encourage believers with great expectations. There are many churches that have been propelled by these prophecies. Looking back decades ago, towards the end of the 1980s many Christian leaders prophesied of a worldwide revival with great enthusiasm and confidence, and they believed that the entire world would be evangelised by the end of the year 2000. Whenever a turning point of the century approached Christians have been caught by the same feelings and thoughts that the end would be near. The Toronto experience took place in the midst of such fervour and it was very highly expected to develop to a mighty end-time revival but in vain. Actually it was only few flocks of the Lord that rightly warned Christians of its deceptive nature and fallacious idea of spiritual awakening and revival. Nevertheless, since then, a belief in a mighty end-time revival is still dominant.

However, does this widespread belief or expectation really reflect biblical promise and prophetic voice? While the majority are already on the mood, some plainly claim that such belief is a myth stemming from a false doctrine of “triumphalism.” How overwhelmingly this triumphalism has permeated Christian thoughts and activities can be seen in every facet of present-day church; in its victorious worship songs with noisy musical instruments, evangelical ways of out-reach to non-believers and worldly accepted but seriously belittled portraits of Jesus Christ. In secularised Christianity, biblical messages seem to have considerably been modified so as to be acceptable to the tastes of carnal man. Triumphalism loves to quote and apply verses such as Deuteronomy 28:13 to the church: ***‘The LORD will make you the head, not the tail...you will always be at the top, never at the bottom.’*** But the church tends to ignore the continued conditional part of the divine promise: ***‘If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them.’***

According to biblical teachers’ studies, triumphalism is mainly supported by the following three strands of theology and movements. **(1) Dominion Theology:** It claims that its basis is in the Scripture. When God created male and female on the sixth day of creation, He blessed them and said: ***‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground’*** (Ge.1:28). Accordingly, the theology encourages the church to go forth exercising dominion over all earthly creatures, flourishing, filling the earth with Christians and even ruling the nations. Apparently its emphasis and interest are not in God’s eternity and man’s salvation by God, but rather, in man’s survival on earth. The believers of this theology interpret the divine dominion mandate as the church’s dominion over the creatures including the peoples on earth. However, there is no man except Jesus Christ our Lord, who rules over man.

(2) Replacement Theology: It declares that God has finished with Israel and that Jewish people are no longer God’s chosen because of their rejection of Jesus as their anointed king, Messiah. As the result, God’s promise primarily given to Israel has been transferred to the church. In other words, this theology claims that it is God Himself that has replaced Israel by church. On the basis of this assumption, the church has applied the passages of blessings promised to Israel to the church, i.e., so-called “spiritual Israel” but in their understanding, passages of curse still remain in Israel only. Applying the triumphant

and glorious prophetic words of God such as Isaiah 62 to herself, the church joyfully and victoriously exclaims in her worship in such ways as “God is exalting the church among the nations,” or “The nations shall see the glory of the church” and so on, though Isaiah clearly addressed God’s words to none other than the nation Israel: *‘For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; You will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. You will be a crown of splendour in the LORD’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God...’* Likewise, God’s Word spoken to Israel in Scriptures has gravely been misunderstood and misapplied to the church and the supporters of this theology believe that a mighty end-time revival would be a fulfilment of biblical prophecies promised to ‘spiritual Israel,’ i.e., church herself.

(3) The Latter Rain Movement: It claims that the real sign of the last days is pictured by a worldwide revival, fuelled by the outpouring of the Spirit and miraculous signs and wonders. In October 1990, unprecedented expectations and fervour of a last-day great revival intensified in England and the majority of Charismatic, Evangelical, and Pentecostal Christian leaders enthusiastically gave highest priority to the proposed great meetings. They gathered together for a week conference to witness a twentieth century great revival, Pentecost. Many came from abroad at the expense of time, space, money and labour. As a result, nothing happened. This failure was solely a result of the blinded obedience to false prophecies uttered by a certain American highly evaluated prophet. He had not only predicted the place and the month of revival but also he had stated with confidence, ‘God will raise a super breed of Christians, and strongly grown Christianity will eventually take over the world.’ On the contrary, the Bible tells us that it is not a true faith in Christ but a false Christianity (religion) that will eventually take over the world. In other words, what is on the rise in place of the true church would be a deceptive and demonic religion finally integrated by Antichrist. Contrary to the popular views of church, the end-time scenario is not so optimistic. Thus, along with the other two false theologies shown above, this movement has also fuelled a false sense of triumphalism in the church.

Having examined the wrong conceptions leading to expectations of a last-days mighty revival, we will now examine the Scripture concerning biblical reference to revival and end-time scenarios.

First, in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) there are many passages where the Hebrew prophets as a representative of God’s people Israel earnestly plead with the Lord for His mercy and restoration on behalf of Israel. For example, the prophet Habakkuk who lived as a southern kingdom prophet towards the end of king Josiah’s reign, acknowledging God’s unavoidable and imminent judgment upon Judah, after lengthy argument with Him over His unfathomable, seemingly unfair ways, cried out to Him to preserve Judah in the midst of judgment. This plea by Habakkuk, asking God to let the nation Israel to still exist through His judgment is understood to be a prayer of corporate **“revival,”** in which an idea of God’s **“preservation of a remnant”** emerges. Likewise, Psalm 80, quoted at the beginning is a plea for this idea of “revival.” The psalm is primarily concerned with the northern kingdom of Israel, depicted by three names *‘Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh,’* known as the divisions of the *‘camp of Ephraim’* in the marching order of the Israelites in the wilderness in Moses’ time, while the entire Jewish nation seems to be called as well by the name *‘Joseph’* because he is the one who sustained the community of Israel in Egypt during the famine before the Exodus. The fact that the ark of the covenant, a dwelling place of Almighty God went forth just in front of the troops of these three tribes whenever the Israelites marched in the wilderness from Sinai into the promised land was far away reminiscence of the assured presence of God who led them at that time. Accordingly, this psalm might be a plea of devout Israelites referring either to the fall of Samaria by the Assyrians in 722 BCE, or the whole exiled Jewish community after the Babylonian Exile in 586 BCE. The Lord is addressed as the *‘Shepherd of Israel’* and at the same time as the divine king who sits *‘enthroned between the cherubim’* on the atonement cover placed on top of the ark. In the midst of their plight the psalmist prayed so that God would shine forth from the Holy of Holies with mercy, and restore His people by causing them to turn back to Him. Recalling their earlier glorious and intimate relationship with God, the psalmist’s intercession for restoration continues, in that he feels that even their prayers seem to anger the Lord when Israel seeks divine answer. It is entirely attributed to God’s working alone that after the Exodus, the *‘vine’* brought out of Egypt was transplanted and flourished in the promised land so as to spread during the empires of David and Solomon, over the mountains of Judea as far as Lebanon symbolised by the beautiful and mighty cedar forests, the Mediterranean coast *‘the Sea,’* and the Euphrates river *‘the River’*. On the contrary, the reality is that the

vineyard was deserted and invaded by the Gentiles symbolised by wild beasts *'boars'* and *'creatures of the field'*. Throughout the verses of the psalm God is recalled as the One that is faithful to His promises to His *'flock,'* His *'people,'* and His *'vine,'* i.e., Israel. When Benjamin was born, his dying mother Rachel named him *'Ben-oni'* that meant "son of my sorrow" at the cost of her life, according to the custom that mothers named their children. Jacob, his father, however, refused the name and called him *'Benjamin,'* "son of (my) right hand." Likewise, it should be Jacob (Israel) that would be the man of God's right hand by grace, for exactly whose purposes he had been planted and raised up by the Lord. The plea of restoration and blessing from the Lord by the psalmist –that if only God turns back and reinforce His protection upon Israel (**the vineyard 'walls'**), Israel will return to Him and become the ideal God's people- somewhat reflects Solomon's intercessory prayer in 1Kings 8:33-34 where a plea for preservation: **"Restore us,..."** was a desperate cry for revival. Thus, revival has something to do with the idea of God's preservation of a remnant of people.

Next, concerning end-time scenarios, what does the Bible tell us? Jesus told His disciples how the end of the age will turn out in the fifth and last Olivet discourse in Matthew 24:9-14. Also, in one of His last messages of John 13-17, spoken to His intimate disciples alone in the upper room, Jesus referred to His disciples' future difficulty because the human system and the sinful nature of man oppose to God's purposes, and He prayed for their protection to the Father, in which He took it for granted that for His followers including all future believers, persecution from the world would be inevitable. What Jesus taught was that the last days would be painted by increasing deception, persecution, lawlessness and apostasy from God rather than a vision of an ever growing glorious, mighty church ruling over the earth. Paul in his several letters also repeatedly warned the followers of Christ not to drift away from the truth but to firmly and patiently remain in what was originally taught, to the end because the days before the return of the Lord would be the most difficult and terrible times to faithfully remain in Christ and His teaching even for the elect.

As examined above, throughout the Bible, the idea of revival seems to have something to do with the survival or preservation of a remnant after divine judgment and nothing to do with a massive, influential expansion of church. While it is true that the church is commanded to go out to the end of the world to reach out to everyone and to make disciples, and this mission is undoubtedly God's high purpose for the church, such an expected image on revival by supporters of triumphalism is far different from the biblical doctrine of revival. A high view of the end-time church as the corporate people of God tends to emphasise the power of the Holy Spirit outpoured on the nations, with expectations of recurrence of the supernatural event of Pentecost in the first century. Turning to past events, indeed, it is also true that in times history has witnessed such a great revival. However, it took place not as a result of Christianity's popularisation but in the midst of severe persecution and furious opposition. The Book of Acts testifies both down- and up-wards paths of God's working that had shaped history time to time differently, even when the same Holy Spirit has always been at work since the day of Pentecost. The fact that whereas there was a season of rapid increasing of disciple's number and of spreading God's Word in Jerusalem, in another season, Stephen, the chosen man of God full of the Spirit and wisdom was seized and had to be killed by the opposition because of the hardened hearts of the people against God despite the Spirit's never ceasing work, suggests that true Christianity and true church were not intended to take over the world at all as the supporters of triumphalism firmly anticipate. Christ's prophetic words concerning the time of His second coming: ***'when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?'*** (Luke 18:8) clearly warns us not to hold false, excessive expectation, and nowhere in the Scriptures is there any promise of a growing, dominant church in the last days.

It is reported that in the twentieth century more martyrs for Christ have been recorded than the previous nineteen centuries. This means that persecution over the true believers is on the increase, in parallel with the world becoming more and more pagan than ever. Accordingly, it would be fair to conclude that it is neither a time of dancing with joy of triumphalism, nor being drunk by human or alien spirits without willingly responding to the Word of God and without preparing for the sweeping rush of apostasy and deception in the end-times. True church should rightfully and wisely be prepared for the times of difficulty preceding real revival, i.e., preservation of a remnant by maintaining upsurge in intercessory and sacrificial prayer. This is exactly what the Lord suggested in the context of Luke 18:1-8, and this alone would be a source of empowering true church to the end-times. Turn your ears to His voice: ***'Listen ... will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night ?'***