



# Believers Bible School

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## Azusa Street and Beyond

### 1. Events Leading Up to Azusa Street Revival

#### Lesson I Events Leading Up to Azusa Street Revival

#### Lesson Objective

Reveal the historical events that led up to Azusa Street to demonstrate how these events have played a part in bringing the Church back to the Book of Acts.

This course begins with the events that led up to the Azusa Street Revival of 1906 – 1909 A.D. Many events had to happen which brought about the most important religious events of the past century. In a dilapidated building at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California, God brought a revival that changed the Church at large. As the centennial event is celebrated, it brings back memories, giving honor to those who played such a vital part as the Church returns to a biblical foundation.



## The Reformation Period of Europe

### Martin Luther

The greatest event that changed the course of the Church came through a man named Martin Luther in the 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Luther, a former monk, priest, and educator within Roman Catholicism, became disillusioned with the practices and traditions of the Church – the Church referring to the “only church” throughout most of Europe. Shocked by the gaiety, lack of reverence, unbelief, and immorality of Italian priests, Luther questioned the Church on its responsibilities toward its people. Eventually, Luther became angry at the hoaxes perpetrated by Church officials. This motivated him to search the Scriptures on what was truth, which brought him to believe that people are saved by the grace of God alone - not by anything one could do. He came to believe that the Bible alone is the standard for teachings and doctrines, not the traditions and beliefs of Roman Catholicism.



Luther challenged the Church by composing a 95 Thesis, attacking several of the main tenets of the doctrines of Roman Catholicism. The day he nailed his thesis to the church castle door at Wittenberg, Germany on October 31, 1517 A.D. marked the official date of the Reformation Period. The Church was about to change!

Luther was condemned as a heretic; however, he managed to avoid the death penalty. He spent his life affirming Scriptural truth, and out of that emerged the Protestant Movement. The Church now was divided between Catholicism and Protestantism.

### **The Reformation spread**

The Reformation spread across Europe in less than 100 years. Other reformers came forth in the persons of John Calvin of France, Ulrich Zwingli of Switzerland, John Knox of Scotland, John and Charles Wesley of England, and others. The reformation of individual lives spread to movements of various groups of people, which caused a blaze of fire as revival spread across the continent. Though less than perfect, carrying different slants of "what was believed as truth," other denominations were formed. This blaze eventually crossed the waters to the New World.



### **Religion in the New World**

The 18th century brought a steady expansion from the influx of immigrants from Europe into the British colonies in North America. Never considering themselves as subservient to the British government, the immigrant settlers simply sought religious freedom or independence. They first came from England, later the Netherlands, Germany, and other countries in Europe. It didn't take long before the British colonies was a melting pot of Europeans immigrants.

### **England's control over the British colonies in America**

The British colonies enjoyed a measure of autonomy due to the distance of Great Britain and the New World. The original agreement for possessing land was simple - the colonies were to supply England with raw materials and not compete in manufacturing. That policy, however, was poorly enforced.

### **The French control**

The British colonies filled the Atlantic coastal area with farms, plantations, and towns up to the Appalachian Mountains. The French had been taking dominion in the St. Lawrence Valley in eastern Canada - heading down the Mississippi River by a line of forts and trading posts. This marked out an empire stretching from Quebec in the north to New Orleans in the south. Only the Appalachian Mountains divided the two powers.

The settlers knew they had come to a vast land of seemingly unending reach. They continuously wanted to stretch themselves further inland to seek out new territory. England, however, feeling impinged by the French, declared to the colonies that there could be no immigration to territories

beyond the Appalachian Mountains. A Parliamentary rule went forth that stated all British Colony residents had to remain within British territory. This left the people basically tied to the land where they resided.<sup>1</sup>

To reinforce her power and authority, the British government began a series of new laws and taxation on the settlers in the New World. Their purpose was to take control over the British colonies, using its people for British purposes. This created a growing conflict between England and the colonial residents, which eventually led to a chain reaction of power from England against the colonies and the colonies against England. This conflict eventually brought on a revolutionary war, known as the War of Independence.

### **Religious Diversity**

Catholicism was a small minority in the United States mainly due to the minority of Catholics in England who had immigrated to the New World. This, however, changed as other Europeans came across the waters. In addition, Catholicism grew strong in Canada through French colonization.<sup>2</sup> The Germans brought in large number of Lutherans, along with the Scotch-Irish from Northern Ireland bringing in Presbyterians who were persecuted by the Anglican Church into the New World. As new frontiers were being established, the impact of the un-churched became significant. The churches failed to keep up with the needs of the population. Many people were without church membership – in proportion to the population.

As the immigration of Europeans continued to the United States, the reasons for coming into the land of religious freedom greatly changed. With the influx of religious diversity, or no religion at all, this lessened Christian growth in the United States.<sup>3</sup>

## **The Two Great Awakenings of North America**

### **The Great Awakening**

In 1734 A.D., the first signs of the Great Awakening appeared in Northampton, Massachusetts through a pastor named Jonathan Edward. While his preaching did not draw crowds at first, the anointing of the Holy Spirit later brought on a revival through Edward's preaching of the conviction of sin, a personal salvation in Jesus Christ, and divine forgiveness. Emotional outbursts came forth as people were converted to Christ and lives were changed. This began a movement that swept across Massachusetts and into Connecticut - lasting for three years. Even though it ended, the memory of the revival remained strong in the people. At least 10 percent of New England was converted in the Great Awakening. Colleges that were developed out of that movement were Princeton through the works of the Presbyterians, Rutgers through the Dutch Reformed, Brown College through the Baptist, and Dartmouth through the Congregationalists.



<sup>1</sup> [http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/H/1990/ch2\\_p1.htm](http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/H/1990/ch2_p1.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Dowley, Tim. Introduction to the History of Christianity. Fortress Press. 1995

<sup>3</sup> Vos, Howard F. Exploring Church History. Thomas Nelson Publishers. 1996

## **The Second Great Awakening**

With the loss of the evangelical enthusiasm that characterized the First Great Awakening, along with the increase of the un-churched on the expanding frontiers, religion and morals declined all over the colonies. Toward the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, another awakening began at Hampden-Sidney, a little college in Virginia. The revival, known as the Second Great Awakening, began out of concern by three students for their spiritual condition. It then spread to Washington College, and from there throughout the Presbyterian Church in the South. The New England Congregational phase of the revival began at Yale in 1802 A.D. under the leadership of President Timothy Dwight, the grandson of Jonathan Edwards. Over one-third of the student body professed conversion during this revival, which later spread to Dartmouth, Williams, and other colleges.<sup>4</sup>

### **The spread of revival on the frontiers**

By 1820 A.D., one fourth of all European immigrants had migrated outside of the thirteen colonies. The social and moral conditions were deplorable in the new frontiers when revival spread. Thousands of people were converted to Christ, which had its frontier beginnings with the Cane Ridge Revival.<sup>5</sup> The revivals grew by the thousands and spread hundreds of miles. Many attendees of the revivals joined the denominations of those who led them, which by this time had been taken over by the Baptists and Methodists. By the middle of the century, these two denominations were the largest in the nation.<sup>6</sup>

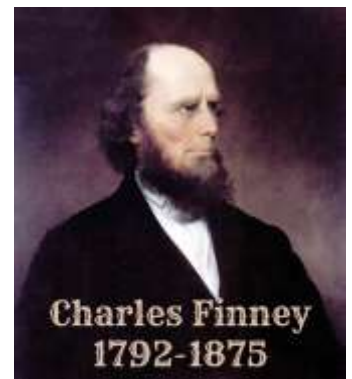
Revivals became an important social event on the frontier. While many came to the revivals for sincere religious reasons, there were others who used the revivals for their own licentious indulgences. This phase of the revival showed it more emotional and less intellectual - to the point that it eventually became anti-intellectual.

### **New societies that came out of phase one of the Second Great Awakening**

During this time two new societies came into being - the American Bible Society and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. In local churches, women's missionary societies appeared, which also gave way to various feminine organizations. Mid-week prayer meetings became an important institution in American Christianity.<sup>7</sup>

### **Charles Finney**

The second phase of the Second Great Awakening was more intellectual in nature. As the first phase began to lose some of its power, Charles Finney came on the scene. Born in 1792 A.D., Finney studied law and set up his practice in New York. While reading Blackstone's Commentaries on Law, Finney noted continuous references to the Holy Scriptures and God as the highest authority. This moved on him to purchase a Bible and in 1821 A.D. he was converted to Christ and experienced the power of the Baptism of the Spirit.



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<sup>4</sup> Cairns, Earle E. Christianity Through the Centuries, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Rev. Zondervan. Grand Rapids. 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Cairns, Earle E. Christianity Through the Centuries, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Rev. Zondervan. Grand Rapids. 1996.

<sup>6</sup> Cairns, Earle E. Christianity Through the Centuries, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Rev. Zondervan. Grand Rapids. 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Cairns, Earle E. Christianity Through the Centuries, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Rev. Zondervan. Grand Rapids. 1996.



Finney's unorthodox efforts took form in long-drawn-out meetings, everyday language in preaching, unseasonable hours for services, naming individuals in public prayer and sermons, and the "anxious bench" to which inquirers came forward for prayer or conversion.<sup>8</sup> Finney also became responsible for cottage prayer meetings at which non-Christians were prayed for by name in meetings in private homes.

In 1824 A.D., Finney conducted meetings in several Eastern cities, which then affected the surrounding towns as well.<sup>9</sup> Over ½ million people became born-again under his ministry. In 1835 A.D. he became the president of Oberlin College in Ohio. While president, he continued to be an influential revivalist through personal campaigns and the wide distribution of his Lectures on Revival. Out of Oberlin College came the Holiness and Pentecostal churches.

### **New societies that came out of phase two of the Second Great Awakening**

The Second phase of the Great Awakening also brought out various social causes, such as the abolition of slavery, the war against alcohol, the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

## **Slavery and the Civil War**

From almost the beginning of colonial times, the issue of slavery had troubled the conscience of many immigrant people – especially those of the northern colonies. The War of Independence with England, however, kept the voices low with efforts being wrapped up in war. Their fight, however, was for freedom – to have the right to live in religious freedom and being independent of other nations. Yet the practice of slavery had become a large part of the new nation.

The Quakers took a stand against slavery, and later other denominations joined them. Their efforts were brief, however. Slavery was big business, bringing in lots of money. By 1843 A.D., over 1000 Methodist ministers owned slaves, splitting the church. Out of that split came the Methodist Episcopal Church - South. Various denominations of churches ended up splitting as the abolition of slavery grew.

### **A split nation**

On November 6, 1860 A.D., Abraham Lincoln was elected president of the United States by 40% of the popular votes. In his campaigning he had declared that the government could not endure a permanently half slave, half free nation. Before he was sworn in as president on March 4, 1861 A.D. South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas seceded from the Union. The Confederate States of America was formed with Jefferson Davis, a West Point graduate and former U.S. Army officer, as its president. The United States of America was divided and a civil war was brewing.

The next month confederate soldiers opened fire upon Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina. The Civil War had begun. The casualties of war were immense on both sides. The South had fewer people and greater casualties. On January 1, 1863 A.D., President Lincoln issues an Emancipation Proclamation freeing all slaves in territories held by Confederates and emphasizes the enlisting of black soldiers in the Union Army. This Emancipation went before the Congress for ratification. The war to preserve the Union now became a revolutionary struggle for the abolition of slavery.

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<sup>8</sup> Cairns, Earle E. Christianity Through the Centuries, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Rev. Zondervan. Grand Rapids. 1996.

<sup>9</sup> Vos, Howard F. Exploring Church History. Thomas Nelson Publisher. Nashville. 1996.

The South had gained some measures of victory as it moved northward toward Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Just before the battle, President Lincoln went alone in prayer, praying for victory. He made a promise with God that he would serve him always if He would give the Union victory. On July 1-3, 1863 A.D., as the Battle of Gettysburg's shots rang out, it appeared the South would carry the victory. Suddenly, out of no where a white horse came carrying a man dressed somewhat like a general. The Rebels shot at him over and over again. There was no way they could not have killed him. When he continued to trudge through, showing no sign of injury, the Rebels, out of fear, ran. This miracle gave victory to the Union Army.<sup>10</sup> The tide of war was turned that day at Gettysburg. God had answered President Lincoln's prayer.

In November of 1864 A.D. President Lincoln was re-elected as president of the Union of the United States. One by one, the South succeeded as the Union increased its military power. On January 31, 1865 A.D. the U.S. Congress approved the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution to abolish slavery. On April 8, 1865 A.D. General Robert E. Lee surrendered his Confederate Army to General Ulysses S. Grant. Two days later celebration broke out in Washington and the U.S. flag of stars and stripes was ceremoniously raised over Fort Sumpter.

That night, President Lincoln and his wife Mary celebrated by going to a play at the Ford's Theater. Toward the end of the evening John Wilkes Booth shot Lincoln in the head. He died the next morning. By the next month the remaining Confederate forces surrendered. The Nation reunited as the Civil War ended.

## Following the Civil War

Following the Civil War, the blacks were able to have their own churches. Black churches, such as the African Methodist Episcopal and African Episcopal Zion churches, came into being. Soon black churches were one of the principal institutions of black society.

### **Formation that came out of the Civil War**

The hatred for the blacks, however, grew strong in the South. This led to the founding of the Ku Klux Klan. They did everything they could to restrict the power and rights of the black. In the urban areas, crowded conditions were forming within the black and white populations. Out of need to serve the masses came the organization of Young Men's (Women's) Christian Association (YMCA and YWCA). As churches grew, a new part of Sunday church came into being – That being Sunday School, which played an important role in learning about the Bible.

By 1872 A.D., in the midst of the lack of solid worship within the churches, several denominations agreed to have Scriptural texts to be used every Sunday to keep unity and collaboration across denominational lines.

### **Seventh-Day Adventists denomination**

Another denomination that came into being after the Civil War was the Seven-Day Adventists. Originally the founder claimed that Christ would return in 1843 A.D. But that day came and left. A small remnant, led by a woman who called herself a prophet, continued anxiously awaiting the Lord's

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<sup>10</sup> Wilds, Ken. Lampstand of America. Radio Broadcast. Focus on the Family. 2/21/05.

return. The movement, still considered Christian, but having mixed up theology, especially on end times, now centers in on medicine, dietetics, and missions.

## The Development of Cultic Denominations Within the United States

### Mormonism

Shortly before the Civil War the cultic denomination of the Mormons came into being, which differed from traditional Christianity. Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism seemed to be a failure. His parents were poor. Young Joseph did not like manual labor, and preferred to seek hidden treasures and claimed he had visions telling him where such treasures could be found. He then declared that an angel named Moroni appeared to him and gave him a collection of golden tablets written in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, and two “seer’s stones” with which made it possible to read the tablets. Out of that came the Book of Mormons. The Mormons took on communal living, and Smith continued to have visions that kept taking him further and further away from orthodox Christianity. He declared himself a candidate for the presidency of the United States, and eventually an unruly mob hung him by the neck. His successor Brigham Young took a group to Utah and started the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints.

### Jehovah’s Witnesses

Following the Civil War this cult was founded by Charles Russell. It came as a result of a group of several people searching Scripture, looking for hidden meanings, especially in relation to end times. Russell declared that the three great instruments of Satan were government, business, and the church. Russell also rejected the doctrine of the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus. He declared that the Second Coming of Christ had taken place in 1872 A.D. and that the end would be in 1914 A.D. The year 1914 brought on WW I, and Russell died 2 years later. His successor, Joseph Rutherford, named this movement Jehovah’s Witness,” and began a vast missionary crusade to win converts.

### Christian Science

This cult was the main expression of old European cultism of Gnosticism, Manicheism, Spiritualism, and others, claiming the material world is either imaginary or of secondary importance. It believes the purpose of human life is to live in harmony with the Universal Spirit, and that Scripture is to be interpreted by means of a spiritual clue, usually unknown to the majority of Christianity.

Mary Baker Eddy published a book called Science and Health, with a Key to Scripture. She used Christianese words in a spiritual sense that differed from the traditional ones. In 1879 A.D., Eddy founded the Church of Christ, Scientist. Soon it had followers throughout the nation. That same year Mary Baker Eddy founded a Metaphysical College in Boston, where “practitioners – not pastors - of Christian Science were trained.

## Christian Revivalist of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in the United States

### **Phoebe Palmer**

Phoebe Palmer, raised under Wesleyan theology, supported the doctrine of Entire Sanctification, which taught that through an instantaneous experience, sometime after conversion, a believer could become “entirely sanctified,” or reach a state of “Christian perfection. Important to that doctrine was

holy living. Palmer began to popularize the term “Baptism in the Holy Ghost” which she felt was synonymous with the experience of Entire Sanctification.

Phoebe Palmer held “Tuesday meetings for the promotion of holiness” as early as 1835 A.D. It is estimated that she brought over 25,000 people to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> Some of the outstanding characteristics of this holiness movement were emotional fervor, Puritanical moves, hatred toward dry religion, and above all, belief in entire sanctification in one’s Christian experience. Often healing took place at her meetings.



**Phoebe Palmer did not affiliate speaking in tongues with the Baptism in the Holy Ghost.**

*The challenge with the doctrine of Entire Sanctification is that no one can be totally sanctified. No one can totally consecrate him or herself unto God. Flesh always remains. Sanctification does have a beginning point when a person becomes born-again and becomes serious about his or her relationship with Christ. At that point, the new believer becomes a new creature on the inside God begins the work of heart change. That change is a progressive work on the inside as the believer is changing from glory to glory.*

### **Dwight L. Moody (1827 – 1899 A.D.)**

Dwight L. Moody was affected by Phoebe Palmer. He adopted her practices in the training of lay evangelists. What he learned transformed urban revivalism.

Moody was born again at the age of 17 in the back room of a shoe store where he worked as a clerk through a church member where he attended church. While working, he found himself more absorbed in religious work as he gathered misfortuned youth from the slums and brought them to Sunday School. His class increased to 1500 youths in four years. Within a few short years he went into full-time ministry.



When the Civil War broke out, Moody worked as a chaplain. After battles, he wandered the fields witnessing to wounded soldiers on both sides who had not accepted Christ.<sup>11</sup> He traveled to Great Britain as a revivalist and began a series of evangelical meetings. He later returned to America and his fame spread. He began his own church in Chicago and preached until his death in 1899 A.D. Moody Bible Institute of Chicago was named in his honor. The institute does not presently; however, believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit as Dwight L. Moody lived and practiced.

### **John Alexander Dowie**

In Chicago where Moody was preaching, John Alexander Dowie established a base of operations in Evanston, Illinois, and founded the Divine Healing Association. He later opened a chain of “Healing Homes” which grew by bounds because people were getting healed. His thrust was holiness and consecration, focusing on healing.

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<sup>11</sup> Jones, Timothy Paul. Christian History Made Easy. Rose Publishing. Torrance, CA. 1999.



In 1895 A.D. Dowie built the Zion Tabernacle which grew into a whole city within five years. The city was known as Zion City, located just outside of Chicago. It was molded according to Dowie's view of what a holy city should be.

*In 1895 A.D. John Alexander Dowie was arrested 100 times for practicing medicine without a license. In every case, the sentence was reversed after he prayed.*

Dowie became excentric as time passed on. He began to wear long, priestly robes, lived extravagantly, and built an elaborate executive mansion to entertain important people. He began to think of himself as Elijah, and in 1901 A.D. announced that he was. He was denounced by religious leaders all over the world, and his was a tragic ending. He died in 1907 A.D. a broken man, believing his followers betrayed him.



### **Maria Woodworth-Etter**

During the time of D.L. Moody and John Dowie, God also used a woman by the name of Maria Woodworth-Etter. Born-again as a teenager, she felt the call of God early in her life. Women were not accepted for ministry in her denomination; however, she chose to follow the Lord. When she stepped behind the pulpit, her mouth was filled with utterance and boldness. Her gift of healing brought thousands to the Lord.

Maria would often go into trances, remaining that way for several hours at a time. Mockers were knocked to the floor, and God showed them visions of hell, causing them to beg for mercy.



Marie Woodworth-Etter pioneered the way for the Pentecostal manifestations. She was the only leading evangelist of the Holiness Movement who embraced the Pentecostal experience of speaking in tongues. She became one of the best-known Holiness preachers of the pre-Pentecostal era, having built one of the largest Pentecostal Holiness churches in America, seating 500 people.<sup>12</sup>

### **John G. Lake**

John G. Lake was a protégé of John Alexander Dowie. His wife was instantaneously healed from tuberculosis under Dowie in 1898 A.D. Lake associated himself with Dowie's ministry and served as an elder at Zion City. He had many healing homes, and there were 100,000 recorded healings in five years.

After the turn of the century, Lake was baptized in the Holy Spirit. He left his job and security and took off for Africa in faith that God would supply his family's needs to preach the gospel. His wife died while in Africa.



<sup>12</sup> <http://www.christianhistory.org/etter.html>

John G. Lake walked in the revelation of God continuously. He was a man of purpose, vision, strength and character. His one goal in life was to bring the fullness of God to every person. Lake was responsible for raising over 1,000,000 converts, 625 churches and 1,250 preachers in five years of ministry.<sup>13</sup> His ministry was well known for healing. According to statistics, the U.S. Government declared his city, Spokane, Washington, to be the healthiest city in America.

### **The Church of God**

Between 1893 and 1900 A.D., there were a number of denominations that started out of the holiness movement that used variations of the names under the Church of God, such as Pentecostal Church of God, Church of God in Christ, and Church of God – Cleveland, Tennessee.

The Churches of God that were formed before 1894 A.D. generally remained with the Holiness stream even though they took on the Pentecostal name. They did not become Pentecostal as they are known today as a full-Gospel church. Those formed after 1894 A.D., generally became Pentecostal later on.

*The primary difference between the Holiness Movement and Pentecostalism is  
"Speaking in Tongues."*

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.christianhistory.org/etter.html>