

Lord, Send Revival!

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Habakkuk 3:2 (NKJV) “O Lord, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.”

The moral, spiritual, and political landscape of America has eroded greatly in the last fifty years and it seems to be accelerating with each passing year. Unfortunately, modern Christianity is partly to blame. Rather than being salt and light, Christians often approve and defend activities, philosophies, lifestyles, and habits that were at one time deemed wicked and sinful. Something is dreadfully wrong. In the name of tolerance, we have abandoned our distinctiveness in Christ and become like the world.

Rather than seek to be holy we have sought to be “normal”. Rather than come out of this world we have settled in Babylon. Rather than awake to righteousness, we have fallen asleep in Sodom. While we slept, sin crept in upon us until we are startled to find that we must fight moral hand to hand combat in our foxholes to save this generation from total collapse. No one honestly knows what America will look like in the next ten years or whether the church will face a hostile culture bent on its destruction.

Sadly, Christianity in America has lost its effectiveness to influence our generation for God. Rather than be a city shining on a hill, the church has chosen to hide its light under a cloak of tolerance and compromise with this world. We have abandoned the clear teachings of Christ and formed an aberrant religion that we call Christianity but which denies the Lord it claims to follow. So-called Christians now divorce at the same rate as non-Christians and justify it as God’s grace. They watch the same ungodly movies and call it “reality entertainment”. They listen to worldly music and call it a “musical appreciation”. They wear the same seductive clothing and call it “fashion”, They repeat the same dirty jokes and call it “humor”. They abuse the same alcohol and drugs and call it “personal freedom”. They commit fornication and adultery and call it “love”. They abort innocent life and call it “pro choice” The list goes on.

How do today’s Christians justify these things? They shrug their shoulders and say, “Well, times have changed and God understands.” Some glory in their shame by openly endorsing sinful lifestyles. Some add blasphemy to their shame by doing these things in the name of the Lord. Has God really changed? Culture changes, but God never changes (Malachi 3:6). Sin is still sin in God’s book. The fact that we endorse the sin that God hates only confirms the depravity of our soul. No wonder the prophet Isaiah pronounced a woeful expectation of judgment upon those in his generation who sought to alter God’s moral standards: *“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”* (Isaiah 5:20 NKJV)

The only hope for the America is a sweeping revival outpouring among God’s people. In theory, most Christians would agree that we need revival but not all would agree on what revival is. The confusion is the result of drifting from a biblical understanding of revival. When we imagine or adopt a non-biblical model, we end up expecting and seeking something

different than the revival we desperately need. We cannot afford to waste precious moments chasing after a diversion.

At the moment there exists a struggle between two extremes regarding revival. The first is what I will refer to as the traditional extreme. While I appreciate the efforts to make revival meetings a regular tradition, this extreme limits revival to a series of meetings featuring a guest preacher and special music. Traditional revivals are scheduled like clockwork each year but unfortunately few bear the fruits of true revival. The idea seems to be “Schedule it and it will come.” Unless Christians are willing to repent of sin and allow God to bring drastic and lasting changes in their lives, these “revivals” leave us disappointed and accomplish little more than pouring another bottle of perfume over our dead religion.

The second extreme is what I will refer to as the sensational extreme. While I appreciate the passion expressed among most Pentecostals and Charismatics, the sensational extreme depends on “shock and awe”. In this extreme, the more bizarre, frenzied, and strange the manifestations, the more it is heralded to be the work of God. In this extreme insistence on correct doctrine is regarded as divisive, challenging questionable character is regarded as touching God’s anointed, and testing the spirits is regarded as fighting against God. In this extreme, no one can claim that revival has come unless people fall out on the floor, burst into holy laughter, drop three dress sizes, or sing until gold dust, gemstones, and angel feathers fall out of heaven. Unfortunately most of these so-called “revival meetings” do not qualify as revival at all. Most are diversionary at best and deceptive at worst.

My purpose in mentioning these extremes is not to make anyone mad, although it inevitably will, but to help us navigate through the confusion about revival. Revival can bring excitement but revival is not excitement. Revival is often characterized by anointed music, but revival is not about music. Revival can draw large crowds, but revival is not about large crowds. Revival can result in the conversion of lost souls, but revival is not about conversions. Revival can result in church growth, but revival is not about church growth. Revival can result in increased offerings in the church, but revival is not about money. Revival can result in powerful manifestations of God’s power and glory, but revival is not about manifestations. Revival can even result in people seeking revival, but revival is not even about seeking revival. Revival does not come by seeking revival. Revival comes when we seek the *Reviver* who can bring revival to those who seek Him on His terms.

What is revival? If we strip away everything revival is *not* and go back to the Scriptures, we find that revival is really not complicated at all. Revival is nothing more and nothing less than a significant and undeniable conviction and return of backsliders to God in covenant faithfulness so that God restores His presence and blessing (2 Chron. 7:14; Hab. 3:2). God has promised to bring revival to those who will meet His conditions. What are His conditions? His conditions and promises are found in 2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV): *“if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”*

We need revival. More than that, we will not survive without it. We don’t need another traditional revival or sensational revival. We need a heaven-sent revival. God has promised revival if we will return to Him. The question is, “Will we meet God’s conditions?” Revival doesn’t begin in the church; it begins in our heart—“Lord, send revival—and begin with me!”