

REVIVALFIRE MINISTRIES

# **Four Steps to Revival**

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Preparing the Church for the greatest revival of all  
time

**Dalen Garris**

Four Steps to Revival outlines the process, the price, and the promise of God to bring the Church into the great revival prophesied in the Book of Joel that will come in the Last Days.

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All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

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## Introduction

I am writing out this message of the Four Steps to Revival because I believe that it is the best hope for a solution to the deep spiritual problems that face our world. I believe that we are living in the last days, as do many other Christians who have been watching Biblical prophesies unfold in the news. While many believe that we have little cause to worry because they expect to be raptured out of the troubles that are coming upon the face of the Earth, I believe that the Church will not only face them but will go through them all the way to the end when Jesus Christ splits the skies to end Armageddon.

Shakespeare once wrote that "all the world's a stage". That is truer than what he might have suspected. All the politics, the business, careers, and hobbies and pastimes of our lives are merely tests in Life that determine our eternal destiny. The Church is supposed to be the landmark and lighthouse that points the way to Heaven in a landscape that is often forgetful of the dual realities that we live in. But when the Church loses its vibrancy and its light grows dim, we find ourselves easily enamored with the other things that make up our lives. Our focus shifts from where we are going, to where we are, and the urgency of eternal judgment takes a back seat to the more immediate sensory inputs of the world around us. We soon lose our way, forget that this stage we are on is only a test, and lose our edge on what is really important. Life becomes complicated with thorns and snares, which pull with an ever-increasing compulsion further and further away from true salvation.

Revival is the only solution. Without a bright shining light to point us in the true direction of Life, we can only stumble about in darkness. Only a Holy Ghost Revival can light those fires again and make our lighthouses illuminate the path to Salvation.

The word Revival is in most cases a misnomer because it suggests bringing a dead body back to life again. But throughout history, the great moves of God have been more of a rebellion against an established religious system that has grown cold and secular. Once a body is dead, resuscitation will not bring it back to life. There is a need for a new life springing up in a new body, not the resurrection of the old apostate system which has died.

## The Decline

Apostasy and Revival are cyclical going all the way back to the times of Joshua. Whenever there is a great move of God, the Church is energized and becomes a vibrant and embracing part of the lives of its people. Joy and gladness are signs of the times. Prosperity and life uplifts not only the Church itself, but the entire society surrounding it. These are wonderful times.

Within a short while, however, the brightness begins to fade and the wonderful blessings of an intimate walk in the Spirit begins to be taken for granted and is traded in for a fascination with what the world has to offer instead. Our focus slowly shifts off the eternal to the temporal, from the longings of our souls to the lusts of our flesh, from the promises of the invisible to the immediate gratification of the visible. Salvation and religion begin to yield to a cheap and easy grace – one that is less intrusive of our personal lives and less demanding of an admonition for holiness. The broad path seems to make much more sense and is much more easier to travel down. After all, why should we endure suffering when Jesus suffered in our place on the Cross? Religion becomes established, sophisticated, and entrenched in a society that it feels no compulsion to challenge. The persecution that once lit the fires of revival that forged our churches has now dissipated and is no longer considered necessary. We have arrived, and are satisfied.

When there is no price to pay, true Christianity does not seem so precious, and as with all things cheap, we find it much easier to discard.

As the fires of revival simmer down to glowing coals, the Church still retains its shape and structure – it just loses its heart. The heart of revival is not the wonderful feeling of the Spirit of God as it flows through us or the excitement of miracles and supernatural manifestations of the Spirit, but rather the winning of lost souls. This is the whole purpose and heart of revival. Revival is the heartbeat of God, and winning the lost is the heartbeat of revival. The blood that flows from the Emmanuel's veins is not so we can have a nice church and a prosperous life, but to draw the lost and wash their sins away in its flow. When we forget that, we miss the whole meaning of the Cross.

When we become more enamored with how good a moving of the Holy Spirit feels than an agony for the lost, we turn off the faucet of that flowing and are left with nothing but church. We rarely notice the decrease until it is nothing but a trickle, and slowly we become used to the institution rather than the inspiration. Our candlestick is slowly removed and we gradually get used to the darkness until we no longer notice that we can't see the Truth anymore.

At such times, God always sends His prophets to call us back to repentance. The job of a prophet is not to be a Gypsy tea leaf reader to tell our futures – we can look up our horoscope in the daily newspaper to do that. The job of a prophet is to call God's people to repentance. It is a job that no one likes -- neither the one called as the prophet, nor the ones that he is called to prophesy to. As a result, prophets are most often either ignored and dismissed or persecuted and killed. Their message never goes along with the current hypnotic sway of the status quo, but is designed to cause trouble as it upsets the foundation of dead works.

One of the marks of apostasy is the flourishing of prophets of peace and prosperity. Like weeds, they grow out of barren ground and find root in the worldliness of the church. False prophets do not call us to repentance; they call us to repose. There is never any challenge in their prophecies; only promises of peace and prosperity. They do not point us to the fear of God, but rather drench us in the love of God. The problem is that their definition of the love of God is little more than a warm, fuzzy feeling -- a comfortable "relationship" with a God who is our "Daddy". The Word of God, however, defines the love of God as the keeping of His commandments, which as Proverbs 16:6 points out to us, is attained through the fear of God. Like Pied Pipers, however, they play the tune that our flesh wants to hear, and draw us off with visions of sugar plums, instead of the fruits of repentance.

Although prophets are rarely accepted in their time, the seeds that they plant find fertile ground in the next generation. The human soul is engineered to desire something more than this carnal life, and when it is starved of Truth, it will begin to search for something to fill up the empty hole inside. That

new generation, like Gideon, will sense that the existing religious structure is no longer answering the needs of their hearts, and will begin to search for something more than what their fathers have offered them. The prophet Joel describes it as beasts groaning for pasture but not able to find it, but in their search for the Truth, they will find the words of those prophets whom their fathers dismissed.

Gideon threshed his wheat by the winepress in secret, and so do these truth-seekers. They thresh the wheat of the Word of God alongside the winepress of prayer to seek the truth of God outside of the established liturgies of church. The words of the prophets ring true in their soul and begin to grow in their hearts to encourage their generation to reach up in hope for a fresh new outpouring of God.

And so it goes, over and over again. Is this by design of God, or is it a symptom of the failure of human flesh? I do not have the answer to that, but I do know that, just as Jesus was a root out of dry ground, so do great harvests come out of times of spiritual drought.

We are in just such a time as that right now. We are ready for the rain and a subsequent time of harvest, but this time the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit will eclipse all other revivals. As we come out of the spiritual famine that Amos foretold just before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the greatest revival of all time is scheduled to arrive.

But no revival is without its price. It is that price that the Four Steps to Revival is about- Recognition, Desire, Repentance, and Prayer.

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## Step 1: Recognition

*“And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass. Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned.”* Nehemiah 2:13-15

The cycle of revival can be seen throughout the Bible, preceded by a fall from grace and the devastation of judgment, to a time of rebuilding. The first step to any restoration, however, is the realization that we are no longer in the place of blessing that we once were. Our walls are broken down, the temple is destroyed, and we have been carried away to a Babylon where we still try to hold on to our religious conventions in a vain attempt to convince ourselves that we are still right with God.

While it might seem obvious to us who are detached by time that the former presence of God and His power in our church has disappeared, those who go through the slow process of apostasy are rarely able to see or accept it. The monotonous process of following the religious traditions set by our fathers cloaks the disparity of our current desolation. We can't see it because we aren't paying attention, and besides, it is too uncomfortable to think about. It is so much easier to listen to Pied Pipers who tell us that God still loves us no matter what, than to face the ugly truth that we have long ago left the presence of God and now are facing judgment. We don't see it because we don't want to see it.

### ***The Challenge***

I preach at the scores of churches overseas, and almost all of them expect the great white American evangelist to bless them with a message that will encourage them. But the first thing I tell them is that I am not there to sprinkle fairy dust on them so they can be blessed, get money, find a husband, or increase their crops – I am there to show them the truth.

My first challenge to them is whether or not they believe that they have a good church. If they are satisfied with their church and their Christian walk, then I need go no further. Let me find a congregation that is hungry for something more in God than just having church functions. I am not looking for someone who is not looking – I am only looking for those who are looking.

How many souls got saved last week? How about last month? Okay, how about last year? This is the litmus test for Christianity. It doesn't matter how nice your church is, how wonderful your pastor is, or how much you love each other – are you winning souls for Jesus Christ? Yes or no. Either you're focused on others, or you're focused on yourselves.

Every week you sit in the same seat surrounded by the same faces. You tell each other the same nice things that you told them last week. You tell each other that you want revival but you expect it to just fall out of the sky into your laps while you sit there like a lump of fat on a wooden pew and do nothing. As the old adage says, if you keep on doing the same things you're doing, you will always have the same things you have, but if you want something different, you're have to do something different.

At some point there has to be a realization that there is nothing new happening in your church. The Spirit of God is no longer present, and souls are not getting saved -- and it doesn't look like there will be any new influx of sinners on their way to your altar any time soon. Why should they? What have you got to offer them beyond timeworn expressions that have been repeated so many times, their original luster has turned dull and they no longer hold any real meaning to the unsaved. Perhaps they are not coming to your church because they are afraid that they will become just like you.

Now, some people don't care. They have church just the way they like it and don't want anything to upset the balance. These are old winebottles that cannot hold new wine and resent any change. But there has to come a point where we at least acknowledge that something is missing and that the fire on our altars has gone out. Only once we acknowledge that, can we turn our hearts to hear His call to revival.

## ***His Last Request***

As He was about to leave, the last thing that Jesus asked us to do for him was to preach the Gospel to the entire world, and he handed us the Great Commission. When someone we love is about to leave us for the last time, it is a very poignant time. As he pauses at the door, about to cross the threshold, and turns to us with a last request, it is something that we hold close to our heart. That last request is important. A dying father who gives his last request to his sons to carry out for him can die in peace knowing that they will fulfill it. Jesus gave us the Great Commission as His last request. It was the whole purpose for His death on the Cross. Jesus died to save sinners from Hell, and he left us with the job of finishing that task. There was no admonition to become learned scholars, prominent leaders of society, or ecclesiastical watchdogs. It was simple – win souls. Deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow Him. And where did He go? To Golgotha to give His life for the lost.

Have we chosen that same path, or have we meandered through the pathways of Life that lead nowhere? Have we convinced ourselves that we are fulfilling His last wish by coming to church? Has fellowship with saints replaced saving sinners? Are we content to know that while we are lifting up our hands in worship during a song service that we are saved, but limit our boundaries to the church walls? When we turn our attention inward and lose sight of those outside, we lose our grasp on the purpose of our own Salvation, and when a church will not look beyond its walls, it denies its very reason for existence.

We did not get saved for ourselves. If the whole reason for your salvation was so you could go to Heaven, then why not just come to the altar, say a prayer of repentance, and keel over and die? Why hang around? You're just wasting the air. Why stay in this world? Just go. Get out of here. Go to Heaven and be done with it. Ah, but you didn't die, did you? Perhaps it is about something more than your own salvation. Perhaps we have received this gift of salvation so we could pass it on to others. Why else would we still be here?

When our altars are bare, we are ignoring this last request of our Savior who gave His life for these souls that we have dismissed. We have our feast and have invited our friends, but have not sought the blind, the maimed, and the poor like Jesus asked us to do.

## ***The Marriage Contract***

Throughout the Bible, the institution of marriage is presented as a picture of our relationship with God. Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom; we are the Bride. Everything from the courtship to the kids has its analogy in our relationship with Him. It's as if God has given us this picture in living color, the most important of all our relationships here on Earth, as a constant and vibrant reminder of what Life is really all about. Marriage is not just about sex, although that part of our relationship with the Spirit of God is wonderful. Neither is it only about taking care of one another, keeping the house clean and making the bed, cooking the food or taking out the trash. All those things have their analogy in our walk with God, but the primary purpose of marriage is to be fruitful and multiply and fill the Earth with fruit. He said it to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, and to Jacob. We got married to Jesus to raise a family.

When a wife is barren, especially in the Old Testament, it was considered a shame unto her. Today, of course, with our many career-minded women, raising a family does not take on the same importance as it did originally. Regardless of its application today, the picture still remains clear, the wife was to bear forth children and raise the family. That same charge is placed upon the Church, the Bride of Christ.

I have listened to some excuse themselves from soul-winning by saying that the fruit we are charged with bearing are really just the fruits of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22. I disagree. Those fruits are the results of the Holy Spirit working in you, not a charge that has been laid upon us to fulfill. The Great Commission is not asking us to develop good characteristics, but to go out and win souls. The simplicity of the Gospel is so easily turned into the complexity of excuses when we refuse to surrender our own comfortable ways.

Two wonderful examples of the godly desire to bring forth fruit can be seen in Hannah and Rachael, both barren women who offered vows to God to escape the shame of a fruitless marriage. The shame was real to them, even though both were the favored wives of their husbands. Their purpose in life was not spousal love, but children. It reflected not on their personal value, but as an important point of honor to their husbands. So should we honor Christ.

The Church today is a barren woman. It does not matter how pretty she is, how wealthy she is, how many skills she has mastered. If the Church is not winning souls, she is a barren woman. We seem to be able to erect great edifices to show the prosperity and livelihood of our church, but spend little time searching for souls to fill them. Fitness centers and Christian coffeehouses are much easier to build than witnessing face-to-face with someone who is unsaved. It is our way out of controversy. We hope that we can still be a witness without the difficulty of exposing ourselves to any individual embarrassment.

Is that not true? Can you not see it all around you? When is the last time you or your church actually took to the streets to witness to strangers and tell them about Salvation? And yet the command is clear in Luke 14:23 to go out into the highways and compel them to come into your Father's house that the Marriage Supper of the Lamb may be filled. What is it that is stopping you from keeping this commandment? If it is the fear of man, then you do not fear God. If it is embarrassment, then you do not have love for others. If it is social conventions, then you are tied to this world. If you think you have a better idea, then you need to learn that you cannot figure out your way to Heaven. It is a simple matter of trust and obey. And obedience is better than sacrifice.

## ***Miracles***

The same Spirit that flows to draw lost souls to the altar is the same Spirit that flows through us to heal the sick, raise the dead, and perform miracles. While it may seem easy to explain away your empty altars with religious and theological excuses, it is hard to deny the utter absence of the power of God to perform the miracles that the Bible says will follow them that believe.

Gideon saw the desolation that had happened to Israel. The Israelites had cried out to God for deliverance, but God's answer to them at Bochim was that He had given them His law to keep, but they had chosen the world instead, and now the enemy had come in to take over the land. So now Gideon had to thresh his wheat by the winepress in secret. The threshing of wheat, which gives the Bread of Life, and the winepress of prayer by which we seek the face of God had to be done in secret. It is in that secret place in God that prayers are answered.

Gideon asked the angel that if he was supposed to be a mighty man of God like the angel said, then where were the miracles that their fathers had told them about? One look at the fields of harvest that were now taken over by the Amalekites was the damning testimony of what happens when you compromise with the devil. When we allow the world to take over the harvest fields, we end up surrendering our rights to the harvest. We are left weak and powerless before them. And we were the ones that let them in!

Gideon recognized the desolation for what it was and threshed his wheat by the winepress of God while others were content to go along with the way things were, even building altars to Baal in a vain attempt to placate the enemy. While others were satisfied with a dead church, God saw in this man someone who was not.

The angel's answer to Gideon is telling: "Go in this thy strength, and you shall deliver Israel." What was that strength? Gideon's strength was that he recognized their apostasy and separation from God and was not willing to surrender to it.

His answer to the angel was a retort of desperation:

*"Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?"*

Yeah. Where are the miracles? When's the last time we saw the sick healed, the dead raised, the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in our services, and souls flocking to the altar to get saved? If our churches are so good, then where did the Spirit of the Lord go?

Faith healings are rare because we don't expect them. The very hands we raise to pray over the sick hold a doctor's appointment in them. We call it prudent, but God calls it unbelief. And don't you dare pray to raise the dead! That's considered extreme at best; crazy at worst. We, by our compliance with our spiritual desolation, hope for a peace that will never come from a compromise with the world. But men of God see what is not, and refuse to be content without it.

The dearth of miracles in our churches signifies a dearth of the Spirit that brings them forth. And yet we are content to wallow in complacency rather than face the reality that the power of God has left us with an empty church with broken down walls.

## ***The Fields are Wasted***

*“That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.” Joel 1:4*

Chapter 1 in the Book of Joel describes the apostasy and revival just before the Second Coming of the Lord. The fields of harvest would be wasted by one predatory plague after another until there was nothing left. He calls to the vinedressers and the drinkers of wine, those who have been called to keep the vine and fig tree of God, and says it will be cut off from their mouths and from the house of the Lord. The corn (the Word of God) would be wasted, the new wine (communion in prayer) would be dried up, and the oil (anointing oil of the Holy Ghost) would languish. Even the sacrifices would be cut off from the house of the Lord.

The Lord calls for the ministers of the Lord to cry out and mourn for the desolation of the Church. The cattle groan for pasture, wandering about searching for food, but able to find any. The barns and garner, the places where the harvest of souls should be brought into are all broken down. Even the rivers of living water are dried up.

This is the picture of the Church when the Day of the Lord would be near. Amos said there would be a famine, not for bread and water, but for hearing the words of the Lord. We have churches everywhere, but we are not getting fed with the deep things of God. Oh there's Bibles everywhere you look, but as Isaiah cried in chapter 18, the book is sealed unto us – we read it but our understanding is barely able to skim the surface. The corn, the real depth of the Word of God, is dried up. We groan, but we do not know where to go for food because the entire spiritual landscape is wasted.

If I was a blind invalid who had no knowledge of the world around me, this chapter in the Book of Joel alone would be enough to convince me that the church in the last days would have fallen so far from God that there is little if anything left of the fertile fields of harvest that used to be flush with souls and a flowing of the Spirit of God. Our church world is dead, but we are so used to our apostasy that we are in denial even when the Holy Scriptures testify of it to our face.

## ***The Hurdle of Realization***

Somewhere in this process of introspection, we must come to a realization that, no matter how much we love our church, if we are not winning souls, we do not have a revival. As simple and obvious as that may seem, coming to that realization is a major hurdle that keeps most churches back from any supernatural move of God in their midst.

Jesus said that no man can come unto him except the Father draws him. If it is the Spirit of God that draws souls to repentance, and souls are not coming to your altar, then it stands to reason that the God is not drawing them there. You have to ask yourselves why.

We are the salt of the Earth, the seasoning that makes food taste good. If we have lost our savor, then we no longer have anything that tastes good. The world may be hungry for truth, but they don't want what we have to offer because it doesn't taste good.

Are your altars empty? Is there a dearth of supernatural miracles and visitations? Have your services become a dry lecture about God with 5 bulleted points, a poem, and a couple of jokes? Is the power of the Holy Ghost no longer flowing through your services like a mighty rushing wind? Has it ever? Maybe it is time to come to grips with the fact that something is desperately wrong with your church. Something vital in your walk with God is missing, and you need to get it back. If you don't, instead of walking with Him, you will find yourselves walking in aimless circles.

Of course you may be completely satisfied with your church just the way it is. If that is the case, then you will get exactly what you wanted. God will not push you any further than you want to go. If He did, you would never be able to handle the high price it would cost you, and you would never be able to nurture the babes in Christ that He would have sent you. He gave His life for those precious souls, and He will not hand them over to someone who doesn't care enough to also give their lives for them.

A church that is not winning souls is like a fig tree that has been withered without fruit; a vine of dried out branches. Jesus cursed the fig tree even when it was not in season. There are no excuses you can offer that will deflect the judgment of God for not having fruit. There is never a time when winning souls is not in season.

A vine that does not bear forth fruit has to be cut off because it is dead wood that can never come back to life and will drain the rest of the vine of its strength. When the sap stops flowing through your church, it is dead and good for nothing but to be burned in the fire. When you no longer see souls getting saved, the sick healed, miracles and manifestations of the Holy Ghost performed, then maybe it is time to admit that your church is dead.

## ***Charity, the Greatest of These***

Often I hear people who are quick to justify their church by pointing to good works. They have canned food drives for the poor, Santa Claus donations to give children toys, volunteer for community causes – all good things, but not the signs of revival.

There are lots of good works we can do – and should do – as the Church of Jesus Christ, but the unsaved also do these things and that doesn't mean they are filled with the Spirit of God. Charity, real charity, is more than good works. Charity is the giving on oneself out of love so that souls can be saved. It is Jesus Christ incarnate, the very essence of Christianity, the real meaning of the Cross. Its ultimate focus is to win souls and nurture them. When true charity is present in a church, the members will bring in the lost to hear the Gospel. When it is absent, no one is cut to the heart for the lost and the altars remain empty.

Jesus commanded us invite the sick, the maimed, and the poor to our feasts of charity, not just our friends, but when we gaze around the congregation, all we see are the same old faces that we see every week. If that is the case with your church, then there is a definite lack of charity there, and certainly no revival.

Chapter 6 of the Book of Amos paints a picture of a people that are comfortable and at ease, enjoying the blessings of life, but who are not grieved for the lost. They lay on their beds of ivory, but are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. But they will be the first who will feel the sting of Judgment, because judgment must begin at the house of God. This is not just a matter of choices without consequences. If you are not moved by charity to seek and save the lost, to ignite your church and start the sap flowing again from the True Vine, then you will face the wrath of God because you did not care about the souls that He gave His life to save.

What will it take to bring you to a realization that something is missing in your church? We have been so long without a true revival that we ignore the blatant signs of our death, and settle for excuses that measure us up with other dead churches to convince us that we are “normal”. If all you want is to be normal and take an easy route to complacent Christianity, then you will never experience the power of God in your life. If that is all you want, that is all you will get. But if you want to experience the vibrancy and fullness of the power of God, you must first come to grips with the reality that you do not have a revival. Only then can you move to the next step to see something so supernatural happen that it will be spoken about throughout Eternity.

## **Step 2: Desire: You Have to Want Revival.**

*“And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.” Genesis 30:1*

It is one thing to realize that you do not have a revival in your church, but it is an entirely different thing to want one. It may seem that these two things would naturally go together, but they do not. How bad do you have to want one? Like Rachael, you have to want it bad enough to die for it; willing to give your life to see souls get saved. Anything less than that is like a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal – lots of noise, but no substance. Or as 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter describes it, wells without water and clouds without rain. We say we want one because we know we're supposed to, but how badly do we really want it? The price of a true revival is higher than human flesh wants to pay, and it takes the Spirit of the Lord to bring us to that place of selfless passion that will drive us past our comfort zone to take upon ourselves the suffering of the Body of Christ.

This is not a mindless suffering for suffering's sake, but a commitment to offer ourselves, both spiritually and physically, to see the ultimate cause of Christ reign victorious. In the Book of Revelations, God does not admonish us that those who try will eat of the Tree of Life, but those who overcome. We have to reach past what is normal and comfortable, to enter into a walk with God that has crucified the flesh and its desires and which enters into a walk in the Spirit. Our greatest resistance is from our own flesh, reinforced by the workings of the devil. This is the challenge that God sets before us to test our determination. It separates the sheep from the goats and raises the real men and women of God from ranks of mediocracy.

### ***Resistance to Change***

Many people simply do not like change. Once they get things organized the way they think things should be, they will defend it ferociously. I believe a lot of these folks like the feel of constricted walls around them to feel safe. Any breach of that security threatens the way they have everything organized in their minds. They just have too much trouble walking without solid ground under their feet, so it is easier to stick with the liturgical traditions they are used to than to break into something that seems untested and revolutionary. They are stuck in “church as usual”, old winebottles that cannot stretch with the new wine.

The problem is that the foundations that they have built upon were based on the wrong things. Religion is the carnal representation of our spiritual walk with God, but if we grasp onto the carnal to secure the spiritual, we will find ourselves with a handful of sand. Faith is the evidence of things NOT seen, and it is the substance of things hoped for. If your hope is anchored on things that you can see because you are not able to reach through the Door of faith to take hold of that which you cannot see, then it will be very difficult for you to embrace a supernatural change in your church. We have to hold these people up in prayer, because only God can reassure them to let go of the leather-like stiffness of old traditions.

Lazarus was called forth out of a tomb of stone, bound hand and foot in the grave clothes of religious traditions and his face was bound with a napkin so he couldn't see. Many today are locked inside a similar stone tomb of religion with no way out. Jesus' command was to loose Lazarus from those traditions and set him free. It takes the hand of God to roll away that stone and set them free, but His command to us is to loose them from the rotting clothes that bind them. They can't do it themselves.

### ***Laziness and Lack of Concern***

There are others who are simply too lazy to want revival. Any fool will know that seeking for a revival is spelled W-O-R-K, and some people just don't care to stretch themselves that far. They don't mind if someone else does the work, but don't ask them to crucify their flesh, especially for someone whom they have never met. They don't mind praying, but not all night long, especially when it isn't for

themselves. They don't mind witnessing as long it's to someone who is already saved and agrees with them, but don't ask them to go out into the highways and byways to witness to the lost. They are holding onto a vicarious salvation that assumes that they can latch onto the coattails of their pastor to carry them to Heaven.

When I was very young in the Lord, I asked Him why some people get saved and some people do not; why some people stay saved, and others fall away. He spoke directly to me, "Some people care, and some people do not. It's as simple as that." That was one of the most profound things I have ever heard. Water seeks its own level. Anyone can recognize the need, but if we don't really care, we will always settle back to that level where we are truly comfortable. But if we want a revival, we will have to care enough to drive ourself past the weight of our own fleshly desires. If we try to rise above our own level of passion without the Spirit of God igniting our hearts, it will not be long before we settle back to that same level we are comfortable with. Only God can give us that drive, and it is to Him that we look for the passion to break out of our complacency ... but we have to ask for it.

Just as the father begged Jesus to help his unbelief, so may we plead with God to place an enduring and passionate desire in our hearts for revival. We are flesh, and we are what we are, but God can place that strong burden for revival, for holiness, and for lost souls on our hearts that will make us what we are not. If we do not pray for that burden, it will not be long before we fall back to our own level again.

While the first step of recognition of our apostate condition is merely a matter of facing facts, I believe that this second step of seeking God for the desire for revival is the first test that we must pass before we can begin to see Him move. You have to want revival so bad that you are desperate for it. There cannot be any alternative for you, and no back door excuses if it does not come. Your soul has to be wrenched from its slumber with a passionate fire that will not stop burning until revival comes. But only God can give that to you. It does not come naturally – it is only by the grace of God. Therefore we have to seek the face of God for it. We have to make the choice to start the whole process by asking God to help our infirmities and set our hearts on fire. If we are serious, we will continue in prayer until we get it. If we give up before the answer, then we fall short of the calling He has placed upon us, and by our own choice, we choose to fail not only God, but ourselves and the countless souls of others who would have come to salvation through us.

God will not send His precious souls to a people who don't care enough to fast and pray for them. If He did, they would soon die because no one would take the burden upon themselves to water them, nurture them, and keep the fire burning. But if a church has a burning desire to break their spirits and seek the face of God for souls, then when God sends them, they will value them as a precious gift that they have labored for.

When we overcome the dimness of our own sight and stretch our vision to reach past our horizons, we will find a God who has been patiently waiting for us to believe Him for the supernatural. These are the faithful souls with whom God can bring revival. The faint, the unbelieving, and the fearful will never climb high enough to look over Mount Pisgah to see the Promised Land of Revival. We rise to the challenge of God only by His grace, so that when it is all said and done, it is God alone who gets all the glory.

## Step Three - Repentance

### *The Call to Individual Holiness*

There is no revival without repentance. Every revival that I have ever read about was always preceded by a time of deep, breaking repentance that leads to extreme holiness throughout the church. Before the move of God can begin to work in the church, it must find a clean and holy foundation to stand upon. If we are looking for a supernatural move of God, our temple must be scoured from sin to accept His presence. God will not fellowship with sin.

This kind of repentance cannot be faked. You cannot mouth the words because you think that's what you are supposed to do, or even want to do. It has to be a sincere, deep flood of repentance that issues from the very depths of your soul. This is not the flippant requests we shoot up to God for a quick fix to patch something stupid that we have done. This is like no other deep cry for forgiveness that we have ever experienced, and it must be real if it is to reach a holy God's ears.

Paul warns us in Hebrews chapter 10 that we cannot rest on our initial salvation experience. Our lives must show a continued walk in holiness before God, and our failures must show up in stark contrast to that holiness. It is these shortcomings in our lives that must be brought to the Light of God's judgment and mercy to be completely cleansed and forgiven before our vessels can be made ready to be "meet for the Master's use".

*"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Romans 12:1,2*

Seemingly harmless sins become glaringly wicked as they stand in contrast to the holiness of the Lord God Almighty. The closer the presence of the Lord comes, the darker those sins appear until His blinding light exposes every dark corner of our hearts. We soon feel the weight of our sins so heavily that we cannot keep our knees from crashing to the floor in prayer for forgiveness like we have never known before.

I have seen Christians sobbing uncontrollably for things that the day before had seemed nothing more than just a normal part of life. No longer could they stand the separation from God that these things caused them. The guilt became so heavy that they had to repent in the most strident cries of the heart, confessing out loud to the whole congregation the things that they had never considered before. The Light is blinding, and even the slightest darkness stands in sharp contrast.

There is something about public confession that is so cleansing that it fills people with a joy of relief that shines out of their faces. The breaking of secret shackles brings a freedom that most have never felt before, and a weight falls off them that they hadn't realized that they had been carrying for so long. It is liberating. It's as if they can't wait to tell everyone and they no longer care what anyone thinks. They are free!

A sure sign that revival is coming is when that first person stands up and rips open their sins to the whole world. Many times it will be a young person who is completely broken at the altar while others

are still struggling with their own Holy Ghost conviction. But once that first sobbing confession is exposed, it breaks the ice, and soon everyone begins to rush forward to wash themselves in that same shower of cleansing.

Without that freedom of sanctification, God cannot move. If we are not holy, the move of God will be mired down in the layer of mud that covers our souls. Under the Levitical law, the altar had to be first sanctified by blood before it could be holy enough to be used to offer up sacrifices to the Lord. Once all sin has been swept out of the church and all the stale air of mediocrity is blown out the windows, the altar is now sanctified and the sanctuary cleansed. Now, and only now, can God inhabit the church in complete holiness and prepare the unhampered offering of ourselves to His worship.

That freedom from every shadow of sin also lends boldness and a newly found strength of faith to the believer. We can now come to the Throne with a new boldness of righteousness in the Blood of Jesus to partake of the promises of God. Righteousness liberates faith, and faith moves mountains. Now we can stand before God and claim the fullness of His promises to us and know that because we are righteous before Him, He has to answer us. Revival is on the way. We know it. We claim it. We now have the faith to believe Him for it. It will come.

Only righteousness establishes the promises of God.

## **Corporate Repentance**

*“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 7:14*

Personal repentance builds the foundation for the next step of corporate repentance. With the clarity that comes from a renewed personal relationship with God, it is easy to see how far our failings have reached. We now realize how much not only we, but our entire nation, our churches, our people have been separated from God. If we want a revival that will reach past our church doors, we have to beseech God to bring that same forgiveness to our entire land. The specter of apostasy hangs over our nation like a dark cloud, and we must pray for God’s forgiveness for us all.

The much quoted scripture in 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles is touted as a banner cry for revival, but in order to bring our land to that point of corporate repentance, someone has to start praying. It has to start somewhere.

## **Daniel**

*“In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes...” Daniel 9:2,3*

The story of the restoration of Jerusalem is one of the greatest and most detailed accounts of revival in the Bible. Space does not allow recounting the fall of Israel, the pleading of the prophets, and the judgments of God, but in every judgment of God there are always the seeds of the next revival. Daniel was one of those seeds. Isaiah set the stage for Cyrus to issue the decree, as did Esther, Nehemiah, and others. The stage was set, the prophesy was written, but it was Daniel who prayed it in.

When you read a word from God right in the Holy Scriptures, you know that it is true. It is written; God said it; it is settled; it must come to pass. Daniel had read in Jeremiah that the Babylonian Captivity would last 70 years and then God would restore Israel to Jerusalem. The children of Israel had strayed far from the righteousness of God and had become slaves in Babylon as a result of their rebellion, but here was a revelation of the incredible mercy of God! Seventy years were about to be up and Daniel knew restoration was coming.

Although it was written in the Word of God and the time for this revival was upon them, did Daniel call his friends to sing and rejoice? Did they celebrate this new hope of restoration? No, Daniel was one of the wisest men that ever lived, and he knew that there would be no revival without repentance.

But to partake of this wonderful call back to His grace, repentance had to be sought, not just individually, but corporately for the whole body of the people of God. Somebody had to get on their knees, and Daniel was the man. The longest prayer in the Old Testament is Daniel's prayer for forgiveness for his people.

E.M. Bounds once wrote that God will not do anything without prayer that he can do with prayer. How true. God could do it all ... but He doesn't. He uses flesh. We are His Body, the arms and legs of the Gospel. It is our prayers that untie His hands, and it is our faith that moves mountains. It is part of His plan for us to be the instruments of His mercy and follow the example of His Son, Jesus Christ.

## ***Nehemiah***

Nehemiah also knew this truth. He wept as he heard how Jerusalem lay in ruins. This was the city of God. It was supposed to be beautiful and built as a monument to the glory of God, but it was now destroyed because of the sins of his people, the people of God. Nehemiah's heart was broken.

As the king's cupbearer, he had access to the one who could issue the command to rebuild the city, but he also knew that without repentance to God for the sins of the people that had caused this destruction, his request would be in vain. Day and night, Nehemiah fasted and prayed for God to forgive his people and grant him favor as he brought his supplication before the king.

We also are the King's cupbearers, and we sit in captivity in a pagan land while the Church lies in spiritual ruins. The walls of salvation and the temples for the Spirit of God are broken down leaving the Church defenseless against the enemy. Like Nehemiah and Daniel, we must acknowledge the cause of our current state and cry out to God for forgiveness for our nation and our churches. If we do not address this, how can God reverse His judgments? If we do not acknowledge this in sincere broken-heartedness, we would be no better than we were before.

This is a test of a Christian's heart. Are we truly sorry for our sin? Do we lament and mourn for a return to God to the point that we are willing to pray and fast day and night? Do we agonize over the sins and failures of our people, and cry out to God with all our hearts for Him to have mercy on His people? While the judgment of God is sure, there is also mercy if our hearts are sincere, and we can turn the wrath of God with a repentance that will pierce the heavens and reach His Throne.

But half-hearted prayers will not do. We have to be broken before God can restore us.

## ***Elijah***

Elijah faced just such a stone wall of unrepentant hearts on Mt Carmel. He had been called in a time of plenty. With green fields and flowing rivers all around him, he stood before the king and declared the end of the rain. Everyone laughed him to scorn, but 3 years later, no one was laughing. The extent of the drought mirrored the spiritual desolation of the nation.

Elijah called for a final showdown with the religious order of the day. All the other prophets of God had been killed, with the exception of a secret remnant that was in hiding. It was 850 of the priests and prophets of Baal against a solitary prophet of God.

These priests of Baal were the local pastors of the established religion in Israel at the time. Israel was a small, rural country, so this many priests of Baal meant every local church leader from every small town in Israel were called. These were the men that married your daughters and sons, baptized your children, and led your local churches. You knew them by name. They were the leaders of the communities, but they had all acquiesced to the false religion of the day.

Where are the courageous Elijah's today? We are so accustomed to the religious systems that rule our localities that anyone who stands up to declare them as apostate is rejected as fanatical, judgmental, and extreme. As with Elijah, the message of the fear of God is considered divisive, while a compromising message of love without righteousness is considered kind and godly. We have chosen laxity while the prophets of God have to run for their lives.

But Elijah knew that the time had come for God to show His righteousness. After the ineffectiveness of the priests of Baal, Elijah rebuilt the foundations of the church by building the altar with stones that were not cut by human hands. This was a church built by God's foundations, not something fashioned by man's religion. He then poured barrel after barrel of water upon the sacrifice. This was on the top of a mountain during a time of devastating drought, and the effort must have been extremely difficult. Water, in the Bible, is symbolic of the cleansing Word of God. Revival will not come without foundations built by God and a sacrifice drenched with the Word of God, no matter how difficult.

And then the fire fell. But did it bring forth a revival? Not hardly. "The Lord, he is God", they called out, but acknowledgment is not repentance. They were willing to stand by while their local pastors were slaughtered in a cleansing action at the brook Kishon, but they did not fall to their knees in brokenhearted sorrow for their sin. They were more concerned about their own lives than the life of their Church. There was no corporate repentance to break up the fallow ground of the nation.

Elijah had no revival, and neither did his successor, Elisha. It takes a corporate repentance to revive the corporate body, and that would not come until years later.

Why are we so blind to spiritual realities? Why is it so hard to break our hearts to not only desire a return to God for our land, but to come to that broken repentance that God requires? Desire mixed with adversity and oppression will only make us sorry. Somewhere in that mix must be a hunger for righteousness, a longing for something other than what this world has to offer in comfort and prosperity. I honestly believe that the people on top of Mt. Carmel had more of a desire to return to a life of prosperity, than a return to holiness. Their hearts were not broken with their sin – they merely recognized their mistake.

There are two worlds – the one we see around us and the one of Eternity. The more we are in one, the less we are in the other. Until a hunger for holiness rises in our hearts, the comforts of this world blind us from seeing beyond our everyday lives. Proverbs tells us, "Where there is no vision, the people perish". We have to be able to look beyond Mt. Carmel and see a land that is afar off and yearn for it as our only home. Only when we reach past the veil of this world to grasp the substance of things hoped for, can we ever truly relinquish our hold on the carnal.

Desire for righteousness exposes our need for repentance, not only for ourselves, but for our people, our nation, and our churches. When that happens, we willingly break up the fallow ground of our hearts to plant the seeds of revival.

## Step 4 – Extreme Prayer

*“And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. “ Numbers 10:9*

*“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand” Joel 2:1*

Two silver trumpets were used to call the assembly together, but when they were used to blow an alarm, it was to gather the people of God to war. We are called to war, and the weapons that God gives to Christians are mighty through God to cast down everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. Paul describes our sword as the Word of God, our breastplate as our righteousness, our helmet as Salvation, and our shield as Faith. We are called forth as warriors to fight the good fight of Faith. The conflict of Light against Darkness is a central theme from Genesis to Revelations and defines our calling as soldiers of the Lord of Hosts. This is war, and we shall not be discharged from it until we die.

We cannot be true warriors if we do not have something to fight for. Our heart will not be in it, our resolve will not be complete, and our courage and determination will fail until we are willing to risk everything for the kingdom of God's sake. That will not come to a church that has not gone through the first three steps of recognition, desire, and repentance. Only once we have traivailed through those phases will we be ready to fight to the death for the truth of God.

The call from God goes out:

*“Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?*

*Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen” Joel 2:15-19*

This is a call for serious prayer. This is not for a sore foot, a new job, or more money (“Gimme, gimme, gimme”) – this is the call to storm the Throne of God for a revival for the entire land. Gone are the superficial considerations of this world and the satisfactions with “church as usual”. This is a call for war.

The people in the army that Joel describes in chapter 2 are outrageous, rude and brash, uncompromising, and nothing like what we see in our pews today. They care nothing for what the world offers, and they are not worried about who is offended by their fierce message of repentance. Their fire is lit from the Altar of God and will not go out until He returns. Nothing will stand in their way. The Lord has commissioned them and utters His voice before them, and they will usher in the coming of the Lord with the strength and power of His zeal.

Does this sound like what we hear over the pulpits or television today? This is not the “kinder, gentler” Gospel that our pastors feed us with. This is the zeal that has eaten us up and whips the moneychangers from the Temple. It will not easily reside in our complacent churches for it will find no common ground there. It is a fire that is designed to burn the chaff and purify the land.

This kind of ferocious warfare is generated only by the same kind of prayer. Easy “quiet times” will not burn hot enough to ignite this fire. Having “a little talk with Jesus” will not break through the doors of the Throne Room to forge an army like this. This takes the strong, contending of prayer warriors who will agonize with tears and crying out to shake the foundations of Heaven for a move of God. This is

the kind of faith that declares, "I will not be moved, I will not be denied, I will not give in. I will grasp hold of the horns of the altar and claim the promises of God until Heaven moves, and the earth shakes and God pours out revival!"

Before we take arms to rush to the streets in full battle gear, we must understand that until the battle is won in the prayer room, it will not be won on the streets. And it is not just prayer, but prayer that contends until it receives the answer. Power in God comes from a hard-won victory in the prayer room, and without that power, all that will be exhibited to the lost is a carnal self-righteousness that is devoid of the Spirit of God.

You can have the best fishing pole and the best bait in the world, but if the fish aren't hungry, they won't take the bait. It takes prayer to direct the Spirit of God to stir up a hunger in their hearts for Truth before we will find souls that are ready for Salvation.

Faith is not believing that God can do anything. Any fool can believe that. True Faith is believing that God is going to move, and that you will not quit praying until He does. Anything less than that is not faith, but presumption. But do we see that kind of faith today? Gone are the all-night prayer meetings that prayed all night long until the dawn broke through for souls to be saved. We have allowed our complacency to dilute our zeal for souls, and as a result have castrated the manhood of the Church. We pray like women, not warriors. (Or should I say little girls, because there are some strong prayer warriors amongst our women that put the rest of us to shame.)

Joel calls for a complete sanctification of the Church and a total commitment to serious prayer before the Lord will answer. This can only come from those who are desperate for a move of God. They can be satisfied with nothing less than revival for the entire land. This is the point that God has brought them to. It is not flipped on like a light switch, but is refined through the fire of an entire process that has burned out all other cares and desires. Nothing else matters. "Give me souls lest I die!"

It is at this point that God hears our cry and answers. For the Children of Israel in Egypt, it took over 400 years to get that place before God heard their prayers in heaven. How long will it take us to come that same place of desperation?

But when we do, He will hear.

## The Answer

*“Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things.*

*Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.*

*Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.*

*And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.*

*And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.*

*And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.” Joel 2:21-26*

The promise of God is that, if we will seek the face of God in true repentance, He will hear us and answer us and show us great and mighty things that we know not. God wants revival much more than we do. Judgments are not only a punishment for sin, but also a call to righteousness.

He promises to restore the corn, the wine, and the oil that has been withheld from the house of God. Our separation from God has kept us from discovering the secret, hidden treasures in the Word that only the Spirit can reveal. This is the corn that was wasted. Imagine the riches we have wasted because we have not walked deeply in communion with Him! But now imagine the excitement of experiencing a river of wisdom that shall be revealed as we dive into the Word of God. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, but our ears have been stopped up by our worldliness. Now our ears will hear, and our faith will reach new levels that will unleash the supernatural in our lives and the lives of those we touch.

The wine of God is that deep communion in prayer with Him. We have read of how our forefathers would agonize in prayer with tears for hours, even all night with God. That takes a power from God to be able to do. These men were not able to pray like that simply because they had strong will power or exercised strong discipline. The Spirit of God gave them the drive and desire to push past the limits of mind and flesh to contend in prayer to that degree. That has mostly disappeared from the church today, but God says He will send that also. The thrill of breaking through to the Throne Room of God after strong, contending prayer is like nothing you can ever experience with “having a little talk with Jesus”. It gives you a victory and a joy that energizes your walk with God. You now walk with the tread of a conqueror to break down all the walls of the enemy. Your confidence in answered prayer knows no limits, and even mountains are cast into the sea because you now have, not just faith in God, but you have the faith of God because you have been there in His presence and the frailty of the reality of this world is now ripped away. You can stop the sun, stop the rain, call down fire, and call down the latter rain of revival.

The anointing oil of the Holy Spirit has been missing for so long that we don't even know what we are missing. As a result, we are satisfied with dry preaching, didactic teaching, and a structured church. We have convinced ourselves that the answer is in theological scholasticism and that educated degrees will suffice instead. Leonard Ravenhill once said that we once had no degrees but plenty of heat, but now we have lots of degrees but no heat. That anointing that has been missing will begin again to flow and life will reenter the church. Imagine being so excited over the message that you can't wait to get back to services, so much so that you now have to have church every day. Sundays are not enough. And you have to tell everyone you meet about how exciting it is! Hungry souls will finally come to get saved, not because of our doctrine or faith, but because they can see the fire in our eyes. This is revival; this is the outpouring that Isaiah spoke about in chapter 32:15.

The fig tree and the vine will once again yield their strength, and as the sap flows through us, we will bear forth much fruit and will no longer be a barren woman. It is that rain that will fall that will bring

forth life out of the desert. But not just the rain, for He will send the former rain and the latter rain together. Brother, it ain't just gonna rain -- it is going to pour!

When Elijah finished with the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel, his curse of drought was over, and he told Ahab, "there is a sound of abundance of rain". That sound is the sound of mingled voices reaching to the Throne of God to save souls. When you hear that sound, the rain is not far behind. This coming revival will be fueled by an unprecedented desperation for God to forgive us, restore us, and to win the souls that we have neglected. It will be a powerful sound. And the answer will be an outpouring rain like never seen before.

He says that the floors will be full of wheat. Which floors? The threshingfloors of our churches. Souls are the harvest that Jesus pointed out to His disciples. That harvest must be brought into the threshingfloor where it is processed to separate the wheat from the chaff. This is the job of the church to produce a pure kernel without the chaff. The floors won't be half full or mostly full – they will be full of souls coming in to ask Jesus Christ to be their personal Savior. The altars will be full, the pews will be packed, and once again, there will be standing room only as people rush to God, dying to get saved.

The fats will overflow with wine and oil – not just a lot, but overflow! The Spirit of God will overwhelm our capacity to lose ourselves in praise. Very few today know what it is like to have the Spirit of God flow over you so much that you lose yourself in it. You can't stand up, you can't think, you can't speak anything but resounding praises to God. You become literally drunk on the Spirit. Even the very air will shimmer from the glory of God.

He will restore the years that have been lost. He will raise up the valley of bones in Ezekiel 37. He will restore His precious Bride and call her to Himself again in the greatest love story of all time.

## Conclusion

The things I have related to you are all written in the Word of God, and they shall come to pass. There have been great revivals in times past, but the great revival that is promised in Joel and Isaiah has yet to be fulfilled. The prophet Joel repeatedly identifies the time as just before “the Day of the Lord”. This timing makes perfect sense because the spiritual conditions will be the same as they were just before His first coming. Isaiah 53:2 says that Jesus was a root out of dry ground. It was a spiritual drought that left the whole of Israel dying of thirst for a new move from God. There were synagogues and Pharisees in every town, but just the rumor of this prophet rising out of Israel caused hundreds and thousands of simple farmers to drop their plows and walk the long distance to Jordan to hear His words. It will be even drier just before He returns -- the perfect setting for revival. I don't know how long it will last, or when it will break forth, but I do know it is coming.

But it is not coming to the church world as we know it today. God will give the churches a certain space of time to repent, and they will not repent. Why should they? They do not feel have to. The sad thing about apostasy is that the same blankets of comfort and ease that the church covers herself with, are the same blankets that cover her ability to see. She is the last to realize how dead she is, even though it is blatantly clear to everybody around her.

The Church of Laodicea is alive in our churches today. She thinks she is rich and increased with the blessings of God, but she is blinded by her lukewarmness and cannot see how far she has fallen from where she once was. Churches that were once forged in the fires of revival have now become social organizations – sophisticated, rich, organized, theologically-correct, and proud of a heritage that they no longer possess. Their pride will not allow them to repent, and so their candlesticks fade slowly away until she sits complacently by in the increasing shadows that grow around her.

And then He will raise up stones in their place. Spread across the land is a Gideon generation that wants something more than just “church as usual”. These are the people whom God will call out of those dead institutions to forge Joel's Army for this last great battle between God and Satan for the souls of man.

There is no question that this last great revival will come. It will come. The Holy Spirit is sounding the trumpet. The question is will you answer the call? If you do not, then you will end up standing on the sidelines watching as the fire of God falls on some other church that was willing to do what you were not. The choice is yours.

Friend, you are living in the most exciting time of all history. War is also coming – terrible war – and it is for such a time as this that we are called to stand in this final battle. This is the final culmination of a conflict that has gone on since the beginning of time. Heroes will be forged during this final battle that will shine throughout Eternity.

Answer the call, rise to the challenge, and believe God for the greatest revival of all time.

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The weekly column, Fire in the Hole, is printed in several newspapers in the U.S. and emailed around the world. They are also posted on his blogs and on RevivalFire.org. If you would like to have the column emailed to you free of charge, please sign up on the website or by correspondence.

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