

# Revival Men: Mordecai Ham

by E.A. Johnston

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*E.A. Johnston's sermon on Mordecai Ham highlights his impactful evangelistic ministry, the opposition he faced, and the transformative effects of his preaching on communities.*

**Duration:** 16:19

**Scripture:** Acts 2:1, Romans 1:16

**Topics:** "Revival Men"

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## Description

The video is a sermon transcript about the preaching of Mordecai Ham, an evangelist who had a profound impact on communities through his powerful sermons. He preached with such intensity and conviction that it shook the whole town and led to remarkable transformations in people's lives. Thousands of farmers flocked to his services, and many were saved. Ham believed in preaching the law before the gospel, convicting people of their sins before offering salvation. He was a dedicated soul winner, preaching multiple times a day and using various tactics to capture the audience's attention. His ultimate goal was to glorify Jesus Christ and save souls.

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## Transcript

We are in our series on men of revival and our subject today is the evangelist Mordecai Ham. Mordecai Ham was greatly used of God in a itinerant preaching ministry which covered the early 1900s to the late 1950s. He died in 1961.

It was said of Mordecai Ham that he was the human means of bringing in over a quarter of a million souls to Christ and his most famous convert was Billy Graham. Billy Graham was just a 16-year-old boy when he went to hear the famous evangelist Mordecai Ham preach in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1934. They eventually became close friends and Mordecai Ham took great pleasure in following the ministry of Billy Graham and they became close friends.

One day Billy Graham went to see Mordecai Ham to ask his advice in ministry. Mordecai Ham thought about it and replied, Billy don't ever lose your sweetheart love for Jesus and that's good advice friends. Mordecai Ham was a fiery evangelist who preached a message above the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ and because of this message he met much opposition in his crusades.

But many persons that openly fought a ham meeting often met with some form of violent death. This helped his notoriety. Many men feared a ham meeting when he came to town.

Mordecai Ham also fought hard against the liquor industry in his day. He met such opposition from the liquor barons that they would often try to run him out of town through mob violence. One day while Ham was preaching in the city of Corpus Christi, Texas he was attacked in the lobby of his hotel by a man with a whip and on this whip were fastened lead weights.

Mordecai Ham threw up his bible up over his head to deflect the blows but he literally was horse whipped for preaching the gospel and the lordship of Jesus Christ. He was in constant danger and had many death threats on his life. Once there was an attempt to kidnap his little girl.

Mordecai Ham would often have to leave town with a troop of armed lawmen who escorted him to the train station. They would point their rifles at the crowd while Ham boarded the train. One time while he was preaching in Fort Worth, Texas he was brutally assaulted while leaving his hotel.

As he was on his way to preach he was struck from behind on the back of his head and gashes were cut in the side of his face. In the same city of Fort Worth 12,000 people gathered to hear him preach at the tabernacle but he never got to deliver a sermon because a riot broke out and a squad of policemen had to break up the meeting to stop the mob that was gathered there against Mordecai Ham. In a meeting in a small town in Texas in 1918 a drunken group of men marched into a ham meeting and after knocking some people down they dragged Mordecai Ham out of the tent and carried him with a bucket of tar and a sack of feathers and the leader of this gang had a rope to hang him.

It was only the quick action of the local mayor who saved Mordecai Ham from being hanged, tarred and feathered. The mayor wired the nearest army base and a detachment of cavalry were dispatched to rescue the evangelist just before he was tarred and feathered. One time a crowd demonstrated their hatred for Ham by skinning a hog and placing it in a coffin and they held a mock funeral for Ham.

An evangelistic meeting conducted by Ham would close down the local taverns. In his meetings angry liquor sellers would form a mob and parade down the street shouting, hang Ham, hang Ham and then a man would holler, you made me move three times. He was referring to the fact that every time Mordecai Ham came to town to hold a meeting the saloons had to close and move shortly thereafter because their businesses dried up because of so many of the conversions.

One time when Ham was preaching a drunken madman rushed into the meeting with a gun and began threatening everybody. Ham jumped from the platform rushed up the aisle singing at the top of his voice. When he got to the man the fellow had fallen to his knees and thrown down his gun with a liquor bottle and a pair of dice and was begging for mercy.

This man was gloriously saved that night and Mordecai Ham put him to work fighting the local saloon crowd. Ham fought sin head on. He preached against sin not like today where we don't even like to make mention of it from our pulpits anymore.

Well one time Ham had so many death threats in the city that a United States marshal accompanied him on the train. En route the marshal surrendered his life to Christ by saying to Mordecai Ham any man who could go through what you went through tonight as calmly as you did has something that I don't have. Ham literally put the liquor crowd out of business everywhere he went.

I have a photograph of the results of a Ham meeting. It was taken in Durham North Carolina in 1923 and in the photo is a pile of destroyed whiskey stills and it's just amazing the size of those destroyed stills. There

has to be over 50 of them in this photo.

Often after God moved in a Ham meeting there was a noticeable difference in the community. Afterwards crime would decrease so much that the police chief would comment on it. After Ham preached in Shawnee Oklahoma the city jail was emptied for the first time in a hundred years.

A man came up to Mordecai Ham at the close of one of his meetings and said didn't you tell us that if we would close our business and come to the meetings during the morning that our business would improve? Well I'm the city jailer and I don't have a single border. But there were light moments in a Ham meeting as well. One time he was in the deep south and preaching at an all-black church.

The church members had never heard of him and didn't even know his name. So when he introduced himself to them he said my name is the part of the hog which you enjoy eating. Just then a lady sitting on the front row called out sure it's nice to meet you Mr. Gentleman's.

Often his preaching was so to God that an entire community would be shaken for Christ. This happened in Jackson Tennessee in 1905 where a tenth of the population was brought to Christ. There was always a tremendous force of good left in a community after Mordecai Ham preached there.

But listen friends listen to Mordecai Ham's own words and you can catch his heartbeat. He said this I have but one desire only one and that is to be a channel through which the river of life may flow to some of the people of this world. I desire no pleasure no promise of long life no earthly exaltation no pride of worldly ambition.

I desire only this that through me the salvation of Jesus Christ may be brought to men and women on this earth. One of the strangest aspects of his life occurred after his first wife died. He was a man in his 30s and while he was in the guest in the home he fell in love with the family's 14 year old daughter.

He ended up marrying this teenage bride and they had a happy union for the next several decades. I don't know if an evangelist was a guest in my home and fell in love with my 14 year old daughter. I'd probably escort him out of town but God honored the reunion with several children.

At the height of his ministry he could preach five and six times a day. He was a man of a strong constitution and even in his early 70s he preached four times daily. This man loved to preach.

He would preach anywhere he could draw a crowd. It was said of him that he had no other hobby other than preaching. Preaching to him was a joy like a hobby would be to some men and he had one purpose in life and that was to glorify Jesus Christ and he ran on one track and one track only and that was to save souls.

He was a soul winner first and foremost. Mordecai Ham meeting was boisterous. He employed any tactic to keep a crowd's attention.

He would sing, shout, jump up and down around the platform. Mordecai Ham would not preach the gospel to unprepared hearts. He would preach the law before the gospel.

Ham said of his own meetings, I started my meetings with preaching intended to convict folk of their sins. First I had to clean up all the backslidden church members then after I had them thoroughly convicted and in a praying disposition I could start on the sinners and take the hide off them. In some of my longer

meetings I had to preach several weeks before giving an invitation.

I offered at first propositions that I knew my hearers would not accept so that the conviction in their hearts would be deepened. When I finally did give an invitation it was like the opening of a mighty dam. We had over a hundred over a thousand responders in one service.

Mordecai Ham preached a famous sermon entitled sudden death and sudden death would often accompany a Ham meeting. Sudden deaths occurred when he would come to a town and encounter resistance from hardened sinners. In some of these meetings an ambulance would have to come and carry away bodies from the service.

He would comment that when a person deliberately fights the pleading of the Holy Spirit nothing is left for him. When God is silent it is because he is preparing to judge and we know he has spoken for the last time through his son. Well this was such a well-known fact about Mordecai Ham's ministry that people feared him when he came to town.

Men would run from the meeting because they were afraid Ham would pray to God to kill them. One time he chased a man into a cornfield. The man was lying low in the corn begging for mercy for Ham not to pray to God to kill him.

Mordecai Ham was also used as an instrument of revival. There are times in his ministry where God would come in such power in revival to a town that the whole town would be gripped with a sense of eternity. Listen to the following newspaper story from the Burlington Daily Times Friday May 29th 1925 in the town of Burlington North Carolina where revival broke out under a Ham meeting.

Remember friends this is a secular newspaper reporting this. Listen to how God gripped this entire community under Ham's powerful preaching. A newspaper man can never allow himself to be swept off his feet and under any and all circumstances must be conservative in his statements and correct in his judgments.

As to stating the effects of the Ham-Ramsay meeting upon our community we do so without any effort to exaggerate or mislead. The results are so astonishing and so far reaching that even a conservative statement of the facts will sound ridiculous to those who have not been in our community during these meetings and seen for themselves the marvelous transformations that have taken place. The evangelist was preaching sledgehammer sermons that were shaking the whole town and its foundation.

The farmers have flocked to the morning and night services by the thousands and hundreds have been saved. Cold and indifferent men and women have thrown off the reserve and are talking Jesus Christ and preaching righteousness and salvation wherever you go whether it be a cafe, a drugstore, a factory, or shop. The only subject is religion and Christianity.

Old men and young men are talking religion and we have had more lay sermons during the last seven weeks than we've heard in the last 25 years. It is in the air in the hearts of men everywhere. The whole community is filled with the Holy Spirit.

Let me ask you friends, how many evangelists today are shaking entire communities for Christ? I'll share his secret with you. Mordecai Ham's power lay in his prayer life. Listen to his prayer for a town in North Carolina before he began his crusade there.

Listen to his words as he lays hold of heaven for the loss of this community and how he enlists the aid of God and the Holy Spirit. Dear Father, thou knowest the conduct of all in this town, how the Antichrist has made his power felt, how the ministers have opposed. Father, please for thy name's sake and thy son's sake begin to deal with these, the scoffers and the enemies.

Father, only a miracle will crush them. Deal with the Baptists, my own brotherhood, the Methodists and their leaders. Dear Father, may this week be a series of warnings and crushing blows.

Deal with the newspapers. Oh Lord, you know how the testimony for Jesus has been opposed in this city. Deal with the city councilmen and all that would try to drive us out of the city.

Oh dear Lord, come on thy servant and make his messages a burning fire. Lord, give us a Pentecost here and deal a blow to that infidel Saunders. Pour out thy spirit tomorrow and may the city be made to tremble.

Send angels now and make the city a stronghold of holy angels and begin to make examples of some from hell. Bring the enemies to where they will publicly confess and apologize to you. Oh Father, in Jesus name, oh Lord, I need your endorsement.

Show the city that you are with me. Brother Evangelist, do you pray like that? Oh, I would need a touch of Mordecai Ham for our day. Well friends, I hope this message on Mordecai Ham in our series of Revival Men has stirred your heart as it has mine.

And I hope that it also has encouraged you to pray for revival in our day so we can see God come and shake an entire town for the salvation of thousands and for his great glory.

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