

# Real Revival

by Richard Owen Roberts

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*Richard Owen Roberts emphasizes the necessity of understanding and pursuing true revival through biblical teachings from both the Old and New Testaments.*

**Duration:** 1:13:52

**Scripture:** Exodus 32:30

**Topics:** "Spiritual Revival", "Gods Presence"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the topic of revival, exploring the misconceptions and diverse viewpoints surrounding it within the church. It emphasizes the need for a broader definition of revival and a deeper understanding of its presence in both the Old and New Testaments. The sermon highlights the importance of recognizing moral and spiritual decline as a precursor to revival, the concept of righteous judgments from God, the role of immensely burdened leaders, and the necessity of God's manifest presence for true revival to occur.

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## Transcript

These days, when you meet with an assembly of people and you use the word revival, you don't know whether you're talking to people who have a similar understanding as your own. I'm the subject of revival of people who have some perfectly preposterous notions as to what revival is. And obviously it's been so long for most people since true revival occurred anywhere around them that they don't have any point of reference to look back to and say that was a real work of God.

And it astonishes me the diversity of viewpoints on the subject of revival represented in the church among those who are supposedly evangelical believers. There are those who say that revival is exclusively an Old Testament subject, nothing about revival in the New Testament. Then astonishingly, those who say revival is exclusively a New Testament subject, nothing whatsoever about revival in the Old Testament.

And sometimes it almost makes it dizzy to hear these varying viewpoints and the arguments that are used in defense of them. Fairly recently in a conference that was held in Wheaton, the statement was made that there are no revivals in the Old Testament. The speaker who was there for a series is a highly regarded man, in fact a warm personal friend of mine from another country.

And I went up to him afterward and I said, uh, would there be any possibility of our sitting down this week for a chat? Oh, he said, I've already discovered that your office is just down the street and I told the people

that have made the arrangements of this meeting that I must have time to see you. He said, I'm scheduled to be at your place on Friday at one. I hope that will work.

Yes, I said. Well, when he came, he said, the others have set up my calendar and they've only given me a half an hour to spend with you. I'm sorry, but let's make the best use of time we can.

So I said, let me tell you what I think I heard you say. I'll put it in the form of a syllogism. Revival is a plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit.

Major premise. Minor premise. There are no plentiful effusions of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.

Conclusion. There are no revivals in the Old Testament. That's it.

That's it. You got it exactly. Well, I said, your problem is you've given revival too narrow a definition.

Certainly, a plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit is a phrase that has been wonderfully used in the past, and there isn't any question, but what in revival, there is a plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit. But to say that's it, and to eliminate revivals from the Old Testament on that basis is simply wrong. Now, I said, look, I know you well.

I know you're a man of the book. What authority can you provide for your position? Well, he kind of hemmed and hawed and cited this fellow and that fellow, and, well, I don't know everything. By the grace of God, I do know something.

And I said to him, all those references will not do. You're going to have to come up with something better than that. Well, he couldn't.

And I said, now listen, through the century, these incredibly gracious and wonderful movements in the Old Testament have been described as revival. You've got to call them something, because clearly, they are things that did occur. So, what name are you wanting to give them? Well, I hadn't really thought of that.

Well, I said, until you do, I'm going to believe that the Old Testament has a lot of wonderful, helpful material on revival, as does the New Testament. You know, the difficulty, in part, that we're facing these days is that really there is an awful lot of downplaying of the Old Testament and not the very careful usage of the New Testament. And the rather absurd thought that if the New Testament doesn't say precisely what it says in the Old on the subject, then it's irrelevant.

It doesn't fit. It doesn't really belong. I'd like to begin this morning by a simple suggestion that our task, and I often do this in public meetings, I take my Bible like this, and I kind of open it to about so, and I say to people, you know, what do you see? Just looking at the page edges, what do you see? Huh? No, no, the page edges, no notes there.

Yeah, roughly a third and two thirds. And if it's all the Word of God, which I honestly believe it is, then my responsibility is to preach two thirds out of the Old and one third out of the New. You don't look convinced.

I don't think that in our day we are handling the Word of God all right. And I believe that an awful lot of the problems that the church is faced with, we're faced with because we are not treating the Word of God as it is meant to be treated. My understanding is if a matter is established in the Old Testament, it remains established today unless God himself has made it clear that was simply a type.

Now we have the reality and the type is no longer in place. But other than that, it seems to me we've got to use both Testaments with great precision and care. Now many people have never asked this simple question, what period of time does the Old Testament cover over against the period of time covered in the New Testament? Now without trying to pin it down to an exact number of years, obviously the Old Testament is covering thousands of years and the New Testament is covering considerably less than a hundred.

Now that's got to enter in to our understanding of such a precious and urgent subject as revival. Sometimes in dealing with perfectly ordinary people, not that you are not perfectly ordinary like me, but I mean in dealing with people who don't have a specific orientation toward revival, I ask the elementary question. Based upon a median, you can all, I'm sure, in your minds envision a median.

Just think in terms of an eye hook on that wall and an eye hook on that wall and the cable stretched between those two eye hooks, and we're going to call that the median line. Most of us understand that a revival consists of a crossing of that line twice. All revivals include a decline, what is called the declension, the moral and the spiritual declension that precedes revival, and then the revival itself.

So once going down the line is crossed, once going up the line is crossed. How many times in the Old Testament did that cycle, that down and up, occur? Yeah, that's the best answer that we can give. Lots.

I don't think anybody could truly pin it down to a precise number, but that there were many in the book of Judges alone, not less than seven of these cycles. And in the little pamphlet that I produced years ago called the Solemn Assembly, I listed 12 of the major revival events of the Old Testament, and I didn't include any of the seven in Judges. So we'll just simply leave it as many.

How many full cycles appeared in the New Testament? Come along, this is the Canadian Revival Fellowship. Have you thought of this? What was that? Yeah, I mean that's exactly it. There's not one single full cycle in the New Testament.

The Old Testament begins above the line with Adam and Eve in fellowship with God, walking and talking with God in the garden. The Old Testament ends below the line, but many, many times has been repeated throughout the Old Testament. The New Testament obviously begins where the Old Testament closes, below the line.

In Pentecost there is this incredible movement of true revival. There are warning passages in the New Testament about declension. There are individual churches, say in the Revelation, where there is indication that they have been sinking severely.

But obviously when you've got these patterns repeated in one Testament and yet not one full cycle in the New Testament, there's going to be a difference in the teaching. It is perfectly reasonable that the Old Testament should have an abundance of teaching upon revival, whereas the teaching in the New Testament would not be as distinct, as sharp, as if they had had a series of these ups and downs. Now I mention those things because what we are faced with today is a generation that has no true knowledge of what real revival is.

So that our task, or at least as I perceive it, is twofold. First, to teach people the raw elements of true revival. I don't think there are very many people who honestly even believe that God is God, and that God is sovereign, and that he does as he pleases.

The prayers that I listen to, and the sermons that I hear, and the personal statements people make in my presence leads me to think that in their mind God is always equidistant from man, that there's no variation. We often hear cited, oh, I am with you, oh, but we don't hear any explanation of what did James mean when he said, draw near to me, and I will draw near to you. Seems to me a statement of that sort indicates that God is not always equidistant from his people.

What would be the sense of saying draw near if God always were near? But the whole basic concept of God and his sovereignty, of his rights, is so grievously contradicted by the position of the church that there's virtually no true understanding of revival. I said I believe our task is twofold. We've got to educate people biblically in terms of this incredibly urgent subject of revival.

But that's not our sole task. We're not teachers or educators alone. We are preachers of righteousness, and our task is also to call men and women, boys and girls, back to true Christianity, to turning from sin and self to God.

But we don't seem to have been very successful Brother, may I ask you, how successful do you think Canadian Revival Fellowship has been? And that's a kindly response. You know, I have a ministry called International Awakening Ministry. I'm not even sure I would dare to go as high as three.

We've done what we could, done everything we knew to do, done it steadily. I mean year after year, decade after decade, doing everything we can. But so little has happened that we're almost embarrassed and ashamed.

And indeed, at times, people ask us very bluntly, don't you ever get discouraged? I meet people who come up to me and say, how long have you been doing this? And I tell them, well don't you ever get discouraged? Well, the honest truth is, no, I don't. I'm doing what I was called to do. I wasn't called to be successful, but faithful.

I'd like to be successful, but that's up to God. But obviously, we are in the situation, in the midst of the decline we're in. We do have to re-examine what we're doing and ask, is there something perhaps additional that we could say or do? Or is there something we're doing that is proven erroneous or so ineffective we could wisely abandon it? But honestly, when everything is said and done, I think the simple truth is, the basic reason why we have so little interest in revival in our two countries is because most people don't have any idea what real revival is and how beautiful.

I'm sure you've been moved as I have by those wonderful last words of Psalm 73, the nearness of God is my good. I couldn't catch how many times my soul has been revitalized at that realization, at the enjoyment of the recollections of those seasons in my own life when the nearness of God was perfectly splendid. Seasons when, in a sense, you almost don't need to walk by faith because the Lord is so near that you almost feel as if you're walking hand in hand with him.

But then other seasons when you honestly wonder, did the Lord forget I'm here? Does he even know and care? We have learned a great deal in our personal experience about the comings and goings of God, but I don't think we are adequately representing these truths to the people. I personally am not ready to give up. I'd like to do things better and in greater power of the Holy Spirit, with greater faithfulness to the Word of God than ever before.

And this might be the last time I stand before anybody to speak at my age. One doesn't do much planning for the future, but as long as I've got life and breath, I want to keep on proclaiming what I am convinced is true and calling people to respond to it as a people ought always to respond to God. So with that as a background, what I'd like to do is to take again an extraordinarily familiar passage to those of us who are engaged in revival ministry and in concern about the well-being of the kingdom of God, and again use it as a reminder and I hope even as a prod to inspire us further in the labors to which God has called us.

I make reference now to that first large-scale account of revival in the Old Testament in Exodus chapter 32 and following. Some of you perhaps have read the book by Jonathan Edwards, *The History of Redemption*, and he gives some wonderful details and focused attention to that period in Genesis where men began to seek God, and he names that as the first recorded revival. Well, I expect this is the first recorded revival with a great deal of detail and information, and I'd like to focus upon this passage and draw from it some items of immense consequence that I believe we need to focus upon in our day.

So Exodus 32, when the people saw that Moses had delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, come, make us a God who will go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him. It was an absurdity.

They know perfectly well what had become of him. They knew that he had gone up into the mountain with God. Aaron said to them, tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.

Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears, and they brought them to Aaron. And he took this from their hand, and he fashioned it with a graving tool, and he made it into a molten calf. And they said, this is your God, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.

Now, when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made proclamation and said, tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord. So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings.

And the people sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play. And of course, the commentary upon this in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 makes it clear that it was a very filthy sex orgy in which they were engaged. Now, I believe that fundamental to the problem we face and the lack of interest in revival, and the lack of fervent prayer for revival among professed Christians, is a misinterpretation of the times in which we live.

And I expect some of you are guilty of fortifying this grievous error. A large percentage of the people I encounter seem to believe that it's too late for anything glorious to happen. They have bought into end times theology to such an extent that you often are with people who say very plainly, I'm just praying that the Lord will hurry up and come.

And innumerable times I have said to someone who spoke words like that to me, do you have any unsaved children? And they will say, well, yes, I have a daughter who is far from God. And you, a professing Christian, is hoping that Christ will come and take you out of this rotten mess and don't even care that your daughter is headed straight for hell. There's something vile about the Christian notion that escapism is desirable.

Don't misunderstand, I'm not speaking against the coming of Christ. I know he's coming, but I also know that at such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man will come. And I personally have not bought into this end time theology that hints or plainly states that it's too late.

I don't believe it is too late. I believe, for instance, that there are some very urgent promises of Scripture that has not yet been fulfilled. I don't believe that God must have Canada or America, the United States, in order to fulfill his promises.

But I do know that we've got an awful lot of Jews living among us who have never yet been provoked to jealousy by a Gentile church so holy and so full of the Holy Spirit, and so prominent in displaying the glory of Christ in its ranks. But the Jews have said that's not fair. He's our Messiah.

Why should they have blessings that were intended for us? I can't imagine Christ coming back now to claim the filthy bride that calls itself his church. I know personally I wouldn't want a bride like the church of North America, and I personally can't conceive of any way by which the bride could be turned from the soiled rotten mess it is into the virgin without spot and without blemish that Christ purchased with his own blood. I can't think of anything that would make an adequate change in the church other than revival.

I have personally strong convictions that revival is mandatory, and that indeed it will come. Where I have uncertainty is whether it will include us or not. But I'm not ready to give up on that as I've already said, and as long as I can I'm going to keep calling the church to repent.

From my understanding of things you may wish to correct me, and I think perhaps I ought to stop right now and say I believe our time together will be most beneficial if you feel the liberty to interrupt me. I mean that sincerely. Up until now at least I have not lost my way when people interrupt, so I'm not fearful of that.

But if you have something to interject, if I have made a statement that you think is erroneous or that is unclear and you want clarification, the only thing I would hope for would be that you give me a chance to finish the sentence. So just perhaps a wave of the hand or some indication you have something you'd like to say. Do feel that liberty.

I'm most earnest in making that recommendation to you. But there are, I believe, not less than four things that always precede revivals, and I think this passage helps us wonderfully in seeing those things. And the first of these is so incredibly urgent because it appears to me that the bulk of the church is misinterpreting the first of these things.

Always prior to revival there is some grievous form of moral and spiritual decline. Now in our day a large portion of the church takes the moral and spiritual decline as evidence that we are at the end of the end. We may be at the end of the end.

I'm in no position to say, and you aren't either, but I don't believe that it's right before God to adopt a pessimistic viewpoint, and especially in the light of those numerous scriptures that remain unfulfilled. But may I say it this way. Thanks be to God our predecessors in the ministry of Christ didn't look at it as if it were too late.

Suppose that at the time of George Whitefield, you know the details, at least some of you, you know that his father ran a tavern in Gloucester, England, that his father died and his mother remarried a rather abusive man, and that George was consigned to the dirty task in the tavern of emptying the pots, etc. He had an aspiration, a hope for an education, but being a commoner was ineligible for university education.

But some older, wealthier man somehow made way, and Whitefield was admitted to Oxford University, went as a servant of other students, and yet nonetheless as a student in the university.

And when he went to Oxford he had this tremendously great hunger. Visited various churches, talked with various faculty members, sought spiritual help, found none in the university city. Then met Charles Wesley who invited him to come and participate in their club that was earning their way to heaven by good works.

And Whitefield perhaps exceeded the rest of them in zealous good works. Pretty well ruined his health in all the fasting and the abstinence in which he engaged, and the zeal with which he tried to save himself and others. Sent home from the university too ill to remain.

Offered an opportunity after someone had slipped him that little book by Henry Scarnugo, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*. The bishop of invited him to speak in the cathedral. And it was said that some 13 or 14 people were driven mad by his sermon, meaning that they came under profound conviction and were weeping and lamenting their sins.

The bishop was wise enough to say, I hope it lasts at least until next Sunday. But you know that the doors of countless churches were thrown open and Whitefield was urged to come and preach. So tense were the throngs that followed him that he had to have guards who broke through the vast crowds for him to move from preaching place to preaching place.

And soon the incredible evangelical revival was underway. Suppose that someone had gotten a hold of young Whitefield just after he had read Scarnugo's book in *Men Converted* and said to him, now understand George, it's too late for anything good to happen. Isn't it wonderful that our forefathers, when they saw the moral and the spiritual decline, turned with all their hearts to the Lord in the expectancy of faith that something wonderful would happen.

You know, perhaps, about Timothy Dwight becoming president of Yale College at a time when it was thought there were only two professing Christians in the entire student body. Now he didn't go to those two and say, look fellows, you got to realize we're living at the end of the end. Don't hope for anything to happen.

No, instead he made chapel attendance mandatory and he himself preached time after time in the Yale chapel, spent an entire year on the doctrine of God, the sermon still available in Dwight's theology. And at the end of that first school year, this man of faith was able to acknowledge that it appeared that there were only two, possibly three students in the entire college who had not been converted to Christ and those two or three were seeking the Lord. Oh, for the kind of hope that expects God to do something incredible.

I said there are four things that precede revival. Let me lay out the four. The first I've mentioned and given this brief statement concerning always a terrible moral and spiritual decline that precedes revival.

Number two, there's always some form of a righteous judgment from the Lord. I shall explain that in a moment. Number three, there's always someone or a group of somebody whom God raises up who have an immense burden for God to come again in great power.

And number four, there's always some extraordinary action that is taken on the part of believing people. That, I believe, gives us a picture of what must still happen among us and what has not really truly happened for a very long time. As I already said, in the light of the moral and spiritual decline, many have simply given up and said, Oh Lord, hurry back.

I don't think we are going to gain any ground asking God to hurry back. I believe that the time of Christ's return has long ago been set by the Father. You remember as well as I do that when Christ was quizzed on the subject, he made it clear that was not his to announce, that was in the Father's hands.

Just seems to me we're making a dreadful mistake wasting time on matters that do nothing but discourage or create a ray of hope in somebody who ought not to hope in that direction. Their hope ought to be that the Spirit of God will be outpoured and their own children and grandchildren brought gloriously into relationship with Christ. So, I leave the subject of the moral and spiritual decline by simply saying, when we see the moral and spiritual decline, our heart should brighten.

We should be encouraged because nothing turns up until it is at the bottom. Why not rejoice that we happen to have in the United States right now, a political leader who is extraordinarily gifted in bringing America to its knees. And those who are running against him, I don't think they're quite as well equipped as he is in the area of destruction, but they certainly don't seem to have any answer.

But let's weigh number two. There's always some form of a righteous judgment from God. Let me turn back to the text.

Verse seven, the Lord spoke to Moses saying, go down at once for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf and they've worshipped it and their sacrifice to it and said, this is your God, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.

And the Lord said to Moses, I have seen this people and behold, they are an obsolete people. Now then, let me alone that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them and I will make of you a great nation. All revivals preceded by some form of a righteous judgment from God.

And so the Lord says to Moses, get out of the way. I will go down there and utterly destroy those people. And I will make of you, Moses, you alone, Moses, a people to my land.

I'm sure most of you have gotten this straight, but I haven't been talking with this young couple here and I haven't yet had a chance to find out how much they know, but I expect they know less than I do on this subject. And maybe they never heard. Are you acquainted with the distinction between final judgments and remedial judgments? Are you familiar with that? Okay, I was right in my assumption.

But look, I'm saying that prior to revivals, there's always some form of a righteous judgment. When you use the word judgment in the church today, most people are thinking of eschatological judgments, that which is down the line, that which will accompany the end of time. I'm not speaking about distant or future judgments.

I'm talking about the judgments that are concurrent with sin. I don't know much about Canada, though I have a brother that is a Canadian who lives in Toronto, but unfortunately our schedules... What? Where is that? Yes, well, I understand. That's like Chicago and saying where's New York.

But we live in a society where justice is so thoroughly corrupted that we have almost lost sight of what true justice is. You can have a person observed murdering someone else. There can be 12 eyewitnesses who saw the murder being committed, and 13 years after the murder, they can still be toying around in the court pretending to administer justice.

We're so used to that kind of injustice called justice that it's difficult for us to realize that God is never even one second late in his administration of justice. We know the biblical pattern, though most churches refuse to follow it. We know that when a person sins, they are to immediately judge themselves on a daily basis.

I believe the statement, let not the sun go down upon your wrath, can be taken as a very, very plain principle. No sin should be taken to death. Every day I should judge myself.

I should appear before the Lord God omnipotent and ask him to pinpoint everything in my life that day that was offensive to him and deal with it then and there. But what somehow a big portion of the church seems to have forgotten is if I don't judge myself, my church is required by God to judge me. But the whole idea of church discipline is largely lost, especially to those churches that have attained any numerical strength.

In fact, very frequently a pastor will explain to me, you can't practice church discipline today. You might be sued. Well, sure you might be sued, but it would seem an awful lot safer to be sued by man than condemned by God.

So I'm speaking of the judgments that are concurrent with sin, the pattern that I'm suggesting. I'm required to judge myself daily. In my failure, my church is required to judge me.

If both fail, you can be certain God will not. We have the powerful example of David. In those psalms that he wrote after his sin with Bathsheba, the arrangement of her husband's murder, Psalm 32, Psalm 38, David is describing what his life was like during that season of non-repentance.

God judges sin when it occurs. My own conviction is that the church in America, North America, is under God's judgment, has been for a long time. I hear occasionally a preacher say, if we're not careful, God may judge us.

And I want to jump up and say, since when have the judgments of God been iffy? And in this passage, God says to Aaron, get out of the way. I'm going to go down there and utterly destroy those people. Now I ask our friends over here if they knew the difference between final judgments and remedial judgments.

I hope the rest of you all do know, but I do know as a fact that the vast majority of the church don't have the foggiest notion what those terms refer to. A final judgment is a judgment in which there is neither time nor opportunity for repentance. And if I were to ask, what is an outstanding example of final judgment in the New Testament, you would say? Yes, of course, Ananias and Sapphira.

Peter did not say, if you go through that doorway, three doors on the left is the prayer room. Will you make your way to the prayer room and see if you can find some cause for repentance? No, the law is told, it's confirmed, and the judgment of God falls in death. Now what seems to be confusing so much of the church is we're not destroyed.

We're still here. So they think that God has not yet judged us. But we have these remedial judgments.

Remedial is not the word that everybody uses, but most educators are familiar with the word in that still today most schools have some form of remedial reading classes. Remedial meaning gracious. You don't just chop a student down and throw him out of school because his reading skills are way behind the rest.

You provide some special opportunity for that student to catch up. And that's a remedial judgment. God, in incredible grace and mercy, provides a wonderful opportunity for those who are tardy in their repentance

to bring their repentance up to date.

But the thing that has to be kept in mind when a remedial judgment is left unheeded in the course of God's time, it becomes a final judgment. Now we have in North America been under remedial judgment for a long time. And thus far it has been largely disregarded, not even noticed I expect, by the vast majority of pastors and church leaders.

In this passage, God tells Moses to get out of the way and he will execute a final judgment. But isn't it beautiful? Moses doesn't even really know what he's doing. But instead of getting out of the way, look at what we've got here.

Verse 11, then Moses entreated the Lord his God. And he said, Lord, why does thine anger burn against thy people, whom thou hast brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, with evil intent he brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy burning anger and change thy mind about doing harm to thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou didst swear by thyself and didst say to them, I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and all this land in which I have spoken, I will give to your descendants and they shall inherit it forever.

So the Lord changed his mind about the harm which he said he would do to his people. What an incredible thing. So a threatened final judgment is set aside because someone had the courage to get in God's face and argue reasonably with God.

He has two basic arguments here, as you well know. What will the Egyptians say? And how will your promises be fulfilled? What a splendid pattern for us. None of us would dare approach God and say, oh God, don't destroy us, we're too good to be destroyed.

No, no, no, we even feel personally, don't we, that if God destroyed us individually, we earned destruction long ago. It's only his grace and his mercy. But let me skip over a bit and just pick up a continuation of this particular issue, then we'll return momentarily.

Verse 34. Go now, lead the people where I told you. Behold, my angels shall go before you.

Nevertheless, in the day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin. Then the Lord smote the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, depart.

Go up from here, you and the people whom you brought up from the land of Egypt to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying to your descendants, I will give it. I will send an angel before you and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Parasite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey for I will not go up in your midst because you are an obstinate people and I would destroy you on the way.

What a powerful message is there for us. Go on, get moving, go to the place where I've sent you. I'll send an angel before you.

You understand, don't you, that a final judgment has been altered to a remedial judgment. Now, the way some of us live, if God said, I'll send an angel to guide you, we'd be full of rejoicing. But these people have been led by the Shekinah glory, the pillar of cloud by day, the pillar of fire by night.

And now to be told, I will not go with you. If I were with you, I would destroy you on the way. You are such a hard-hearted, stiff-necked people, I'll send an angel.

Remedial judgments come in huge variations--plagues of locusts, sickness, oppression, in captivity, all kinds of things. Perhaps the most telling, the most consequential is what's happened to us, the withdrawal of God's manifest presence from the church. Look, friends, you've got the face of reality.

I'm 80 now. In the providence of God, was brought into preaching just after I became a teenager, and I've been engaged in this ministry since. In my early years, even before I had been to school, I often saw whole congregations bathed in tears.

Nothing really to do with me. I didn't even know anything. Certainly hadn't learned how to manipulate a cloud or anything of that sort.

Just stood up and spoke what I thought the Lord put in my heart. We saw conversions on the right hand and on the left. There were days when we almost thought we were living in the book of Acts again.

You don't take any credit or feel any superiority, just deep thanksgiving. But now, I think I know an awful lot more than I did then, in every possible dimension. To see a single tear is almost a triumph.

We all know something, at least of the statistics. The divorce rate among so-called born-again believers, the divorce and remarriage rate is greater than it is in the world. The homosexual rate among those who claim to be born-again believers is higher than it is in the world.

In most areas of sin, the church and the world are about the same level. In those two areas, the church exceeds the world. How do you explain it? Did you ever have anybody press you hard, saying, how do you explain the fact that a few years back there was a morality in the church that is now God? There was a morality in the nation so that people were shocked and ashamed at the exposure of sin, but not now.

How do you explain that? Oh, well, I'll tell you how it came about. You see, for a long time, the devil had a single manufacturing plant in which he was producing demons. They worked a five-day, eight-hour shift.

But now, he's got seven of these plants. They're working 24-7. They are unleashing millions of demons on the land every day.

Well, I don't think I've ever heard anybody make a statement quite that stupid, but a great deal of what he said is borderline stupidity. We've got to face the fact, when God withdraws his manifest presence from the church, sin mounts up. It's not unlike what happens when a police force in a given city goes on strike.

I don't remember what Canadian city it was, but a number of years ago, the police in one of your cities went on strike, and articles appeared throughout the press describing how citizens from the best districts of the city went into the downtown, smashed out store windows, helped themselves to valuable merchandise. All of us have had some experience in driving, where, to our consternation, we observed a police car behind us. I had an experience a while back.

I was driving an old one-ton van that was ready for retirement, and then some, and driving from my office to my home, at that time, a distance of 14 miles, I glanced in the mirror, and there was a police car behind me. It was along a highway with a rather high curb, and it was impossible just to pull off. Then, when I glanced, I saw that the lights were blinking, but because of the high curb, I couldn't get off, and I went on,

and glanced again, and the lights weren't blinking, and glanced again, and they were blinking, and finally, I thought, well, maybe it's just the rays of the sun hitting the lenses of the police car lights, but believe me, I didn't know any relief, until at the next major intersection, I went straight, and he turned left.

You know what I'm talking about. The visible presence of law and order has a profound impact, and here, God says to Moses, I won't go with you. I'll send an angel, and we live at a time when the evidence is overwhelming that God is not with us, and what do we do about it? Nothing.

I dare to say that the majority in the church don't even observe that anything's out of order. As far as they know, everything is as good as it ever was. In fact, I occasionally hear somebody say, things have never been better than they are right now, and simply to complete the picture, you know that at the end of this chapter, pick it up, if you will, please, at verse 13, Moses, or the next chapter, I should say, 33, at verse 13, Moses says, now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thy sight, let me know thy ways, that I may know thee, so that I may find favor in thy sight.

Consider, too, that this nation is thy people, and he said, my presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest. Then Moses courageously said, if thy presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here. How then can it be known that I have found favor in thy sight, I and thy people? Is it not by thy going with us, so that we, I and thy people, may be distinguished from all the other people upon the face of the earth? Brothers and sisters, that is at the heart of what we are facing now.

The church should come to its senses and say, we're not going anywhere if you don't go with us. How under the sun can we expect the world to believe the message we proclaim, when God is no more with us than he is with them? I believe at the heart of revival theology is the understanding that the people who are right with God enjoy the presence of God, and that presence is felt by those to whom the world, or in the world to whom the church is bearing witness. And it is that presence of God, profoundly impacted by word and spirit, that results in glorious turnings to God.

Well, I think my time is more than gone. Sorry, Charles, I'm pretty careless when it comes to that. I've got another couple of things at least I must say, and then I'll be quiet.

I want to mention again the third issue that I said is always, prior to revival, the raising up of immensely burdened leader or leaders. I shall be very quick concerning this, but going back to chapter 32, let's pick it up at verse 30. It came about on the next day that Moses said to the people, you yourselves have committed a great sin, and now I'm going up to the Lord.

Perhaps I can make atonement for your sin. Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. But now, if thou wilt forgive this sin, and if not, if not, let me out of the book which thou hast written.

That's the level of compassion that should accompany revival prayer. That's what is meant by an immensely burdened leader. If you can't save my people, don't save me.

I am so identified with my people that I must have their salvation as well as my own. That's the kind of praying God does not resist. I don't know whether any of us have ever come anywhere near that level of praying, but I know that that's the immense need of the hour.

I shall cease now. Lord, accomplish your purpose through Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

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