

Do We Want Revival?

“Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? **—Malachi 3:1-2**

Nearly all my life I have wanted to see revival. I am not sure when I first had an appetite for it, but I grew up in what was something of a revival atmosphere. In 1985, I introduced the first prayer covenant in Westminster Chapel. There were several petitions, and one of them was a prayer for true revival in the congregation. After five years we closed that covenant but revived the idea some years later. Then, instead of praying for true revival in Westminster Chapel, we prayed for the manifestation of God’s glory in our midst along with an ever-increasing openness in us to the manner in which He chose to appear.

The people in Malachi’s day prayed the equivalent of that prayer. Malachi tells them how their prayer will be answered, and I don’t think it is exactly what they had in mind. What they wanted was for God to come in the way He had done in the great days of Solomon, when the temple was filled with His glory and all the nations stood in awe of Israel. They were looking not only for the honor of God’s name to be restored, but also for the honor of Israel to be seen in the world. They sincerely believed that when God came that was how it would be. But things were to turn out very differently.

What is the difference? The difference is that praying for revival was, in a sense, setting a limit on God, and that is what these Israelites were doing. Praying for the manifestation of God’s glory is not dictating to Him what He should do. Why did we use the word glory? The word glory is the nearest we can get to the essence of God. If we only had one word to describe the God of the Bible, that word would

have to be the glory. He is a God of glory. We prayed that He would manifest His glory, and we did not tell Him how to do it. What is revival? Revival is certainly one manifestation of God's glory. Praying for such a revival is inviting God to be Himself. But we must not limit Him.

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