

Should We Stop Asking for Revival?

Does the following logic make any sense to you—asking for something that you have *already* received? Of course not. The fact is, countless Christians across the earth are doing this—myself included!

We continue to pray for revival, asking God to move with great power, when in fact, we might be making the wrong request. Could it be that instead of sending something out of heaven, God is looking for the generation that recognizes what it has received, rises up and begins to steward the precious Person of the Holy Spirit? The greatest power that heaven could release into the planet is not reserved for some sovereignly selected future date; He has already come. The question: What are we doing about it?

I issue an immediate disclaimer: God is not upset about this! Heaven is not worried. The Father is not pacing the throne room wondering what He is going to do. Our intentions are not even being questioned. The key is stewarding what we received when God, the Holy Spirit, took up residence inside of us.

In Spirit-filled circles, the cry for revival is certainly a popular prayer. In essence, we are giving voice to Isaiah 64:1: “Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence” (ESV). This is common language, particularly when we join together for intercession on a local, national, or global level.

We pray, “Lord, rend the heavens and come down!” I have prayed this several times, as it truly reflects the cry of my heart. I want to see the presence and power of God touch the world in a fresh new way. I want to see the spiritual landscape shifted, thousands ushered into the kingdom and entire nations

transformed. The Message Bible gives some powerful clarity on what the expression of “rending the heavens” actually looks like: “Oh, that you would rip open the heavens and descend, make the mountains shudder at your presence.”

Is Isaiah 64:1 an appropriate prayer for us to be praying—or has it been fulfilled? I want to take you on a fascinating journey from Jesus, to Pentecost, to present-day Christianity. My prayer is that we would catch a fresh glimpse of the inheritance we received and take our place as the generation that lives like we are truly indwelt by the presence of God.

Jesus, the Answer to Isaiah 64:1

Jesus Christ fulfilled Isaiah 64:1. In fact, this took place at His baptism. Pay careful attention to the language of Mark 1:9-10, “In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately *he saw the heavens being torn open* and the Spirit descending on him like a dove” (emphasis added, ESV).

We read that at Jesus’ baptism, the heavens were “torn open.” Could it be that since that glorious day, heaven has remained “open for business?” There is surely no mention of it closing back up. Truly, heaven long awaited the day when a Man walked the eEarth who would be a compatible vessel for Holy Spirit. Jesus was the Man, since He was the perfect, sinless Son of God. He fulfilled Isaiah 64:1, making it possible for anyone without sin and filled with Holy Spirit to walk in the same supernatural reality, where there is a consistent provision of power flowing from one world (heaven) into the earth through those anointed by the Spirit.

Calvary Sustained an Open Heaven

The cross dealt with the sin issue that prevented humanity from being indwelt by Holy Spirit. Jesus was the example of what the Father desired to produce in every single believer: A lifestyle characterized by the abiding, indwelling presence of

the Spirit.

In the Old Testament, people might have received temporary empowerment from the Spirit, but it was always for a season or specific task—never a sustained lifestyle. There was no permanence to His presence and power in their lives because of the chasm of sin. The only remedy to humanity's great disease of sin was the precious blood of Jesus.

Even the most celebrated prophets and honored heroes of the faith could not enjoy the indwelling Presence that we have today. Truly, the blood of Jesus kept heaven open even after Jesus left the Earth. His redemptive work made it possible for people throughout the ages to receive Holy Spirit and walk in the same power that He did, bringing His kingdom to the earth.

Pentecost Released an Open Heaven

Calvary dealt with sin and made it possible for every believer to live under an open heaven, where the power and presence of God was not seasonal, but sustained. Pentecost was the glorious byproduct of Calvary. Heaven was not simply opened—its power was released and deposited into every believer gathered in that upper room. And this power was a person: Holy Spirit.

Consider Acts 2:38-39, as this brings us right into the modern era. On the tail end of Peter's sermon at Pentecost, the emboldened apostle replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call" (NIV).

The promise of Pentecost was never meant to be exclusive to those in the Upper Room, the Christians living during the first century, or for the church prior to the closing of the Scriptural canon. It is for *all* whom the Lord would call into redemption.

Sovereign Outpourings

I absolutely love revival history. It is healthy for us to be stirred up by the great revivals and outpourings of yesteryears. You know—those moments in history where God seemed to sovereignly break in and move with unusual power. At the same time, it is *unhealthy* for us to throw everything up to “sovereignty,” hoping that should God feel like it, He will send us another “sovereign outpouring.”

I propose that the sovereign outpourings of both past and present were never intended to make us dependent on some situation where God randomly showed up at certain times in history and released some special, sovereign blessing. Everything that appears sovereign must be carefully studied, for every outpouring of God contains vital keys that were meant to transform Christian culture and unlock a lifestyle of sustained revival.

The problem that prevents this is our tendency to get so caught up in the passion, excitement and manifestations of revival that we miss the foundational things God wants to show us. Yes, we celebrate His supernatural *during that season*, but also, we must ask Holy Spirit to show us how to carry revival from one generation to the next.

What begins as an outpouring in one generation should continue as a lifestyle in the next.

Healing Revivalists

Finally, I think of the season of the healing revivalists/evangelists, beginning with historic figures such as John G. Lake, John Alexander Dowie, F.F. Bosworth and continuing on with Oral Roberts, Kathryn Kuhlman, Jack Coe, T.L. Osborn, and others. God unusually graced these men and women to represent Jesus through the healing ministry. They became voices of revolution, reminding the world that the power of God was still very much alive and moving. Again, it is easy to simply look back with celebration on these

individuals, memorializing the great exploits that were accomplished under their ministries. However, there is more.

What God accomplished through these ordinary men and women is also meant to be a divine summons for an entire generation. What they walked in is available to *all whom the Lord our God will call*. These were not extraordinary men and women; they were ordinary people anointed with an extraordinary Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit that you have living inside of you. The key was stewardship. Kingdom history is made by ordinary, imperfect people who recognize that heaven is open over them, that God lives inside of them, and they live as though these Truths are in fact reality.

The cry for revival is truly noble. How wonderful to know that what we are looking for is not merely some experience, it is a Person. In fact, we do not need to convince God to send something new out of heaven, for He has already filled us with the glorious catalyst for global revival. Revival is not going to come out of heaven; it is going to come out of a people who truly know Who lives inside of them.

Holy Spirit lives inside of you. Instead of crying out for something else to fall upon us, let's ask Holy Spirit to flow *through* us in an increasing measure. It all begins with recognizing Who we received and living as though God is actually in us and with us.

The men and women who live like this will truly shape history. Will you take your place?

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