

# Encounters With God

By David Wallis

We need to each have a fresh encounter with God to prepare us for a new move of the Holy Spirit. God wants to give us breakthroughs against the enemy and thereby release a tremendous harvest of souls. He wants His people to experience His mighty power and glory. The following examples will help us to understand how we can better enter into these mighty breakthroughs.

## Joshua

In Joshua 5:13-15 we read about Joshua's encounter with God. Joshua met the captain of the army of the Lord, who was the Lord Jesus Himself. *"And it came to pass, when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, 'Are you for us, or for our enemies?'"* This verse begins with the word 'And,' which links this incident of Joshua meeting with the Lord with what happened immediately before it. God had told Joshua to circumcise the people. Not only had he circumcised them (which signifies the cutting away and removal of the carnal things we are born with), but he also obeyed the Lord in observing the Passover. The Lord Jesus said, *"He that has my commandments and obeys them, he is the one that loves Me... and I too will love him and will reveal myself to him,"* John 14:21. It was after this obedience that the Lord revealed Himself to Joshua.

It was in the path of obedience that the Lord came and met him. As Joshua looked, he saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword. This was a real test to Joshua's courage and valor. The Lord had said three times in the first chapter, *"be strong, be of good courage,"* so Joshua didn't panic, but boldly advanced and challenged the man: *"Are you for us, or for our enemies?"* It is important for us to test the spirits, as we are told in I John 4:1. There will be much deception in the last days and Satan can be transformed into an angel of light, 2 Cor.11:14. Joshua realized that this stranger was not an Israelite. He was to discover this person was more than just a man, it was the Lord as a Man of War, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah who would fight for them.

In verse 14 the Lord replied, *"As commander of the army of the Lord I have now come."* The Lord revealed that He was the real commander of the armies of Israel, not Joshua. When Joshua heard those words, he fell on his face worshiping the Lord. This encounter with God that Joshua had, was not only showing that the Lord was the real commander, but it also was a sign that God would fight for the children of Israel. Immediately after this God brought down the walls of Jericho. Afterwards they moved on to many other victories as they began to possess their inheritance.

## Paul

The Apostle Paul was one who had encounters with God. He knew the call of God and had met the Lord in so many ways. He had seen Him in visions, and had been to the third heaven. Paul had experienced many victories and established many churches. Paul saw notable miracles of the power of God, including healings and casting out evil spirits. The hand of God had been mighty upon his life. Yet in spite of all the victories and the wonderful ways God had used his life, there was a cry in his heart, a passion for more of God. About six years before the end of his life, Paul wrote *"That I might know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings,"* Phil.3:10. There was that cry for a new encounter, a new visitation, a new meeting with God, so that he would further know the Lord and the power of His resurrection.

## Amy Carmichael

One of the great missionaries in India was Amy Carmichael. God used her to establish a work in Tamil Nadu, India. When not much was happening, the girls in her orphanage began to earnestly seek God. The Lord visited them in a mighty move of the Spirit and many of the orphan girls came under great conviction of sin. There was a real cleansing as the fire of God fell on them. For about three days they did not eat or sleep, but cried out to God and wept before Him. Many of them saw heaven, hell, and the glory of God. Their lives were touched and changed, and the whole ministry was ablaze with the presence of God.

## Argentina

In Argentina, a mighty revival broke out in April 1954. This revival was birthed through encounters and meetings with God. Edward Miller was a missionary in Argentina, but his ministry was having little effect. He was very discouraged and ready to quit when God spoke to him to begin really seeking the Lord in prayer and fasting. That went on for months, but ended up with an encounter with God. Others came to the prayer meetings, and the Spirit of God came down in a powerful way. Then the revival moved into the Bible school. Such an awesome presence of God hit the students! All the classes stopped and they were down on their faces in great repentance and weeping and crying out to God, as He was dealing with their lives. That went on day after day, as God visited them in visions and showed them many things that were to come.

The prophetic word came that the strong man over that nation of Argentina was broken. Shortly after that time, there was an unknown evangelist who came to Argentina. Miraculously, he was granted an audience with the President. God used him to heal the President. The President granted him the use of the largest soccer stadium in Argentina, which seated over 100,000. Crowds began to come, and miracles began to happen as the power of God came down. Many came to the Lord and the stadium was completely packed, with many thousands outside. It was reported in the newspapers, and buses came from the villages and towns. After the meetings, there were piles of crutches left behind from people who had been healed. Many were called into the ministry, and for a period of time, that nation was shaken by revival. It began with encounters, by intense seeking of God, and crying out to Him. Then the visitation came in a tremendous way.

## Wales

The Welsh revival (in the early 1900's) started with Evan Roberts and others crying out to God. For weeks, God visited him each night. One night his roommate came in to the room to find Evan's face shining with a heavenly light. Astonished, he asked what had happened. Evan replied that he had just seen the whole of Wales lifted up to heaven. Then he prophesied, "We are going to see the mightiest revival that Wales has ever known. The Holy Spirit is coming now and we must get ready, we have a little group and need to go all over the country."

In a very short period of time, over 100,000 souls were saved. Prayer meetings began in mines, factories, schools, and stores. Men were convicted of sin in the taverns. They could not lift up their beer glasses to their mouths as the Spirit of God came upon them. Thousands of young converts spread out all over the land preaching the Good News. The newspapers were dominated by news of the revival. Headlines reporting violence and scandal were replaced by accounts of conversions, news about the meetings, testimonies, and revival maps. Pubs, cinemas, and theaters were closed down as tens of thousands were saved. In one village of 5,000 people, 4,000 of them came to Christ. There was a tremendous impact on the whole nation.

## Conclusion

I believe some of these revivals of the past are just a foretaste of what God is going to do in these last days. Jesus said the best wine is kept until the last! God is able and wanting to do awesome things in our lives

and churches, over and above all we can ask and think. The Holy Spirit wants to draw us to cry out to God, “Oh Lord, open the heavens and visit us! Come down by Your Spirit! O God, start in my heart.” The Bible says that judgment must begin in the house of God. So let us cry out and seek Him, allowing Him to deal with sin and our motives, so there will be a cleansing of our lives.

God is sovereign in what He starts. Yet, there is also our part, to press in and seek the Lord when He is drawing us. We can accomplish nothing of ourselves, yet as we draw near to God, we have the promise in James 4:8 that God will draw near to us. In Jeremiah 29:13 the Lord says, “*You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.*” It is God who gives the desire to seek for Him and to press in to Him. As we respond, we will have encounters with God which will transform us and will prepare the way for God to move by His Spirit in a fresh and powerful way.

—by Rev. David Wallis, a pastor and missionary from New Zealand. For the last 30 years he has ministered in 35 nations, conducting pastors' seminars and speaking for conferences, Bible schools, and churches.