

"O LORD, REVIVE THY WORK"

BY BRIAN BAILEY

In this article I want to look with you at the cry of the heart of Habakkuk. In chapter 3:1 we read that it is "a prayer of the prophet"; and then we read in verse 2 " O Lord, I have heard thy speech and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy."

This prayer- " O Lord, revive thy work" is the cry of every devout saint throughout the ages. It is also the cry of each of us who will intercede before God, that He will send revival to the towns, the cities, and to the nation. But the background to the cry of the prophet is also important.

1. WHY REVIVAL IS NEEDED

A. Judgment is Coming

In chapter 1:4 Habakkuk shows us the state of the country at that time: "The law is ignored and justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore, justice comes out perverted." That certainly is the case in this nation, and in many nations today. We also read in chapter 2:5-20 about five "woes" that deal with certain sins- theft in verse 6, covetousness in verse 9, violence and iniquity in verse 12, drunkenness in verse 15, and idolatry in verse 19. God was saying that He was going to judge the nation of Israel because of these sins.

Those who do much traveling are hearing consistently that God is pronouncing awesome judgments upon many nations today. For example, in Leviticus 18:22 we read about God's law against homosexuality, but that law is being changed in many nations and homosexuality is being legalized. God has sent an awesome judgment- AIDS- and it is estimated that 2 to 3 million have been infected in the United States alone. AIDS is an awful judgment that God has put upon the nations. God is speaking among the nations of judgment- awesome judgment!

B. Revival Can Take Us Through Judgment

Revival can to an extent turn away judgment. The Church can turn away judgment in certain areas and in certain nations, but revival and judgment are also co-existent. We must understand from the Scriptures that 1) revival comes before judgment, so that 2) the revival can carry the people of God through the judgment.

1) Revival Before Judgment

To give an example, we can look at the three sieges of Jerusalem. The prophets spoke about the destruction of Jerusalem because of it's idolatry, immorality, and violence. This first happened in 586 B.C., but before this judgment, there was a mighty revival under King Josiah.

The next siege of Jerusalem was in 70 A.D. when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. Before the destruction, the greatest revival that Israel had ever known came in

the person of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the early Church. Revival preceded judgment.

We also know from the Word of God that before the Second Coming of our Lord, there is the third siege of Jerusalem. The prophet Zechariah describes this in chapter 14:1-4. Isaiah declares that there will be awesome judgments, and great darkness shall cover the earth before the Second Coming. But Isaiah also declares that the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon the Church (Is.60:1-3).

2) Revival To Carry Us

In Habakkuk 3:16-17 we read, "I heard and my heart trembled, my lips quivered at the sound. Decay entered into my bones and in my place I tremble because I must wait quietly for the day of distress, for the people to arise who will invade us. Though the fig tree shall not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines; the yield of the olive shall fail, and the fields produce no food, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ." Here we read of God dealing with the people. Yet in verses 18-19 we see the clear difference of the people of God: "Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds feet, and makes me walk on my high places". This is the picture that we see repeated in Isaiah 60:1-3 of great darkness, and yet the glory of the Lord being upon the people of God.

It is of the greatest importance that revival comes to the Church before judgment. This is because revival will release the joy of the Lord in our hearts, and the joy of the Lord will be our strength to take us through times of trouble and judgment. I do believe that to a certain extent, the Church can turn away judgment. But it is very clear that we as a people of God desperately need revival to carry us through the time when God brings forth judgment. The Church must come into revival with miracles and supernatural provision, because the revival is going to keep the Church alive!

For example, in the country of Wales when there were times of judgment in the early 1930's, there was no food. There were no government food supplies or anything like that. The Christians really had to pray, and pray in food! They usually stored their food in what were called "larders". Their larders would be empty, and they would pray. Then they would open up their larders, and they would be full of milk, bread, meat, and other foods! God supernaturally provided. I say these things to stir up your hearts. Revival is not just for the unsaved, but revival is necessary for the Church in times of judgment!

3) We Cannot Save Ourselves

In one nation recently, when many prophecies of judgment started to come, some business minded Christians started producing freeze-dried foods for the coming tribulation. For \$2,000 you could buy a package of food that could feed you for one year! It is amazing how Christians bought many of these packages. Then they also thought, because they were stocking up food to be ready for judgment times, that if they have food when other people do not, that the other people might come to take their food. So they started to buy guns! It is amazing how distorted our thoughts can be if we try to save ourselves. No, we are kept by the power of God. We need to have revival and miracles in times of judgment.

II. HOW REVIVAL STARTS

A. Prayer And Waiting On God

When God spoke to Habakkuk that judgment was coming, the prophet said in chapter 3:2, "O Lord, I have heard thy speech and was afraid". After he heard of the coming judgment, he then cried out, "revive thy work...in wrath remember mercy". This is what the Lord quickened to us a few years ago about a drought in a certain country. We knew that the drought was God's judgment, but then He spoke to us and said, "This drought is from my hand, but now I want you to cry out for My mercy for rain". This is very important. When we see God's judgment coming, we need to cry out for mercy. As the children of God, we should start humbling ourselves and start crying out "O Lord, in wrath remember mercy". There are to be great judgments, but we want God's mercy. We want to cry out and say, "Lord, we deserve judgment, but Lord, revive thy work".

We also read in Habakkuk 2:1 where the prophet says, "I will stand upon my watch and station myself upon the tower; and I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me". Habakkuk said that he was going to his prayer tower, not just for a little prayer, but he said that he was going to wait, and keep waiting, for a word from the Lord.

B. God Speaks And Reveals To Us The Hindrances To Revival

1) The Need Of Cleansing

In Habakkuk 2:1, the prophet then opens his heart before God, expecting somewhat of a reproof from the Lord- "I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd". King David was like that also. In Psalm 139:23-24 David cries out, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me."

It is very important to realize that revival starts with us. It is nice to pray that God will give revival to others, and start to move around us, but revival always starts with those nearest to God, who have been stirred up by the Lord to see the need for revival. We need to cry out, "Create in me a clean heart" and "Search me, O God". This is where revival starts. Then the Lord may start to reveal things in our lives that we did not even think were obstacles to hinder revival!

In Isaiah chapter 6, we find Isaiah having a fresh meeting with God, with the Lord then commissioning Isaiah before revival. That is what we want. It is the people of God that must first have a fresh meeting with God. We cannot expect the unsaved to meet God until the church has had a fresh meeting with the Lord. So Isaiah enters the house of God, and there he sees the Lord seated upon the throne. The Seraphim cry one to another, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory". Then in verse 5, this revelation of the holiness of God is so great that Isaiah cries, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips: for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts". Before this, Isaiah was unaware of how unclean his lips were, because he had not seen the Lord in this degree of glory. So often we are totally unaware of things in our lives that can block God's moving in revival power. This is because we have not had a revelation of God that has shown a light into us and revealed these things that we have never seen before, or that perhaps we have seen and never dealt with. Revival starts with the church having a fresh visitation and cleansing from God.

2) The Hindrance Of Pride

After Habakkuk waited on the Lord to hear what He would speak in chapter 2:1, the

Lord then answered him. In verse 4 the Lord revealed a problem in Habakkuk's time. "Behold the soul which is lifted up is not upright within him". The Lord revealed the hindrance of pride. As we come near to God, it may be that He will put His finger upon pride. We can be very proud in the church. We can even be very spiritual, and be very proud of our spirituality! Pride is deceitful and can be a block that can hinder revival. We must humble ourselves to realize that we are entirely dependant upon God for Him to pour out His Spirit and bring revival. It is the sovereign grace of God, so the attitude of humility is very important.

3) The Need Of Faith

The Lord goes on to say in Habakkuk 2:4 "But the just shall live by his faith". With the attitude of humility the church needs to have a holy dependence upon God, and cry out, "Lord, put faith in my heart, that You will move"! It is only as God moves that we will have revival. Revival does not come by our own efforts or activity, it must come from God. Therefore in deep humility we have to come to God and realize that it is only as He puts faith in our hearts that we will see revival come. We need to cry out, "Lord, put faith in my heart for revival, so that as we pray, faith is released for the heavens to open, for You to pour out Your Spirit in revival power". In the towns, cities, and throughout the nations, there are powers of darkness that bind the people. they are like dark clouds that block the light of the gospel from coming through. Until they are broken and destroyed, there can be no revival. But prayer plus faith brings results.

4) Hindrances In The Home

Our houses should be filled with our prayers, crying out "Lord, send revival". Seeking the face of God should not be something that we do just at church services, but also in our homes.

1 Peter chapter 3 speaks of the relationship of a husband and wife. In verse 7 it tells husbands how to dwell with their wives "that your prayers be not hindered". We have to be careful how a husband and wife speak to each other, because that could hinder our prayers! It is our home life that can block revival.

We see further proof of this in Malachi 4:5-6. We see that the last day revival "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" is going to be characterized by the hearts of the fathers being turned to their children, and the hearts of the children being turned to their fathers, "lest I come and smite the earth with a curse". So in the Word of God, both in the Old and New Testament, we find that hindrances in our home life must be removed so that revival can be in the home.

5) The "Little Things"

As we wait on the Lord to hear His answer as Habakkuk did, then God will start speaking. It could be a very little thing that the Lord wants to adjust in our heart. There was a certain English preacher who wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He was crying out to God "Lord fill me with the Holy Spirit". The Lord spoke to him such a little thing- "go into the other room, open the door of the birdcage, and release the bird". In the cage he had a wild bird that he had captured. He made it a prisoner, as it were, and kept it as a pet. The Lord said, "release the bird". He thought, "here I am praying about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and God is speaking about the bird"! He started to pray again, and the Lord kept speaking to him about the bird. So he went and released the bird, and the very next moment he was filled with the Holy Spirit! You might say, "That is a very little thing". Yes, but it was his hindrance to receiving the baptism! How could that

preacher ask for liberty, when he was holding something else in captivity? Even though it was only a bird, Jesus said that a sparrow does not fall to the ground, but our Heavenly Father knows it.

As we wait upon the Lord, He will start speaking to us. Perhaps it will be about what we read, or watch on television, or something that does not appear to be wrong, but God can speak and show us that they are hindrances! The Word of God is very clear that it is the little foxes that destroy the vine (Song of Solomon 2:15). God must speak to us and show us the little things that can hinder revival.

III. Conclusion

In conclusion, we have looked at the cry of the heart of Habakkuk- "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy". But the prophet who prayed that prayer had already waited before the Lord to hear what God would speak to him personally. That is what we must do. The Lord is saying, "I want you to draw near to

Me, and I will draw near to you. I want you to let Me speak into the inner places of your heart". Perhaps it is a little insignificant thing that the Lord will speak about, like the bird that was to be set free, but it will release God's power in your life. Perhaps it is something far more serious that you have not dealt with, perhaps a problem in your marriage, or pride, or some other thing. We cannot make a formula and say, "Do this one thing, and you will have revival". No, you must come before God, and let the Lord speak to you personally and show you what He wants to change in your life. It is important that we spend time with God and hear from Him, because revival must start with the Church.

The Church is the key to the country. We are going to see two great leaderships raised up. One is the Church filled with glory, and the other is the Antichrist. The nations that know not God will go to the Antichrist, and the nations that know God will go to the Church. In the timetable of God, things are changing, and it is time for the Church to arise. So the Lord is speaking now to His Church and saying, "I want to lift you up, I want to bring My power and glory to you". By the grace of God we are beginning to see how this revival is going to come to pass.

Many voices are going out across this nation and the world. Some are declaring revival, some are declaring judgement. But what is the truth? We have to make the vision plain, as the Lord spoke to Habakkuk in chapter 2 verse 2; so that the people will understand that there will be both revival and judgement. If we only see that glory and revival is coming, there can be presumption. On the other hand, if we only see a gloomy picture of judgement coming, people can despair. We must give a true vision that there will be both revival and judgement.

There must be judgement to bring purification, because God cannot overlook national iniquity. When our Lord returns for His Church, He will also judge among the nations. There will be the sheep nations on his right hand, and the goat nations on His left (Matthew 25:31-34). There is therefore to be a national purification in many countries, in order that they can be the sheep nations on His right hand. So in these last days the Lord is going to deal among the nations, and we must be faithful to declare the word and prepare the people for the time that is coming upon the earth. Let us hear the trumpet sound that is saying "prepare for revival and judgement".

As we look upon the Church, we find that it will be in glorious revival at the time of such judgement. In the timetable of God, things are changing, and it is time for the Church to arise. So the Lord is speaking to His Church and saying, "I want to lift you up, I want to bring My glory and power to you". By the grace of God we are beginning to see how this revival is going to come to pass.

Once we were in a situation where there was tremendous bondage. Then when we went about 2,000 miles away from this place, and in the middle of the afternoon while I was wide awake, two fallen angels came and stood before me. The Lord said to me, "These are the angels that have bound the situation in the other place. Command that a chain come up and bind these angels". So I simply said to these fallen angels, "The Lord has spoken to me to command a chain to come up and bind you". Do you know what those angels did? They simply bowed their heads in submission, because they knew it was their time. There was no jumping up and down and yelling and such. Actually, I was sitting in a chair, with the two angels before me. All God had to say was, "Command...". I said, "Let a chain come up and bind them, and bring them down to hell". Then I saw a chain come up and bind one angel, then the other, and I commanded them to be cast down and they disappeared. A few weeks later there was a great fall in that place that had been bound, and the leader that the fallen angels had been working through was brought down from his position of power. This is what it means in Psalm 149:8-9, "To bind their kings with chains ...to execute upon them the judgement written".

The Lord is very shortly going to cause us to enter into a position in Him where we shall see the enemy forces, and we will hear the quiet Word of the Lord to command their binding. There will be no battle for they will bow before the decree of the Word of God that he gives us to speak. We will see the enemy forces bound and the covering that they had upon the people taken away. Then we will see the sunshine of God's presence come and bring revival with a great harvest of souls. Beloved, this is what God is offering us if we will lift our vision higher!