

WHEN WILL GOD COME DOWN AND REVIVE US?

Isaiah 64:1, 2 says, "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries...."

Oh how my heart longs for revival in our homes, our church and our land! We are well beyond the point of man "fixing" our problem. At this point the more of man we have, the more in trouble we become. We must have God Himself move in, interrupt and heal our sickness! Earlier in Isaiah's prophecy, he reported in Isaiah 1:4-6, "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." Had we not known Isaiah was addressing ancient Judah and Jerusalem, you would have thought he was addressing modern America!

The Psalmist said in Psalm 94:16, 17, "Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence." And in Psalm 127:1 the Word of God reminds us, "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." When will God come down and revive us?

1. When we begin to fear Him

In Isaiah 64:2c, it reads, "...that the nations may tremble at thy presence!" We have grown far too accustomed to things as they are. We need a shaking! In the great Hebrides Revival of 1949-1952, the moving of the Lord began to move in such a big way that during an early prayer meeting, there was a literal shaking that took place. God will meet with those who do not take His presence lightly. Isaiah 6:4 and 5 tells us, "And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

Psalm 103:13: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him." Psalm 103:11: "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." Psalm 85:9: "Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land."

2. When we expect the unexpected

Isaiah 64:3a, b, "When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down...." Let us pray for God to do whatever He wants, even if it is not in accordance to our premeditated plans. We cannot put God in a box! Now is the time to pray, "not my will, but thine be done." Let us claim Jeremiah 33:3: "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." We serve a God who says in Ephesians 3:20, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

3. When we take the initiative to seek God in repentance

In Isaiah 64:4-7, God is explaining that He is willing to give us things beyond our comprehension. We must first see ourselves the way He sees us, i.e. with the best we have to offer Him but our best is only "filthy rags." The phrase, "...stirreth up himself to take hold of thee..." (Isaiah 64:7b), bespeaks that God desires us to take the initiative. This is confirmed in James 4:8-10, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

In Exodus 4:2-4 the Bible says, "And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand." What a command! God tells Moses to take that which is his natural protection (the rod in his hand) and then says to throw it on the ground and it becomes one of man's most feared predators. Moses is so frightened that he first runs from it, then God tells Moses to pick it up by the tail, leaving the dangerous part alive and well and ready to strike. Do we want God's will more than we want our comfort zone? Revival requires us to often do the hard and unnatural thing.

4. When we place ourselves at the mercies of God

Isaiah 64:8-12. The prophet shows us our need to recognize God as our Father. Earlier the prophet said, in Isaiah 1:2, 3, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." The same angst is expressed in Malachi 1:6, "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?" When we give the Lord the honor and glory due unto Him, we shall then receive the benefit of the verse we already quoted in Psalm 103:13, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him." This truth is found in the New Testament as well, as exemplified in II Corinthians 6:17 and 18, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Too often, even among those of us who recognize our dire need of revival, we become too logical in our approach. In our human math, we believe if we do "this" plus "that," the result must be "thus." I am convinced we need to humble ourselves before the Lord in such a manner that if God says, "Do this" or "do that" we will take "thus saith the Lord" no matter what results. At the time the book of Job was written, Job was the most righteous man in the earth and his outlook early in his trial was given to us in Job 13:15, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him." Job was saying, even if this path God is leading me on is the path to my own destruction, I will trust Him. One of the difficult things in life is to do the right thing no matter what God does or does not do. Have we gone so far that the punitive wheels of God's justice are now going to take place like an object loose in our atmosphere would be sucked to the earth because of the natural law of gravity? On the other hand, will we rise again like the overcoming law of aerodynamics that lifts the eagle high in the air while riding the turbulent thermals of our atmosphere? Our duty is not to dictate to God what He must do; our attitude must be, "Lord, do what is best for me and that which brings glory to Thee." This is the essence of the attitude of the humble. Isaiah 57:15 promises, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

And when this is done, the mountain of unbelief, carnality and base immorality will be melted in the manifested presence of a Lord who is pleased with our absolute surrender to Him and His will. Isaiah 64:1: "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence." Then we may claim, with assurance, Mark 11:23, "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be

thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.