

Revival

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*Looking back to revivals of the past, Steve Uppal calls us,
in our own day, to join in the anthem of Revival.*



May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us – so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations. May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you. May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples with equity and guide the nations of the earth. May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you. The land yields its harvest; God, our God, blesses us. May God bless us still, so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.

PSALM 67:1-7

Psalm 67 is not merely a poetic scripture but a prophetic cry. The psalmist captures God's heart, revealing a deep yearning for every nation, tribe, and tongue to know and worship him. This plea for divine blessing is devoid of self-promotion or self-preservation; it seeks only the glory of God. Our prayer is that believers' hearts will resonate with the anthem of Psalm 67.

In contrast, many contemporary books, sermons, and conversations focus on personal survival, prosperity, and comfort, often neglecting the nations and the glory of God. This, however, is changing. An awakening has begun.

PAST REVIVAL

Throughout human history, the tendency of the human heart to drift from its Maker is evident. From Adam and Eve in the garden to the Israelites in the wilderness, societies that forget God and become self-sufficient invariably end in brokenness and pain. Yet, in his great compassion, God does not forget his people. He uses our brokenness to stir up desperation. Desperate people, gripped by a holy dissatisfaction with the status quo, become gateways for his kingdom on earth. These divine interruptions in our fragmented world are what we call 'revival.'

The pattern of rebellion followed by repentance is clear throughout the Old Testament, particularly in the story of the Jewish people. Psalms 106 and 107 capture the cycle of backsliding and turning back to the Lord:

But they soon forgot what he had done and did not wait for his plan to unfold. In the desert, they gave in to their craving; in the wilderness, they put God to the test. (Psalm 106:13-14)

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. (Psalm 107:19-20)

We must not doubt God's ability to move based on the sinful condition of our world or the brokenness of our societies. These realities should lead us to come to the Father in prayer and repentance. As people turn back to the Lord, he always turns to them. Indeed, some of the greatest moves of God have broken out amidst profound darkness in society. This truth gives us tremendous hope that, in these unprecedented, challenging times, a heavenly story is unfolding.

While theological definitions of 'revival' are helpful, immersing ourselves in historic revival accounts is far more enriching and energising. Consider the Hawaiian Revival of 1835, where nearly the whole population



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turned out to hear the gospel preached, or the Welsh Revival of 1904, where all of Wales was aflame. The Second Great Awakening, sparked by Charles Finney (theologian and anti-slave activist), crying out to God in the woods, and the Hebrides Revival of 1949, where churches were packed and sinners lined the streets to repent, also stand out. These stories of mass conversions, societal transformation, and great spiritual renewal reveal divine moments in history that few in our generation have witnessed. The Holy Spirit uses such stories to stir faith and awaken hearts to the fact that the Lord can do it again. Nothing else can meet the needs of our world apart from a genuine Holy Spirit revival that brings transformation to our communities.

THE HEART OF REVIVAL

Revival is not just about emotional experiences or increased church attendance; it is about a profound transformation of individuals and societies. True revival leads to deep repentance, a turning away from sin, and a turning towards God. It results in a renewed passion for holiness, a zeal for evangelism, and a commitment to social justice. Revival reorients our priorities, aligning them with God's kingdom purposes.

Historically, revival has been marked by several key characteristics. First, there is a pervasive sense of God's presence. People are acutely aware of God's holiness and their own sinfulness. This awareness leads to deep

conviction and repentance. Second, there is a powerful move of the Holy Spirit, resulting in signs and wonders, healings, and miracles. Third, there is a hunger for God's word. People flock to hear the preaching of the gospel, and there is a renewed interest in prayer and personal devotion.

Revival also leads to significant societal change. During the Welsh Revival, crime rates dropped, and pubs closed due to lack of business. In the Hebrides Revival, entire communities were transformed as people turned to God. Such changes are not just the result of human effort but are the fruit of the Holy Spirit's work.

PREPARING FOR REVIVAL

For revival to occur, there must be a recognition of our need for God. This recognition often comes through a sense of desperation and holy dissatisfaction with the status quo. We must acknowledge our own spiritual bankruptcy and our inability to bring about change through our own efforts. This humility and dependence on God are the foundation for revival.

Prayer is central to revival. Historically, every major revival has been preceded by fervent, persistent prayer. We must cry out to God for his intervention, acknowledging that without him, we can do nothing. Prayer aligns our hearts with God's purposes and prepares the way for his Spirit to move.

Repentance is also crucial. We must turn away from sin and turn towards God. This involves not only confessing our sins but also forsaking them. It requires a commitment to live a holy life, set apart for God's purposes. Repentance prepares our hearts to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Unity among believers is another key factor in revival. Jesus prayed for his followers to be one, just as he and the Father are one. When believers are united in love and purpose, it creates an environment where the Holy Spirit can move powerfully. Division and strife hinder the work of God, but unity and love among believers pave the way for revival.

THE PROMISE OF REVIVAL

God has promised that if his people, who are called by his name, will humble themselves, pray, seek his face, and turn from their wicked ways, he will hear from heaven, forgive their sins, and heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14). This promise gives us hope and assurance that revival is possible.

We must hold fast to this promise, believing that God can and will move in our generation. As we look back at past revivals, we see a God who is faithful to his word, who delights in showing mercy, and who longs to pour

out his Spirit on all flesh. This same God is at work today, and he desires to bring revival to our churches, communities, and nations.

Revival is not something we can manufacture or manipulate; it is a sovereign work of God. However, we can position ourselves to receive it by praying, repenting, and uniting in love and purpose. As we do so, we can trust that God will be gracious to us, bless us, and make his face shine upon us, so that his ways may be known on earth, and his salvation among all nations.

In conclusion, let us cry out for revival, not for our own sake, but for the glory of God and the salvation of the nations. Let us pray that the hearts of believers will beat with the anthem of Psalm 67, and that we will see a transforming revival in our generation. May God bless us still, so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.



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PRAYER FOCUS

REVIVAL: A recognition across the nation of our need for God; Acknowledgement of our own inability to bring about change; repentance of our rejection of Godly values; a passion to seek holiness in individuals, the church and across the nation; a crying out for God's intervention in our broken society and a transformation of every aspect of life across our land. (Matthew 6:33; James 4:7-10).

CHURCH ISSUES: Repentance: An acknowledgement across the Connexion of the move away from Biblical holiness; the admission of sin and the need for repentance; denial of the Holy Spirit's power; going our own way rather than seeking God's vision for the church. (James 4:4-10; Proverbs 3: 5-7).

NATIONAL ISSUES: Immigration: Minister in Charge of Immigration, Yvette Cooper; wisdom on the way forward; good working relations with European nations to tackle the issue; those fleeing persecution in

their own countries; the exploitation of those crossing the channel in small boats; bringing to justice of the criminal gangs perpetrating the exploitation and suffering of vulnerable people. (Leviticus 19:33-34; Zechariah 7:9-10).

ANTI-SEMITISM: Protection of relationships between Muslims and Jews in Britain; protection for the Jewish population in Britain; those intent upon violence towards Jews to find the peace of the Lord; Ephraim Mirvis Chief UK Rabbi, Tzipi Hotovely Israeli Ambassador to UK, Zara Muhammad leader of British Muslim Council. (Romans 10:12-13; Acts 10:34-35)

WORLD ISSUES: American Elections: For unity amongst the people and for campaigning to be peaceful; an end to the vitriolic language between the parties; for the candidates, Donald Trump and Kamala Harris to have respect for each other; God's outcome. (Romans 14:19; Hebrews 12:14-15)