

Call to Obedience #216
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You can go after the gloom and doom preachers, or you can join a revival prayer group.

Will There Be A Worldwide Revival?

By Reimar Schultze

“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, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!” (Is. 64:1,2).

This is the prayer of a prophet for worldwide revival. Let us first observe that:

God Wants A Worldwide Revival.

I believe with all my heart that God’s agenda has never been anything less than salvation for the whole world. We read in John 3:16 that “God so loved the world...,” and in 1 Timothy 2:3,4, “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

God does not want anyone to perish; no, not a one. Jesus came for all, he died for all, and he rose for all. So, any church that has an agenda smaller than the world falls short of the perfect will of God. Any church that has a provincial goal for herself, be it for 50 or 5,000 members, is missing the mark. God wants all men, the whole world, to know him and to serve him.

Since God wants a worldwide revival, why don’t we want it? Since God does all he can to bring it to pass, why don’t we?

Let me ask you, do you want what God wants? Does your prayer life tell others that you are after worldwide revival; does your witnessing indicate such; does your church giving; does your attitude? Does the way you spend your time indicate that you want worldwide revival? Does the way you raise your children, the way you relate to your spouse and your friends and enemies tell us that you want what God wants? Do your church budget, your church prayer meetings, and your church activities demonstrate to the Lord that your church wants worldwide revival?

God wants worldwide revival. Jesus is praying for it now, and he has been doing so for nearly 2,000 years.

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (Jn. 17:20,21).

Oh, let us stop putting our little church programs ahead of God’s mighty plan. And, praise God, every church can do so, whether it be a house church or a congregation of 10,000.

Two thousand years of church effort in saving souls has miserably failed. More people today die without knowing Christ than ever. We need something bigger and something better than has ever been tried before. God wants worldwide revival: Jesus prayed for it, and the prophets predicted it!

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to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!"

In prophecy, generally speaking, "mountains" mean governments. So Isaiah prays that God would come down to earth, and that the governments of men would flow and melt in fear of his presence, and repent and be saved, that the glory of the Lord may be revealed! Yes, God wants revival--a worldwide revival. Do you? Do you want what God wants?

God Can Bring A Worldwide Revival.

Having looked at God's desire, we now need to look at God's ability. He wants to bring revival, but can he?

Can God make the nations tremble? Is God able to save a nation in a day? Yes, indeed, since a divided church can save thousands, what will God do through a united church?

Yes, God can bring revival. All the nations of Canaan trembled when they heard of God's mighty deeds amongst the children of Israel (Jos. 2:9-11). And when Jonah went a day's journey into Nineveh to proclaim judgment and doom, Nineveh was shaken and melted. Upon the hearing of their first sermon from Jonah, the most wicked, condemned government in the world trembled and declared a national fast. All the people repented of their sins, and salvation came to every one person in the most ungodly city of the world.

God wants to bring revival. God can bring revival. Since God has demonstrated that he can turn the hearts of a whole big city, of EVERY ONE IN IT, away from their sins, why can God not do the same thing for other cities in the world?

Can God bring worldwide revival? Can dry bones live again? In the story of the valley of dry bones, as recorded in Ezekiel 37, God asked his prophet, Ezekiel, "Son of man, can these bones live (again)?" (v. 3).

What is your answer to that? Can the dry bones of Israel and the church live again--bones that are very dry? What is your answer? Is it as skeptical and noncommittal as Ezekiel's answer, "O Lord God, thou knowest" (v.3)? What kind of answer is that? Of course, God knows! The question is: Do you know what God can do?!

Can the God who spoke a billion galaxies into the skies, who by speaking just a word separated the land from the sea and light from the darkness, make dry bones live again? Is our God able to keep up with the marvels of human science? Or is God falling behind with his inventions?

"O Lord God, thou knowest." No wonder God's words to Ezekiel fifteen chapters earlier implied that even he was disqualified from being a man who could "make up the hedge, and stand in the gap" (22:30).

Is not this statement, "O Lord God, thou knowest." the attitude of most of Christianity? And with that attitude, we go right on with our pitiful programs in our local churches. But, thank God, God commanded Ezekiel to prophesy, and Ezekiel obeyed. And in this vision, we actually see the dry bones becoming an exceeding great army, prepared for war, and endued with the Spirit of the living God.

Yes, God wants to bring worldwide revival. God can, and:

God Will Bring Worldwide Revival.

There are many scriptures that indicate that God will bring revival. Let us begin with two of them, both from Romans.

"Now if the fall of them (Jews) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?" (11:12).

“For if the casting away of them (Jews) be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” (v. 15).

Since the gospel was brought to the Gentiles by the Jews rejecting Jesus, what is going to happen in the world when all Israel will be saved? “And so all Israel shall be saved...” (v. 26).

Let me give you quotations from three commentaries I picked at random to see what three different scholars say about this text. Please, hold your breath.

Let us begin with the commentary that John Wesley used most frequently: Bengel's New Testament Commentary.

“The conversion of the whole human race, of the world, will accompany Israel's conversion.”

The next quote is from The Preacher's Homiletical Commentary: “The casting of them away is the reconciling of the world. The view expands before his eager vision. The receiving of them is life from the dead, their bright era is in their happy future, the valley of apostolic vision is not a valley of dry bones; the world is not to be forever a vast sepulcher. Spiritual life shall animate the race. Moral wastes shall quickly become gardens of the Lord. Spiritual deserts shall speedily rejoice and blossom as a rose.”

Third, we read from Adam Clarke's Commentary: “The restoration of the Jews to a state of favor with God, to which the apostle refers and which is too plainly intimated by the spirit of prophecy to admit of a doubt, will be a most striking event. Their being preserved as a distinct people is certainly a strong collateral proof that they shall once more be brought into the Church of God, and their conversion to Christianity will be an incontestable proof of the truth of divine revelation and, doubtless, will become the means of converting multitudes of deists, who will see the prophecies of God, which have been delivered so long before, so strikingly fulfilled in this great event. We need not wonder that a whole nation should then be born as in a day.”

How, what is your answer to the question, “Son of man, can these bones live again?”

Consider the teachings of Jesus on this matter...

One would think that of all the parables of Jesus, at least one of them would point to the ultimate triumph of Christianity. Indeed, such is the case with the ‘parable of the mustard seed’.

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof” (Ma. 13:31,32).

First notice, this is not a parable of the church but of the kingdom's power and influence. Remember the words of our Lord, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Ma. 24:14).

In the parable, the smallness of the mustard seed represents the smallness of the kingdom beginning. As Frederick D. Bruner states on this text, “The end will be glorious, earth-filling, and Gentile-embracing (symbolized by the birds and the branches). In the days to come, Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit (Is. 27:6 RSV), and under it dwell all kinds of beasts; in the shades of its branches, birds of every sort will nest (Eze. 17:23 RSV; cf, esp. 31:6; Da. 4:12,21).”

As you notice here once again, Israel is implicated in the worldwide spread of the kingdom gospel. The church today, as a whole, does not know the kingdom gospel. Israel will know it when she comes to the Lord.

Turning now to the teachings of the Revelation...

The question might well be asked now: according to Jesus, are not the last days full of doom and gloom, tribulations, wars, disasters, and back-slidings?

Yes, so it will be, but all of this will not stop the growth of the mustard tree putting forth its branches into every nation, kindred, and tribe in the world. Matthew 24:14, quoted above, tells us that the gospel of the kingdom will be spreading to the whole earth even as the world is in chaos and the saints suffer persecutions.

Revelation 7 puts this all together. First, you have the sealing of the 144,000 for evangelism. Within the Scriptures, the number 12, along with the numbers 7 and 3, is the number of perfection or completeness. 12,000 sealed of each tribe multiplied by 12 means nothing but the fulfillment of the prophecy of Paul that all Israel shall be saved and sealed to preach.

In this chapter, you then see the fruit of Israel's salvation by these words, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Re. 7:9). Take particular notice of the words, "After this I beheld..." After what? After Israel's conversion!

The estimates of scholars as to how many Christians were killed by the Romans in the ten great persecutions of the first three centuries vary from ten thousand to one million. I believe that it was likely in the tens of thousands. But even if it was one million who died in those days of tribulation, it is a long way from being a "multitude, which no man could number." Add to these first martyrs those who died under Communism and then the number of all the saints gone to heaven since Pentecost, if you please. In my opinion, it does not add up to a "multitude, which no man could number."

Friend, there is a great multitude yet ahead of us. That final ingathering of souls will be the result of the latter rain that will come upon the earth. It will come in the midst of gloom and doom, of confusion of nations, the love of many waxing cold, and of brethren accusing brethren. Yes, read on in that chapter and observe the Matthew 24 connection by this sentence, "These (the numberless multitude) are they which came out of great tribulation..." (v. 14).

So here in the Revelation, the vision for worldwide revival is completed.

All Israel saved unto the work of preaching the gospel of the kingdom (7:3-8).

A mighty end-time harvest of men and women who "...love not their lives unto the death" (12:11).

The great end-time tribulation as Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24 (7:14).

God wants worldwide revival. God can bring worldwide revival. God will bring worldwide revival.

Yes, you can run after the gloom and doom preachers and get your entertainment from them, or you can get into revival praying and become part of that great multitude of saints who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.