

## 2. Revival Fire in the Church

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Subtitle: Ascending into the Presence of God

- There've been many outpourings of the Spirit over the history of the church
- It's time for a fresh outpouring of the Spirit in our day

**Habakkuk 3:2 (NIV)** *Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. **Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known ...***

- Past revivals are good, but present day revivals are better

**Acts 3:19–20 (WUESTNT)** *Therefore repent at once, instantly changing your attitude, and perform a right-about-face in order that your sins may be obliterated, **in order that there may come epoch-making periods of spiritual revival and refreshment from the presence of the Lord ...***

Main points of last week's message:

- a. The Bible speaks of seasons of Refreshing & Revival
- b. Ezra the O.T. priest spoke of a measure of Revival in his day
- c. Seasons of Prayer & Seeking God's Face
- d. Practical Steps to press into the Presence of God

### 1. **Coming boldly to God at the Throne of Grace to get help**

**Hebrews 4:14,16 (NKJV)** *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession ... **16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.***

- Through Jesus Christ and His completed work at the cross, we can now come freely to God at the throne of grace anytime

**Hebrews 10:19–22 (NKJV)** *Therefore, brethren, **having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.***

- The way to the Father is now open because of the blood of Jesus Christ
- When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain of separation between God & the people was torn from top to bottom to open the way into God's presence (Matt. 27:51)
- As N.T. believers, we have the right and privilege to pray in the Name of Jesus Christ, and our heavenly Father hears our prayers

## **2. Coming into God's Presence to bring Worship**

**1 Chronicles 16:29 (NLT) *Give to the Lord the glory he deserves! Bring your offering and come into his presence. Worship the Lord in all his holy splendor.***

- We come to the throne of grace to get something (grace to help)
- But we come to the altar of worship to bring something (worship)
- We should always seek to bring something first (worship) before we try to get something
- Notice the words: ... *come into His Presence* ...
- When we say "Presence of God", we differentiate between two "variants" of God's Presence:
  - a. God's omni-Presence - He is everywhere at the same time
  - b. God's manifest Presence - He chooses to manifest His presence:
    - at a certain time
    - in a certain locality
    - for a certain period

## **3. Songs of Ascent - Old Testament Journey into the Presence of God**

**Psalms 134:1-2 (NKJV) *A Song of Ascents. 1 Behold, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who by night stand in the house of the Lord! 2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord.***

- Several times a year during special feasts, the Israelites would travel from all over Israel to Solomon's Temple, which was on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem
- As they ascended the mountain range on which Jerusalem is built, they sang "Songs of Ascents"
- They were called the "Songs of Ascents" because the Israelites sang them as they ascended towards the Temple in Jerusalem

- Solomon's Temple in the city of Jerusalem was located approx. 750 metres above sea level
- Comparatively, the city of Jericho is located 260 meters below sea level, and around 24 kms distance from Jerusalem
- The elevation between these two cities is around 1000 metres
- We can see that it took **considerable effort** to make the ascent toward Jerusalem to worship the Lord
- **The pilgrims' own body weight would have worked against them as they walked & ascended towards God's presence in the Temple**
- **In a similar way today, our flesh tries to work against us as we approach God to praise and worship Him**

Definition of the word "Ascent":

- a. The act or process of rising or going upward
- b. An advancement ...
- c. An upward slope or incline

**Psalm 24:3 (NKJV)** *Who may **ascend** into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place?*

**Isaiah 2:3 (NKJV)** *Many people shall come and say, "**Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.**" For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

- This "hill of the Lord" & "mountain of the Lord" was a literal elevation
- In our worship today, we don't climb literal mountains
- However, we ascend "from the flesh" into "the spirit"
- We ascend from the natural realm, into the spirit realm
- We rise above the comforts or preference of the flesh, & strain toward God's presence
- **Worship involves movement!**

#### **4. Moses "climbs" into the Presence of God**

**Exodus 24:1–2 (NKJV)** *Now He said to Moses, "**Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. 2 And Moses alone shall come near the Lord, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him.**"*

- God called Moses, his helpers and the 70 elders to come up on Mt. Sinai to worship
- Once again, “worship involved movement toward God”... *come up to me on the mountain ...* (Ex. 24:12)
- **3 groups of people / 3 levels of elevation & closeness to God :**
  - a. The people at the foot of the mountain & far from God
  - b. Moses’ helpers & elders halfway up the mountain but still afar off
  - c. Moses on the mountain & in God’s presence
- Today, all people can come near to God through the blood of Jesus Christ
- But sadly, the above picture of closeness to, or distance from God is repeated in most congregations around the world in worship services:
  - Some never get beyond the foot of the mountain
  - Some make it half-way up the mountain
  - And some make the effort to get to the top of the mountain into God’s presence

## **5. Now, in the New Testament, the Presence of God comes to us**

**Psalm 22:3 (KJV)** *But thou art holy, O **thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.***

- When the Israelites worshipped God In His Presence, God inhabited their praises
- Whenever we praise & worship God, God manifests His presence among us

**Psalm 15:1 (NLT)** *Who may worship in your sanctuary, Lord? **Who may enter your presence on your holy hill?***

**Ezekiel 46:3 (NIV)** *On the Sabbaths and New **Moons the people of the land are to worship in the presence of the Lord at the entrance of that gateway.***

- God calls the people to weekly & monthly corporate worship services in His presence
- Of course, now, in the New Testament, we seek to worship God every day
- But we also come together in our weekly church services to worship God corporately