

# THE SCOPE AND FOCUS OF REVIVAL



REVIVED! PART 3

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A REVISION STUDY FROM  
THE FELLOWSHIP OF AILBE

*The Scope and Focus of Revival*

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Revived! Part 3  
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The Fellowship of Ailbe

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## Welcome to *The Scope and Focus of Revival*

As we seek the Lord for revival, we must strive for an ever clearer vision of what God intends. We need to know how *He* defines revival, and what our role must be in seeking this great movement of His Spirit.

The psalms in this part of our study help us to see that revival, renewal, and awakening catch up the entire world – all people, culture, and all of creation – in seeing the goodness of the Lord increasing on earth.

We need to pray boldly, confidently, and expectantly that what God has promised, He will perform.

This *ReVision* series, “Revived!”, is designed to help you understand why revival is so important, and how we can seek it together from the Lord in prayer.

*ReVision* studies are designed as brief introductions to the subject under consideration. We hope they will enlarge your worldview, help you to become more firmly rooted in Scripture, equip you to minister to others, and stimulate you to want to learn more about the Word of God and the Biblical worldview.

We’re happy to provide this study at no charge. If you find these studies helpful, we hope you’ll consider sending a gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, to help us in making these resources available to others.

And if you find this study helpful, please let us know. How have you benefited from this study? Go to our website, [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org), and use the Contact Us button to share your story.

May the Lord bless your study of His Word.

T. M. Moore  
Principal

## 1 Save, Lord: Psalm 20

*May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble;  
May the name of the God of Jacob defend you;  
May He send you help from the sanctuary,  
And strengthen you out of Zion;  
May He remember all your offerings,  
And accept your burnt sacrifice.* Psalm 20.1-3

### *In times of trouble*

Where do we turn when trials and troubles confront us? If we look at the record of Christian activism over the past generation, we might discover a reason why God has not yet seen fit to bring revival, renewal, and awakening to His people and the world.

Beginning in the early 1970s, church leaders began to be aware that moral foundations were shifting in America. The legalization of abortion in 1973 woke up a significant section of the Christian world, which immediately began a notable and untiring struggle on behalf of unborn children. That struggle continues to this day, and considerable progress has been made.

During that same period, the imposition of a secular and evolutionary worldview on school children saw a rush to establish separate Christian schools, to protect Christian children from the lies of unbelief. At the same time, efforts appeared from within the Christian movement to address the changes in culture and society that seemed to embody and promote the tectonic shift in values that was moving the nation off its putative Christian foundations. Efforts were mounted to rate the lyrics of pop music; boycott certain organizations for their support of abortion and other perceived evils; decry the rise of progressivism in politics and education; secure certain moral positions in national political platforms, and befriend politicians who promised to stand for those values; and work for more conservative judges to fill the benches of the American judiciary. Ministries took to the air waves and the Internet to serve as watchdogs against rising cultural immorality, political chicanery, and shifts in long-standing institutions such as marriage.

A tsunami of progressive, secular, hedonistic, and narcissistic change was washing over the country, and Christian leaders turned to politics and activism as their preferred means of redressing the changes troubling the Christian conscience. So much, however, did Christians invest the power of change in the political realm, that they became captive to politics and the materialistic focus which drives it. This, at least, is the opinion of Notre Dame historian Nathan Hatch, writing in a recent issue of *Comment*.

As a community, Christians rightly diagnosed the rising troubles on every hand. But they gave at best only a passing effort to resolve those troubles as God prescribes. Only now are believers beginning to realize that, while we should have been involved in addressing moral and cultural changes and troubles in many different ways, none of that will be of any lasting benefit apart from seeking the Lord together in prayer.

In the day of trouble, whatever that trouble may be, we must call the Lord (Ps. 20.1), and continue to call, and increase our calling – asking, seeking, knocking, imploring, confessing our sins and repenting day by day – if we expect God to deliver us from the troubles that, more than ever today, threaten to put targets on the backs of believers everywhere.

In short, we have not because we ask not (Jms. 4.2). God promises to hear and deliver us in our times of trouble, if we will make calling on Him our primary and most constant effort.

*The Lord's promise*

Psalm 20 overflows with promises from the Lord for helping His people in their times of trouble. He promises to hear them (vv. 1, 6, 9), defend them (v. 1), send them help (v. 2), strengthen them (vv. 2, 6), remember all their prayers and offerings (v. 23), give them their hearts' desire (v. 4), fulfill their purpose (v. 4), save them (v. 6), and enable them to rise and stand upright in all their ways (v. 8). The realization of all these promises is premised on God's people calling on Him in prayer (vv. 1, 5, 6). We have believed that better chariots and more horses were the answer to all our troubles (v. 7); the result is that Christian influence continues to lose ground, Christian values are being compromised even by church leaders, churches and believers have turned inward for the fullest experience of faith, and the banner that waves over this land is that of progressive secular humanism, and not the Kingdom of God (vv. 8, 5).

Why have we not turned to the Lord in prayer, beseeching Him day and night, in our private devotions and homes and as gathered congregations? We know that past revivals have all grown out of extraordinary efforts at prayer – repenting of sin, pleading with God for mercy, calling on Him to fulfill the promises of His Word, and staying at the work of prayer by every means in every season. Jonathan Edwards, in an extended exegesis of Zechariah 8:20-22 showed us what God is looking for from us, before He will deliver us from our troubles. The title of Edwards' book says it all: *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of All God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Renewal of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, Pursuant to Scripture Promises and Prophecies*.

If we want God to deliver us, and to save the world from its many and increasing troubles, we must give ourselves to extraordinary efforts in prayer. This we have not done. Our leaders have not called us to this work, and we have not taken it up in our homes and private devotions. And do we wonder why our troubles continue to increase?

*Praying Psalm 20 for revival*

Psalm 20 encourages us to come to God with our troubles in one hand and His promises in the other. Hold your burdens up to the Lord – your personal needs, those of your family and church, and those that threaten to swallow the nation in a sinkhole of narcissism, materialism, mere sensuality, and sickness. Offer prayers of confession like burnt offerings to the Lord, pleading with Him to forgive and revive you, to renew the churches in the land, and to awaken lost souls to the salvation of the Lord.

Call on God to fulfill everything that He promises in this psalm. Name each of the promises outlined in the paragraph above, and spread them out in detail before the Lord. Thus, you both take Him at His Word and show your confidence in Him, to do what He has promised when we pray.

Declare your confidence in the Lord: He hears your prayers! He will answer and show you great things and mysteries you've never known (Jer. 33:3)! He will lift you up, unfurl His banner over you, and bring you to great heights and power of His saving mercy and grace! Tell Him that you believe Him, and call on Him to show you the steps you need to take each day to move toward His promises and fulfill the requirements of His word.

And get others to pray with you! It's when *All God's People* join for *Extraordinary Prayer* for revival, renewal, and awakening that God rides out among us, conquering and to conquer, bringing His Kingdom to reality on earth as it is in heaven, and turning the world rightside-up for Jesus Christ.

Get God in focus amid the growing darkness of these troubling times, and let His own Word, as in Psalm 20, guide you in calling on Him to act according to His promises and power.

*For Reflection*

1. Why does God make prayer a prerequisite for delivering us from our troubles?

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2. What are you doing to make prayer for revival a more constant part of your daily walk with and work for the Lord?

3. What can you do to enlist the believers in your Personal Mission Field to join you in seeking the Lord for revival?

*Next Steps – Transformation. Begin using Psalm 20 to pray for revival. Add it in rotation with the other psalms we have considered thus far in this series. Pray boldly, and encourage other believers to pray boldly, too.*

## 2 The Joy of Jesus: Psalm 22.21-31

*A posterity shall serve Him.  
It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation,  
They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born,  
That He has done this.* Psalm 22.30, 31

### *Joy in the midst of suffering*

Times of trouble are times for hoping in the Lord and His promises. No matter how great our troubles, or how far-ranging or interminable they may seem, the Lord stands ready to defend, deliver, and save His people, when they turn to Him in prayer.

No one understood this better than Jesus.

In His own time of deep trouble, hanging on the cross for our sins, Jesus was able to endure by praying to His Father, and then seeing through His troubles to the promised day of renewal that lay ahead. When Jesus cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me”, He turned the thoughts of onlookers to Psalm 22, that great depiction of the suffering of God’s servant at the hands of angry, sinful men.

Surely, as Jesus cued up that psalm by crying out verse 1, some must have worked through the rest of it, if only in their minds. As they did, they would have seen before them the prophecy being played out before their very eyes.

Jesus suffered troubles more than any person or all combined. And yet, the writer of Hebrews tells us, He was able to concentrate *through* His troubles to the time of joy that lay just ahead: “...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12.2). Jesus embraced the agony and trouble of the cross according to all the wretched details outlined in Psalm 22.1-21. And He was able to do so because He did not allow His troubles to have the last word; the last word was what God promised in verses 21-31 of Psalm 22 – a coming Kingdom of glory and joy and lovingkindness, reaching to all the generations of the world.

Jesus bore up under His troubles by looking to the promise of the Kingdom that was to come.

### *God’s answer to Jesus’ suffering*

And how vast and glorious is the vision of the coming Kingdom that rounds out Psalm 22! Note the following:

- the followers of Christ will come to know the Name of the Lord, and will praise Him together (v. 22)
- their children, and those they lead to the Lord, will fear and glorify the Lord (v. 23)
- a great assembly of God’s people will praise Him and seek Him diligently (vv. 25, 26)
- the poor will be relieved of their misery (v. 26)
- the Gospel will reach to the ends of the world, and families and nations will turn to the Lord (v. 27)
- the Kingdom of God will bring the rule of Jesus over all the nations of the earth (v. 28)
- the people who worship God will prosper in all their ways (v. 29)
- all peoples will bow to the Lord, even those who continue to cling to the dust (v. 29)
- the Gospel will reach to generations to come, so that His righteousness continues from age to age (v. 30)

This is what God promises that He will do, to reward His Son, Servant, and King Jesus for the troubles He endured. Jesus saw this, and He rejoiced, even in the midst of His suffering, because He knew that *the Word of*



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*the Lord can neither be a lie nor fail!*

Do we share this vision with our Lord Jesus? Does it comfort, thrill, and fill us with joy at the prospect of realizing it? Christ's Kingdom, coming on earth as it is in heaven? A revival of religion to fill the Kingdom framework outlined in these verses?

When we pray for revival, we turn to the Word of God to tell us what to seek, what to hope for, and how to pray. We do not let present troubles deter us from seeking the will of the Lord. We rejoice in the midst of our sufferings, because we know what God has promised; we've seen what God can do; and we very much expect Him to bring a mighty Spirit-led movement of revival, renewal, and awakening in our day.

*Praying Psalm 22.21-31 for revival*

As God answered Jesus in His time of trouble (Ps. 22.21), He will answer us in ours. But we must follow the example of Jesus and look to the Lord in prayer, bearing up under whatever burdens He lays upon us, confessing and repenting of our sins, and focusing on the coming day of revival, according to the promises of God's Word.

We do not make up the vision of revival we seek. We turn to the Lord and His Word, to guide us in our prayers. As we pray Psalm 22.21-31, let us give hearty and abundant thanks for Jesus, Who ever lives to make intercession for us, and will most certainly receive these prayers, inspired by His Spirit, and convey them to the Father on our behalf.

Let us pray boldly for all that God promises. And let us ask the Lord to begin using us today, and every day, to begin bringing this promised time of revival and renewal to pass. Join with other believers to seek the Lord for revival. Pray each of these verses to the Lord; thank Him for all that He has done thus far in bringing this vision to pass in our world, and pray that He will do even more than this – exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we could ever ask or think (Eph. 3.20), and wholly in line with what He has revealed to us in His Word.

Renew your soul and body in service to the Lord (v. 30), and tell His praises to this generation and the one that follows (v. 30). Call upon your fellow believers to join you in declaring the righteousness and Kingdom of Jesus to everyone in your Personal Mission Fields.

Then praise the Lord in advance for what He is going to do – because of what He has done, but more importantly, because of what *He has promised in His Word*.

*For Reflection*

1. Do you think the vision outlined in this psalm is one that Jesus wants you to embrace? What will that require of you?
2. Why is it important that we see ourselves as working toward this vision every day, both in our prayers and in our daily lives?
3. How can a vision like this – the vision that sustained Jesus on the cross – sustain and encourage us during our times of trouble?

*Next Steps – Preparation: Spend a few days praying just Psalm 22.21-31, and let God's vision for revival sink deeply into your soul.*

### 3 The Beauty and Goodness of God: Psalm 27

I would have lost heart, *unless I had believed*  
*That I would see the goodness of the LORD*  
*In the land of the living,*  
*Wait on the LORD;*  
*Be of good courage,*  
*And He shall strengthen your heart;*  
*Wait, I say, on the LORD!* Psalm 27.13, 14

*Any good news?*

Waves of cynicism and doomsaying seem to wash over the decks of our planet with increasing regularity.

Wars and rumors of wars are a normal feature of life. Violence of all kinds is an everyday occurrence. Think of the meanness of politics or the banality, insipidity, and frivolity of pop culture. Environmental warnings can sound like hysteria, as each new report of melting ice caps warns of coastal inundation worldwide. Add to these superstorms, which seem to be increasing in number and intensity, and a pandemic, and you have a formula for mass cynicism, uncertainty, and fear.

In the darkness of a cynical age, the Lord is our light and salvation (Ps. 27.1). His beauty far surpasses any we have ever known; His paths can lead to righteousness and hope; and His goodness can make all things new. The world is arrayed against the Lord and His salvation; but we know that the salvation of the Lord is our cynical world's only hope. So when the Lord commands us to seek His face, that we might see the glory therein, and be transformed by it, we need to make this our primary business each day (Ps. 27.8; 2 Cor. 4.6; 2 Cor. 3.12-18).

The world is desperate for good news, and we have the best Good News anyone could ever hear, Good News so powerful, that it can bring the salvation of God, the beauty of the Lord, the righteousness of His Kingdom, and the goodness of God to the world, making all things new. This is the message of Psalm 27, and this is why Psalm 27 is such a powerful psalm to use in seeking the Lord for revival.

*God's beauty, path, and goodness*

Psalm 27 holds out the prospect of *seeing the beauty of the Lord, rediscovering His righteous paths, and realizing His goodness in the land of the living*. Written in a time of trouble (vv. 2, 3, 5), this psalm brims with hope. We can feel David's excitement building as he contemplates the Lord and prepares to come into His Presence to meditate there. Psalm 27 offers an antidote to despair in a cynical age, and an exhortation to diligence in waiting on the Lord (vv. 13, 14).

The *beauty of the Lord* is the supreme manifestation of and template for all beauty. That beauty is seen most clearly in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, as John saw it on Patmos, rich in glory and transforming power and grace (Rev. 1). God calls His people to seek His beauty, that they may be transformed by it and live it in beautiful works before the dark and cynical world. But we must make meditating on the beauty of the Lord a high priority in our lives, listening as the Spirit brings together from throughout the Word of God, images and impressions of Jesus, exalted in glory. We must practice gazing on these images with the eye of the heart, to engage the power that is available there (Eph. 1.15-21). The more we set our minds on Christ, and on the beauty of the unseen realm, the more that beauty will be evident in our daily lives, showing the hope we have in Jesus to an increasingly hope-starved world (Col. 3.1-3; Heb. 11.1; 1 Pet. 3.15).

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The *paths of the Lord* are righteousness, mercy, and truth (Ps. 22.3; Ps. 25.10). They are marked out for us by the guard rails of God's holy and righteous and good Law, and the example of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 2.1-6). As we seek the Lord and His face (Ps. 27.7-9), He will teach us His way, and empower us to walk in it by His indwelling Spirit. We don't have to guess about the will of God; He has shown us what He wants, and how we should love Him and our neighbors (Matt. 22.34-30).

We walk the paths of the Lord, having come from His Presence and beauty into our daily journey, in the confident hope that the *goodness of the Lord* will come to light throughout our Personal Mission Field (Matt. 5.13-16). The goodness of the Lord is that which comports with His beauty, justice, truth, and lovingkindness. The goodness of the Lord is throughout the earth (Ps. 33.5), but it has been trampled underfoot and taken for granted by people who have no regard for the Lord or His Word (Rom. 1.18-32). The more we see of the beauty of the Lord, and the more diligent and circumspect we are (Eph. 5.15-17) to walk His path, the more we may expect that His goodness will come to light in us – good works of beauty, truth, and love, shining in and through us like lights for vessels floundering amid the storms of unbelief.

We can know true beauty. We know the path of righteousness, mercy, and peace. We are the key to God's goodness coming to light for the blessing of the world. And Psalm 27 leads us to seek and expect all these. Let us not despair amid a cynical generation; instead, let us seek the Lord and His beauty, ways, and goodness in prayer.

#### *Praying Psalm 27 for revival*

As you pray this psalm, let the troubles of our world come to mind, and hold them up to the Lord for His mercy (vv. 1-5, 7). Intercede for our cynical generation. Call on God to multiply His goodness, even to His enemies, and to prepare the hearts of many to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Meditate on the beauty of the Lord. Think of Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, throughout the book of Revelation, and in such psalms as 2, 45, 47, and 110. Let the images conveyed there fill the purview of your imagination, as you set your mind on the things that are above. Linger before the beauty of the Lord, letting the light of His glory shine in your soul, so that you confess and repent of any sins, and embrace more of what you see in Jesus. Pray that the beauty of Jesus may come through in the world with increasing clarity and brilliance.

Seek His path for you for this day. What work will you do? Whom will you see? What challenges or temptations do you expect? Meditate on the commandments of the Lord (Ps. 1) so that you may be able to discern that path of Jesus and to prepare for the works you must do in advancing His Kingdom and righteousness (1 Jn. 2.1-6; Matt. 5.17-19).

Pray specifically that the Lord will show His goodness through you, and through all His people. Pray for a great upwelling of His Spirit to empower us with His fruit and gifts, that we might fulfill our calling as witnesses and disciple-makers (Acts 1.8; Matt. 28.18-20).

Keep at it day by day, waiting on the Lord, and not giving up hope, as you think ahead to the day when revival, renewal, and awakening break out over all the earth, and the knowledge of the glory of Jesus Christ fills the world.

#### *For reflection*

1. Why is this an especially good time to be sharing the Good News of Jesus?
2. Explain the connection between the beauty of the Lord, and His paths and goodness.
3. How can believers encourage one another in seeking the Lord for revival?

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*Next steps – Transformation: Spend the next few days praying Psalm 27 at various times during the day. Review the psalms we have previously studied in this series, and continue praying them on a rotating basis.*

## 4 God's Works, God's World: Psalm 66

*Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!  
Sing out the honor of His name;  
Make His praise glorious.  
Say to God,  
"How awesome are Your works!  
Through the greatness of Your power  
Your enemies shall submit themselves to You.  
All the earth shall worship You  
And sing praises to You;  
They shall sing praises to Your name." Psalm 66.1-4*

### *God's work and ours*

Revival is a work of God. During seasons of revival, people are made acutely aware of their sins and of being separated from God. Under the searching light of Scripture and the Spirit of God, conviction stings the souls of those in whom God is working, so that they confess their sins and repent. This leads to a new-found freedom to come before the Lord with a grateful heart, rejoicing in His forgiveness and basking in His love. Cleansed souls fill up with the Spirit of God, and people are moved to serve Him joyfully in every area of their lives. Their discipleship becomes more evident, and their witness more consistent and effective. They tell the works of God to the people around them; and as this happens throughout the Body of Christ, multitudes are converted and come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Revival leads to renewal, and renewal leads to awakening.

Only God can make this happen. But it pleases God to accomplish the work of revival in and through His people. We have a part in revival, as Psalm 66 makes clear. Our part is to bless God together before the watching world, and to declare the works of God to all nations and peoples, so that praise and thanks increase to the Lord, many declare their faith in Him, and God's mercy and grace flow like rivers of living water to refresh the world again.

It pleases God to bring revival to His people as they submit to His criteria for revival, beginning with seeking Him in prayer. Seeing the need for revival all around us, we must not despair, and we must not do nothing. Instead, we must seek the Lord to deliver us from times of testing and refining (Ps. 66.10-12). As He hears and receives our prayers, like sweet offerings and sacrifices (vv. 13-15), He prepares us to go forth and declare His works, beginning by encouraging one another in the saving mercies of our prayer-hearing God (vv. 16-19).

Then, as we stimulate one another to love and good works (Heb. 10.24), we become a powerful force for calling the world to consider the works of God, and to come under His power for salvation.

Revival is God's work. But He chooses to do His work through His people, by the power of His Spirit, and according to His Word. As we seek the Lord for revival, we must make sure we understand what that requires, and how it will involve us, as God begins to do this great work.

### *The works of God to the world*

What are the works of God? In times of revival, God's people, newly refreshed in His grace, and overflowing with the joy of His salvation, declare the works of God to all the world: "Come and see the works of God; *He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men*" (v. 5). The primary work of God which we are called to declare to the world is the work of salvation, which He has accomplished in our Lord Jesus Christ.

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In His work of salvation, Jesus fulfills all the righteousness we require to be acceptable to God, to know Him and enjoy His fellowship, and to love and serve Him with joy and gladness. At the same time, Jesus bore the wrath of God against our sins, so that we might be made righteous before God in Him (2 Cor. 5.17-21). His resurrection is the proof that God is satisfied with Jesus' work, and His intercession at the right hand of the Father ensures that our work can succeed until He returns. Jesus is the way to God and the full and abundant life God has in store for us (Jn. 14.6; 10.10). We who have come to know this great saving work of Christ are called to be His witnesses, and to make disciples of *all nations* by declaring the awesome and saving works of the Lord.

And when we are revived, we will do so eagerly and with great effects.

We must also declare the other works of God. He is the Creator of all things, and this means that the world around us is not *nature* but *creation*, and we have a duty to bring to all of creation the liberating power of the Gospel of the Kingdom (Rom. 8.20-22). God also exercises His providential care of the creation, upholding all things and causing all things to consist in Jesus Christ (Heb. 1.3; Col. 2.16). Science can discover many wonderful truths about God's providential working, and we should welcome each new discovery and its proper applications. But we must make it clear that, back of all the work of science and all the workings of the universe is the Lord Jesus Christ, Who speaks to the world continuously, thus keeping it in existence and functioning.

Then there is the work of regeneration and sanctification, which God works in each of our lives, giving us lively and ever-new testimonies of His personal care and love to share with one another and the people around us.

We are called to declare God's works to the world, and that world begins in our own sphere of influence, our Personal Mission Field (2 Cor. 10.13-18). As God begins to revive us, let us make a point of bringing the Good News of His works to all the people to whom He sends us day by day, living as His witnesses and testifying to His grace at every opportunity.

#### *Praying Psalm 66 for revival*

Praying Psalm 66 can greatly enlarge the scope of our vision for revival. It reminds us of how God has worked to save and sanctify us; it focuses our attention on all His mighty and saving works; it calls us together for prayer and mutual edification; it sends us to the world to proclaim the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ; and it promises that, as we do, even those who do not believe will be constrained to act in accordance with the powerful and increasing Presence of the Lord through His growing, revived Body (Ps. 66.3).

Let this psalm lead you first to confess your sins (v. 18), so that your prayers will not be hindered, and you may be assured of His hearing your prayers for revival (v. 20). Then prepare yourself each day to take up the work of revival in your own life and your Personal Mission Field. Praise, thank, and bless the Lord throughout the day. Encourage your fellow believers to seek the Lord for revival. Share your testimony of God's gracious working in your life at every opportunity. And declare the saving work of our Lord Jesus Christ by every means, so that some might be saved.

Psalm 66 covers the bases on God's work of revival and ours as well. Let it guide you day by day in seeking the Lord and His Spirit for revival, renewal, and awakening in our time.

#### *For reflection*

1. How would you explain the saving work of Christ to an unbelieving friend?

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2. Why does God choose to use us in His work of revival?

3. Whom can you encourage today to seek the Lord for revival and bless and praise Him for His many works?

*Next steps – Transformation: Spend the next few days praying Psalm 66 at various times during the day.*

## 5 Blessed to Bless: Psalm 67

*Let the peoples praise You, O God;  
Let all the peoples praise You.  
Then the earth shall yield her increase;  
God, our own God, shall bless us.  
God shall bless us,  
And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.* Psalm 67:5-7

### *The essence of God's covenant*

Psalm 67 begins in supplication and ends in confident hope, and the focus of each is the blessing of the Lord. In verse 1 the psalmist calls on the Lord to bless His people; in verse 7 he confidently declares that God will do just that.

But why? Why would the psalmist ask for blessing? And why should he so confidently expect that God will bless His people? What is the end and purpose of all this blessing, anyway?

This powerful little psalm has revival laced throughout its seven verses. The focus of revival is God; the means of revival is God; and the outcome of revival is God. Revival begins and ends with God, and this short hymn shows us how to focus clearly on and pray boldly and expectantly for God to bring revival to His people.

Blessing is the heart and soul of God's covenant. When God called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees, He promised to *bless* Him (Gen. 12.1-3). A cognate of that Hebrew word, *bless*, is *knees*. Blessing and knees are related in the Hebrew mind. When God comes to bless someone, He sets them on their knees. He puts them in the position of one who is about to be knighted, or of a beggar who is about to receive some boon from one much higher in the social scale. One who is being blessed of God is set squarely before His face, to see Him in His glory, hear and receive His words, and devote Himself to obedience. To be blessed by God is the very *essence* of God's covenant, that spiritual arrangement whereby God calls, redeems, saves, and deploys a people who will know, love, enjoy, and serve Him forever.

When the psalmist prayed for God to *bless* His people, and to shine His face upon them, it was because He sensed some lack of that blessing in his day. The people were not rightly positioned before God. They were not hearing Him, delighting in Him, and living according to His Law. Only if God would shine His face on them would they have the Spirit of God to turn them to His Word, so that they could enter His blessings once again (cf. Ezek. 37.39; Ps. 119.135).

And the psalmist knew that getting back into that posture of blessing was the key to seeing revival, renewal, and awakening come to all the nations of the earth.

### *Blessed to be a blessing*

The blessing God has prepared for His people is not to be indulged on themselves alone. God promised to bless His people, and He commissioned them to be a blessing to all nations and families of the earth. That is, through His chosen, redeemed, saved, and blessed people, God intends to extend His blessing to the peoples and families of the whole earth.

The way this is done is by declaring the way of God's salvation to the people of the world, beginning with those who are right around us all day long (Ps. 67.2). We want the people with whom we have contact to know the way of the Lord, to hear the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ, to know the joy and gladness



### *The Scope and Focus of Revival*

that comes with that great gift (v. 4), and to join us in praising the Lord Who thus blesses us, and in becoming a blessing to others.

The end game of all this is that the righteousness of God, as seen in our Lord Jesus Christ, might be taken up by all the peoples of the earth; that the rule of God – His Kingdom – would fill the earth; that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord would abound; and that the reality of the living Christ would fill every place and everyone (vv. 4, 5; cf. Eph. 2.8-10).

Then the whole earth will bear the fruit of righteousness, an holy increase that causes the blessings of God to abound in every place and to all peoples (v. 6). As God blesses His people, and they respond faithfully to that blessing by making His way and salvation known in their own part of the world, blessing flows, grace and truth reach to more and more people, many are converted and join the ranks of the blessed, and the ends of the earth learn the fear of the Lord (v. 7).

And all this begins in prayer – seeking the Lord to restore His blessing to His people, so that we can be the means whereby His blessings flow freely and abundantly to the rest of the world. When the people of God earnestly and eagerly seek His blessings, according to the promises of His covenant, a movement of God's Spirit can begin to spread the salvation of Christ and the fear of the Lord to people everywhere.

Isn't that worth praying about?

#### *Praying Psalm 67 for revival*

Praying Psalm 67 is pretty straightforward. You can even pray it verbatim, just as it is written. But you might want to pause at the end of each line and elaborate. For example, when you ask for God's mercy (v. 1), wait in silence for the Spirit to convict you of any sin, and to lead you to repentance. Pray for the people you will see today, that you might encourage them in the way of salvation, and that the Lord will give you an opportunity to tell someone about His saving mercy in Jesus (v. 2).

For verses 3 and 4, plead with the Lord to touch His people for more praise and worship, and more thanksgiving, more consistently throughout the day. Pray for the Church in those places where persecution is not uncommon – China, India, Afghanistan, parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Cuba, and elsewhere – that God's people will be glad and rejoice, and that the Lord will stay the hands of their oppressors.

Pray for the nations and peoples of the world (v. 5), that the Spirit might prepare the hearts of multitudes to hear the Good News of Jesus.

And pray that, as Christ's Kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven, that the blessings of His goodness will increase and abound throughout the world, to the praise of His glorious grace (vv. 6, 7).

This psalm is sufficiently short, concise, and comprehensive for what we seek for revival, that you could pray it at least once a day, or even memorize it, and share it with Christian friends. This psalm, like a tightly coiled mainspring, wants to strike the bells for revival; the more we pray it, the closer will come the great day of increased blessing this psalm envisions.

#### *For Reflection*

1. What does it mean to say that God blesses us to make us a blessing to the world?
2. What is your approach to conveying the blessings of God to the people in your Personal Mission Field?
3. How can this psalm help you to develop a vision for what revival will look like, when God begins to bring it to the world?

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*Next Steps – Transformation: Try praying Psalm 67 verbatim. Then go back and pray it, allowing each line to lead you to some more specific requests for revival.*

## 6 Thy Kingdom, Come: Psalm 72

*His name shall endure forever;  
His name shall continue as long as the sun.  
And men shall be blessed in Him;  
All nations shall call Him blessed. Psalm 72.17*

### *Key to blessing*

As we have seen, the essence of God’s covenant promises to His people – all of which are “Yes” and “Amen” in Jesus Christ – is that we are blessed of God so that we might bring His blessings to the world.

There’s a small problem with this plan, however: The world frequently doesn’t want to be blessed. We saw in Psalms 2, 12, and 53 that many people in the world are in rebellion against God. They want to throw off His Law and all the blessings it promises. They substitute for His truth a wide range of lies, deceptions, and half-truths. They refuse to seek Him; and very often, they turn their anger toward God against His people, in the forms of persecution and oppression.

How can we bless people who don’t want to be blessed?

God has an answer for this: The Kingdom of God. Recall what we saw in Psalm 66. 3, 4:

*Say to God,  
“How awesome are Your works!  
Through the greatness of Your power  
Your enemies shall submit themselves to You.  
All the earth shall worship You  
And sing praises to You;  
They shall sing praises to Your name.”*

This same idea is repeated in Psalm 81.13-15:

*“Oh, that My people would listen to Me,  
That Israel would walk in My ways!  
I would soon subdue their enemies,  
And turn My hand against their adversaries.  
The haters of the Lord would pretend submission to Him...”*

The words *submit* and *pretend obedience* translate the same Hebrew verb: *שָׁחַשׁ chachash* which means to cringe and to feign obedience. When revival comes, and God’s people repent of their sins and walk boldly and consistently in His ways, praising Him and declaring His works, the effect on the enemies of the Lord is to cause them to back down, lay low, and go along with the flow of divine power, which is like rivers of living water through and from the City of the Lord (Ps. 46.4-7; Jn. 7.37-39).

The Kingdom of God is the *power* of God at work within, among, and through His people (1 Cor. 4.20; Acts 1.8); and its effect, as it comes on earth as in heaven, is to turn the world rightside-up for Jesus Christ, bringing the blessings of righteousness and making all things new wherever His banner is raised. Psalm 72 spreads out the broad horizon of blessing that comes to the world as the Kingdom comes and God’s people are revived and take up their calling to the Kingdom and glory of God (1 Thess. 2.12).

*The blessing of the Kingdom*

The scope and extent of divine blessing outlined in Psalm 72 is nothing short of breathtaking. David wrote this psalm for his son, Solomon (v. 20, cf. superscription), as he ascended the throne and became heir of the covenant promised to David (cf. Psalm 132). Without going into too much detail, let's simply enumerate the many blessings that come to the world as the Kingdom comes through God's anointed King:

- vv. 1, 2: righteousness becomes the standard of judgment for God's people
- v. 3: peace reaches to even remote parts of the earth
- v. 4: the poor, needy, and oppressed receive justice from the Lord (cf. also vv. 12-14)
- vv. 5-7: the fear of the Lord's King reaches to all generations, and the blessings that flow from Him take the form of righteousness and peace (cf. Rom. 14.17, 18)
- vv. 8-11: the rule of King Jesus extends to all the earth, and even His enemies will bow before Him, and offer Him gifts (cf. also v. 15)
- v. 16: the earth will be maximally fruitful in yielding its blessings to the world
- v. 17: the Name of Jesus will endure forever, and all people will count themselves blessed in Him, and call Him blessed
- v. 19: the whole earth will be filled with His glory (cf. Hab. 2.14), and His Name will be blessed everywhere

This is the work God does as His Kingdom advances on earth as it is in heaven. We do not expect to realize this fully in the course of history; the fullness of the Kingdom awaits the new heavens and new earth. But, like dough responding to leaven, we do expect to see real progress of that Kingdom throughout the course of human history, as God puts Christ's enemies under His feet, and gathers His people together as one Body and Kingdom to bless and praise Him, to seek the wondrous things and exceeding great and precious promises He holds out to them in our Lord Jesus Christ, and to bless the world with the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

*Praying Psalm 72 for revival*

This psalm should fill our minds with a vision and our hearts with a burning desire for revival. Revival comes as God's people repent of their sins and call upon the Lord to fill, direct, and empower them for seeking the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. This work begins in prayer, as Jesus Himself taught (Matt. 6.10). Pray for each of the various bullet points of this psalm, that God would move among His people to extend the blessings of Jesus Christ to lost, suffering, confused, oppressed, and needy people everywhere.

Pray for the people in your Personal Mission Field, that you might be God's agent of blessing to them, to show the love of Christ and share the Good News of His Kingdom as often as you have opportunity. Pray that God will silence His enemies, expose the lies of unbelieving worldviews, and put in the hearts of lost people to begin seeking Him as He created them to do (cf. Acts 17.26, 27). Pray for boldness for all believers, that we might daily repent of sin and take up our Kingdom-and-glory calling in every area and aspect of our lives. Pray that the Spirit of God will flow rivers of living water through His people, to refresh and renew a thirsting world.

Then pray specifically about your own calling to seek the Kingdom of God *today*. How might God use you, in the various relationships, roles, and responsibilities that are before you today? Say with Isaiah, "Here am I! Send me!" and ask the Lord to show you the work He has for you in the day ahead, that you might serve and glorify Him (Ps. 90.16, 17), and thus His Kingdom might advance through you on earth, as it is in heaven.

Pray a big Kingdom vision; then go forth in every small detail of your life to be a Kingdom ambassador for our risen, reigning, and soon-returning King and Savior, Jesus Christ.

*For Reflection*

1. Summarize the vision of the coming of God's Kingdom as it is outlined in Psalm 72.

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2. What can you do to have this vision more constantly before your mind and in your heart?
3. How can believers encourage one another in our daily calling to seek the Kingdom and righteousness of God?

*Next Steps – Preparation: Find a prayer partner to join with you in praying Psalm 72 for revival. Plan to meet – online, or by phone – on a regular basis to seek the Lord for revival, using this and the other psalms we have considered in this series.*

## 7 Revived for Joy: Psalm 96

*Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;*

*Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;*

*Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it.*

*Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice  
before the LORD.*

*For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth.*

*He shall judge the world with righteousness,*

*And the peoples with His truth. Psalm 96.11-13*

### *Judgment and joy*

Seasons of revival are in many ways seasons of judgment. Believers come under severe conviction of sin, as the Spirit brings to light and judges their erring ways and stubborn hearts (Jn. 16.8-11). Unbelievers come under the judgment of the Lord in large numbers, and are converted to Jesus Christ and translated into His Kingdom.

The sense of judgment pervades the air during revival. People weep for their sins, and the sins of those they love. Believers implore God with tears for the salvation of the lost. Those who are seeking revival call on the Lord to judge the wickedness of the world and to bring a new measure of uprightness to all our relationships, roles, and responsibilities.

As God moves in judgment, in response to the earnest prayers of His people, tears of sorrow flow because of our sinful ways. But they are quickly replaced by tears of joy, as we bask in the forgiveness of God, are renewed in His Spirit and truth, and go forth to sow in tears of joy those seeds of witness and prayer that will further the work of revival in our generation.

Psalm 96 fills out the vision of a world in revival. It calls us to announce the Good News of God's salvation from day to day, and to declare His glory to the people in our Personal Mission Field. It focuses on the greatness and might of God, and reminds us that all glory belongs to Him. The scope of its reviving energy is worldwide and creation-pervasive. It calls on the Lord to come in judgment and to lead the world in rejoicing and in singing a new song to the Lord:

(Mit Freuden Zart: "[\*All Praise to God, Who Reigns Above\*](#)")

Sing to the Lord! O, bless His Name! All nations tell His glory!

Salvation's tidings loud proclaim; let earth rehearse His story!

For God is greatly to be praised; His throne above all gods is raised –

Fear Him, and sing His glory!

### *A world caught up in revival*

In times of revival – as we saw in the city of Ephesus in Acts 19 – people denounce their false gods and turn away from them in repentance. Those things they had trusted in – wealth, leisure, power, entertainment, sex, and more – are seen as having let them down, and people look from them to the living and true God, Creator, Redeemer, Savior, and Lord. The worship of God spreads from person to person, city to city, nation to nation, and all the earth takes on a new prospect – fear and trembling before the Lord, leading to rejoicing:

All other gods are idols vain – the Lord created heaven.

Splendor and strength with Him obtain; to Him be glory given!

All fam'lies, praise this mighty Lord! Give strength and glory to His Word!

Exalt the Lord of heaven.

The witness to the Lord breaks out like spring, bringing new life and joy far as the curse is found. To God strength and glory are ascribed by all the peoples of the earth, as they come before Him to offer praise and thanks and the worship which is His due:

Bring offerings sweet to Him, our Lord, in holy garments praise Him!  
Tremble before Him, all the earth; among the nations raise Him!  
The earth is fixed, it will not move; the peoples will His justice prove –  
exalt the Lord and praise Him.

The joy of the Lord spreads so rapidly and fully that even the groaning and travailing creation becomes caught up in the new and widespread liberty of the sons and daughters of God, and is refreshed and renewed, and flourishes according to God's original design (Gen. 1.31):

Let heaven sing with lusty voice; let earth and sea sing sweetly!  
Let fields and trees in Him rejoice, For He is coming swiftly  
To judge the world in righteousness, the peoples in His faithfulness –  
He comes; exalt Him greatly!

When God comes to revive His people, they are renewed throughout, in all their ways. They go forth each day, into every nook and cranny of creation and society, bringing the Good News of salvation, calling on men to repent and believe the Gospel, and working to restore the fallen world with good works of joy.

And that's a scenario worth praying for, indeed.

*Praying Psalm 96 for revival*

As you pray Psalm 96, pay attention to the many imperatives: sing, proclaim, declare, fear, give. How do these apply to you? What is God calling you to do through these actions, to prepare yourself and your world for His coming judgment and revival?

Intercede for the families of your church, and for all the families represented by the people in your Personal Mission Field. Express your confidence in the Lord's ability to revive His Church and awaken the world to Jesus. Plead with Him to give you a vision of the world revived, renewed, awakened, and being restored for the glory of God. Then go forth to declare that Jesus reigns, and that He is calling the world to repent and believe the Gospel, before the coming judgment of God.

And as you pray verses 11-13, particularly at the end of the day, rejoice in the Lord, that what He leads you to pray for in His Word is just that much closer now than it was the day before. He is coming, and when He comes in reviving power, it will be for us like a dream come true, and we will laugh with tears of joy to see the salvation of the Lord as we have never seen it before.

*For reflection*

1. Why should we expect judgment to accompany revival? Where is judgment needed?
2. Review all the imperatives in this psalm. How would you describe the state of these in your own life?
3. What will you do today to bring revival, renewal, and awakening to your soul, and into your Personal Mission Field?

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*Next Steps – Transformation: Sing and pray Psalm 96 along with other psalms we've studied, so that you gain a growing vision for revival. Download this and the previous series of studies on the theme, Revived!, and share them with some friends.*



*The Scope and Focus of Revival*

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. How would you describe the scope and focus of revival, as we have seen them in these psalms?
2. Why should we expect revival to have such a broad scope?
3. What does the scope of revival indicate for your own sphere of influence?
4. In what ways does God expect His people to bless the world?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from this third installment in our study on seeking the Lord for revival? How are you putting that lesson to work in your daily life?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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Thank you.