

# Oh That God Would Come Down

by Charles Leiter

---

Isaiah chapter 63 & 64. Isaiah 63 and we'll begin reading with verse 15, "Look down from Heaven and see from Your holy and glorious habitation; Where are Your zeal and Your mighty deeds? The stirrings of Your heart and Your compassion are restrained toward me. For You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not recognize us. You, O LORD, are our Father, Our Redeemer from of old is Your name. Why, O LORD, do You cause us to stray from Your ways and harden our heart from fearing You? Return for the sake of Your servants, the tribes of Your heritage. Your holy people possessed Your sanctuary for a little while, our adversaries have trodden it down. We have become like those over whom You have never ruled, like those who were not called by Your name. Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at Your presence – as fire kindles the brushwood, as fire causes water to boil – to make Your name known to Your adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Your presence.

"When You did awesome things which we did not expect, You came down, the mountains quaked at Your presence. For from days of old they have not heard nor perceived by ear, neither has the eye seen a God besides You, who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him. You meet him who rejoices in doing righteousness, who remembers You in Your ways. Behold, You were angry, for we sinned, we continued in them a long time; and shall we be saved? For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on Your name, who arouses himself to take hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us and have delivered us into the power of our iniquities."

The verses that I would like for us to consider this evening are verses 1 to 4 of chapter 64, and they make up what is surely one of the most glorious prayers in all of Scripture: "Oh, that Thou would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence."

So I want to speak this evening, Lord willing, on the subject of God Coming Down. And I've read a little bit of the larger context just to give you a feel for the original setting of this prayer. The prayer comes at a time when Israel has sinned and is under the judgment of God for its sins. And the prophet says in vs 7 that God had hidden His face from them and had delivered them into the power of their

iniquities. Back in Isaiah 63:19, he says, "We have become like those over whom Thou has never ruled, like those who were not called by Thy Name."

So Isaiah cries out for God to do, once again, what He has done in the past of Israel's history. And he says in Isaiah 64:3, "When Thou didst awesome things which we did not expect, Thou didst come down, the mountains quaked at Thy presence." That was something that had happened. When did God do that? When did He do awesome things? Well, surely one time was back when He took the children of Israel out of Egypt – out from the power of Pharaoh and the power of Egypt. He certainly did awesome things during that time. The God of the Hebrews, through these insignificant men (Moses and Aaron), came to the most powerful man in the world at that time, with the most powerful empire. And these two little men stood there before him and said, "Thus says the God of Israel, 'Let My people go.' " And so, God laid claim on these people - "they're My people." Now think of this, saying this to the most powerful man in the world: "They're My people; let them go, that they might worship Me." And as the Scripture says, He did this with a mighty arm and an outstretched hand. He did awesome things.

You know, Pharaoh's first response was, "Who is this LORD? I don't know the LORD." Isn't that quite a statement? "I don't know the LORD." Well, he didn't know the LORD, and he said, "I'm not going to let the people go." But after all those plagues were over, he was glad to see them go out. And God delivered His people with mighty signs and awesome wonders from the land of Egypt. And once the people were delivered, He came down on Mount Sinai. Hebrews 12 says, "He came in the midst of blazing fire, and darkness and gloom, and whirlwind. And a sight so terrible that Moses said, 'I exceedingly fear and tremble.' " Moses was quaking. And according to Exodus 19, it says, "There were thunder and lightning flashes, and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet sound so that all the people who were in the camp trembled." Mount Sinai was all in smoke - listen to this - because the LORD descended, He came down upon it. The LORD descended upon it in fire, and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. "When Thou didst come down, the mountains quaked, the mountains flowed down." So God had come down before in the history of Israel, and Isaiah was asking Him to do it again.

Now, beloved, God answered Isaiah's prayer, but He did it in a way that they looked not for. It says, "Thou didst awesome things which we did not expect in the past." Nobody had any idea what God was going to do to deliver the people out of Egypt. And nobody had any idea how God was going to ultimately answer this prayer of Isaiah. He's asking God to come down. God came down. He came down in the person of His Son. He came down from above into this fallen world, and invaded human history in the person of His Son. Malachi 3:1 says, "The Lord,

whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple; even the messenger of the Covenant, in whom you delight. But who can abide the day of His coming? He's like a refiner's fire." And when the Lord Jesus came, He was like that. But He didn't stay in this world, He ascended to Heaven. And a few weeks later, God came down in a more abiding way when He came down in the person of the Holy Spirit. God came down. Who is the Holy Spirit? He's God. God came down, on the day of Pentecost, to abide with the church forever.

Acts chapter 2, Peter is quoting from Joel, he says, "It shall be in the last days, God says, that I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and even upon My bondservants and My handmaidens will I pour out of My Spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy. And I will grant wonders in the sky above and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come. And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Now that's God doing great and awesome things which they looked not for and did not expect. And it's God coming down, and the mountains quaking and flowing down at His presence.

Beloved, the new covenant coming of the Holy Spirit was God's answer to Isaiah's prayer for God to come down. He came down in a far more powerful and more wonderful way on the day of Pentecost. He came down in a far more wonderful way than He ever came down, when He came down with a bunch of fire and lightning and all those things on Mount Sinai. In the New Covenant, God comes and puts His Spirit within people. He regenerates their hearts, He writes His law on the inside instead of on the outside; and He pours out His Spirit upon them to empower them to do impossible things. Think of the words of the Lord Jesus. He said, "In that day you shall know that I am in you, and you and Me, and I in the Father." He says, "He that believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do because I go to the Father."

God doesn't come down on the physical mountains anymore, but He does still come down. And when He does, the mountains flow down at His presence. It's the coming of the Holy Spirit, by which God answers Isaiah's prayer and solves the problems of backsliding and backslidden Israel, and puts His law on the inside, and has a new covenant people who won't turn away from it.

Well, I want to speak to you then on vs 1 to 4 on the subject of God Coming Down - "Oh, that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at Your presence." And the first thing that I want you to notice is this - very simple, but very profound - and that is, that when God comes down, God is the one who is acting. God is the one who is coming down. Now that's

pretty simple. Isaiah is asking God to do something. He's asking God to intervene. He's asking God to rend the heavens and come down. This prayer has to do with God's activity, not man's. It has to do with God's presence and person, not man's. We're dealing with something objective here, and I want to belabor this some, because it will help you to understand. There's so much confusion in relation to the work of the Holy Spirit. If we can lay hold of this; this has to do with God doing something from the outside, objective to ourselves. God comes to us from the outside, and all this is a result of God's activity.

When God comes down, God's the one coming down. He's the one acting. And we see this so clearly on the day of Pentecost, I don't know if you want to turn to it or not, but I'll read it to you. Now we're talking about the activity of God. In Acts 2:1, it says, "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from Heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance." Notice the activity of God here, it's everywhere in this. This is not man reaching up to God, this is God coming down to man. This is not man giving himself more fully to God, this is God giving Himself more fully to man.

Now I'm going to develop this a little as we go along, but just listen to these things, this thought: This is not man "taking something by faith". This is God giving something that man does not expect and does not look for. Notice how objective, how given, how outside of man, this all is. It happens SUDDENLY. Suddenly, there came. All right?

They're here, they're waiting. Suddenly, there comes - from the outside, from heaven - a noise, a sound, like a violent rushing wind - objective. And it fills the whole house. And there appears these tongues of fire. We're dealing with something objective that comes from the outside that God has initiated. And if we're looking for terminology for this, it's what the Bible calls "An Outpouring of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit comes down, He's poured out upon us. And Peter quotes from Joel, and he quotes his prophecy, he says, "What's happening here on the day of Pentecost, this is what was spoken of by Joel. 'It will come about in the last days,' saith the LORD, 'that I'll pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.' " Not just prophets, but God has things for bondservants and handmaidens, and housewives doing the dishes. What a promise this is! "I'll pour out My Spirit upon all flesh - your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon My bondservants and My handmaidens - that's talking about you and

me! not just those guys. An outpouring of the Spirit of God - this is something that God does.

Now there is a great deal of emphasis in the New Testament on our responsibility. And there are a lot of things that we're commanded to do. We're commanded to believe God, we're commanded to obey God. And, in relation to the Holy Spirit, one of the things that we're commanded is, we're commanded to be filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit, that's a commandment. And you understand, when the Bible talks about 'being filled with something', we have this idea of taking a cup and filling it up with water. But to be filled with something means to be utterly under the control of, and possessed by, you might say, that thing. There's a lot of examples of this in the New Testament. But if you look around and you read, it says, "They were all filled with rage." Well, that doesn't mean that somebody poured rage into them, it means that they were under the control of rage. They were filled with it, it just possessed them. And so when He says, "Be filled with the Spirit," it's a commandment. You are commanded to come to God and give yourself over to Him for His control. And so, we are to come to God - we are responsible to come to God - and repent of known sin, and believe what He has said about our ability in Christ to walk by faith. And it's life-changing.

I've been in meetings like this before, where God would put His finger on some area of sin. And you get alone before God and you ask His forgiveness. And you see, you know, by the grace of God I have power in Christ, I don't have to be defeated by this anymore. You see, that's repentance and faith. That's our responsibility. And you give yourself afresh to God, and, lo and behold, you're different after that. Haven't you seen this? I've seen meetings where one meeting changed my life. As Brother Don said this morning, it's far away from perfection but there's a difference, you're different from then on. God gave you, brought you into an area of victory that you never had before. And you're on a different plane, and you never go back to the way you were. That has to do with deep repentance before God, and believing, and having your mind renewed to see who you are in Christ, and the power that you have in Christ. That all has to do with our responsibility. You're commanded to be filled with the Spirit.

But, beloved, you cannot make God come down. That's something different. You can ask God to come down, like Isaiah did, but you can't make Him come down. When we talk about God coming down, we're talking about God's activity. If you could just get this clear, because there's a lot of things you'll read in the book of Acts, and sometimes you can see as you read it, you say, "Wait, this has to do with them giving themselves more fully to God." But other times you're reading, you say, "That's God coming down." And if you can get the picture of the total thing that's happening, it helps you regardless of the terminology that's used. Now, a lot

of times the terminology is pretty clear. "The Spirit had not yet fallen upon them" – that's God coming down. And it'll help you to sort some of these things out. But there's a lot of things that we are responsible for, and in a word we're responsible to walk in the Spirit. And that has to do with our activity. But again, these passages have to do, not with our activity, but with God's activity. And this is what happened in Acts 2.

But here's what we need to get. This didn't just happen in Acts chapter 2, it happened again a couple chapters later. God came down again. And this is the big encouragement because we don't just have to read Acts chapter 2 and say, "Wasn't that wonderful? God came down. I wish I would have lived back then when God was real and when God came down." That's not the way it is. Acts chapter 4, let me read it to you, starting at verse 23, "And when they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples devise futile things? The kings of the earth took their stand...' " And they go on reviewing what God has said in His Word and what He's done in the past.

And then they say in verse 29, " 'And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.' And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness. And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all." Now what happened there? They're praying, and God comes down. And the place is shaken, and suddenly they're all filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to speak the word of God with boldness. What is this? It's another outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

As I said earlier I think, or Brother Mack said, historically this has been called Revival. Now we live in a time when the term 'revival' has taken on the meaning of just any special meetings - "We're going to have a revival. We're going to hold a revival." But historically, back earlier in church history in the 1700s and 1800s, a revival was talking about an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I personally don't know if that's the best word for this, because a revival gives the concept that the true church is either dead or just about dead. You know, somebody's on the

beach there, and they're just about ready to go out. And you say, "I gave him artificial respiration and he revived!" And I think that's a wrong idea of what we're talking about. That's not the situation in the book of Acts. You read Acts chapter 4, these people were not backslidden. They have just been filled with the Spirit in Acts chapter 2 in a powerful, mighty way.

A lot of men, who are from a background of what's called Covenant Theology, speak of revival in this way. They equate Old Testament Israel with the true church. And so they say things like this: "God has turned His back on the church." "There's just as much adultery in the church as there is in the world." "The church doesn't any longer believe in the Virgin Birth." All those things. That's not the true church, beloved. That's not what the church is. And a lot of times they get all of their ideas of what they call 'revival' from the Old Testament. Well, there's a difference between Old Testament Israel and the church. Old Testament Israel was a physical nation made up mainly of unregenerate people. If you don't believe that, look at the way they lived. And God said, "There's a day coming when I'm going to do something special. I'm going to put My law inside of them, it's not just gonna be on the outside." In general (now there were regenerate people too) but in general, the reality was that the law was just on the outside, and as soon as you gave them a chance - like Moses goes up on the mountain for a little while, and by the time he gets back they had made a golden calf and they're going wild! That's not regenerate people.

And so in the New Covenant, God says, "I'm going to take care of this. The kingdom is going to be taken away from you and given to a nation that brings forth the fruit of it." And that nation is that spiritual nation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood that we are. So God has not turned His back on the church, and God has not forsaken the church, the true church. I mean, the true church is alive and well. At least, I have the feeling that the true church is alive and well here in this gathering. I don't want to minimize the glory of what God has done in your lives. I can see miracles! But, beloved, that doesn't mean we don't need what the early church needed. We need a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. You see that? It's not a deal where we come and we pray to God, and if He doesn't answer right away, we say, "Well, God has turned His back on me. God is not for me. God's against us." You know, that's not the reality. God is for you; and He is with us; and He is helping us. But mercy drops around us are falling, but for the showers we plead. That's what that prayer is. "Oh that You would come down." In the book of Acts we see this happening, God pouring out His Spirit afresh, not on a backslidden people, but on a dependent and needy people. And not on a worthy people, but on His people. His people. He's pleased to do that.

Well, when God pours out His Spirit, He comes down and makes His presence known in mighty ways. And He has been pleased to do this, time after time, down through church history. And in my own life, I don't know about some of you, some of you this may be new. Maybe you've never heard of God pouring out His Spirit historically. But some of you have heard about it, and maybe like me you've been stirred for a while, you pray about it and so on, but you kind of begin to feel like, "Well, maybe He's not going to do that." Beloved, He could do it again here. It's not because we're so worthy, you know, you can get the idea, "Boy, if we were just more on fire for God like the early church was, then He would do stuff, He would pour out His Spirit on us." Beloved, the reason the early church was on fire was that God had poured out His Spirit upon them. It's not the idea that they merited something and then He came.

It's very easy to get this thing, and I've listened to men preach on this subject, and you get this whole thing turned around to where the fruit of love, joy, peace and so on, is the Holy Spirit. That's not what the Bible says. It's not saying, "If you're Christ-like enough, God will give you His Spirit." It's that He supplies us with what we need to be like that. And so we're coming as His children, and we're saying, "Father, You said that the New Covenant could be characterized as the Ministry of the Spirit. And we're seeing so little right now." And, brethren, I remember a time, and from the people that I've known, they've told of little... I mean, 50, 75 or 100 years ago, it was not uncommon to have just a camp-meeting, and God would move in, and 25 or 30 people would be sobbing in the front under deep conviction of sin. And we're thankful for what He is doing even here. But if God came down here, this thing would be a totally different thing, wouldn't it? I mean, deep movings of the Spirit of God.

What happens when God comes down? Well, three things that I want to bring out that are illustrated in the verses in Isaiah 64. First of all, there is a glorious sense of God's presence. Now there are many other things related to the outpouring of the Spirit or what has historically been called revival. But at least this much in this passage, "Oh that thou would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake - what? - at Thy presence." In verse 2, "That the nations may tremble at Thy presence." And verse 3, "When Thou didst come down, the mountains quaked at Thy presence." Now we might expect that there would be a sense of God's presence because when God comes down, He's the One that comes down. But think of this: When we think of our great God, the God who created everything, suppose that God came down in here tonight. I mean, we would all dissolve, as would the building, and the whole world.

Now we know God is everywhere. And we know that when God comes down He doesn't manifest all that He is or we'd all die. But what He does is, He

pulls back the curtain more than it's ever been in our lives. He comes and manifests. We're talking about, of course He's present, but He manifests His presence. He comes down. And what happens when He's present is, mountains start quaking and nations start trembling, and He does awesome things. Conscious reality. When God's presence becomes a conscious reality. I was in a meeting one time in Louisiana many years ago, and this was not historic revival, it was just God coming into the meeting. And the sermon, I didn't particularly get that much out of the sermon, but after that sermon was over, God came into the room. I can't explain that. Everybody there knew that He was there. I mean, it was this sense of "God is in this room". He just was pleased to do that.

We had a little taste of that one time when Brother Don and Keith McCloud came to Missouri. And we went into a basement meeting room right after lunch, I think it was, and we were gonna have a little testimony time and celebrate communion (I mean, take the Lord's Supper) and go out. And we had communion but it wasn't that kind. We never got around to that. God came in a measure. And it was one of those things our children, our little crying babies, who hadn't had anything to eat all day that afternoon, went to sleep. And all the mothers are right there, everybody was there, you wouldn't even know there were any babies. They were all asleep. And when we came out of that time, it was like time stood still. And when we came out of that meeting, we looked around and it's like, "It's dark out here. We've been in there for hours." No knowledge of time. Duncan Campbell, I think, said, "The silence of eternity." God coming down into the midst. Don't you want him to come down?

Think of this: When God comes down in His presence, mountains shake and mountains melt (they do!) and nations fear. It's like when Jacob said, "Surely the LORD is in this place" (Gen. 28:16). He came to that realization, he was afraid, and he said, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven." There's a sense of awe, you can see that in the book of Acts. Acts 2:43, "Fear (or awe) came upon every soul." Acts 5:11, "Great fear came upon all the church." Acts 19:17, "Fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."

I want to read to you just a little bit of some accounts from church history, and I've almost picked these at random, not quite. But just to give you a feel again, this is from a book called *Rent Heavens* by R. B. Jones. This was the Welsh Revival, that Brother Mack talked about, in 1904, 1905. He says, "If one were asked to describe in a word the outstanding feature of those days, one would unhesitatingly reply that it was the universal, inescapable sense of the presence of God. God had come down. A sense of the Lord's presence was everywhere. It pervaded, it created the spiritual atmosphere. It mattered not where one went, the consciousness of the

reality and nearness of God followed. Felt of course in the revival gatherings, it was by no means confined to them. It was also felt in the homes, on the streets, in the mines and factories, in the schools; even in the theaters and drinking saloons.

"The strange result was that wherever people gathered became a place of awe, and places of amusement and carousal were practically emptied. Many were the instances of men entering public houses, ordering drinks, and then turning on their heels and leaving them on the counters untouched. The sense of the Lord's presence was such as practically to paralyze the arm that would raise the cup to the lips. Football teams and the like were disbanded. Their members finding greater joy and testimony to the Lord's grace than in games. The pit bottoms and galleries became places of praise and prayer, where the miners (Wales was a mining country), where the miners gathered to worship before they dispersed to their several stalls. Even the children of the Day Schools: stories could be told of how they would gather in any place they could, where they would sing and pray in most impressive fashion." Sense of the Lord's presence.

He tells about one of the meetings, he says, "It's difficult to overstate or overvalue this remarkable feature of the revival. The writer will never forget one outstanding experience of this sense of an atmosphere laden with the power of God's realized presence. The memory of that meeting, even after more than a quarter of a century, is well nigh overwhelming." The memory is overwhelming. "It was easily the greatest meeting the writer was ever in. The theme of the message was Isaiah chapter 6. The light of God's holiness was turned upon the hearts and lives of those present. Conviction of sin and its terrible dessert was so crushing that a feeling, almost of despair, grew over all hearts. So grievous a thing was sin, so richly and inevitably did it deserve the severest judgment of God, that hearts questioned: 'Could God forgive? Could God cleanse?' Then came the word about the altar, the tongs, and the live coal touching the confessedly vile lips, and the gracious and complete removal of their vileness. And after all, there was hope. God was forgiving, and He had cleansing for the worst. When the rapt listeners realized all this, the effect was absolutely beyond any metaphor to describe.

"As one man, first with a sigh of relief and then with the delirious shout of joy, the whole huge audience sprang to their feet. The vision had completely overwhelmed them and one that's not ashamed to tell it. For a moment they were beside themselves with heavenly joy." All that's from hearing about the tongs touching the lips of Isaiah. "The whole place at that moment was so awful with the glory of God. The holy presence of God was so manifested that the speaker himself was overwhelmed. The pulpit where he stood was so filled with the light of God that he had to withdraw." That's God coming into one meeting.

The presence of God. When God comes down there's a sense of His presence. Duncan Campbell, in the Hebrides Revival in 1949, said that God's presence was so manifest in those Hebrides Islands that sea captains would be sailing down the channel between the islands and the comet(?), and they would come under conviction of sin, and they'd be out on the deck of their ships praying, crying out to God. God's presence.

This is from Edward Payson. He talks about how in a meeting like this, sometimes there'll be one person, there'll be someone that God speaks to and he feels that he alone is the one spoken to, and that God is there, and he's almost unconscious of the presence of his fellow worshipers. But he says, "When God thus speaks to the whole or the greatest part of an assembly at once, as He sometimes does when He comes to revive his work extensively, these effects are experienced in these appearances exhibited by all. No scene on this side of the bar of God can be more overpoweringly solemn than the scene which such an assembly exhibits. Then the Father of spirits is present to the spirits He has made; present to each one of them and speaking to each. Each one feels that the eye of God is upon him, that the voice of God is speaking to him. Each one, therefore, though surrounded by numbers, mourns solitary and apart. The powers of the world to come are felt. Eternity, with all its crushing realities, opens to view and descends upon the mind. The final sentence, the judgment of God, though uttered by human lips, comes with scarcely less weight than if pronounced by the Judge Himself." That's what happens when God comes. Oh that God might do it again.

One of the surest marks of God's presence is that men are humbled and there's a deep sense of conviction of sin. Again I mentioned Brother Keith McCloud, who was involved in revival in Canada. He said, one time he was driving along in his car, listening to a message by a godly man, and there was this sense that God had come. And he pulled the car over to the side of the road, and he got down on his face in the bottom of the car. He said, "If I could have, I would have pushed my way through the floor to get lower." And he said, "I felt so unclean in the presence of God, though I could not think of one sin in my life at the time." Now if that's true of a godly man, what is it of the sinner?

In the Hebrides Revival, again, Duncan Campbell told about, I think it was seven or nine atheists; men who were educated, men that were weavers. And they mocked God and mocked religion. And at one point in the revival, they called for Duncan Campbell. They said, "Please come, we're afraid these men are going to lose their minds." What is that? That's the hope that God came and convicted of sin.

Well, when God comes He's present and there's a sense of His presence. Secondly, when God comes down, mighty things happen. "Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at Thy

presence." Mighty things happen. Mountains quake. "As fire kindles the brushwood, as fire causes water to boil, to make Thy Name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Thy presence. When Thou didst awesome things which we did not expect. Thou didst come down, the mountains quaked at Thy presence. From of old they have not heard nor perceived by ear, neither has the eye seen a God besides Thee who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him." When God comes down, mighty things happen. And time would literally fail us to tell of some of the mighty things that have happened in church history.

Mack mentioned the Welsh Revival in 1904. Evan Roberts was a young man in his mid-20s. He comes in there to his roommate (he's been weeping profusely), and he says, "See it. God showed me that He's going to save 100,000 people." And it looks like He did that, because in the first six months there were 80,000 added to the church rolls, in a little nation. And this went on for two or three years. A hundred thousand people. God does mighty things when he comes down. And in the case of the Welsh Revival (some of you may have heard some of these stories); in Swansea, one of the largest cities, there were no cases to try, there was no crime. The judge didn't have anything to do, the police didn't have anything to do. And so the police formed quartets to sing and also they directed traffic to the meetings. And in the mines, so many of the miners had been converted and they wouldn't curse anymore. And the horses, who were used to being cursed at, didn't know what orders they were being given. They couldn't get the horses to pull the coal carts. That's God coming, you see. We're not talking about special meetings. I mean, you can have a hundred of those so-called 'revivals' and nobody even knows it. But when the Holy Spirit comes down, even on a hundred and twenty people, it turned the world upside down.

William Williams, this is from the 1700s, I just want to read a variety of things for you just to get a feel, so you'll know this is not just one or two things. William Williams in Wales, in the 1700s, he says, "The tone of the whole district was changed. Instead of playing games on the Sabbath, dancing, cursing, swearing, blaspheming the name of God, singing unworthy songs, empty talk, gossiping, collecting stories, lying and persecuting God's people; instead of all this, the shepherds would sing hymns in the valleys, the ploughman and the driver of his oxen often singing psalms and spiritual songs together in the fields. The maidens, the children, and the old men together discussing happily about the works of the Spirit of grace." Whole communities changed.

Duncan Campbell, in the Hebrides Revival, said that you could be walking along the roads at night, and there were sobs coming from the sides of the road as people were crying out to God for mercy along the roads. Six hundred people

spontaneously gather in a field, crying out to God for mercy. That's the kind of thing that happens. People would find themselves just gathering, not knowing why they came, crying out to God for mercy.

Dr. Charles Culpepper was a Baptist missionary to China. I heard towards the end of his life he shared some about the revival there in China. And it was like a man gazing through the back of the building as he would talk about it. He said, "More was accomplished in two weeks than in ten years prior to that." God just saving people. I mean, we can't crack hearts open. We can't do it. When the Holy Spirit comes in any measure, things are different. When God comes, awesome things happen.

This was from revival in the Congo, with Helen Roseveare, who is a very proper little British medical doctor. She's not some wild-eyed fanatic. And I read part of an interview with her. The interviewer says, "What can you remember of the first experiences you had of revival power?" She said, "The first day revival came to Ibambi, the actual building shook. We were sitting in the Bible School hall. It was 7 PM on a Friday night. Jack Scholes, our field leader, had just come back from a trip in the south and he had seen revival down there. He stood up to speak about the revival and started to read from Scriptures. Suddenly - isn't that how often that word appears? He gets up to start reading from the Bible - suddenly we heard a hurricane storm. It was frightening!"

"Not what you expected?" the interviewer says. Just to see things that we looked not for. "No! None of us stopped to think that this was strange because you don't get hurricane storms in July (we have them in February or March). We heard this hurricane coming and the elders began to take the shutters down (the shutters are not very strong and fall in and can hurt people.) We looked out and it was moonlight, and the palm trees were standing absolutely still against the moonlit sky. It should have been pitch-black and stormy. Then the building shook, and the storm lanterns down the centre of the building moved around. There was a terrific noise and a sense of external power around." You see? We're not talking about people giving more of themselves to God. We're talking about God coming down. God comes down! He still comes down! He's done it in church history. He did on the day of Pentecost, He did it repeatedly in the book of Acts, and He still does it! He's done it in this century. He's done it in the past hundred years many times, on smaller scales.

Beloved, I'd like to see it even on a small-enough scale as this building right here. I mean, we need to long for this. We need to be aware of it, and we need to long for it. I won't read all this, but she said to the question, "What was the strongest sense you had around you at the time?" What do you think? Conviction of sin. She said, "We didn't leave the hall that whole weekend. Most of the time, God

was dealing with our sins. Some needed help from the pastors and moved around with much wisdom and encouragement. Then joy struck the repentant sinners and the pastor's moved on. It was remarkable what discernment was given to these uneducated pastors."

One more. This is a revival in Kwasizabantu in Southern Africa. I think it was maybe the end of the 1960s - not that long ago. Erlo Stegen was the man that was being used in this revival. And he says, "After about a week, God came down." That was the quote. "Suddenly there was a mighty wind, almost like compressed air which is released. It felt like a wind which blew right through them. The building shook and everyone was aware that God was in their midst. Erlo buried his face in his hands, deeply aware of his own unworthiness. He felt that he should bow down low. Everybody was on their knees. No one could grasp it."

Now this is what happened: The first thing, a Zulu woman - a witch - appeared unexpectedly at Mapumulo. To Erlo's surprise question of what she was looking for, she answered, "I'm looking for Jesus. Can He set me free? I'm bound with the chains of hell. Can He break these chains?" Erlo could not believe his eyes and ears. For 12 years he had tried, often for weeks on end, to lead a witch to Christ but to no avail. And here, suddenly, as if out of the blue, one comes and says that she wants to be set free from the chains of Satan. He asked her, "Who spoke to you?" "No one," was the answer. "Who brought you the message of Jesus?" "No one." "But who invited you to come here?" he asked with rising amazement. The answer was again, "No one." Now how did she get there? "But," she asked, "why all these questions? If Jesus does not set me free now, I will die with hell as my destination." Led by Erlo, she confessed her sins and made known her desire to open her life to Jesus. Then she said, "Ask this Jesus to set me free from the evil spirits within me."

Now that's the kind of thing God does. This woman was gloriously converted and many other witches began to come. They would come in waves. Sometimes blind people coming in waves and God healing miraculously. Many times there are no miraculous healings and things, especially in places where they don't need them. But when you're dealing in a country that is in utter darkness, a lot of times God does special miraculous things - healing people and doing unusual things. When God comes down, mighty things happen.

This is the last point: When God comes down, it always far exceeds our expectations. When God comes down nobody says, "Is this all?" Nobody says that. They are so blown away by the reality of God's presence that they're speechless. They said there was a sense of awe. People were afraid because God was so real and powerful. There's no need to pretend anything. The reality of God is so much greater than anything anyone has ever imagined or experienced.

One more quote from this account of the Welsh Revival. Telling about one of the meetings, it says, "A noted minister, Reverend Thomas John, after the meeting, was found alone in deep meditation in a field. One of the people who drew near to him said, 'Mr John, was not the sight of the thousands, as they silently prayed, a most impressive one? Did you ever see anything to compare with it?' He said, 'I never saw one of them. I saw no one but God.' Soon after, he was seen leaving the field and a friend said, 'Where are you going, Thomas John?' He said, 'Home. How dreadful is this place! I must leave, I'm too weak to bear it.' " His earthen vessel was too frail for such experiences. "Among the many lessons which were learned on such occasions is that there must come a great change, not only in the spiritual characters but also in the physical frames of God's children, before they'll be able to bear the far more exceeding weight of glory. And people have a sense they're going to die if God doesn't pull back a little. And God is going to have to give us new bodies to be able to bear a fuller glimpse of His glory."

Well we can't make God do this, but we can ask Him. And that's what Isaiah did in Isaiah 64, and that's what the early church did in Acts 4. But one final encouragement here, I love this one. William Williams, this is from the 1700s in Wales, they started having special meetings to pray for God to come in this way. And they were lifeless, hard-going meetings, not a great deal of liberty. And he says, "At last, forced by cowardice, unbelief, and the onslaughts of Satan, we resolved to give up our special meetings. Now we were about to offer a final prayer, fully intending never again to meet thus in fellowship. But it was when man reaches the lowest depths of unbelief that God imparts faith. And when man has failed then God reveals Himself. So, here, with us in such dire straits on the brink of despair, with the door shut on every hope of success, God Himself entered into our midst." Don't you like the way this is? because you can get the idea, "Boy, if we just... we're going to pray down, we're going to make God do this. We'll fast, we'll do this, we'll do that." And here they are, they were going to pray for a revival. And they were so weak and unbelieving that they decided to give up. And that's when God came, because He wanted to let it be known that it's not because of them, it's not because of you.

It says, "God Himself entered into our midst and the light of day from on high dawned upon us. For one of the brethren, the most timid of us all, the one who was strongest in his belief that God would never visit us, while in prayer was stirred in his spirit and laid hold powerfully on heaven as one who would never let go. His tongue spoke unusual words, his voice was raised, his spirit was aflame. He pleaded, he cried to God, he struggled. He wrestled in earnest like Jacob in the agony of his soul." God came and helped that man, and God began to pour out that spirit of supplication on the others there. And he says, "This came to pass, for there

fell upon us the sweet breath of the love of the Lord. We were filled as if with the fullness of the bulls and the horns of the altar. The fire was kindled, we gave voice with our tongues, the cloud melted away, the sun shone. We drank of the fruit of the vines of the promised land. We were made to rejoice. Gone was unbelief, gone guilt, gone fear. Gone a timid cowardly spirit, lack of love, envy, suspicions, together with all the poisonous worms that tormented us before. And in their place came love, faith, hope, a joyful spirit, with the glorious multitude of the graces of the Holy Spirit.

"Up till now the service was only beginning; for prayer, singing, praise, and blessing were redoubled and no one felt like bringing things to an end. Some were weeping, some praising, some singing, some filled with heavenly laughter. And all full of wonder and love and amazement at the Lord's work. To my mind, like the time of the apostles, when the Spirit descended from on high on a handful of fearful people, and strengthened them mightily to come out of their secret hiding place into the midst of the streets of Jerusalem, and to declare the name of the Lord before every tribe, tongue, and nation that had gathered together there from the uttermost parts of the earth. As it was then, so it was here now."

That was the revival in Wales in the 1700s. I read that because we should be encouraged to ask God and keep asking Him. I mean, there's a lot of things that we don't know whether it's God's will or not. But when you come to talking about the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, "I say to you, Ask and keep on asking; knock and keep on knocking; seek and keep on seeking: for everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" Beloved, we should not have a prayer meeting where we don't ask God to come in this way and pour out His Spirit. I mean, He encouraged us to do that. He says, "How much more..." We desperately need the Holy Spirit. Mercy drops around us are falling, but for the showers we plead. I mean, think of what it would be if God would have all of us to go back to our homes to be praying in a fresh way for an outpouring of God's Spirit, for God to come down.

I was with a brother in Iowa when I was a college student, who has prayed for many years for revival. And it hasn't happened yet, but I know those prayers are stored up in God's bottle. God puts those things away and He stores them and He hears them. But I can remember times when 3 or 4 of us college guys would be with him, and he would be weeping with his hands in the air, saying, "Oh God, pour out your Spirit." We need to be doing that. We need to be crying out to God. He'd always quote that verse where God says, "I will pour floods upon the dry ground. I'll pour out My Spirit." One night he was quoting that and crying out, he's saying,

"God, You said that You'd send the rain upon us. You'd send the floods upon us..." And then lightning and thunder started crashing all around us, and a deluge that you could hardly hear his prayers any more. And I just felt like God's just saying, "I'm listening to you. It's not going to happen yet, but I can hear you, I'm able to do this. I'm listening." He has been pleased to do this repeatedly down through church history. And, like I said, He doesn't do it just on a backslidden people, and He certainly doesn't do it on a worthy people, but He does do it on His people - a dependent, needy people. Not because we're worthy of it, but because He's good. Amen. That's all I have.