

# (Revival) Revival Presupposes Declension - Part 2

by Michael L. Brown

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*Michael L. Brown's sermon discusses the necessity of recognizing God's holiness and fear for true revival to occur in the church.*

**Duration:** 26:48

**Scripture:** Exodus 19:17-18, Isaiah 26:9, Malachi 3:14, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 12:21

**Topics:** "Spiritual Decline", "Revival Needed"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the three steps that lead to the decline of the people of God. The first step is when the acts of God become only a memory, leading to skepticism, hardened belief, and a cheapening of faith. The second step is when the fear of God disappears, resulting in spiritual and moral decline, where the people of God become like the world. Finally, the third step is when the people of God become enslaved to the world. The speaker emphasizes the need for revival and urges listeners to be realistic and prioritize their time and focus on God.

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## Transcript

What happens now when the acts of God become only a memory? Fear of Him disappears. Fear of Him disappears from our society. If there's one thing that's lacking in the body, and there is one thing, there are many things, but if there's one thing pronounced that's lacking, and something we'll talk about over and over, is the lack of fear of God.

The lack of a recognition of the awesome holiness and reality of God. When I talked about major characteristics of revival, I had said that one quality was its overwhelming revelation of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man. You could say, man, we don't have it.

Why? Because we've heard about what God's done, but His in-breaking power hasn't been there. Now let me say this. I have gotten testimonies from people of miraculous healings that I've personally prayed for, and I use myself as an example because there is not some extraordinarily powerful gift of healing that God's anointed me with.

And yet, I could tell you of a woman who prayed for with a cancerous tumor in her stomach, and prayed for, felt something jump on the inside, went for surgery, and the thing had disappeared. I could tell you

about someone with a severe and curable disease for 20 odd years, and prayed for, and delivered, goes to the hospital, the thing's fine. And someone healed of this, and someone healed of this, and someone delivered of this, and someone delivered of that.

And a lot of supernatural prophetic experiences and words. I'm not downplaying or downgrading what God did. I believe if I talked about the things that I've seen in the last five years, and talked about one after another, after another, after another, because it has been real workings of the Spirit that we can almost get drunk in the reality of what He's done.

Having said that, it's still 100% proper to say that Bible days are not here again. And because of that, the biblical fear of God isn't here with us. Recently I heard someone's teaching that God is going to use Jewish believers in particular to emphasize the holiness of God.

I'll have more to say about that later. And it would certainly be in keeping with God using the weak things of the world to confound the strong, and the foolish to confound the wise. And I say that only because in terms of Jewish believers worldwide, well, basically we're a very small remnant, and more the child than the father so far.

But anyway, the point is, and I say that as a Jewish believer, not pointing a finger, but as someone right in the midst of this who's sunken my life into it. But why would it be that God would use Jewish believers to restore an aspect of the holiness of God, and with that, the fear of God to the body? Well, because one thing we do that a lot of other people don't do is take the whole Bible seriously. And we really have our beginnings as a nation hearing from God, as a people hearing from God, standing by Mount Sinai with the whole mountain on fire and shaking.

According to one tradition in the Talmud, or in some of the early rabbinic literature, it says that what happened was that God lifted up Mount Sinai and hung it over the people's heads and said, Will you listen? Will you do what I say? If everything you say, we'll do it, we'll obey. You got a deal. And then you get over to Hebrews, written again to Jewish believers, and what does it say in the end of the 12th chapter? Hey, that was nothing.

That was nothing. What do you think is going to happen if we refuse to hear from heaven? Well, you see, there's that experience of God's reality, and if we have it in an ongoing way in our own lives, experience His awesome power and His might and His majesty, then based on that, we can convey that holiness to others. But if it's just a story, if it's just part of our religious tradition, if the movings of God and the workings of God are just part of our past religious background or tradition or the stories we've been told, then all fear of God disappears.

Turn over to Ezekiel, the 8th chapter. As you're turning there, let me emphasize that when the fear of God disappears, I don't care how much you say you love the Lord, I don't care how much you say that the people in your congregation are committed to the Lord, I don't care how much you say Yeshua is Lord of my life, when the fear of God disappears, spiritual and moral decline set in. People do not live right.

It would be wonderful that I could say that when there's no fear of God in the hearts of believers, they still live just as holy lives because they love Him. But the fact is, if there was not a penalty for sin, the fact is, if there was not the potential of a hell, the fact is that if we didn't know that we could destroy our lives forever by messing up, we would not live the holy lives that we're called to. Unless there is that ongoing supernatural experience of God, in which case, we will fear Him.

Remember when the angels of God surround God in heaven. According to Isaiah 6, according to the book of Revelation, they don't say, love, love, love, love. Or loving and kind and merciful and compassionate.

They say, well, God is love. Well, there are a number of things the Bible says God is. Not just love.

The fact is though, what do they cry out? Holy, holy, holy. They're around Him continually. I don't believe God made them like that and programmed it into them and they're just like tape recorders and they keep saying it.

I believe every time they look at Him, all they can say is, holy, holy, He's a holy God. Oh my, He's a holy God. Remember when Isaiah saw the Lord, he was overwhelmed by God's holiness.

Without God speaking to him, he was overwhelmed by the holiness of God. Just by seeing Him. Do you understand how holy He is? No, none of us do.

I don't, you don't. But when He comes and reveals Himself, as Finney said, God is one pent-up revival. Then you see Him as a holy God and it changes your life.

So when fear of God disappears, then moral and spiritual decline set in. Ezekiel 8. God shows the prophet in a vision. Verse 12.

Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the darkness? Each at the shrine of his own idol. They say, the Lord does not see us. The Lord has forsaken the land.

Again, he said, you will see them doing things that are even more detestable. Why were they doing it? Because they said the Lord doesn't see us and the Lord has forsaken the land. Why did they say it? Just move down a few more books to Malachi.

In your English Bibles, it's the last book of the Hebrew Scriptures. Malachi, chapter 3. How could someone say the Lord doesn't see us? How could someone say the Lord's forsaken the land? Because they did whatever in the world they wanted to do and nothing happened to them. November 12th of 1971, when I prayed and asked Jesus into my heart, I had a problem.

Because I just did it to make my friends and the people in this little Italian Pentecostal church happy and I didn't believe it myself. And as I went up and prayed, God opened my heart and I believed that he was for real, that this was true. Now I had a problem.

I believed that it was true, but I wasn't willing to repent. Being Jewish, I never believed it, never even considered the possibility of it. Now, something happened, I knew it was true, but I wasn't willing to repent yet.

Now, haven't you been in situations where over and over and over again, you know what's right, you know what you should do, you know what God wants you to do, but you don't care about what He says enough to stop you from doing the wrong thing. I mean, we all know. You may know, for example, in disciplining the flesh in a certain area, you know that God has spoken to you to do it.

And you can say, Lord, I know what you want, but right now, I'd rather have that pie. Or right now, I'd rather watch this show. Or right now, I'd rather not pray, I'd rather go to sleep.

Now, we may not even vocalize it, sometimes we may. That's the state I was in as a brand new believer. And I had just started doing cocaine at that point, and I said, Lord, you know when I go home I'm going to do it.

You know it. I'm not willing to repent yet. The whole thing was just brand new to me.

I'm not excusing it, but it was just brand new. And I said, if you don't want me to do it, when I get home and shoot a spoon of cocaine, don't let it have any effect on me. And I went home and shot it, and nothing happened.

Well, that makes you think. Even as an idiotic sixteen and a half year old kid, that makes you think, that makes you wonder, that makes you know something is up here. Well, what's the deal? The deal is that God began to deal with me and break in and began to show me, by His power, little by little, just began to show me His reality.

And then all that stuff, December 17th of 71, when I really experienced His love, I said, that's it, never again, I won't touch it, it won't happen. Well, when you say, hey, He doesn't see. I shot that thing and nothing happened.

I did this and nothing happened. There was no consequence to my sin. I guess God doesn't see, or I guess He doesn't care.

I mean, listen. Nancy and I went into a particular monastery of a particular religious group in the land of Israel. She saw the men in their particular religious outfits.

It was a so-called Christian denomination. She saw the men in their particular religious outfits and called them little demons. No, no, no, no, no.

These are very holy men. These are men separated. These are men consecrated.

These are men set aside. These are men who devote their whole lives to the faith, to religion. I came out and I said to Ari Sorkaron, who was with us, I said, man, I said, unless I don't know God, 90% of those guys are gay.

Well, I know God, put it that way, okay? In other words, they got a problem in there. Well, that's just the way things are done. You know, it's just the... What would happen if the first time somebody fell into homosexuality, a lightning bolt came in through the window and killed them? Killed one, left the other alive to go tell everybody that God was really there.

Do you think things would be different? Now, I'm going to give you a verse to that effect in a minute. But when nothing happens, when people sin, there's no fear of God. All the stories we heard, they're just nice religious truths.

They're creedal things. They're things to raise our children up. There's no reality to it.

It changed my life. No fear of God. Moral, spiritual decline.

Malachi, the third chapter, beginning in verse 13. You have said harsh things against me, says the Lord. And this book is in particular directed to the priests and Levites who are supposed to be those that taught the children of Israel to distinguish between the holy and the unholy and the clean and the unclean.

Who are supposed to be set apart to the Lord's service. And Malachi himself was probably a Levite or a priest. Probably.

Can't say for sure. But based on the book and his message, it would make sense. You have said harsh things against me, says the Lord.

Yet you ask, what have we said against you? You have said it is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the Lord Almighty? What good did it do us? We fasted. We prayed.

We went through the Scriptures. We performed the religious rites just the way he told us. You can't sacrifice this animal.

It's got a little blemish on the nose. I didn't write the book. He did.

Sorry. You can't take the meat from there. That meat's got to go on.

But I'm hungry. No, that meat goes all the way up in the offering. What good did it do us to deny ourselves? Where is the blessing? What good? I mean, look at us.

Look at us here back in the land. I mean, we're nobodies. We're nothing.

What good is it doing us? But now we call the arrogant blessed. See, there's the total turnaround. The total cynicism enters in.

And that's why liberal religious people are your worst enemies. You have some man on the street, some guy on the street who's a hardened sinner. And that person will give you less problems than some liberal religious leader.

Because they've absolutely turned the whole thing around. And you'll find out many of them at one time in their lives either had an experience with the Lord or were raised in a strict fundamentalist type of environment where it was all teaching, teaching, precept upon precept, live like this, do this, all in outward religious form with no experience of God. They threw the whole thing off and went to the exact opposite extreme and became cynical and said, now we call the arrogant blessed.

Now we enjoy our lesbian choirs. Now we enjoy our gay services. Now we enjoy fighting for abortion and burning the flag and whatever else as anti-patriotic and anti-moral and anti-God.

Certainly the evildoers prosper. And even those who challenge God escape. What line? You tell me the Word of God isn't relevant.

The people of God, when the fear of God disappears, the people of God become just like the world even though they claim to be religious. This one rabbi that I dealt with for years after a number of years said to me, Mike, I found out something from you. He said, I understand now that not everyone who calls himself a Christian is a Christian.

And when some of our students from Christ for the Nations went over to visit him, the dean of students on Long Island called me and said, Mike, do you know any rabbis in the area that we could bring our students to? We've got a comparative religion class. We brought them to a Buddhist temple in the city. We brought them to speak with Muslims and Hindus.

And we want to bring them to a synagogue and get a tour and interact with someone. Do you know anybody? And I said, well, call this friend of mine. He's a good guy and I'm sure he's willing to accommodate you.

And the students that went said, man, he understood the Gospel. I mean, he could explain it better than most because he saw. And when I spoke in his congregation, he invited me years ago to debate him publicly.

He was teaching on Jewish believers in Jesus. He invited some local pastor and he blew the guy out of the water. And he said, Mike, could you come? He said, you could do a much better job than any of them to defend where you're coming from.

He said, I want to give them, you know, a good articulate presentation. So we went back and forth each week. In the final week, he said to me, Mike, he said, feel free and missionize.

This is congregation. He said, Mike, feel free and missionize. He said, I have far more respect for you than any of those people.

Because even though he disagreed with me, he knew that I had laid down my life as much as I understood at that point in time to follow God. And one night, when we were in the middle of our debate, the microphone started beaming in the bingo next door. And then I pulled up.

I said, man, what a turnout. This is incredible. I mean, he had 1,300 families in his congregation.

It was some huge number. You know, if they all came, the place would be absolutely overflowing. Maybe he could fit 1,500 people total in there.

But you know, he had all these people just come to high holidays and special times of the year just on the rolls so they could have the religious rites for their kids. And I pull up one night. Wow, what a crowd.

This is incredible. He said, it was the bingo? No, it wasn't the bingo. It was ladies aerobics.

He said, Mike, feel free to missionize. I have far more respect for you than these people. This religion, it's nothing.

It's nothing. We call the arrogant blessed, and surely the evildoers will prosper. But look at what it says over in Isaiah, the 26th chapter.

Isaiah chapter 26, verse 9. Frank Bartleman, in his book, Another Wave of Revival, applies this verse to when in San Francisco, after much preaching and mourning, there was a tremendous earthquake at the beginning of the century. Hundreds of people were killed in it. And what happened was within a few days, he distributed, or a few weeks, 75,000 tracts at his own expense somehow distributed them throughout San Francisco and went into taverns and just preached and all this other stuff.

And he said, thereafter, there was a rage of preaching to try and prove that God was not in earthquake. He said everybody, the sinners on the street, knew in their hearts that it was a judgment of God. And they were being told to wake up.

And then all these pulpits start flaming all over the place. No, no, no. God doesn't do this.

Nothing to fear. Nothing to fear. So look at Isaiah 26, verse 9. My soul yearns for you in the night, in the morning my spirit longs for you.

And now the second half of the verse. For when your judgments are in the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness. When your judgments are in the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness.

You know, there can be a lot of rhetoric, a lot of talk that sounds very big. A lot of pro-communist type of talk among certain leaders in our government. And I'm not saying that capitalism is right and the United States is right and that this is God's ordained way.

I'm not making black and white distinctions like that. But you can hear a lot of rhetoric about all this stuff. One fellow who had been in Vietnam and is basically the equivalent of a Green Beret said, I wonder what all these flaming liberals will think when the communists come and invade their home and take their possession and kill their wives.

He said, you know, when people are starving to death, all the talk in the world doesn't mean anything. It doesn't do any good. And he was talking about Libya and all this other stuff.

This is before we had bombed Libya. And again, I'm not justifying warfare or saying this is right or that's right. Just hear my point, okay? In case you disagree with me on any of these minor things, hear the overall point.

He said, man, all their talk and all their threats. He said, just go into their own country and bomb them there. Hurt them where they live and they'll shut up.

Do you know when the Iranians finally started talking peace with Iraq? Is when that jetliner with all the innocent people or innocent in terms of they had not done anything provocative themselves. The Iranians were shot down by mistake by the USS warship. That's when they all of a sudden started to talk peace because the thing hit them where they lived.

When they started bringing caskets back into Russia from Afghanistan, the Russian people with all their idealism wanted to get out of the nation. When it's your son or your daughter or your husband that was just killed, you start taking action and acting differently. So all the talk, all the hardness, all the garbage, all the junk of all the people all over the place, when the judgment of God begins to fall, they change their tune.

You know you're in trouble when the judgments of God come and people instead of repenting begin to blaspheme. You want to see a hardened heart. Certain people in the homosexual community have gotten hardened enough that when judgments come, whether it's simply the fruit of their own sin, that's a judgment.

God doesn't have to do anything. You reap what you sow. You drink like an alcoholic day and night.

You get cirrhosis of the liver. That's a judgment. God didn't do anything.

Another form of judgment is when you get out from under the protection of God because of your sin and the devil gets you. Again, God didn't do anything. You walked out of His covering.

That's another form of judgment. But there's a third form of judgment which is when you get out of God's will and you defy Him to His face and He Himself strikes you down. And if you don't believe in a God like that, you don't believe in the God of the Bible.

So when His judgments are in the earth, He doesn't know striking down and smiting His obedient children. Of course not. Satan attacks and kills and maims the innocent.

God only judges the guilty. But if you don't believe in a God who judges the guilty that refused forgiveness and refused His grace, then like I said, you don't believe in this God of the Bible. When the judgments of God start to fall, a lot of big talkers get on their knees and ask God for mercy and pray.

And come running to you and say, help me, I don't know what to do. Well, first thing, the acts of God become only a memory. Second thing, fear of Him disappears, producing spiritual and moral decline.

And then thirdly, the people of God become enslaved to the world. That's the state that we're in today. Not just one, but point one has led to point two and point two has led to point three.

That the people of God have become enslaved to the world. There's a consistent pattern with the children of Israel. The clearest example is when they came into the promised land.

God said, destroy the Canaanites. Kill them, slaughter them, butcher them. Don't let them live.

Israel did not fully do it. Why? A couple of reasons. One, they didn't take God seriously.

And two, they didn't see the sinfulness of the Canaanites. So they didn't destroy them totally, which led to the next step, which was that the Canaanites then remained as thorns in their sides. You know, God decisively says, get rid of this thing in your life.

So you rationalize it, you cut back, but you don't get rid of it. Okay? You know, let's say you keep falling into alcoholism. He says, get all wine and beer and hard liquor out of your house.

And you say, all right, look, I'm going to stop having it with meals, except for maybe just once a week, you know, on Sabbath dinner or something and no hard liquor. And then one day you get really discouraged and you drink four bottles of wine, you get drunk, and now things like this thorn in your side. It weakens you.

It condemns you. It hurts you. Well, you know what happens after a while, though? If you don't act on it quickly enough, then the next step comes in.

First, you don't totally exterminate. Second thing, those that remain are like thorns in your side. Third thing now comes, well, you know, they're not really so bad after a while.

What's so bad about getting drunk every so often? You start to befriend the enemy. You start to intermarry with the Canaanites. You know, really, God told me to get rid of my television.

What I did is I just stopped watching all the real garbage and only the shows that don't offend me too much I still watch. And, you know, that I feel God's really offended. Look, most people in the world, I mean, this is like child's play for them.

That's because they've become so polluted. You know? Their standards have gone lower. We've dropped with them.

So, you know, what used to be, you know, wouldn't nearly get to a theater under any circumstances is now PG. Or even G. I brought home a G-rated video that I'd seen as a kid and asked, she said, was that really

G? I said, yeah. She said, I don't believe it.

And my standards are not what God's standards are. His are much higher. Much higher.

Well, anyway, you know, it's really not so bad. I didn't get rid of that television yet. You know, I stumbled a few times.

Yeah, I watched that late night show that had a lot of, you know, immorality in it and all these other things. You know, I used to feel terrible about it, but I'm going too far. I'm really going too far.

I mean, it's not so bad. Look, God still loves me. His Spirit's still here with me.

It's not so bad. And you start to intermarry with the Canaanites. And the next thing, you wake up and find out that they are your masters.

Like one man said about smoking cigarettes, you know, he held a cigarette out and he said, little master, and pointed to the human being, big slave. You become enslaved to the world. Enslaved to the world.

When I asked the Lord some months ago what was the number one pollutant in the lives of believers, He instantly said to me, television. And when I said to Nancy, what do you think the Lord said to me? She instantly said, television. So I'm real honest with people.

Maybe you're much stronger in the Lord than I am. Maybe you're much more devoted to God than I am. Maybe you have a much greater ability to walk in holiness than I do.

Maybe that's why you can have a television than I can't. I don't judge you. But all I know is, I know very few believers.

In fact, I don't know any that I can say guaranteed sure have it in their home that are not polluted by. But I couldn't live without it. Then, by all means, go home tonight, get to the highest bridge you can find, look both ways, make sure there's nothing passing in the water and throw it over for good.

If somebody is a gift, keep it quiet. Get rid of it anyway. I once gave away a television and got two given back in return.

One pastor said, Mike, that was certainly not casting your bread on the water. No, it wasn't. I mean, there are ways around.

You see, there's some good videos. You can get a screen. You can just get a screen, by the way.

You say, why am I saying this? Because I'm not just dealing with revival and the history of revival and future revival and potential revival. I'm dealing with where we live today and the Lord just laid it on my heart when something like this comes up, just to go with the Spirit and speak the truth in love. I'm not judging you and you don't have to give account to me and I will not come to your house and look, if you invite me over for dinner, don't hide the thing with a sheet.

So the first thing you walk in, what in the world is that sheet doing, you know, hung by a nail in the middle of your wall there? What's the most conspicuous, what's behind that sheet? I wouldn't judge you if you had the thing. Maybe it doesn't work. Maybe you've never fallen with it.

I don't judge you. Okay? All I'm saying is, let's grow up and be realistic. Let's ask the question, how many of us really have that much time to waste in front of that thing anyhow? I mean, if that's the number one pollutant in God's spoken to me to help try and clean us up, to clean me up and to share with you things that will help clean us up, I might as well speak the truth and deliver my soul.

Amen? Plus, if you're listening to this on tape, you already bought the tape and if you're sitting here in class, you already paid for the classroom, I'll see you next week. Amen? But just to recap this, what I said, revival presupposes declension. I gave you three steps.

One, the acts of God become only a memory, producing skepticism, hardened belief, rationalistic doctrine in mere religious form or else a cheapening of the real thing. And then second, fear of God disappears, producing spiritual and moral decline. The people of God become like the world.

And then thirdly, the people of God become enslaved to the world. And I'd say all of us with eyes to see have to know and understand that is the exact state today of the American body. Therefore, we can gladly say, God, we is ripe for one large revival.

So when we take up again, we're going to discuss when can a revival be expected? When can a revival be expected? God bless you.

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