

# (A Divine Visitation) Man's Great Hope - Part 2

by Richard Owen Roberts

---

*A divine visitation brings refocusing, holiness, and a focus on the Holy Spirit, leading to fresh love and devotion to work.*

**Duration:** 33:50

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 7:11

**Topics:** "Divine Visitation", "Personal Holiness"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for divine visitations in the church and in our lives. He highlights the importance of holiness and the urgency to pursue a life of purity. The speaker also addresses the issue of sin and the need to have zero tolerance for it. He emphasizes the refocusing that occurs when God's truth shines upon us, bringing clarity and helping us distinguish between what is merely a fruit and what is at the root of the issue.

---

## Transcript

All of you are aware, I trust, that the scriptures are rich in teaching on the subject of revival. In one of my earlier writings, a little pamphlet called the Solemn Assembly, which has been perhaps more widely circulated than most of the things I've written, most of what I've written. Even if 10,000 copies are distributed, we almost feel as if a miracle has occurred.

Whereas some piece of absolute religious rubbish will sell 5 million copies. But you kind of have to adjust to that. These are the days in which we live.

But in that Solemn Assembly pamphlet, as it first appeared, I gave a list of 12 of the revivals that appear in the Old Testament. You know, it's really lovely and refreshing for me from time to time to review these incredible seasons of visitation. I was thinking earlier this morning about that visit at the time of the golden calf and that grievous wickedness on the part of error.

And yet God chose them to visit Moses and the people. One might focus upon that lovely passage in 1 Samuel, and particularly chapter 7, where the Lord chose another one of these incredibly beautiful seasons of visitation. Or I was thinking this afternoon of that passage in 2 Samuel 6, where David, in all of his energy and enthusiasm and determination to bring the ark of the Lord back to its rightful place, sinned wickedly in asking the Philistines how to conduct the work of the Lord instead of consulting the divine revelation.

And how God had to strike that young boy dead who accompanied the ark and reached out to steady it when indeed it hit the rough places in the road. But David came to repentance, to the realization that indeed he was the guilty party, that it was his good fortune because of the providence of God that he was spared and the young fellow brought down. And so he called together the priest and the elders and said, we didn't do it right, and now we must do it right.

And God came in a wondrous visit. And oh, what a season of blessing it was for them. I often preach upon that gracious revival recorded in 1 Chronicles 14 to 16.

Under Asa and his miserable ending. Or the revival under Jehoshaphat. The revival under Jehoiada.

The revival under Hezekiah. The revival under Josiah. The revival under Ezra.

The revival under Zerubbabel. The revival under Nehemiah. The revival under... Oh, what a host of blessed passages that bring this subject of God's divine visitations to the fore.

But let me take now the last portion of my time. And I'm not really paying any close attention to it. And if you are, that's well and good.

But I want to speak about seven things that are bound to be affected when God visits. The horn of salvation. The sunrise from on high.

Will surely touch these seven areas. Which desperately need touching right now in our lives and in our society. The first thing I would mention is in every divine visit, there is a refocusing that instantly occurs.

Things are out of focus. Not only in the church at large, but in the lives even of some here. We get confused as to what are the real issues.

I often address audiences on learning to distinguish between what is merely a fruit and what is at its very root. And often we get all riled up and we fuss mightily over a matter that is incidental. And we have failed to lay hold of the root of the issue.

But when the sunrise from on high brings the light of truth to bear, upon our situation, things come into focus. Years ago I thought I ought to write a book on evangelical Phariseeism. And I made some good beginnings, but then came to realize I wasn't ready for it and laid it aside.

But periodically the issue of the Pharisees comes to my mind and heart. I'm thinking of them right now. They had everything out of focus.

They concerned themselves with the material. They concerned themselves with personalities. They concerned themselves with inconsequential issues.

They seemed to find it impossible to focus on the things that God himself focused upon. The church is pouring countless hours of energy and multiplied billions of dollars into things that simply don't matter. And oh, for a visit from on high where everything comes into focus.

And all of us ought even now to ask with integrity of our own hearts, am I in focus? Are the things that are upon God's heart on my heart? Are the messages that I deliver the very word of God? Am I speaking from His heart through my heart to your heart? Or am I just simply reviewing matters of interest that might possibly have some significance? In a series of meetings in upper New York State with the Adirondack

Association of Southern Baptists last fall, I felt very clearly to give a series on the man of God, the man of God's own choosing. And I felt greatly interested and burdened about the book of Malachi. And spent a great many hours poring over and praying over that book.

But I think the thing that laid hold of me the greatest was the issue of the burden of the Lord of which Malachi speaks. I'm asking you now, not only are things in focus, but are you under the burden of the Lord? Or is the burden you spout about your own burden? It is certainly possible for any of us or all of us to miss the burden of the Lord. And oh, how intense we must be in our study of Scripture to draw near to the heart of God so that indeed what burdens Him is what burdens us and what powerfully impacts the church focus.

That's the first issue. The second issue that I would say that is always incredibly affected by a divine visitation is the issue of holiness. I cannot understand how we have managed to divorce holiness of life from imputed righteousness.

How does one have the righteousness of Christ credited to their account and yet live without any regard for holiness? How can it be that nominalism is now called Christianity and Christianity, which is holiness unto the Lord, is regarded as fanaticism? What a ridiculous age in which we live and in which so many are participating. Oh, for a divine visitation that brings the issue of holiness into focus in our lives so that indeed we truly believe, Be ye holy as I am holy. Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

At the present time, on the Sundays when Maggie and I are in our home in Wheaton, Illinois, I'm preaching at the First Baptist Church in St. Charles, Illinois. I've been doing so sort of just as a supply preacher since last August. I had a wonderful time.

I recently finished what for me was an absolutely marvelous series of 13 sermons on Romans chapter 8. Oh, what a delightful time I've had. But I'm there filling in because the pastor took a wrong turn and had to be removed. In one little association of churches numbering only about 30 or 32 churches, five pastors have gone down the tubes morally over the last two years.

How can we divorce holiness of life from imputed righteousness? I plead with you, take seriously the issue of holiness. And I remind you again, when God comes in one of these incredibly urgently needed and marvelous visitations, holiness rises immediately to the fore. Isn't it wonderful even to review those encounters of men in scriptures with the Holy God when they cry out, woe is me, I'm undone.

I'm a man of unclean lips and an impure heart. Depart from me, I'm unworthy. And oh, for another day when the horn of salvation will root the love of sin out of our hearts and the sunrise from on high will so shine upon us that every speck of dirt within us is brought into the light and our repentance takes on depths and urgency long needed and finally by the grace of God accomplished.

So focus, number one. Holiness, number two. Tolerance for sin, obviously connected, but let me treat it as a separate matter.

Tolerance for sin is affected when there is truly a divine visitation. And I speak of this in a particular vein. I mentioned to you a passage of which you have considerable familiarity, Psalm 51.

That incredible confession and prayer of David, but in particular the words of verse four. Against thee, thee only have I sinned and committed this great evil in thy sight. I fear that we become tolerant of sin because we fail to keep regularly in front of us the remembrance of whom our sin is against.

One might almost argue with David and say, David, how could you say against God, God only? You had sinned when you sinned against Bathsheba, when you sinned against your own family, when you sinned against her husband by arranging his murder, when you sinned against the nation over whom God placed you in rule. When, because your sin was sexual in its nature, you sinned against your own body. How can you say against thee, thee only I have sinned and done this evil in thy sight? He said it because he understood something we easily forget.

That the great evil of all sin consists in the fact that it is against God. When God seems far away, when it has been a long time since he visited, we can in our carelessness forget that all sin is against him. But when he visits, it becomes so clear that the great evil of all of our sin does truly consist in the fact that it is against God.

May I ask if you ever sat down with that statement and wrote out the ways in which your sin is against God? It would be a very profitable exercise for you. Let me just help with a starter point or two. All sin is against God's sovereignty.

He is the ruler, not you. All the rights are his, not yours. He is the one who has laid down the commandments.

He is the one who has stated what is acceptable and unacceptable conduct. When you sin, it's as if you shake your fist in God's face and say, I do as I please. You are not the sovereign God as far as I'm concerned.

And I'll only mention one more, though a long series might be set in front of you. All sin is against God's creation. In the recent series I mentioned, having finished a short time ago, we were dealing one week with that passage in Romans 8, where Paul makes it crystal clear that the sin of Adam affected the entire creation.

So that the whole of the creation is groaning and travailing together in pain, awaiting the redemption. Worth a sobering thought to realize that sin, on Adam's part, brought the whole of God's creative purposes to a standstill. And oh, to join with the trees and the rocks and the rivers and the mountains in a heart cry for a restoration of righteousness.

So that creation is again on track, and everything in all the universe is praising the Lord instead of defiling Him. All sin is against God. Take that to heart.

Let it affect you. I have simply stated that a visitation from God always affects deeply our tolerance of sin. Number four, a visitation is absolutely guaranteed to affect our view of repentance.

I find it almost impossible to believe what I see with my own eyes and hear with my own ears. I had accepted an engagement in the latter part of last year in a distant city. A church had contacted me and asked if I would come for a Friday evening and an all-day Saturday and then an all-day Sunday meeting, and I agreed.

And then long after the original plans were laid, they called and said some horrible mistake has occurred, and we've scheduled somebody else to speak on Sunday night. As well as you, and we find we can't get out of this other arrangement. And would you mind if we arranged a meeting in another church for Sunday night? No, I said, I'd be delighted.

I don't want to travel home on Sunday afternoon, make some arrangements. So I went to this church that I knew absolutely nothing about. I was greeted with tremendous warmth and enthusiasm by the pastor.

But when I announced my text, 2 Corinthians 7, verse 11, the seven marks of true repentance that Paul lists, this man dropped his head and turned beet red. As the sermon progressed, he got redder and redder. I was fearful he might actually blow a gasket.

And after the service, he totally disappeared. There were a large number of visitors there. He never greeted a one, he just disappeared.

But after a few moments standing there wondering, a large, impressive-looking fellow stepped up to me, introduced himself by name, and told me he was a policeman in that city, which made me wonder what might be coming. But then he said to me, I'm attending the local Bible college evenings. And he said, in our Bible college, we're being taught that repentance is only for covenant Israel.

I never heard of such a thing. I didn't think the fellow was lying. But I wondered if he knew what he was talking about.

And then it was revealed to me that the pastor was on the faculty at this Bible institute. No wonder he got red. But we live in a day that is simply incredible.

The numbers of those who call themselves Christians, who will not even use the word, repentance is flabbergasting. But when God draws near, now repentance becomes a very urgent issue. It isn't something that you make some silly doctrinal excuse and push aside.

It's something that you know you're going to have to do and do quickly, or you're in eternal trouble. And there is no escape. Oh, my dear brothers and sisters, I have preached hundreds of times upon repentance, indeed written the only book in modern times on the subject, without any visible impact.

But one day, the sunrise from on high will visit us. And then all the church of God will hasten to repent. And oh, that it might happen soon.

Number five. These divine visitations have incredible impact on our interest in, submission to, and delight under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. I get so tired of the arguments and the quibbling about the boasting of those who claim they're filled with the Holy Spirit and can't even speak the truth in a straight line.

But oh, for a day, when the words of John the Baptist become true in our lives as for me, I baptize in water for the remission of sins. But when he comes, he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. I listen to these mealy-mouthed preachers.

Some of them, you can scarce understand their words. You know, when you get old, there are two things that are almost certain to happen to you. Your eyes dim and your ears grow dull.

I strain myself almost in a headache trying to hear what these silly fellows say. What's wrong with raising your voice? What's wrong with passion? What's wrong with fire? What's wrong with enthusiasm? When he comes, he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. I believe the baptism in the Holy Spirit is truly a baptism of power.

And I believe the baptism in fire is a baptism of purity and passion. Someone mentioned in my presence earlier today that remarkable man of God, Armand Deswine, that fellow who was so mightily used of the

Holy Spirit in so many parts of the world. What a delight that fellow was.

He was with us in our home in Wheaton long ago and yet he was very aged at the time and he and I were walking downtown for some purpose and I had to run to keep up with this fellow. I tell you that just before his death he was meeting with his associates planning how they were going to take the world for Christ. Having just completed a marvelous ministry tour in one of the Scandinavian lands.

Passion. Passion. Have you got it? Oh, that the sunrise from on high might visit us and that every last person here might know power and purity and passion as the Holy Spirit does his great work in each of us.

I don't wonder the world looks with disgust upon the church that cannot seem even to arouse itself long enough to speak a word in such a way that people can't help but hear it. Number six, these divine visitations always lead to fresh love. In ministering to one of our fairly large parachurch organizations, a group of the young people on staff gathered around me and one of the girls, quite a timid girl, spoke up and she said, Mr. Roberts, I want to ask you a question.

Why is it when revival comes it seems the only thing the church wants to do is pray? And without really thinking of the consequence of my question I said to her, were you ever in love? I wasn't really probing, but that's the question that came out. She turned very red and embarrassed and then after a bit she held up her finger and showed me an engagement ring. Then I said, you answered your own question.

You know what happens when you're in love? You want to spend all the time you possibly can with the one you love. No sacrifice is too great. When Maggie and I met, I was an itinerant.

She was just finishing up her university degree. I didn't think anything of driving 1,200 miles to spend two hours with her before I rushed off to the next engagement. When one of these precious visits from on high occurs, there is love, a bathing in love.

Love for God. Love for one another. Love for a lost world.

And finally, number seven. When the sunrise from on high visits us, there is a devotion to work. Not the dead works that are so much part and parcel of the life of the church today, but that work which is truly anointed by the Holy Spirit and mindfully used.

The first book I ever wrote, I included a chapter on repentance from dead works. And many have said to me, I never even thought of the subject before. But there's a profound passage in Hebrews 6 about repentance from dead works.

It's listed as a foundation doctrine. Some silly people think maybe whoever wrote Hebrews got mixed up and meant to say repentance from sin, but ended up somehow with a twist of his pen to speak of dead works. No, indeed.

My friends, he meant to speak of dead works, and he did. Oh, the church is laden down with dead works. But oh, for a visitation from on high that gives life to all that we're doing.

And as reported in the session this morning, you trace the history of these mighty visits of God, and almost every important reformation and change that has occurred in our society came about as a result of a divine visitation. Men and women come into focus with God. They see that sin is against Him.

Their repentance takes on new meaning and significance. They fall in love with holiness. They devote their time, their energy, their awe.

And right now, we need a visit of the horn of salvation and the sunrise from on high. We know we need it, but do we know that we need it so badly that nothing else really matters, that we lay aside all the extraneous and the inconsequential? Oh, that we might reach that point where we cannot live without the immediate presence of the horn of salvation and the sunrise from on high. We honestly believe, Father, that in addition to our desperate need, in addition to our holy longings, the greatest incentive that we could possibly raise before you in request of a divine invitation, a divine visitation, is the glory that belongs to you and will be rendered when you're in our midst.

Grant, O God, that we shall live to see and to experience and to walk in the midst of your presence in the church. To the glory of King Jesus. Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/13/SID13793.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-owen-roberts/a-divine-visitation-mans-great-hope-part-2/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**