

# Spiritual Awakening

by Richard Siple

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*Spiritual awakening is the restoration of God's people to biblical standards of experience and practice, and the conversion of the ungodly in such numbers as to affect society.*

**Duration:** 54:39

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:17, Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:16-21

**Topics:** "Spiritual Awakening"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of staying true to the teachings of Christ and not being led astray by false teachings. He warns against welcoming those who do not bring the true teaching of Christ into our homes. The speaker also highlights the urgency of the current time for spreading the gospel and reaping the harvest of souls. He mentions the proliferation of evil in the world and the need for forces of good to rise up and carry the sentiment of the day. The sermon concludes with examples of individuals who have been transformed by the gospel and are spreading it in places like China and Romania.

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## Transcript

But when it comes to this area of spiritual awakening and revival and God pouring out his Spirit upon us, it's going to be very important what we believe. And I believe that one of the greatest problems in this area over the years has been what people believed in regard to revival or spiritual awakening. And I'm not going to be too careful how I use those terms right now.

Later they'll be defined a little more clearly. I think many times we take revival to mean the church coming back to life, and we take spiritual awakening to mean what God does in the world as he brings thousands of people to himself. But those terms have been used so differently that I'm not going to quibble about those terms.

The big issue this morning is whether revival is possible and whether it's to be expected. And so I want to begin talking about this whole matter of believing in spiritual awakening and what that means. A few years ago, Dr. Kaiser and I were speaking here at the school.

I think maybe it was the fall conference. I'm not sure which conference it was. And at that time he told me that he was writing this book, Quest for Revival.

It's worth your reading. I was fascinated to see what he had to say right in the introduction, and I'm just going to read the first paragraph because it helps to launch what we're talking about this morning. Here it is.

When in the course of human events there lies such a heavy sense of injustice and despair over the proliferation of evil and the failure of any forces for good or righteousness to carry the sentiment of the day, there remains only one answer--revival. This has been the experience of men and women throughout history as the biblical record testifies. And what you have in the book are ten Bible revivals.

And of course, this is the great Bible expositor, and he does a superb job of that. But I'm going to read that paragraph to you once more because it certainly is a picture of our day. When in the course of human events there lies such a heavy sense of injustice and despair over the proliferation of evil--are we living in a day of proliferation of evil? I mean, I don't need to say it, do I? And are we living in a day when we even despair over it because it's not getting better, it's getting worse, and it's increasing everywhere we turn? And when there is a failure of any forces for good or righteousness to carry the sentiment of the day--that is, the sentiment of the day is evil, not good.

The forces of good are not carrying the day. They're not influencing the common mind. And that's true.

And I can remember when down in the United States, you know, so many thousands of people were so hep about reform. We were going to have reform. We were going to reform the United States, change it, you know.

We had the moral majority, and we had all kinds of reform movements, and we had blocks of people who boycotted certain goods, and we're going to reform the United States and bring it back to where it was. It hasn't worked, has it? It hasn't worked. And it isn't going to.

It never has worked that way. It never will work that way. I'm not against that.

That's fine. And Christians should stand against evil and stand for righteousness. It's just that it isn't going to work as far as turning around our Western world and changing the evil day in which we live.

There remains only one answer--revival. This has been the experience of men and women throughout history, as the biblical record testifies. I'd like to have you open your Bibles this morning to a very important passage of Scripture and John 4. Please open your Bibles to John 4, verses 34 to 38.

I'm going to give you a definition, my own definition, for what I'll be saying today, a definition of spiritual awakening, but I'm combining the two things. So here's the definition. You may want to write it down.

Revival and or spiritual awakening, and I'm including both, is the restoration of God's people to biblical standards of experience and practice. That's the first part of it. Revival is the restoration of God's people to biblical standards of experience and practice.

And, here's the second half, and the conversion of the ungodly in such numbers as to affect the society of which both are a part. Let me give you that second part again. And the conversion of the ungodly in such numbers as to affect the society of which both are a part.

Such numbers really goes with both statements. The restoration of God's people in such numbers, and the conversion of the ungodly in such numbers as to affect the society of which both are a part. Now,

everything that we experience in the Christian life begins with what we believe, begins with truth, with biblical truth, or what we believe is biblical truth, or what we're convinced is biblical truth.

And how we live and what we experience and what God does with our lives is always based on biblical truth, so we have to always begin with what we believe. First comes the truth, then we believe it, then we do it, then we feel it. And that's the order.

Truth, belief, action, and then feeling, then experience. And so in this whole area of spiritual awakening, what we believe is extremely important. And I think one of the reasons that my own heart has been so stirred about revival and about spiritual awakening for so many years is because very early on in my life as a young pastor, God convinced me thoroughly that revival was the order that he wanted and that we could have it.

And I was convinced that it was biblical. I was convinced that it was Bible truth. I was convinced that it ought to happen and could happen in my day, and I wanted to see it happen in my day.

And I have never gotten over that. I hope I never do get over it, and I hope God keeps me living just long enough that I'll be in the middle of it, because it's coming. I believe the spiritual awakening is coming.

And I believe it not because I'm emotional or not because I'm excitable or not because I'm one of those kind of people, you know, but I believe it because over a period of years, the word of God that has convinced me has convinced me deeper and deeper and deeper. And then all my personal experience as I have believed that word and have entered into it has convinced me more and more. But my faith is not based on my experience, but on what I believe from God's word.

And so I want to begin with some words of Jesus this morning from John 4, 34 to 38. Jesus had been talking to the woman at the well, and she was a very unlikely convert, but he had gotten through to her, and she had responded in faith. And the disciples came back amazed that he was talking to a woman at all, and amazed that he was talking to a Samaritan woman especially, because he was a Jew.

She was amazed, too, as far as that goes. And so as they wondered about that, Jesus said, and then they asked if he had anything to eat, because they had gone into town to get something to eat. And then Jesus said, My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

And I don't believe his work is finished yet. I believe there's more to be done. And do you not say, four months more and then harvest? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields.

They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages. Even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.

That's the saying, one sows and another reaps, is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.

Now, I think that the tendency in regard to revival is to always put it at another time than ours, at another day. Jesus said, don't you say, four months and then comes the harvest? But he said, what I want you to know is that the fields are ripe right now for harvest and even now they're getting wages. Even now they're having a harvest.

Even now it's beginning to happen. And see, we read history and of course we believe what it says. I hope we believe what it says in history.

Do you really believe that there have been great world-shaking revivals that have saved hundreds of thousands, even millions of people and changed all the face of society? Do you really believe that has happened? Do you believe it? Great. Oh boy, now here comes the question. Do you believe that it's going to happen again? But you see, there are a lot of people that don't.

I mean, not really. They even think they have biblical reasons for believing it's not going to happen. Are you listening? See now, that's why I introduced myself the way I did this morning, because I know I'm going to step in some areas before I'm done here that are biblical, that might make you a little uncomfortable, some of you, but that won't hurt you, will it? And you're strong Christians.

If I say something that isn't true, just don't believe it. No problem. I mean, I'm not speaking to a bunch of brand new Christians, so don't worry about it.

And if I misinterpret the scriptures, just ignore me and just say, well, he, you know, he can't help it or whatever. But listen to what I have to say, because Jesus here is very concerned about these men because they've been running around. They went into town to get food and they're all concerned about the difference between Jews and Samaritans and what one person believes in another.

And they are not interested in lost souls and they don't think you can win Samaritans to Christ. I mean, the Samaritans are people that you just can't reach. You know, people have said, well, I live in an area where there are all Roman Catholics and you just can't reach them.

Or, you know, I live in an area where there are all this or that. And I mean, if you were where I was, you couldn't win souls either. And so, you know, we tend to say, no, it can't happen now or it can't happen here or it's impossible for this situation.

And Jesus said, I want you to know that you can have a harvest now. Right now, right where you are. And not four months from now.

It isn't just that God is blessed in the past and that God is maybe going to bless in the future sometime way out there. Hope it's after I stop pastoring. Or is he going to bless now? Does he want to move in on our society now? Does he want to change the whole face of Canada and the United States and the Western world now with a great spiritual awakening like none of us have ever seen because we have never been in it? We're all too young.

Isn't that wonderful? I mean, none of us have lived long enough to have been in these great revivals. And so we tend to doubt whether it can come or not. But he says, even now, even now, and even now it is happening.

Even now in South America, there are people being saved faster than they're being born. You realize that? Oh, man, I've been in some of the cities of South America where I walk into a church that seats 2,000 people and that church is packed every Sunday morning and they're disappointed if they don't have 30, 40, 50 conversions every single service. Those churches, if people are not saved in every service, they sit there and when the service is dismissed, they won't leave.

They sit there and weep and cry and pray and ask God why nobody was saved in this service. I mean, 2,000 people. And when they have baptismal services, they have two baptismal tanks and they baptize a hundred people in a baptismal service.

I mean, we just had one this Sunday where we baptized people in the morning and then we baptized some more people at night because you can't do it all at one time. But my goodness, a hundred people and they do that every time they have a baptismal service and then you can just go down the street to another church and you run into the very same thing. A church that seats 1,000 people and it's full three times on Sunday morning and it's packed on Sunday night and it's a totally different crowd on Sunday night.

They don't come back on Sunday night because there isn't room. You come either Sunday morning or Sunday night. So the unsaved can get in the building.

I mean, God is moving. God is working. There are people that are coming to Christ.

These aren't just some kind of halfway conversions. These are powerful conversions. It isn't just happening in the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

It's happening in all kinds of denominations in South America. There's a harvest time. I mean, even now the harvest is being reaped.

Even now men are earning their wages. Even now they're seeing people saved by the thousands. It is beginning to happen already.

God is beginning to move in power. In South Korea it's the same way, isn't it? I mean, we can't imagine a church that has 600,000 members. And it isn't just one church.

It doesn't make any difference which one you go to hardly. They're packed to the doors and people can only come maybe once a month to church because there isn't room in church for the unconverted. And it's happening all over the world.

It's happening in South Africa among the Zulus where there's tremendous revival and people are being saved by the hundreds and thousands. It's happening in China where when the Communists came into China there were about 7,000 Christians and now there's probably 50 million Christians. Do you consider that revival in 30 years? I consider that a spiritual awakening right under the heel of Communism.

People being saved. We have Chinese scholars coming to the university which is very close to our church and some of them have walked in off the street just to see what we were doing from Beijing. Communist atheist scholars who have been sent over there because they're some of the cream of the crop and they're working on their doctorates.

And they just walked into the church and in two years time we've had 12 of those scholars come to Jesus Christ because they're hungry. I mean they sit down in a home Bible study and I had one of them sit in a restaurant and say to me, pastor I never saw a Bible until two months ago in my entire life. And he was working on his doctorate.

I mean they have nothing in their background but they're hungry and some of them are already going back over to China to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Everywhere we turn it's already beginning to happen.

And what's happened in Europe and in the Soviet Union with a complete break up of the Soviet Union five years ago, who would have thought we'd ever live to see it.

And the whole thing is coming apart. And those doors are coming open. And in Romania people are hungry and wide open for the gospel.

Oh it's exciting. A little group of our men went over to Poland to see what's going on there. To see whether we should start a mission in Poland and send missionaries there.

And they bumped into a pastor of a church, found out that he had 22 churches and that he was the head of the little denomination. And that they had been going there under communism serving the Lord and winning souls. And they said can we join the Christian Missionary Alliance? We need somebody to father us.

There they are just sitting there waiting for help. And one of our elders is going over there soon to look that over. See if he should be a missionary in Poland.

See it's already beginning to happen. Alright? It's already beginning to happen. That's the thing that we need to get in our hearts.

In Indonesia it's already beginning to happen. Now, what are the voices that despair of revival and spiritual awakening? And I want to just name some voices that despair of revival because if we don't deal with those negative voices, then maybe we won't be able to go on and deal with the positive voices that are speaking to us in this area. So, of course, to begin with, liberals despair of revival and spiritual awakening simply because they do not believe in such things.

Those who are theologically liberal, they deny the inspiration of the scriptures, so of course they don't expect to happen what happened in scriptural times where they don't even believe that it happened. They deny the deity of Jesus Christ. They deny the blood atonement.

They deny salvation by faith and grace. They deny the new birth. They deny heaven and hell.

They deny individual salvation. And they're just interested in the redemption of society. And you know there's a drift among evangelicals in that direction.

You know, I'm really concerned about that. I tell you, I got all worked up recently. You say, well, I can see you get worked up easy.

Well, my wife usually keeps me pretty level. But I did. I got disturbed.

I had a call from the vice president of Canadian ministries in our denomination out in the Toronto area, and he said, Dick, I'm going to send you three tapes. They are tapes of some lectures given by a leading theologian of our days, an evangelical theologian, by the way. He gave these lectures in an evangelical Bible college down in the United States.

And he said, I want you to listen to these lectures and make some notes on it. And then I'm coming out shortly and I need some ammunition about these lectures. And so I did.

And I tell you, I was very, very concerned because he was speaking about the question as to whether it's possible to be saved without coming through Jesus Christ. And we're talking about an evangelical

theologian, an evangelical Bible college. And he gave three lectures.

I have them all on tape. And after every one of them, he had a thunderous applause. And this is an evangelical denomination.

And one statement he made, I was just astounded at, quote, I think it's possible that Mohammed may have been a prophet of God. Now, I'm not going to tell you who he is, because if I did, you'd all know who he is. And in his lectures, he quoted from a book written by a leading evangelical pastor who has written an entire book now on the subject of whether it is possible in some cases for people who have never heard of Christ, but who are righteous people to be saved without hearing of Christ.

And, of course, we're here at a school that believes in missions. Amen? And speaking to you, missionary is our middle name. And so we agree on that issue.

And those that despair of revival, and what he was talking about in all three lectures was basically that God is interested in saving the nations, and he is, of course. There's no doubt of that. But the emphasis was really underneath it all, the redemption of society.

But I want to tell you there's no way to redeem society without redeeming the individual. Amen? I mean, there's no way. Society is redeemed when the individual is redeemed by the thousands.

And when they are redeemed, then society's changed. You can't do it from the top down. You've got to do it from the bottom up.

And so, of course, those kind of voices, despair of revival. 1 Timothy 4, 1 and 2 says, the Spirit clearly says that in a latter time some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits. And there's a great deal of demonic activity in North America today.

And they will follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Now, they don't want to admit that's where it comes from, but that's where it comes from. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars whose consciences have been seared as with a hot fire.

That's very strong language. I never say anything that nasty when I'm preaching. Never.

I'm much nicer. That's strong stuff. Well, that's it.

2 John 7-11, Many deceivers who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh have gone out into the world. Any such person is a deceiver and the Antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.

Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God. Whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him.

Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work. And I said, man, it's fortunate I wasn't in that auditorium. I couldn't applaud that.

They had a question answer period. I wondered what they were thinking. I would have had some questions for him.

I've got them all written down. Some biblical questions. It's going to have to answer.

So those who are liberal, they despair, of course, of revival. Worldly Christians, worldly Christians often have a negative voice in regard to spiritual awakening or revival. 1 John 2:15-17, Do not love the world, love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man love the world, what? The love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust thereof, but he that does the will of God abides forever.

Worldly Christians are not interested in revival. Why are they not interested in revival? Well, they're not interested in revival because revival brings tremendous changes in the very areas where they are in need. In other words, I think there are many Christians who sort of secretly suspect.

I'm talking about Christians in our churches who sort of secretly suspect that if real revival should come, that it would really change their lifestyle because they suspect they couldn't handle it. They suspected if the Holy Spirit should come on the scene with great power, that he would convict their hearts so that they would have to respond. They know they would have to break down.

They would have to repent. They would have to get their life cleaned up, and they would have to get the worldliness out of their life. And our churches have drifted so bad, and our Christians have drifted so bad into worldliness of all kinds.

And Christians allow themselves to do things today that 25 years ago, no self-respecting Christian would have allowed. And they're involved in all kinds of worldliness. And let me tell you, pastor and church leader, you cannot expect people like that to get excited about the idea of revival.

They're not going to get excited about that idea, not until God moves in their hearts for the Holy Spirit with such convicting power that they will begin to want to do something about it, and want to change, and want to be on fire, and want to get rid of their worldliness. But worldly Christians have a negative voice toward revival. I know, because everywhere I've ever pastored, I've had them.

I don't mean all my church, because thank God they're not like that, but I've had some of them. And I've had some who have been who have been against this coming to Christ, young couples. And we were sitting in a board meeting one night, and one of our men was sitting there, and he, and suddenly he just spoke up.

We were talking about these young couples that were coming in, and how we're going to handle certain things. And he said, I'm not sure it's really a good thing, all these new young couples coming into our church. Everything got just dead still in that board meeting, just absolutely quiet.

Everybody sat there just amazed, just breathless. And then after a while, the board meeting just went on. Nobody even said anything.

They were just thunderstruck. In the great revival in Wales, if you had been in some of those meetings, one of the most common things you would have heard from those who were praying, sometimes down on their face on the floor, would be a cry like this, What have I to do anymore with idols? That was a common cry in the Welsh revivals. What have I to do anymore with idols? What were they talking about? Did these Welsh people have little wooden or metal gods in their homes, little altars that they offered rice to? No,

they were talking about the idolatry of their lives, because they were full of worldliness and full of all kinds of materialism and the things of this world.

And people with that kind of a problem will have a negative attitude toward revival. Another negative voice against revival are from backsliders. Christians who never pray, who never read their Bibles, who do not tithe, who do not witness, who are bitter, rebellious, unbelieving and unloving, are backslidden.

Amen? You're not sure. In fact, there's even a question whether they're saved at all. But if they are, they're backslidden.

And you see, revival changes all that. It really challenges all that. People who are living in that kind of a condition are not going to be positive toward the idea of revival and spiritual awakening.

They have a negative attitude toward that. Let me read you a passage you're very familiar with out of Revelation 3. To the angel of the church in Laodicea write, these are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds that you are neither cold nor hot.

Do you have anybody like that in your church? No, you don't. You're very lucky. I wish you were either one or the other.

So because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I'm about to spit you out of my mouth. You say I am rich. I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.

But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. He's not talking to Christians. He's talking to people in the church that really, you know, feel very smug about everything.

Everything's fine and everything's going great and they don't need anything. You know, that's a great problem in churches if the church is outwardly successful and if it's growing and if it meets its budget and its missionary money is coming in and people are getting saved. It's very easy for that church to say, hey, we don't need revival.

We're fine. We're fine. Well, I want to tell you, when the revival came to the church in Akron, that church was doing just fine every way that somebody would want a church to do fine.

But boy, when the Holy Spirit came on the scene, oh, did it need revival? I think it did. As soon as the Holy Spirit cracked people's hearts wide open and you got a look at what was in there, it needed revival. Absolutely.

And so, Racksiders, of course, are negative. Jealous Christians are negative towards revival. 3 John 9-10, I wrote to the church, but Diocretes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us.

So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

Jealous Christians who are jealous of God's power and God's anointing and God's blessing, who are threatened by new Christians. You know, when this spiritual awakening comes, ladies and gentlemen, when this comes, there are going to be people crowding into our churches, people getting saved, brand-new converts who are going to be well saved. That's not a good theological term, forget I said it.

I mean, when people get saved in the heat of revival, they really get saved. And in the heat of revival, God can do something in thirty minutes that he hasn't been able to do with people for years. And I mean, you can take ten years of counseling and you can wrap it all up and in ten minutes from the Holy Ghost falls, it's all done.

I know, I've watched it happen. So you see, here's the problem. As soon as God starts to bless in the church, now you can just put it down.

Some of you may say, Ma, I wish God would bless in our church. I wish he'd give us souls every week. I wish we'd see new converts coming in all the time.

I wish we'd have baptismal services all the time and have new people come. You know, I wish we'd see all that. I'll tell you what, if you did see it, I'll tell you right now that there's some of your board members, some of your leading church people who wouldn't like it a bit because it would threaten them.

They would see people who were twice as on fire as they've ever thought of being and who were praying and witnessing and singing in full the joy of the Lord, which they'd long forgot if they ever had it. And people who are giving generously and who are bringing in other people who need to be saved. And all at once the church will want to elect some of those people to the board who have only been Christians a year.

And they'll be very threatened. You know, when this revival comes, it's going to cause some problems. Don't new babies cause problems? I think they do.

And it's going to cause problems. So jealous Christians are negative toward revival. They want control.

They can't understand what's going on. And sometimes, now I'm going to get down where the rubber meets the road. Are you ready? Sometimes conservative Christians are negative toward revival and don't believe that it can really happen because of culture, fear, pride, training, what they've been taught, those who by nature, training or culture are fearful, proud or dignified, are afraid about revival, afraid that some things might happen that they don't want to happen in their church.

I was preaching to a full church on a Sunday morning recently. It was on Father's Day. And I hadn't even gotten to the sermon.

In fact, I was just praying. We had all the men get up and stand around the outside of the auditorium. And we said we want all the men in the church to just form a wall around the outside of the auditorium and stand there shoulder to shoulder and make a wall between this church and the world.

And take the responsibility for the people inside this wall, these women and children and young people, to love them, to protect them, to pray for them and to be their their protection against the world. And so they all got up and stood there. It's a great thing.

And so I said, now we're going to pray. So I started praying. Well, I knew there was a man there that was demon possessed, but I had I didn't think about how he might react.

And he was standing in that wall. And I got to the point where I said, let the power of God flow through this wall and he screamed. Now, I tell you, it's nice to read it in the Gospels, you know.

It's great, especially when Jesus was preaching. And the demon possessed man cried out in the synagogue, you know, and said, what happened to you, Jesus of Nazareth? You know, hey, that's great. I love to read that.

But when it happens in your Sunday morning service and there are hundreds of people sitting there and they and except for what you could count on your hand, they've never heard that before. Not one of them had ever heard a demon scream before. And I tell you, we had a shook up congregation.

Didn't we, Warren? My minister of personal care is sitting here. And he was busy, so was I. Now, we had a fine in that service. But one lady, one brand new lady got saved before the day was over.

The woman that brought her to church said she went home really upset. She thought, here I bring this brand new woman who isn't saved to church to hear the gospel. And then you have a dumb thing like that happen.

I didn't have it happen. She'll never come back to church. You'll never get saved.

But right after lunch, the lady called her on the phone all shook up and said, can you come over and talk to me? She said, sure. She came over. She said, I want to get saved.

She said, what? Why do you want to get saved? She said, well, I wasn't sure that there was a God. And she said, I surely didn't believe there was a devil. But after this morning, I know there's a devil.

And she said, now I believe there's a God and I want to get saved. That's right. Well, I won't tell you the rest of that story, but I will tell you that I think it was just last Wednesday night in our encounter meeting.

Nick was sitting there clothed and in his right mind, and he's delivered and growing in the Lord. So, hey, and you ain't seen nothing yet. I tell you, when the revival comes, I mean, in this wicked society in which we live, with people's lives in the terrible messes that they are in.

I mean, people are in bad messes. And if you aren't talking to new converts, you're in for a shock when you do. I mean, they have done everything.

They are a mess. And you can't name a sin they haven't done. And when this spiritual awakening comes and God moves in in great power, there's going to be all kinds of things happening.

And I, hey, I'm not promoting those things. We didn't promote that. In fact, we just said, you know, in Jesus name, you be quiet.

And that was it. And God took care of it. But you wait till the spiritual awakening comes.

There are going to be a lot of things happen that are going to unnerve some of our conservative Christians. Hey, I came out of a wife would get me straightened out. But those who are ultra-conservative are not really in favor of revival or spiritual awakening.

And they're going to be negative to it and not believe in it. Now, I have one more that I want to deal with. Ultra-dispensational teachers and preachers.

Now I'm even getting closer. But now listen to me very carefully. Ultra-dispensational teachers and preachers are negative voices often toward revival.

Often sincere, totally sincere, but blind to God's word. And I'm going to quote something now from a great evangelist of the past who is now in heaven. There are some Christians who overemphasize the dispensational teaching in the Bible.

Of course, there is a dispensational difference between the old covenant and the new covenant, between the ceremonial law and the gospel, of course. But ultra-dispensational people say that the Acts of the Apostles is a record of a transition period and that the Christianity of the book of Acts is not to be a pattern for present day Christianity. Such people sometimes say that the Sermon on the Mount was for Jews only, not for us, and that even the Lord's prayer is a kingdom prayer not suitable for us.

They say that the miracles, power, and gifts manifested among Christians in the book of Acts are now out of date. Such people usually say that the only infilling with the Holy Spirit there is is what one receives at conversion. These ultra-dispensationalists say that we are in the last days, and this is what I want to talk about, and that the Savior must come very soon.

They say that the great apostasy is on, so that a great revival is impossible. They usually think that a number of signs prove that from the time of the first world war on to the present should be called the last days, or today they would take it farther than that, and that many signs indicate the Savior must come at most in a few months or years. People who teach this do more to discourage revival than many because they are sincere Bible believers, not infidels.

They are premillennial, not amillennial. They believe in the verbal inspiration of the scriptures and believe it literally true. They are godly children of God.

These ultra-dispensationalists are usually followers of John Nelson Darby or one of those founders of the Plymouth Brethren movement. They have had tremendous influence in the notes of the Schofield Bible. They have infiltrated the Bible institutes built by the evangelists and substituted their own pet doctrines for the teaching of Moody, Torrey, Spurgeon, and Finney on the fullness of the Spirit, and by now I am really in trouble.

But that's not unusual for me. Anyway, I want to stop here and say that I am not trying in this to deal with any particular theological position in regard to the second coming of Christ or teaching or preaching about the second coming of Christ. I'm not going to get into that at all because there's all kinds of different opinions.

There's premillennial and midmillennial and amillennial and somebody says I'm a panmillennialist, everything's going to pan out all right in the end. Yes, and then there are pre-tribulationists and mid-tribulationists and post-tribulationists and all that. The truth is when the trumpet sounds, we're all going up.

So that's great. And that's not what I'm talking about. But here's what I'm talking about.

The idea that because, as they believe, we are in the last days, that therefore the last days are the of the sea and period. They are a period of lukewarmness. They are a time when we cannot expect God to move in great power.

It is the time of the great apostasy, the great fall in the way, the time of great coldness when the Son of Man will not find faith on the earth. And all the church can do is just hang on by its fingernails and hope and pray for Jesus to come and rescue them. And that approach, which is an approach by very sincere

Christians, sincere brothers in Christ, that approach, though, has a deadening effect upon any hope of a great outpouring of God's Holy Spirit and a great spiritual awakening and a great in-gathering of people to Christ.

And so I cannot help but talk about it. Now, the last days period, as far as I'm concerned from the scriptures, is either from the baptism of Christ or from Pentecost to the return of Christ. The Bible teaches that the last days are the period from Pentecost or possibly even from the baptism of Jesus to the return of Jesus Christ.

And I can give you all kinds of scriptures on it. I don't have time to read them all, so I'm going to read a few, but I am going to give you some references. Hebrews 1, read the whole first chapter of Hebrews, and there he talks in verse 2, he says, But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things and through whom he made the universe.

And then it tells who the Son of God is, the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. And he is sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heavens. Now, that is this period of Christ, of his coming and being the final word of God.

That period is the last days. Matthew 4, 17 and 23. From that time, Jesus began to preach, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom. Acts 2, and this is the passage I want to emphasize. Acts 2, verses 16 to 21.

Now, this is Pentecost and the Holy Spirit has come upon the church. And again, I was reading from this evangelist, but I don't want to get into any theological controversy about Pentecost or about being a transition period in Acts or any of that. I don't think that's important or necessary.

But what I do want to deal with is this thing of the last days. Acts 2, verses 16 to 21. The Holy Spirit has come and they have said, these men are drunk, and Peter is answering.

Now, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel. Now, what has happened here is what Joel said would happen. In the last days, this is that.

It says in the King James Version. This is that. This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel saying, in the last days, God says, I will pour out my spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams.

Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out of my spirit in those days and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below. Blood and fire and bills of smoke.

Have we seen that? Nope. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood. Have we seen that? Nope.

Before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. Have we seen that? Not yet. And then what? And everyone who calls the name of the Lord will be saved.

You want to know when the last days is? Here it is. The last days is from at least Pentecost to the return of Christ in glory. To set up his kingdom.

Because Peter says, this that has just happened at Pentecost, this is that. And that is the last days. Do you see that? Don't say so unless you do.

But can't you see that? He is saying, this is that. This that has happened at Pentecost is that, and that is the last days. In the last days, sayeth God, I will pour out.

This is what has happened. So at least the last days began there, if they didn't begin with the baptism of Jesus. At least they began there.

So to say that because now, we are right now at the end of human history, and we are in the very last days, and therefore we are in the day of apostasy and falling away, and we cannot expect any more great outpouring of the Spirit or any great revivals or any great spiritual awakening, because we are in the last days before Jesus comes, that's not biblically accurate. Because the last days are from Pentecost to the time that Christ comes, and that whole period is alike. And throughout that entire period, there are cycles of declension and revival, declension and revival, declension and revival, just like in the book of Judges.

It's no different. It is that kind of a historical thing. Now, you think I'm running over, but I'm not, because Harold told me that because I got started late, I could take a few extra minutes.

So I'm going down to a quarter after. I just don't want you to be nervous. All right.

Let me give you another scripture. 1 Timothy 4, 1-3. The Spirit clearly says that in latter times, some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, etc., etc. Now, that is in the latter times. You say, well, that's certainly happening now.

This is certainly happening now, but it certainly happened before. I mean, it's not just something that's just happened. It's something that's been happening ever since the time of Pentecost.

It's been happening. You could go on down to 2 Timothy 3, 1-5, because you're just getting to Timothy. 2 Timothy 3, 1-5, but mark this, there will be terrible times in the last days.

People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying his power, have nothing to do with them. You say, that is the description of today. We must be in the last days.

We certainly are in the last days. But so is the apostolic church in the last days. And all of these conditions have prevailed.

If you would just go back and read history, go back and read the history of Whitefield and the great revivals under Whitefield and the Westleys, and all of the modern world of that day was, believe it or not, worse morally than we are today. Absolutely. We think we're living in the worst time history has ever seen, because it's the worst time we have ever seen.

But it's not the worst time history has ever seen. And if you go back and read history, you'll find there have been many times in modern civilization when things have been much worse. Much, much worse.

And much more evil and much more immoral. Why, right before the great revivals with Whitefield and Wesley, one of the men in the House of Lords actually, not only he wrote a book that was published, it was addressed to his son on how to seduce a woman. Remember the House of Lords? He brought his mistress into the House of Lords to sit with him.

Nobody said a word. You talk about corruption and rottenness and wickedness, it was beyond imagination. And pastors of parish churches had housekeepers who lived with them and had children of them.

They were not married and nobody thought a thing of it. Those men lived on drank and were drunkards and adulterers and pastored the churches and married and buried the people. Conditions were incredible.

Conditions were so bad that Parliament in England had to pass a law against celebrating Christmas, because in celebrating Christmas so much evil happened. We're not living in the worst time in history. Not yet.

So, the last days, 2 Peter 3, 3 and 4. First of all, you must understand that in the last days, scoffers will come saying, where is the promise of his coming? 1 John 2.18, dear children, and this is one you should underline. 1 John 2.18, dear children, this is the last hour. Not the last day, it's the last hour.

When was that written? Well, it wasn't written since the Second World War. This is the last hour, and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many Antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

The last days are from Pentecost to the coming of Jesus Christ. Well, let me just in closing read a couple more paragraphs from my evangelist friend. I'm not going to tell you who he is.

Good, solid, soul-winning evangelist. All those who cry that the great apostasy is on, that there are hearts which are hardened against God, that this age is a wicked age, where the spirit of Antichrist should notice that so it has been in every age. These are the last days, beginning before Pentecost, really beginning with Christ.

These are the last days before Christ will come to personally take over the world and destroy the wicked Gentile world powers. But it was the last time when John the Apostle wrote his first epistle. The great falling away had already begun then, as it has begun in every age.

So the term, the last time, is meant to fit the whole age and not any last few years of the age. It does not fit 1991 any better than it fit the year A.D. 91. A man who preaches on this text must preach that the whole age is alike, with the falling away of people with hatred and opposition to the gospel and with wicked anti-Christian people, infidels, atheists and haters of God occurring all through the age.

From a consideration of all the passages which speak about the last days in the New Testament, it is quite clear that the term in the Bible never means just a few years preceding Christ's coming. And it is quite clear that God has set off the last few years before Christ's coming to be different from the rest of the age. God has not even intimated in the scriptures that before Christ comes there would be a special period of time when men would be harder, when revivals would be impossible or more difficult.

All that is a manufactured excuse of those who do not pay God's praise for revival and for soul winning. It is the subconscious rationalization of people who do not feel that God is able to meet this age, do not feel that the gospel is sufficient, do not feel that God's power and God's promises are sufficient. It is the excuse of those who are defeated, backslidden and unbelieving, or it is the cry of those who have been misled in doctrine about a period of the last days at the close of the age in which it is not supposed that there could be great revivals.

And when it is supposed men are more wicked, that God's word does not work the same and that revivals are much more difficult, if not impossible. The scriptures teach the exact opposite, that the whole age alike is the age of revival. And in that passage in Acts chapter two, you will notice as he is talking about it being the last days, as Joel said, in the last days God would pour out his spirit on all flesh and men and women and all kinds of people would be out there prophesying and preaching the gospel.

And it tells you then about the terrible judgments that will come right out of the book of Revelation and the moon turning to blood and the sun black as sackcloth of hair and all that. That is right out of the book of Revelation. That is the same stuff that is going to happen right at the end.

And it takes you right down through the end and then says, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. What the apostle is saying by the Holy Spirit is that the whole last days are to be an age of revival and of people coming to Christ and people being saved. And so may God help us not to listen to the negative voices, that despair of revival and spiritual awakening.

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