

## SOUTH FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

### Bible Study

Date 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles

Hymns 641, 640, 172 Read: Habakkuk 3:1-2 Text:  
Habakkuk 3:2

Series Revival (2) Title The Preservation of  
Revival

The Prophet Habakkuk lived and ministered at a time there was spiritual dryness, dullness, and darkness in the land.

The nation largely had departed from the living God.

God's people were slack concerning the things of God. The name of Jehovah was dishonoured.

As a result, the Lord chastised the people on account of their sin and it was revealed to the prophet that an invasion by the Babylonians was near at hand.

The prophet, therefore, was filled with anxiety as to the future of his country.

At such a time of spiritual declension, the prophet Habakkuk gets before the Lord, and prays "**O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.**"

The very name Habakkuk means **to embrace**, for that is what he did. He believed in the promise of God. He was persuaded of them and embraced them, and rested there.

Therefore, believer, we too, are concerned about the UK, England and London. We live among spiritual declension, and deadness among churches.

but where is our hope of survival, its in the Lord breathing upon us from heaven sending a mighty down pour of revival blessing.

how we need to embrace the Lord, let it come o Lord we pray thee let the showers of blessing fall, O Lord revive thy work.

With that line of thought in view, lets learn from Hezekiah's prayer for the preservation or revival of God's work.

## **I FIRST, HABAKKUK'S BELIEF IN THE PRESERVATION OF GOD'S WORK – *O Lord Revive thy work***

One man said when God is going to visit His church, he first sets his people praying.

In the past two chapters, Habakkuk has heard the report of the Lord, and he comes before Him to pray.

From these words is it confirmed that Habakkuk believed in Revival.

He maintained God would preserve His work. He prays ***O Lord revive thy work*** or ***O Lord preserve thy work***.

He had a firm belief in what God could do. He believed in the ability and authority of God concerning the promise of revival.

For revival is a visitation of God, when He awakens His church, visits His covenant community.

The word for "***revive***" in the original Hebrew of this text is used many times in the OT, and basically means ***to live***.

It is a word that refers to possessing life, giving life and enjoying life.

It has various translation such as– ***to live, to recover, to restore, to revive, to give life, to keep alive, to preserve, to preserve alive, to quicken***.

For that reason, revival belongs to the realm of spiritual life, when the Spirit of God refreshes and revisits His people those who have spiritual life.

The unsaved don't need revival, they have no spiritual life, but are dead in sin. Sinners need redemption, the forgiveness of sin.

They first need spiritual life which comes from trusting Christ alone for salvation.

That means, Revival is for the church of Christ, those washed in the blood of the lamb.

There is a reviving of the spiritual life that already exists in the individual or the congregation.

In this sense there is a dispelling of the deadness of spiritual declension and the restoring of zeal and power when spiritual life is at its lowest.

Notice some examples how the word **revive** is used in scripture with regards to the rekindling of spiritual life.

**In Psalm 119**, eleven times the word revive is translated ***quicken***.

First instance is in **verse 25** ***quicken thou me according to thy word***, this is the pattern throughout the rest of the psalm in the other ten verses, **vs. 37, 40, 50, 88, 93, 107, 149, 154, 156 & 159**. The longing to be revived, quickened, rekindled by the Lord.

The idea is that of a fire, when the fire is at a low, dim, it looks like its about to go, but when the fire is poked, the flame rekindles. This is what revival, the child of God, the church of God set on fire again.

Are you feeling like spiritual fire and zeal in your life is at a low, do you feel your coldness, weakness in your spiritual walk.

Do you feel your lack of love for Christ. You need revived, restored.

**Psalm 138:7** “*though I walk in the midst of trouble thou wilt revive me*”, The psalmist uses the word in the context of his going through a period of trouble when the enemies of God sought to destroy him.

But the psalmist was confident that the Lord would preserve him – and in that sense he uses the word *revive*.

Therefore, Habakkuk prays that in revival God will preserve and nourish the spiritual life of His people.

They are soon to be taken by the enemy, and he prays Lord revive preserve thy work.

But I want you to see He prayed this prayer because he believed in God’s reviving, stirring, awaking power. He believed God was not yet finished with His people

Believer, ye have not because ye ask not. God is the God of revival.

I encourage you to pray that God would pour out His Spirit upon us here in London.

Keep on believing. Church of Christ, beloved and chosen, rise up and pray O Lord revive, preserve thy work, in the midst of years make known.

It is time for thee to work O Lord.

**Habakkuk’s belief,**

## **II SECOND, HABAKKUK’S BURDEN FOR THE PRESERVATION OF GOD’S WORK**

The prophet did not only pray Lord reive thy work, but he prayed ***O LORD revive thy work.***

The **O** denotes intensity of feeling, it indicates a real burden.

Here was his desire, he has a burden for revival because he believed in revival. This is what keeps Him praying, he knows God is the God of revival.

Habakkuk has a burden and desire to see God revive or preserve His work, create soul thirst among His people.

He longed to see revival, it was his desire, his heart burn. His spirit was stirred within him at the sin of the people and his heart was broken by a vision of the chastisement which the Lord had ordained.

***O Lord revive thy work, "Lord, cause us to live again. O Lord revive thy work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make known.***

In our captivity preserve us, Lord, revive us.

Lord you have done mighty works before in our land. Lord you have worked through great servants in the past, Moses, David, etc, Lord, strengthen us yet again. Visit thy vine, water us again O Lord, cause us to live again.

What is interesting to note the same word revive used by Habakkuk for revival or preserving is found in **Ezra 9: 8-9** – Ezra is in prayer recalls how in Babylon, the Lord had given "***a little reviving in our bondage.***"

The Lord had not forgotten them. He brought them out, and He revived a place to worship Him again in Jerusalem. In this way the Lord had ensured the preservation of His work.

We need the breath of God. The church needs revived, and her prayers need revived.

We need a freshness that comes from heaven. We need our hearts to pant after God.

**O Lord revive thy work.** Revive the preacher, if the Preacher is set in fire people will come to watch him blaze for God.

O Lord revive my heart that I may be a light a magnet to draw men and woman to Christ and this church.

May our burden to be revived in fellowship with the Saviour.

how much have we to cry out against ourselves because of our lack of that holy fellowship with Jesus which is the mark of the true child of God!

let me ask you how long it is since you have had a visitation from Jesus Christ—how long since you could say, “... **He feeds among the lilies.**” How long is it since He brought you into His banqueting house of blessing.

Maybe there are some who can say preacher the Lord has meet with me today, then praise the Lord.

But we are not talking about only a word from God we are speaking about such a burden to see God work in our lives that we can't sleep at night until we have read and prayed, when there is the acknowledgment of the continual presence of God in bible reading and prayer.

when all you want to do is read, pray and witness for Christ.

The people had lost out with God. Habakkuk prays revive thy work.

The great burden for our day is to see God work. The greatest need for the church of Christ is for God to revive it. That is the great need. The great need of your life and my life is revival.

This was the prophets burden. We do know when God will send revival, but we must never lose the burden for it. I beseech you

beloved, strive with God, both by day and by night, for revival in our midst.

### **III THIRD, HABAKKUK'S BASIS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF GOD'S WORK** O Lord Revive thy work

The basis for his praying was the Lord Himself. He is the author and the source of all spiritual life.

The focus in Revival is to the Lord. the end in view is for the glory of God. that He will give Himself all the victory, that God will be praised.

Revival is not a work of man, we can prepare for it, but we cannot organise revival, for man cannot create an anxious thought.

**Revival does not depend on the style of the preacher.**

I say this because of God's servants, each man has his own style and gifts in preaching,

some like more points than others, some are fast speakers some are slow,

some are loud some are soft, some stand in one place, others walk around, some memorise their notes some read of their notes.

**But Revival does not come because of how the preacher preaches, It is the Spirit of God coming upon the preacher and using his words.**

It was often said about George Whitefield, he was a shouter, he was a loud preacher, a fiery preacher, his preaching was that of a trumpet.

Whenever he preached his grammar was bad, his thoughts in the message seemed to be disjointed.

His preaching was rough. Even today when his sermons are read, many struggle to read them, they don't flow.

Preachers have testified to being disappointed when reading his material.

They have heard how God used him, and so they go to his sermons wanting to be inspired.

But having said all that when he preached God anointed Whitefield with power and as the people heard him speak they listened to a man who spoke from the heart and man who preached with a burden, and believed what he said about His Saviour. He saw thousands won to Christ.

Another man who know revival was **Jonathan Edwards**. He would take his manuscript, hold it up close to his eye, and stand still, almost without motion, except now and then the lifting of his hand and he read his sermon through from beginning to end.

The Lord moved among the people. Men returned to their homes, and they told of the great things they had heard and experienced within. Ministers went home, and they began to preach differently from what they had done before.

Church members went home, and they began to pray more earnestly; and, on a sudden, from the spark that seemed to be kindled, as it were, one mighty sheet of fire, which spread throughout the land.

### **Therefore, Revival comes from God.**

Habakkuk was motivated to pray to the Lord to Revive His own work. He longed to see the power of God demonstrated again. Habakkuk knew despite the bleakness and bareness it was not beyond God.

The spiritual situation was not above God. The temple would be destroyed the children in captivity.



What about the next generation. From a human view point It looked hopeless. It seemed to be the end, but He looked to the Lord to revive, to preserve His work, raise up another generation.

Oh believer, no matter how dark the day, Our God is able to preserve His work.

Though we are in the last days, things are getting worse in society, but remember the last days started from the cross of Christ and continue to His return, therefore we can pray expecting God to revive His work.

If we only look at the spiritual declination we will be discouragement.

When we look at ourselves, and others we see spiritual powerlessness, weakness, **but when we look to the Lord and consider Him, He has all power, His work depends on Him.**

O Holy Ghost revival comes from thee send a revival start the work in me.

#### **IV FOURTH THE BLESSING FOR THE PRESERVATION OF GOD'S WORK**

Habakkuk prayed **in wrath remember mercy**, He focused upon the covenant of grace in that Messiah will come and die in the cross and purchase redemption for His people, and turn away the wrath of God from them.

When are going into captivity but in wrath remember mercy. God answered prayer, after 70 years God brought them out of Babylon to Jerusalem. He had them back in the land to build the temple, center the altar and through the symbolic practise of the sacrifices, look to Christ, the one true sacrifice who takes away sin, putting away the wrath of God against all who believe in Him.

Habakkuk's prays in faith upon redemption ground.

Revival flows from Calvary. Revival is one of the redemptive blessings that Christ has purchased for the Church.

Lord, London deserves wrath, as the result of her sin, turning away from you, forgotten your goodness, despising your prophets.

Your own people deserve wrath, due to their careless living, idols, backslidings and coldness of heart.

Yet Lord revive your work, preserve thy work, in wrath remember mercy, remember the blood of thy Son, Remember the terms of the covenant, send revival that has been paid for by blood.

Make known thy power.

May we know and talk again of the breath of God sweeping through us in revival, to praise His name, to talk of His wondrous work afresh.

Let us pray O Lord Revive thy work.