

# Passionate Pleading for Revival

## *Habakkuk 3:2*

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Introduction: Opening illustration: hymn history of “Revive Us Again.” Normally in studying hymnology, you discover that a poem or verse was written & later a tune was composed to fit those words. Sometimes the same person is the composer of the music as well as writer of the text, but more often than not there were two individuals. On rare occasions, the music was composed before the words were written & the two were at a later time combined. Consider the case of words of a hymn written some 40 years after the music was composed, yet that musical score was unknown at the time to the author of the hymn. (John Husband & William Mackay).

What does this hymn have to do with us here this morning? The text that inspired William Mackay to write his hymn is my text for today. Habakkuk 3:2 says, “*O LORD, I have heard Thy speech, & was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.*” As we prepare for the special services with Mike Shrock, I ask you, is “Revive Us Again” your prayer? How might we be prepared for God’s blessings upon our lives & upon our church? I see from our text that when God’s people receive God’s revelation properly, they will request God’s reviving passionately.

### I. Habakkuk's response to God's revelation (the *spirit* of revival)

[3:1, “*upon Shigionoth*”? – a deeply emotional tune or poem; a triumphal song]

#### A. “*I have heard thy speech*” > He **heard** God speak.

1. Habakkuk's questions (his honest doubts are voiced to God):
  - a. Why is wickedness not punished? (1:2-4)
  - b. Why does God use a nation (Babylon) more wicked than Judah? (1:12-13)
2. God's answers (He answers Habakkuk’s honest doubts):
  - a. God has raised up the Chaldeans to punish Judah. (1:5-11)
  - b. God will judge the proud Chaldeans. (2:5-8) [Key verse > 2:4, message tonight]

#### B. “*And was afraid*” > He **heeded** God's speech.

1. Terror - great fear, as he saw God's judgment upon Judah & Babylon.
2. Awe - genuine awareness of God's sovereignty.

#### C. Application: Do we hear God speaking & heed His speech, whether it be in our private reading of God's Word or in the public meeting with God's Word?

1. What is our attitude?
  - a. I Samuel 3:9, “*Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth.*”
  - b. Proverbs 28:9, “*He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.*”
- Application: Do you desire for God to speak to you as you read & hear His Word?
2. What is our attendance?
  - a. Faithful to God's house? Hebrews 10:25
  - b. Worshipful in God's house? Psalm 27:4
3. What is our apprehension (fear)?
  - a. Judgment? fear lest we be judged - Psalm 119:120; Romans 3:18; Hebrews 10:31
  - b. Jealousy? fear lest we offend God - James 4:5 (move the Spirit of God to envy?).

See Acts 10:33 > Application: What does it take for God to get our attention & for the pastor to hold our attention? Consider the competition for our attention.

## II. Habakkuk's request for God's reviving (the *supplication* for revival)

### A. "Revive Thy work"

[Habakkuk wanted his people (the Jews) renewed, restored to the place of blessing]

1. We are His people - II Corinthians 6:14-18.
2. We are His work - cf. Matthew 16:18 with Ephesians 2:10.
3. We need His blessing - II Chronicles 7:14-16.

Summary: Habakkuk's & our prayer? "Revive Your people!"

### B. "Reveal Thy-self" ("*make known*")

1. His power – cf. Psalm 2:4 (& see Philippians 4:13).
2. His protection – cf. Psalm 27:5; 34:7 (& see Philippians 4:6-7).
3. His provision – cf. Psalm 34:8-10; 37:25 (& see Philippians 4:19).

Summary: Habakkuk's & our prayer? "Reveal Your power!"

### C. "Remember Thy mercy" ("*in wrath remember mercy*")

1. Confess the prospect of His mercy (its possibility):
  - a. Salvation for the sinner - Luke 18:13 & Titus 3:5.
  - b. Sufficiency for the believer - Psalm 103:8 & I John 1:9, 2:1.
2. Consider the promise of His mercy (its availability):
  - a. Lamentations 3:22-23, "*It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.*"
  - b. Hebrews 4:16, "*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, & find grace to help in time of need.*"
3. Claim the provision of His mercy (its attainability):
  - a. Psalm 23:6, "*Surely goodness & mercy shall follow me all the days of my life...*"
  - b. II Corinthians 4:1, "*Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.*"

Summary: Habakkuk's & our prayer? "Remember Your provision!"

Conclusion: What is revival? In our text, revival begins with the proper response to the revelation of God, willing to hear & heed what God has said. That response includes a reverential awe, a fear of the Lord (an awareness of His presence, power, & purpose in our lives). Such a response will be reflected in our attitude toward God speaking, our attendance to hear God speak, & our apprehension when God speaks.

Could you pray this prayer with Habakkuk? "Lord, **revive** Thy people! **Reveal** Thy Self! **Remember** Thy mercy!" When revival does come, it will not be because we deserve it, or have some how earned it, but it will be because our God is a God of mercy.

Might we again earnestly plead with our Lord in the words of the Psalmist, "*Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?*" Truly, when God's people receive God's revelation properly, they will request God's reviving passionately. Might our hearts be able to unite in singing, "Revive us again – fill each heart with Thy love; May each soul be rekindled with fire from above. Hallelujah, Thine the glory! Hallelujah, amen! Hallelujah, Thine the glory! Revive us again."!!

## Hymn History of “Revive Us Again”

John Jenkins Husband was born in 1760 in Plymouth, England. As an adult, he served as a clerk in the Surrey Chapel of England. In 1809 he decided to migrate to the US. There he settled in Philadelphia, where he would live the rest of his life. He earned a living in this country by teaching music & also served as a church clerk again in St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. We don’t know when exactly he composed the music for our hymn in question, but it was probably written while he still lived in England. That’s because the tune came to the attention of a well-known hymn writer, poet, & pastor, Dr. Horatius Bonar (1808-1889). One of his most notable songs was entitled, “Rejoice And Be Glad,” and contained the lines:

“Rejoice & be glad! The Redeemer hath come;  
Go, look on His cradle, His cross, & His tomb.  
Sound His praises, tell the story, of Him who was slain;  
Sound His praises, tell with gladness, He liveth again.”

Fifty years after John Husband’s death, Bonar’s words were “wedded” to his music & the hymn was included in Ira Sankey’s *Sacred Songs and Solos*.

But the story doesn’t end there. Eight years before Bonar wrote his text, a Rev. William Paton Mackay was reading through his Bible, either for personal enrichment or perhaps seeking a sermon text. He read these words in the O.T., “*O LORD, I have heard Thy speech, & was afraid: O LORD, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy*” (Habakkuk 3:2). He then recalled & quickly turned to another text, Psalm 85:6, “*Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?*” While meditating upon these two texts of Scripture, he began to write out the words of a prayer for revival, words that could be sung by a congregation of God’s people.

Move forward in time now some 20 years or more. Bonar’s hymn, “Rejoice And Be Glad” has been popularized in England & Husband’s tune then became known to Mackay. He recognized that his words for revival fit exactly with that tune, & soon combined them together. While Bonar’s song caught on quite well in England, Mackay’s hymn spread even more rapidly in America. It soon became a standard hymn to be sung at nearly every revival & evangelistic crusade in the expanding Republic of the USA. What hymn, you ask? These are the words:

“We praise Thee, O God, for the Son of Thy love,  
For Jesus who died & is now gone above.  
We praise Thee, O God, for Thy Spirit of light,  
Who has shown us our Savior & scattered our night.  
All glory & praise to the Lamb that was slain,  
Who has borne all our sins & has cleansed ev’ry stain.  
Revive us again – fill each heart with Thy love;  
May each soul be rekindled with fire from above.

Chorus: Hallelujah, Thine the glory! Hallelujah, amen!  
Hallelujah, Thine the glory! Revive us again.”