

FIRESTARTERS 5

PRAYER TOOL

Igniting Prayer for Revival in our City • 5 Minutes to Read • 5 Minutes in Prayer

FOR THE WEEK OF Dec 19th - Dec 25th, 2021 - **Volume 86**

THEME VERSE:

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul
and with all your mind and with all your strength.*

Mark 12:30

THE GOD OF REVIVAL:

The Revivals of the Carolinas: 2nd Great Awakening (Pt 2): Strange Behaviors

Powerful, and sometimes strange, physical manifestations are often commonplace during times of revival. When the Holy Spirit dropped in on the early 1st century Christians during that first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, it is recorded that God's visit was accompanied by a supernatural rushing wind and tongues of fire in that very room. And, the commotion of activity that followed caused some outsiders to think that the Christians had gotten drunk on wine that morning. So, too, revivals in later times have displayed supernatural phenomena and curious behaviors that some have considered inappropriate.

The camp meetings of the early 1800's were no exception to this. In fact, apparently bizarre and disorderly behavior seemed to be the rule during these revivals. This must be understood in the context of the dead orthodoxy that dominated most mainstream expressions of Christianity at the time. The spirit of over-intellectualized and duty-bound religion looked down on the notion of a personal and even emotional response to the living God. So, it is not that much of a surprise that God would capture people's hearts and inject bursts of strong emotion into this great awakening.

What were some of these strange things seen at the revivals? One commonly-seen response during the meetings was people spontaneously falling to the ground. People of all ages, of all races, men and women, would frequently collapse or faint to the floor. Usually it would happen as the preacher was presenting the Word of God to the crowd and challenging them to consider where they stood in regard to sin and to God Himself. That is why the falling down was accompanied often by an overwhelming sense of conviction of sin and fearing for one's soul. People would groan and cry out to God for mercy as they lay upon the dirt.

But, interestingly, the historical records tell us that this falling down was not confined just to the meetings during the sermons. It would happen before the events or afterwards, on the way walking to town, or in the middle of people worshiping or praying or talking together. It was far more than the power of persuasion or the pressure of crowd thinking. It was God's presence that made the difference.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the accounts of critics, doubters, and trouble-makers who attended the camp meetings hoping to disprove the proceedings or cause some mischief. In one instance, an older man had gone to a meeting with a custom staff with a sharp nail on one end. His plan was to poke and prod those who fell down to jolt them back to attention. Little did he realize that the Holy Spirit would surprisingly overwhelm him in the middle of a conversation and send him collapsing to the floor. When he awoke one hour later, he admitted his bad intentions and confessed his sin. Time and again, numerous stories tell of those who had no desire or intent to ever fall down, yet the irresistible presence of God would override their stubbornness and reveal a God who is mighty at work in our midst.

THE GOD WHO ANSWERS PRAYERS:

Praise God for increasing connections between the intercessors of the city! This week, intercessors from around Charlotte met in the 4 quadrants of our city (Northeast, NW, SE, SW). It was a time for reflection upon God's heart and an opportunity to pray for fires to ignite and for another great awakening to sweep our land.

PRAYER REQUESTS THIS WEEK:

FOR THE CITY:

- **SCHOOL BOARD OVERREACH.** The Board of Education in Wilson County (about 1 hour east of Raleigh, NC) voted to give school administrators the right to search students' cellphones for text messages or photos or other data upon suspicion of any breaking of the law or school rules. Pray that leaders would re-think how this could lead to persecution and abuse of power, and pray that that this policy would not be embraced in Charlotte or other places in our country.
- **SAFETY DURING CHRISTMAS SEASON.** Please pray that all our families, churches, and communities would stay safe during the Christmas season as we travel and meet up with friends and family. Pray for smooth travel and good health for everyone. Pray that people's hearts would be drawn to the birth of Christ and how God loves and longs to redeem this broken world.

FOR THE WORLD AND MISSIONS:

- **TORNADOES.** Pray for those in America impacted by the slew of tornadoes this past week. Pray especially for Kentucky, which saw the deaths of over 74 people and tremendous damage to its neighborhoods. Pray for God's hand of protection and resilient hope at this time to rebuild and move forward from this disaster.
- **OPEN DOORS IN IRAN.** Please pray the missions work of Opens Doors in Iran. It is reaching the lost with the Gospel and providing assistance and hope to persecuted believers.
- **SAT-7 IMPACT.** Continue to pray for the SAT-7 ministry which provides online video programming to the Middle East. Pray that many would hear the Good News of Jesus and give their hearts to their Savior. Pray especially for the children's programming to powerfully impact the younger generation who watch the SAT-7 shows.

FOR LOCAL MINISTRIES AND REVIVAL:

- **LOCAL CHURCHES.** Pray that worship services this month will point people to Jesus again and again: He has come to save us, and He will come again! He is, now and forever, the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). Pray that churches will also emphasize caring for those in need this Christmas season, meeting needs in Jesus' name, doing the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.
- **REVIVAL.** As we prepare to conclude this year and begin a new year, pray that Christians and churches will see the opportunity to re-focus on Jesus as Head of the Church and Lord of all. Pray that 2022 will be a year of Spirit-led, worship-fed, Bible-centered prayer for revival in the church and awakening in the culture. May the church remember and embrace the challenging call of the 18th century revivalist Jonathan Edwards: to pray fervently for revival every Saturday evening, trusting God to hear His people and to move powerfully to rescue our nation.

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