

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG139 – Lord, Rend the Heavens and Come Down

Welcome to this podcast. We are in the midst of the Feast of Passover. Of course, to me it is one of the most dramatic times that we have on the spiritual calendar for the year, because there is just so much that is encompassed in this idea of Passover. There is so much we could talk about; but I want to focus this podcast on what the Lord has been making real to me about the timeframe that we are in, and that is His Presence – His Presence coming down into the earth. This is what initiated the events of Passover, and so I want to talk about it.

This podcast is being titled, *Lord, Rend the Heavens and Come Down*. This, of course, is out of Isaiah 64, verses 1-4: “Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at Your presence—as fire kindles the brushwood, as fire causes water to boil—to make Your name known to Your adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Your presence! When You did awesome things which we did not expect, You came down, the mountains quaked at Your presence. For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear, nor has the eye seen a God besides You, who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him.” Now this chapter goes on, and I encourage you to read it; because it so deals with all of the realities that I think we face when we are talking about outpourings of God, or the appearances of the Lord, His returning to us. There are many elements to that; but I want us to realize that really, Passover is a product of this type of reality.

When we look at Exodus the third chapter, we have this encounter between Moses and God at the burning bush; and this conversation goes on between them, starting at verses 6-7: “He said also, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. The Lord said, ‘I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their task masters, for I am aware of their sufferings.’” Now, in my mind, we have two dynamic elements here which are what Passover is made of. It is the cry of a people unto God, and it is God hearing that cry and coming down. For God to hear the cry and stay in heaven doesn’t do much; but when He hears the cry of His people and He comes down, then things begin to happen. When God comes down to earth, things don’t stay the same. Everything begins to change.

When we look at ourselves in this day and age, and we know in our hearts that we are crying out for what some term as revival, or others term as outpouring, to me it is a cry for His Presence. It is a cry for His return to earth. I say return, because when we look at the days we live in, it is obvious that we don’t have this manifestation of God with us on the earth – and it is that which changes everything, and it is that which we need in this day and age in which we live. It is that which Israel needed for things to change in days of slavery when they lived in Egypt. They had been there for four hundred years, and for things to change it needed God’s moving. They had gone for so long with nothing changing; they had cried out for it to change, but it had not changed. Sometimes we feel this way – and that is what Passover represents. It represents the moment at which God comes down and He engages in the situations – He engages in their bondage, He engages in their sin and their lack of faith and lack of obedience to Him; He engages in Pharaoh and his perversion and bondage of the children of Israel.

And I say perversion because of the gods of Egypt that he worshiped and even represented. So when God comes down, He judges all of the gods of Egypt. Everything begins to change. But it had not changed up to that point.

You can cry out, you can believe; but really, it requires that final element, that God Himself finally comes down and engages in this earth, with mankind, with humanity itself, on every level. And it is this that I personally look for in the end time. I look for God by His Presence to come into the earth and begin to change everything. I am not necessarily talking about the second coming of the Lord; that would be wonderful, I would love to see that. But I believe that there can be events like Passover that take place prior to that coming of the Lord.

So we see this conversation going on. In verses 7-9, the Lord continues: "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their task masters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them." God is aware, He has seen. And I think, first and foremost, we should have that sense. Maybe we have been crying for a long time. Maybe it seems like our bondage and the difficulties we are facing on this earth have drawn out for four hundred years surrounding us, and we wonder, is our prayer effective? Our cry, is it getting through? Is He hearing? Is He seeing what is transpiring in this world? – the depth of wickedness, of darkness, of evil that is transpiring, that is swallowing up the children of God, the sons of God, and oppressing them and holding them in bondage from serving Him as they would if they had the opportunity and the deliverance that was needed. So God comes down, and the first thing we begin to realize as the story goes on is that it is not always just easy.

When God decides He is going to intervene, when He decides to step into the scene, things aren't just in a moment turned to wonderful; many times there are issues that have to be dealt with, that God has to deal with. Because, again, it has been a long time since He has been on the scene, and I think we lose the concept of really what it is to have God present. We are a generation, for the most part, that has lived without this kind of intervention of God into the earth in a massive way. I mean, we have to go back into the outpourings of God that happened, say, before 1900 – times like the Welsh Revival that took place, and movings of God in the early nineteen hundreds. We think of days like Azusa Street, we think of other outpourings or movings of God's Spirit; and, really, those things changed the world. But it has been many years since we have really seen this kind of impact. There may have been a little outpouring here or a revival there that was short-lived. But I am talking about something that is on a global scale, something that is really a massive, undeniable, unquenchable manifestation of God's Presence, of Yeshua, Jesus, of the Holy Spirit, coming in, stepping down into this world. And as I said, when that happens, first of all, just as Moses did, he hid his face, because he couldn't face God; he couldn't look Him in the eye, so he is on his face before the Lord. This is a good position to be in when God appears. We would be on our face before Him. But it begins to deal with Moses. God deals with everything, and everybody. And we see that in this Passover. God deals with Moses. God deals with Pharaoh. God deals with the Egyptians. God deals with Israel. Everyone is dealt with as God enters the scene, because there are things in everyone that need to be either dealt with, or broken, or judged, or delivered. And so, that immediately begins to happen.

It happened for Moses in Exodus 4:1. We read, “Then Moses said, ‘What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, “The Lord has not appeared to you.”’” And when we see revival begin, or outpourings begin, it is one of the reactions that comes. People say, “Well, you know, the Lord is not really appearing. The Lord is really not doing that. It’s just feigned, people are making it up,” whatever. But you have to deal with your reactions to that – “What are people going to say to me when I start to talk about what God is doing?”

We go on in Exodus the fourth chapter, at verse 10. “Moses said to the Lord, ‘Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant.’” In other words, Moses had some type of a speech impediment. We assume possibly he was someone who stuttered; and he says, “Look, God, I’m not eloquent. I can’t speak very well. I have trouble speaking, and it has been my past history. And really, if I am honest, Lord, even since You have appeared to me, this hasn’t changed. I am here talking to you now, having a hard time getting the words out.” So Moses had this speech impediment, and he is telling God, “This is a reason why You shouldn’t send me to go speak to Pharaoh, because I have this problem.” Now God, when He appears, He realizes we all have problems. Humanity has problems. That is why He so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him would not perish, but have everlasting life. He is about changing our problems, and that takes repentance on our part. It takes humility on our part. It takes opening up to Him, allowing Him in, allowing Him to work within us – because what He is going to do, and the reason He is stepping into the world, is because He is about to act. When He acts, there is going to be involvement with His believers and with unbelievers, and everyone is going to be prepared for this. Whenever you see an outpouring or a revival begin to take place, one of the clear signs of it is that the participants are thrown into repentance and confessing – confessing their sin, confessing before the Lord, before one another, humbling themselves – because God is changing first inside of us. He is changing in us. He is changing our heart. God never comes just to change the outward circumstances that we live in. God comes to change us in our heart towards Him, in our worship, in our serving of Him; and therefore, He begins by dealing with our hearts, minds, and spirits to purify us, to sanctify us, to make us vessels worthy to be used by the Master in what He is about to do.

This is what Moses is facing. And he can make all the excuses he wants, but God has chosen him, and he has got to allow God to purify him and change him. In verses 11-13, “The Lord said to him, ‘Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now then go.’” The Lord is so disturbed by Moses’ problems, isn’t He? So what does He finally say? “Just go. I told you to go, just go.” “‘And I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say.’ But he said, ‘Please, Lord, now send the message by whomever You will.’” I always love this line! “Lord, do whatever You want to do.” “Lord, Your will be done.” We pray that prayer: “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done – just don’t try to do it through me, because I’m unworthy, and I’m incapable, and I have all these problems and these situations. I know You are the Creator of the universe and You are all powerful, but I know You can’t fix me.” Yes, He can fix you, and He is here to fix you. He is here to fix me. He is here to change us spirit, soul, and body, that we might be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord; that we might be His hands and feet, His arms and legs, and His mouthpiece in this world as He begins to move. Yes, He has come down, but He has come down to move through you. That is Passover.

We see another dealing that begins to happen. We find this in Exodus the fifth chapter, and it is surrounding Pharaoh. Pharaoh rejects and refuses God in His coming, starting with verses 1-2: “And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, “Let My people go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness.”’” But Pharaoh said, ‘Who is the Lord

that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and besides, I will not let Israel go.” Well, Pharaoh begins to have a meeting with God, as we would say; and God begins to change his attitude and show him that He is the only and true God in the universe. To do that, He must destroy everything else that Pharaoh does believe in. Pharaoh is saying here, “I don’t know the Lord, I don’t believe in the Lord, and I am not going to let Israel go. I am not going to be obedient to what He is telling me to do.” So we go through a process of judgments. It is estimated at times that this took a year in the engagement between Moses and Pharaoh and the judgements that came upon the land of Egypt. But God was going to show Pharaoh who’s God. What a wonderful thing, when you think about it. What truly a grace of God, that God would come down and show Pharaoh that He is the true God. And Pharaoh, at every turn, has the opportunity to open his heart and to submit himself to God, to believe in God, to serve God, to do the will of God by allowing Israel to go out and serve God and sacrifice to God. And he will not, and he will not, and he will not; and so, we see that this happens.

Pharaoh turns, because of this approach from Moses and Aaron, and talks to his task masters. In verses 6-9 it says, “So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters over the people and their foremen, saying, ‘You are no longer to give the people straw to make brick as previously; let them go and gather straw for themselves. But the quota of bricks which they were making previously, you shall impose on them; you are not to reduce any of it. Because they are lazy, therefore they cry out, “Let us go and sacrifice to our God.” Let the labor be heavier on the men, and let them work at it so that they will pay no attention to false words.’” Immediately when God starts to move, boy, satan comes in like a flood, and he starts to oppress and he starts to make things worse. So he started making things worse for Israel. And things were bad enough, really. They were already crying out to God because of the suffering they were in; now here God appears, and things get worse. Now brace yourself, because this is a scriptural reality that does happen. Many times, when God comes to deliver you, the circumstances get worse; because He is not just delivering you, He is also going to bring thorough and complete judgment on that which is oppressing you. And sometimes, that means that the circumstances surrounding you are going to get worse. This is the way we see it happening many times in the Scriptures, so don’t be surprised if things don’t immediately tend to get better.

God is using these circumstances now to begin dealing with the children of Israel. So in verses 19-23 of chapter 5, it says, “The foreman of the sons of Israel saw that they were in trouble because they were told, ‘You must not reduce your daily amount of bricks.’ When they left Pharaoh’s presence, they met Moses and Aaron as they were waiting for them.” Moses and Aaron were waiting for them outside; they got sent to the principal’s office, and Moses and Aaron are waiting outside to see what happens, you know. And so, the leadership of Israel comes out, and you think, “Oh, they’re going to hug in the hall and say, ‘Lord bless you, good to see you.’” That is not exactly the way it happened. “When they left Pharaoh’s presence, they met Moses and Aaron as they were waiting for them. They said to them, ‘May the Lord look upon you and judge you, for you have made us odious in Pharaoh’s sight and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us.’ Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, ‘O Lord, why have You brought harm to this people? Why did You ever send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people, and You have not delivered Your people at all.’” When God begins to move, and He steps into the situation, He is going to move the way He knows to move, being God that He is; and He is going to deal with everything that must be dealt with in order to accomplish His will and to bring forth His Kingdom. And we need to be ready for that. We need to be ready to participate in it. We need to not get a bad spirit towards God, towards His servants, towards whatever else is happening around us. We must remain faithful, and we must live in a faith

knowing God is here to bring about and accomplish His perfect, complete work in bringing His Kingdom and bringing our deliverance and release. That is difficult to do many times, but it is part of the Passover story, and it is what we must do.

When we go to Exodus 12, we see the preparation for the night of Passover. This is a great story that involves all of the players: Pharaoh, the Egyptians, the children of Israel. It starts in verses 12-14, saying, “For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance.” And we do. I do. Today, I believe in celebrating the Feast of Passover. It is a biblical feast, and we are directed to celebrate it throughout the generations as a remembrance and a memorial of what God does and what He has done, and what He continues and has promised to do in the future. So we celebrate this time knowing that what we need is a cry in our heart that initiates God’s stepping down into this earth, into our circumstances, and beginning to deal with our hearts and spirits, as well as everything around us on a natural and spiritual level. That is what Passover is to mean to us. It is a memorial. We are to remember. We are to tell the story to our children, and we are to remind them how God moves. We may have lived for many, many years and not seen a moving of God, but we cannot allow ourselves to forget that God has promised in these last days that He will once again engage with mankind. He will once again come to judge all of the gods of this world, and He will establish Himself as the Lord of lords, the King of kings, and the One who reigns over all as the worshiped Creator of the universe. So we bless this time of Passover. Lord, we not only remember, but we cry in our own hearts – today let it be the day of Your return, the day when You step into this world that surrounds us, and You bring about Your Kingdom and Your will into our lives.

Exodus 12 goes on in verses 29-32, and says, “Now it came about at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle. Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead. Then he called for Moses and Aaron at night and said, ‘Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel; and go, worship the Lord as you have said. Take both your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and go, and bless me also.’”

God did deliver. He brought about thorough judgment. He had worked in the heart of Moses, in the heart of Aaron; He had worked in the heart of Pharaoh and the Egyptian people; and He had brought the children of Israel to a place of submission in obedience to His Word. When you look at the celebration of that Passover dinner, it was very specific as to what they must do if they were to walk out of Egypt and be protected from the judgements. So Israel became an obedient people unto the voice of the Lord. And we see, as they enter the wilderness, how important it is that they have that attitude, because they face many trials going forward, and they need to be prepared for them.

According to Exodus 14:19, we know that, “The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them.” This is kind of just added into the story, it almost seems. But as they were leaving Egypt, the angel of the Lord was going before them as a pillar – as a pillar of cloud by day, fire by night; they could see that. When Egypt came after them, it moved back behind them, between themselves and Egypt, so

that Egypt could not advance against them and destroy them. But this Presence – again, we must see that God came, He stepped down, because one of His purposes was that His people were to live now in His Presence. And I know they went into the wilderness, and I know there were difficult times; but God's motivation was that there would be a people that would live in His Presence, day and night. They would live in the visible Presence of God. They would live in the tangible Presence of God. And this, too, is something that we see. He says, "I will be your God, and you will be My people." He will dwell with us, and we will dwell with Him. We look for this day of dwelling. And once again, part of the purpose and the revelation that we have in Passover is the days of dwelling in the Presence of God, and what that really means for us.

When we read about Passover, it really becomes a picture of the Kingdom of God in many ways. We see that His Presence is constantly, constantly with us. Another thing – after they pass through the Red Sea, we see in Exodus 15:1-2 that it says, "Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and said, 'I will sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted; the horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise Him; my father's God, and I will extol Him.'" And you can read on, because the entire chapter of Exodus 15 is this Song of Moses. It is a beautiful expression, because what we see is that when the Presence of God comes, one of the signs is a new way of worship; it is breaking into a worship of God that we have not had before. This is what happens after the Red Sea closes around the Egyptians and they have actually obtained the salvation, the deliverance that God came down to provide for them; and they began to sing about that salvation. They began to sing about the strength of God. They began to praise Him as their God, as the God of their fathers that they have believed in all of these years. In this time of Passover, I loose for God's people a new Presence, a new way of worship, because now we worship in His Presence. We worship as He has stepped into this age, into this world, and we fall in love with Him in a way that must be expressed back to Him in ways that we have never known. I loose new expressions of this love, of this honoring, of this worship for the salvation and deliverance that God is bringing for us, and will bring for us, in these days.

As we go on in the story, we find in Exodus the nineteenth chapter that God appears to Israel on Sinai. Once again, it says that He comes down, and He touches down on Mount Sinai, and He meets with His people. He reveals Himself. This is not just the angel of the Lord; but in verse 9, it says, "The Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever.'" So God came down again to reveal Himself, to let the people know that Moses was the one who was to lead them. And I just want it to be so alive to us, that God is looking to come down. In verse 16, it says, "So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled."

We have seen this manifestation. We see it both in the Scriptures, and it has happened since; it happened at places like Azusa Street. When God comes down, He appears in the thick cloud, called the Shekinah, or Shekinah Glory. It is something that makes people incapable of moving and functioning normally. But His Presence comes, and many things happen; and it was from this point of His appearing to them on Mount Sinai that we see for over forty years, God being with them tangibly, effectively. He fed them manna. He provided water for them. It says their clothes did not wear out, and they had none of the diseases that were found in Egypt. Their whole lives changed because they were living in the Presence of God. And I would say, as we celebrate the days of Passover, let that cry be in our heart – "Lord, we want to live in Your Presence. We want to live in the visible, tangible, real Presence of God,

where You provide for us, You deliver us from our sin, from our wickedness, our idolatry, our lifestyle that is not focused upon You; that You purify us, that You sanctify us, that You make us a people for Your own possession, and You bring us and lead us into the Kingdom days that You have promised.”

When God comes down, things change. It is impossible for them to stay the same. One aspect is they don't always get better in the moment. You are going to go through God's dealings, His purifying, purging, refining of your heart, your spirit, removing all filthiness of flesh and spirit from us. When God comes down, the gods of this age are going to be judged. The gods that hold us into bondage, the false gods that are being served and worshiped in the world, will be judged.

When God comes down, we will break into a worship that is something we have never known before. It will be a new day of constant worship as we find in heaven – “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty.” When God comes down, Israel lived in a visible, tangible Presence of God. They ate the manna. Their clothes didn't wear out. Their lifestyle completely changed as they lived in His Presence. And as we celebrate these days of Passover, I encourage us, let us have that same cry in our heart today for this Passover – God come down. Let that be our cry today. Let it be our cry every day, until we see it literally manifest in our presence, that God comes down into this world and we live with Him. Amen.