

Revival

Then God said to Jacob, "Arise go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an alter there to God who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother" And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and make an alter there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone" So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the ear rings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terabith tree which was by Shechem. And they journeyed and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. So Jacob came to Luz (Bethel) which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. And he built an alter there and called the Place El Bethel because there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother.
Gen 35:1-7

This is an account of the first revival recorded in the Bible, and it has all the salient features of the many subsequent revivals described in the scriptures. They are

- 1) Revival is often preceded by a period of gross iniquity, disgrace and consequent fear.0
- 2) It is initiated by the Word of God, either directly or through a consecrated leader.
- 3) There must always be a forsaking of all that displeases God i.e. 'Remove foreign God's' purifying all v2.
- 4) There must be a whole hearted return to the obedience of God's revealed will (Build an Alter)
- 5) Past blessings are remembered. V3
- 6) Revival is usually accompanied by a new revelation of the character of God. v11
- 7) Then the promises of God are renewed and the revelation of a higher spiritual life is given. V 10-11
- 8) Revival may prove to have been God's preparation for something that may become a very hard test.

There have been seven major revivals in the Old Testament under:

King Asa (2Chron 15:1-15), **King Jehoshaphat** (2 Kings 11-12, 2Chron 23-24), **Hezekiah** (2Kings 18;4-7, 2Chron29-31) **Josiah** (2Kings 22-23, 2Chron 34-35) **In Nineveh**(Jonah 3) **Zerubbable**(Ezra 5-6) **Nehemiah** (8-9,13:1-6)

The word Revival comes from the French word '**Revivore**' which means '**to be brought back to a predetermined position**' and there have not been many real revivals at all like we read about in Acts 2.

Significantly it took the space of thirty three and a half years to get the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome; about the same time that the Messiah was on the earth. Which means it was turned around in one generation.

It also means that one generation can wreck the lifetime beliefs of many, simply by their non-conformity.

In the last five decades revival has taken place in Brazil, Indonesia, Borneo, and Korea. Revival means to bring back from the dead, to return to a state of languor. Revival brings a Holy Ghost shock to our carelessness, it restores truth and recalls to obedience, that which has just been forgotten. Revival accomplishes what our best special efforts cannot. Revival means a church dormant becomes a church militant.

Revival energises both believer and unbeliever alike; it's not about big meetings because you can't manufacture it. It's about people being so sick of the society in which they live they get on their knees and cry out to God to save their backslidden nation; and if you're not that sick you won't see revival.

There is no cheap grace in revival, it turns careless living into vital concern. It is not something that falls haplessly out of the blue on an unprepared people; it comes when God's people earnestly desire it and are willing to pay the price. Not many are, it's a step too far for many. Others are not really serious about revival; they want to play games with God trying to turn it on like a tap, get a few thousand men and women in a stadium and then whip them into a frenzy like state of human excitement. Such people never learn the difference between Holy Ghost power and human excitement. The Rev James Burns wrote

“To the church revival means humiliation, a bitter knowledge of unworthiness and an open humiliating confession of sin on the part of her ministers and people alike. It is not the easy and glorious thing many esteem it to be, who imagine it fills the pews and re-instates the church in power and authority. It comes to scorch before it heals, comes to condemn ministers and people for their unfaithfulness, for their self living for their neglect of the cross, and to call them to daily renunciation to an evangelical poverty and a deep and daily consecration. This is why revival has ever been unpopular within the church.”

Revival shows you that you are dead, then like Lazarus calls you forth out of the grave releasing what bound you. Revival starts with a majority of one, just like Frances of Assisi who was once a soldier, playboy and womaniser. But this man's repentance radically changed the whole of Italy, Egypt and Spain as he advocated the abandoning of earthy wealth and the studious reading of the Scriptures; thousands came to join his order.

We must remember what the writer to the Hebrews informed us “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”. Don't ever think revival is the soft option you would be quite wrong. But many a hapless preacher will still be happy to whip you into a state of frenzied excitement in order for him to get a name that people will recognise as he descends into the vapour of hype and doctrinal inaccuracy.

For more years than I can remember preachers have been informing me that another great revival is coming, and this in the face of what scripture inform us:

“Let no one deceive you by any means; that day will not come unless the falling away comes first and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3

The falling away is quickly upon us, and whether it's before the rapture or any other move of the Holy Spirit, there is always a falling away first. Many will have to live through that falling away just as Lot did in Sodom; for Peter informs us

“Righteous Lot who was oppressed by the filthy conversation of the wicked, for this righteous man dwelling among them tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds” 2 Peter 2:7-8

This is how many of you will be, before God puts a stop to it. We will be on our last legs faith wise and the lawless man, that is the man who will not accept the law of God, will have the complete upper hand. But the real question is how bad will we allow it to become before we call on the name of the Lord with one voice; all Christendom together becoming exactly what Jesus always wanted - **‘in full unity’**.

Let me read you something to bring you to a more positive hope, just because we see the falling away does not mean we have to accept it!! We can still pray for God to intervene and revive us!!

Mel Tary on the Indonesian revival speaks of one night in a prayer meeting:

A Mighty Rushing Wind

That night as we were praying together, the Holy Spirit came just as He did on the day of Pentecost. In Acts chapter two we read that He came from Heaven like a mighty rushing wind. That night as I was sitting next to my sister, I heard this mighty rushing sound. It sounded like a small tornado in the church. I looked around and saw nothing; I turned to my sister and said “dear do you hear a strange noise?” I asked, “Yes she replied, I do but forget about the sound let’s pray.”

She began to pray, at the same time I heard many others begin to pray. You must know that in our church we prayed in absolute order, one by one. For one-person to pray in our church was enough since everything was written in front of them. So if many where to pray we had to write a whole bunch of prayers; that night those Presbyterians started to forget the written order, and started to pray in the Spirit. First of all one by one then all at the same time. “Oh my dear Jesus, what is going on in the church? They have forgotten the written order” I said. As everyone was praying, I looked at the pastors. My what an anxious look they had on their faces. They were sitting in front of the church on the platform and they did not know how to handle two hundred people praying together. They two heard the mighty rushing wind. I looked around again, and there was still nothing moving; it was only a sound.

I then heard the fire bell ringing loud and fast. Across the street from the church was the police station and the fire bell. The man in the police station saw that our church was on fire, so he rang the bell to inform all the people of the village to come quick, there was a fire!! In Indonesia especially in Timor, we do not have fire trucks. We just ring the bell and the people realise that there is a fire and come from all over the village with buckets of water and other things to help put out the fire. When they got to the church they saw the flame burning above the church but the church was not burning. This was no natural fire; it was the fire of God. That night many people accepted Jesus Christ as their saviour.

Taken from 'Like a Mighty Rushing Wind' Creation House Coverdale House Publishers 1971 p 24-25

This is a real revival, that was seen to be what it was, in that it revolutionised the whole of life in the Philippines and many people found the Lord Yeshua as it spilled out of the churches and on to the streets.

Now this is an important factor when we look at the so called revivals today with people professing to have been given gold teeth while barking like dogs on all fours, supposedly being slain in the Spirit as some profess or making like chickens around the church.

This is definitely not revival because it has not impacted the rest of mankind in the way revivals do. People are looking for revival, but revival comes entirely at God's discretion. We can only pray, we must not manufacture things that excite the masses, because excitement is not Holy Ghost power. Nor should musicians use their musical ability to create an ambience that fakes revival, with long musical repetitions interspersed with suggestive prophetic uttering that send the congregation into some kind of hypnotic trance where they believe everything that the lead musician makes real to them, this is definitely not revival but is tantamount to shamanism.

Revival comes when the people of God realise that they are not what they are suppose to be, or the nation they live in is not even merely godly and they repent on their knees and pray asking God for forgiveness. And as I said before the answer is entirely at the Lord's discretion.