

Revival: An Abundance of Rain

By E. A. Johnston

sermonaudio.com

Preached On: Sunday, October 13, 2013

Ambassadors For Christ Intl-USA

1335 Terrell Mill Road
Bldg 1462, Suite 100
Marietta, GA 30067

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/9225

There is a generation among us dying off who know what true revival is; they have spent their lives in the study of it. I spent decades praying for it, preaching on it and some have even seen the power of God in a meeting and real revival. I fear we live in a day where the vast majority of Christians do not know what a true revival of religion is. We live in a day where many pastors in the pulpits know very little of the subject of revival because they've not pursued an interest in it nor prayed desperately to see it. And it grieves my heart that if God came in revival in the land at this hour, that many in the church would fight that revival and try to put an end to it because of their great ignorance of the movements of God in past time in the history of spiritual awakening and revival.

I've been fortunate to know men of revival. Men like Stephen Olford and Ted Randall, Ian Murray and Richard Owen Roberts, men who have immersed themselves in the study of revival. They have written wisely upon it and preached on it and prayed for it in their lifetimes. I, myself, have spent decades studying the subject of revival and I've written many books on revival. My Ph.D. dissertation was on the revival of religion in Great Britain the mid 18th century under Wesley and Whitfield. I've immersed myself in the study of revival for years but many young preachers need to know what true revival is. They need to be aware of the vast distinction between evangelism which is what we do for God and revival which is what God does for us, that a revival is not a series of meetings with loud music, loud preaching and loud shouting but revival is a true work of grace when God takes the field and everyone present is bowed down by the awful presence of the Almighty. Revival is when God breathes new life into his bride to energize her for the task at hand; to equip her to reach this generation of perishing souls with the gospel of the Son of God.

Our study today, friends, is a look at revival and its principles as found in the first book of Kings, in chapter 18, beginning in verse 30. You can turn there now in your Bibles. There is a pattern to follow to prepare our hearts for a visitation from on high. Listen, we cannot produce revival, it is a sovereign work of God. However, we can set our sails and align ourselves rightly to God to catch those winds of revival when they do blow. My message today is entitled "Revival: An Abundance of Rain" and we will look at the life of the prophet Elijah and how he was used of God to turn a people back to himself to where the drought ended and there was an abundance of rain because that's what revival is, friends, an outpouring of divine effusions of grace upon the people of God like showers from glory. It is heaven come down to earth and God dwelling among man. All

our human props are kicked out from beneath us when God takes the field and saturates a church or community with his manifest presence. And that's what we need so desperately today, friends, the power of God in a meeting, bowing hearts in repentance and surrender and where the preaching of God's Word is once again, like a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces. Oh, for those days again. Oh, for the great God of the Bible to come down in his glory once again.

Let us look at this passage found in 1 Kings and I will lay out for you today the five great aspects of this passage in the relation to the reality of revival. That was the title of my first book on revival: Realities of Revival. Stephen Olford took my manuscript with him on his last vacation and he added to that book very carefully before it even went to print. Dr. Olford taught me much on the subject of revival and I want to share with you today, friends, some vital aspects on how to prepare ourselves for revival. Like I said, there are five aspects seen in our passage today: 1. we see a repaired altar; 2. a prepared sacrifice; 3. an accepted offering; 4. a revived people; and 5. a healed land.

Let me read you our passage today as found in 1 Kings 18, beginning in verse 30,

“30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. 31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: 32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. 33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. 34 And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. 35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. 36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. 37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. 38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God. 40 And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.”

This is the Word of the Lord. May God attend it with his holy blessings to it.

The first aspect of revival as seen in this striking passage of Scripture is this, friends: we notice a repaired altar. In verse 30 we see that Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. Is there an area in your life, friend, in your walk with God that has become broken down? Has a sin separated you from the sweet fellowship of Jesus Christ? Have you been neglecting the daily quiet time with your God? Is your Bible a closed book and are your eyes dry when you pray? Perhaps the altar in your own life is broken down and it needs to be repaired. That's the first step to revival: re-entering a right relationship with God. Repair your altar, friend, and get your wood in order.

Listen to this poem written by Evan Roberts of the Welsh Revival. In Wales in 1904, God showed up under the ministry of a young layman called Evan Roberts and it spread through other preachers and revival spread all over Wales until it was said that from that revival over 100,000 people came to Christ. Listen to this very last poem of Evan Roberts which speaks of repairing our altar before God.

“Here I have built my altar,
The wood I've placed in order;
The sacrifice is ready now,
Send Thou, O Lord, the fire.”

Is that what you need, my friend? Do you need to place the wood which represents the things in your life that are wood, hay and stubble, place them on the altar of sacrifice and offer them up to God in repentance? Do you need to be the sacrifice where you get up on that altar, where you can say, “Send Thou, O Lord, the fire”?

So, we have this first aspect of revival of a repaired altar. The second aspect is this: a prepared sacrifice. Look at verse 33 from our passage today, “And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood.” Our hearts, friends, must be prepared to seek God in revival. We must realize the sacrifice involved in seeing revival, that in God's economy there is always a cost involved. Our very redemption had a cost and that cost was Christ's blood. What counts costs and what costs counts.

Too many pastors give up on praying for revival; they lose their passion for it. Their burden of prayer grows cold. I used to meet with a group of local pastors each week on Thursday mornings to pray for revival. These men faithfully came for about three months then they stopped coming. There must be importunity in desperate prayer for revival. There is a great sacrifice of prayer in seeing revival. It's a sacrifice of time, a sacrifice of self. Self must get up on the altar if we desire to see revival. So, we have this aspect of a prepared sacrifice.

Next, the third aspect of revival is: an accepted offering. We see this in verse 38, “Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.” It is as if God was so pleased with the faith of Elijah that he consumes his offering as if at a great banquet, licking his lips in delight. We see that it's only after the altar is repaired and the wood placed in order and a sacrifice offered up that God then sends the fire. When the people

of God get right with God and return to him in repentance and humility and seek his face in desperate prayer and turn from their wicked ways, then God accepts that offering. It is an accepted offering.

How about you, friend? Have you offered yourself to God lately? Or are you just a taker? Are your prayers just self-centered and it's all about you? Or are you willing to be laid up on the altar of sacrifice for others and have those flesh hooks pin you down so you can't crawl off there? Can you say of your life right now before God that it is an accepted offering? If not, then get your wood in order.

Now notice the fourth aspect of revival as found in our passage today. Look at verse 39, "And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God." We see a people revived. That's what true revival is, friends, it's when God comes and revives his people and takes a sluggish church, a downcast remnant and breathes fresh life into them to where they have an apostolic faith and an apostolic walk. True revival is like the book of Acts all over again where it was said of the believers that they turned the world upside down.

Once revival comes and the people of God are rejuvenated by his Spirit, then it's all action, action, action. Evangelism is ignited. Missionary enterprises are activated. Family altars are reinstated in the homes. The very spiritual life of the church and community is altered because of what God has done. Christians become firebrands, drawing others to Christ as a revived people of God.

Now let us see this last aspect of revival and that is a healed land. We see in 1 Kings how a mighty drought has plagued the land, cattle have been dying off. It had been a blight upon the people of God but when God comes with his presence and accepts the offering of the prophet, then the drought ends. Look at verse 41 from our passage, "And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain." And that's what true revival is, friends, an abundance of rain. God promises in his Word that he will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. The thirsty heart is flooded by the presence of the Holy Spirit. The text says in verse 45 that "there was a great rain." When revival comes, the lost are swept into the Kingdom of God through a spiritual awakening. More is accomplished in seasons of revival than in years of steady evangelism.

So, we see this aspect of a land healed. What does it say in God's Word for a land to be healed? Look at 2 Chronicles 7:14. I will read it to you,

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

That's the pattern, friends, and it's mirror is laid for us in 1 Kings 18. Let us remember that if we truly have a desire to see God come in his manifest presence in the midst of revival and heal our land with an abundance of rain, with showers of blessings, then we

must each come to that place before him personally where we are willing to have a repaired altar, a prepared sacrifice, an accepted offering which results in a revived people who then dwell in a healed land.

Let the people of God turn back to the God of the Bible in these last days and cry out to him to forgive our sins, notice our sacrifice and accept our offerings of ourselves before it's too late and rather than his blessings received in revival and spiritual awakening it is drought and judgment and ultimate destruction. Listen friends, let us realign ourselves back to God right now. Right now. And turn our hearts towards him in repentance. Turn our eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ and tune our ears to expectantly hear the sound of abundance of rain.

It is my prayer to see revival in your day and mine. I will close this message with a poem I wrote on this very subject entitled "A Repaired Altar."

"Give me a fire, O Lord,
Give me a fire for thee.
Give me your fire, O Lord,
Let it burn brightly in me.

"Give me a fire, O Lord,
The wood of my life I give to thee.
Consume my ashes, O Lord,
And let a revival begin with me.

"Give me a fire, O Lord,
Give me a glimpse of hell and eternity.
Make me a fire, O Lord,
So my life may be burned out for thee.

"Give me a fire, O Lord,
Increase my desire for thee.
Make me a flame, O Lord,
That draws others to you through me."