

## AMERICA NEEDS REVIVAL

### TEXT: I KINGS 18:17-41

#### Introduction:

1. The other day, my wife and I were talking about this disgusting demonstration down by Wall Street.
  2. I said to my wife, that the way I see it, there are three choices for America: Rapture, Revival, or Ruin.
  3. Second Timothy 3:1 says, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." These certainly are perilous times, and there is a great need for revival.
  4. The United States of America will not survive for long unless God sends a great revival to our nation. Perhaps there are some here this morning that are not sure what I mean by revival.
  5. James A. Stewart, in his book, *Preparation for Pentecost*, gives some Scriptural definitions of revival.
- Revival is the manifestation of the supernatural.
  - Revival is the people of God filled with the awe and majesty of the Shekinah glory. (i.e., the presence of God.)
  - Revival is the sovereign, supernatural, spontaneous outworking of God the Holy Spirit.
  - Revival is the Church scattered, going everywhere preaching the Word.
  - Revival is the saints of God agonizing on behalf of lost souls going to hell.
  - Revival is the restoration of the backslider of the thrill, glory, power, and joy of his salvation.
  - Revival is the breaking forth of God' glory.
  - Revival is the people of God living in the power of an ungrieved, unquenched Spirit.
  - Revival is the Church of God filled with all the fulness of God.
  - Revival is walking in the light, and experiencing the power of the blood of Jesus.
  - Revival is the Church crowding the Upper Room in mighty conquering, devil-binding intercession.
  - Revival is a new beginning in obedience to the voice of the Holy Spirit.
  - Revival is the noising abroad of the presence of the living Christ in the midst.
  - Revival is an invasion of God into the devil's territory.
  - Revival is our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing.

6. Israel was in very bad shape in the days of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. It was so bad that wicked Jezebel, the queen of Israel, was killing the LORD's prophets (18:13).
7. It was so bad that Elijah the prophet thought he was the only prophet of the LORD left in Israel (18:22).
8. Later on, the LORD explained to Elijah that there was still a faithful remnant of seven thousand in Israel, who had not bowed down to Baal (I Kings 19:8-18).
9. I wonder if there are seven thousand true believers in the New York City area today. Even if there are, what is seven thousand compared to the 18 million people in the metropolitan New York City?
10. I would like to preach about the great revival the LORD sent in the days of Elijah. Before I go any further, there are two things I would like to point out that are very important.
11. First of all, revival always starts with God (18:1).
12. Secondly, it continues when God's people respond to God's leading (18:2).

## **I. HINDRANCES TO REVIVAL**

1. Many Christians have developed a defeatist attitude. They say that this world is getting worse and worse, and therefore revival is unlikely.
2. Some even go further and say revival is impossible today. Elijah lived in a day that was in many ways worse than ours, and yet God sent a great revival.
3. Elijah faced many difficulties. Sitting on the throne was wicked King Ahab, a man referred to in Scripture as the worse king Israel ever had.
4. First Kings 16:30 says, "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him."
5. First Kings 16:33 says, "Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him."
6. First Kings 21:25 says, "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up."
7. R.G. Lee, in his sermon "Payday Someday," said this about wicked King Ahab: "the vile human toad who squatted upon the throne of his nation—the worst of Israel's kings. King Ahab had command of a nation's wealth and a nation's army, but he had no command of his lusts and appetites. Ahab wore rich robes, but he had a sinning and wicked and troubled heart beneath them. He ate the finest food the

world could supply—and this food was served to him in dishes splendid by servants obedient to his every beck and nod—but he had a starved soul. He lived in palaces sumptuous within and without, yet he tormented himself for one bit of land more. Ahab was a king with a throne and a crown and a scepter, yet he lived nearly all of his life under the thumb of a wicked woman—a tool in her hands. Ahab pilloried himself in the contempt of all God-fearing men as a mean and selfish rascal who was the curse of his country."

8. Then Dr. Lee went on to describe Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab: "I introduce to you Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, King of Tyre, and wife of Ahab, the King of Israel—a king's daughter and a king's wife, the evil genius at once of her dynasty and of her country. Infinitely more daring and reckless was she in her wickedness than was her wicked husband. Masterful, indomitable, implacable, a devout worshiper of Baal, she hated anyone and everyone who spoke against or refused to worship her pagan god. As blunt in her wickedness and as brazen in her lewdness was she as Cleopatra, fair sorceress of the Nile. She had all the subtle and successful scheming of Lady Macbeth, all the adulterous desire and treachery of Potiphar's wife, all the boldness of Mary Queen of Scots, all the cruelty and whimsical imperiousness of Katherine of Russia, all the devilish infamy of a Madame Pompadour, and, doubtless, all the fascination of personality of a Josephine of France. Most of that which is bad in all evil women found expression through this painted viper of Israel. She had that rich endowment of nature which a good woman ought always to dedicate to the service of her day and generation. But—alas!—this idolatrous daughter of an idolatrous king of an idolatrous people engaging with her maidens in worship unto Ashtoreth—the personification of the most forbidding obscenity, uncleanness, and sensuality—became the evil genius who wrought wreck, brought blight and devised death. She was the beautiful and malicious adder coiled upon the throne of the nation."
9. King Ahab and Queen Jezebel had turned the nation of Israel to Baal worship. Four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal were leading the nation into gross idolatry. Another four hundred false prophets ate at Jezebel's table.
10. It was a dark day in Israel.
11. Another obstacle to revival was timid and fearful believers like Obadiah (18:7-16).
12. Fearfulness indicates a lack of faith. Our Lord said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather

- fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).
13. Second Timothy 1:7 says, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."
  14. Hebrews 13:6 says, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."
  15. Not only was Obadiah afraid of King Ahab, so were most of the people of Israel (I Kings 18:21).
  16. Obadiah and others in Israel did not bow down to Baal, but they were too scared to lift their voices against it.
  17. America has too many men like Obadiah today. But we need more men like Elijah. If we expect to see revival, we need more believers like Elijah.
  18. We need preachers like John the Baptist. When Herod was committing adultery with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, John the Baptist confronted him and said, "It is not lawful for thee to have her" (Matthew 14:4).
  19. America needs men like the apostle Paul, who went to Athens and stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious" (Acts 17:22).
  20. Then Paul went into the wicked city of Corinth, and "testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ" (Acts 18:5).
  21. "And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6).
  22. In Ephesus a riot broke out because of Paul's preaching against idolatry. A silversmith named Demetrius said, "Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands" (Acts 19:26).
  23. It wasn't just the apostle Paul who stirred things up. In Acts 17:6, we read that the Jews of Thessalonica accused the apostolic church of turning "the world upside down."
  24. Actually, the world was already upside down because of sin, and the Christians were trying to set it back the right way.

## **II. THE MAN GOD USES FOR REVIVAL**

1. There are a few things I would like to say about Elijah this morning. First of all, Elijah was a man of prayer (James 5:16-18).
2. Elijah was obedient (I Kings 18:1, 2).

3. Furthermore, Elijah was bold. God gave him a holy boldness. This holy boldness is available for all Christians.
4. Acts 4:31 says, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."
5. God used Elijah because Elijah was filled with the Holy Spirit and he was led by the Holy Spirit (I Kings 18:12, 46).
6. The same power of the Holy Spirit is available today. Before he ascended into heaven, Elijah said unto Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee." And Elisha said, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me" (II Kings 2:9).
7. That request was granted, and a few verses down we read, "And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha" (II Kings 2:15).
8. Luke 1:17 says John the Baptist came "in the spirit and power of Elijah."
9. The power of the Holy Spirit that was upon Elijah and Elisha and John the Baptist is still working today, though regrettably many Christians are ignorant of the Holy Spirit.
10. Before He ascended into heaven, our Lord said in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
11. We often marvel at the power of God upon Elijah, and we forget that Elijah was an ordinary man who did extraordinary things because God used him.
12. James 5:17 says, "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly..."
13. Elijah got his prayers answered because his prayers were according to the Word of God and the will of God. Deuteronomy 11:16 and 17 says that if the people of Israel ever turned aside, and served other gods, and worshiped them, then the LORD'S wrath would be kindled against them, and He would shut up heaven, "that there be no rain."
14. Because of the influence of wicked King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, the people of Israel were worshiping Baal. Elijah knew his Bible so he prayed, and boldly stood before King Ahab and said, "As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (I Kings 17:1).

### **III. GOD GRACIOUSLY SENDS REVIVAL**

1. Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal, and he proved that Baal was useless and unable to answer their prayers (I Kings 18:23-29).
2. The God of Elijah is the true God (I Kings 18:30-41).
3. Not the god of Islam.
4. Not the god of the Mormons. (Actually the Mormons believe in many gods.)
5. Not the god of the Jehovah's Witnesses.
6. There is only one true God. Referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, I John 5:20 says, "This is the true God, and eternal life."
7. The apostle Paul said He is God "manifest in the flesh" (I Tim. 3:16).
8. Thomas said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).
9. God sends revival, but Christians must pray and ask God for revival. Second Chronicles 7:14 says, "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."
10. God says that if His people shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways; then He will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.
11. God sent revival in the days of Elijah, and many other times throughout history. And He can do it again.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Adrian Rogers was a Baptist preacher who died a few years ago. Not long before he passed away he said this, "Some have given up and say it's too late for America. I refuse to believe that because of the word 'Thou.' 'Wilt Thou not revive us again...!' (Psalm 85:6). If it depended upon us — indeed, it would be too late. But as long as there is God, there is hope for America and for revival."
2. Pastor Rogers went on to say, "I've studied the history of revival and found that God in His mercy sent revival in the darkest of times. Think of some of the revivals in history. On Mount Carmel Elijah was God's only prophet. There was political, moral, and religious corruption. But there was one man who knew God. Elijah prayed, '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' (I Kings 18:37). Verse 38 says, 'Then the fire of the Lord fell....' God sent a mighty spiritual awakening. If God could do that on Mount Carmel, He can do it in America."

3. "The problem is not in Washington. It's not in the schools. The problem lies with God's people. Like the patriot in Psalms, we must pray, 'Revive us again.' We say, 'If only Hollywood would... If only Washington would.... If only education would... If only the liquor industry would....' But God says, 'If My people...' '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" (II Chronicles 7:14).' God wants His people to humble themselves and turn back to Him. Our sins have hidden His face. We must turn from that which is wicked and sinful. All-night prayer meetings are to no avail unless we repent."
4. "The call of the hour is for revival. The only thing that can save America is revival. And the only people who can start revival are God's people. It's time we say it and mean it, pray it and feel it: 'Father God, *revive us again* so that You can bless America.'"