

The Revival of Faith – II Chronicles 7:12-16

I. Introduction:

- A. Israel's King Solomon took the materials prepared by his father, David, and built a magnificent temple in which to worship and serve God.
1. When it was completed, he also had a temporary ten foot high pulpit set up in the temple courtyard.
 2. **II Chronicles 6:13** says, that he climbed that pulpit then he *"kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of the Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven,"* and he began to pray.
 3. I wish we could study this lengthy prayer because it would benefit us all.
 4. But I have time only to point to its conclusion (**verse 40**): *"Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.*
 - a. *Now therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.*
 - b. *O LORD God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember the mercies of David thy servant."*
 5. I can't measure Solomon's faith, but I am confident that it was completely infused with a trust that God would remember the sure mercies of David, and that the Lord would bless Israel.
- B. Our text, from **chapter 7**, is Jehovah's reply to that prayer. God said, *"Solomon, I have heard thy prayer."*
1. That reminds me of a comment the Apostle John once made: *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."*
 - a. John expressed his **faith** in the Lord – *"We KNOW that we have the petitions that we desired of him."*
 2. Solomon, too, had a few petitions he desired of God. They might be summarized with the word *"revival."*
 3. Then the Lord said, *"I have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice."*
 - a. At that point, He didn't say the temple was His house of permanent residence.
 - b. And although the temple was a place for worship, we remember that only the priests could enter into the inner sanctum to worship there.
 - c. For the common Israelite – for you and me – the temple was a place of sacrifice and service.
 - d. And if I might say, it was a place for **self**-sacrifice and **personal** service.
 4. Solomon, in his prayer, acknowledged the waywardness and wickedness of Israel.
 5. And the Lord acknowledged it as well, declaring that He would punish Israel for her sins.
 6. **BUT**, *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, & pray, & seek my face, & turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, & will forgive their sin, & will heal their land.*
 - a. *Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.*
 - b. *For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually."*
- C. Please understand that God's churches today are not replacements for the Old Testament nation of Israel.
1. And any local church, or the building in which it meets, is not a duplication of Solomon's temple.
 2. But, there are lessons to be taken from the Old Testament and applied to the New Testament Christian.
 3. For exa., if today's saints, like Old Testament **Josiah** or **Hezekiah**, should humble themselves, and pray,
 - a. and seek the face of God by faith, then the principle contained in God's promise applies:
 - b. the Lord will hear from heaven and will heal that congregation and perhaps even their nation.
 4. As I mentioned in an earlier message in this series, many people believe that **II Chronicles 7:14** is a reference to something called *"revival."*
- D. In a few minutes we will have the privilege of hearing, once again, one of God's special men preach the Word.
1. Over the past few years, Brother Scott Silvers as been a great blessing to our church and to others.
 2. And he was here with us just about a year ago – fifty-three weeks ago.
 3. Obviously, two visits doesn't make a pattern, but there might be one developing.
 4. And if we were like some churches, I might be announcing our *"Annual Spring Revival with Scott Silvers."*
 5. But I am not going to do that. I am not going to call these next few days a *"revival meeting."*

II. One reason for my reluctance is that different people define “REVIVAL” differently.

- A. Obviously, to some churches “*revival*” is nothing but a few days of special meetings with a special speaker.
1. Many churches have never, in a century, grown to over fifty members & rarely see people saved, but year after year they have had a “*Spring Revival*” and a “*Fall Revival.*” **Calling** it a “*revival*” doesn’t make it one.
 2. For some people “*revival*” is any period of emotional enthusiasm, not too dissimilar to the excitement in a city when its favorite team makes the playoffs. It ends just as quickly, when they lose & the season is over.
 3. Some people have to include the stirring of multiple churches before it should be a “*revival.*”
 4. One definition of “*revival*” is an increase in spiritual interest.
 5. For others it’s a restoration of charismatic spiritual gifts. For them there is no “*revival*” without speaking in tongues and people being slain in the spirit.
 6. Perhaps a good definition involves the salvation of multiple lost souls.
 7. But salvation is a **creation** of spiritual life rather than the **restoration** of life.
- B. You may be aware that the words “*revive*” and “*revival*” are not common in the Bible.
1. Most of the fifteen verses refer to some sort of restoration to physical life, either from death or sickness.
 2. But there **are** a couple of exceptions.
 3. The psalmist may have been picturing a physical restoration, but he applied it spiritually, when he said, LORD “*wilt thou not revive us again; that thy people may rejoice in thee?*” – (**Psalm 85:6**).
 4. And **Habakkuk** once begged: “O LORD, I have heard thy speech, & was afraid; O LORD, *revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known: in wrath remember mercy*” – (**Hab. 3:2**).
 5. When we come to the New Testament, we find verses speaking of **physical** revivings, but unless I am mistaken there are no specific statements about **spiritual** “*revival.*”
- C. In other words, I can’t point you to any scripture and say, “*There is God’s definition of revival.*”
1. I think we can see some patterns of revival in the Bible, but no definitive definitions.
 2. The most helpful comment that I could find comes from a statement in **Isaiah 57:15**:
 - a. “*For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy;*
 - b. *I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite one.*”
 3. Should we somehow link humility and contrition with revival?

III. I mentioned that the Bible presents us with a pattern of revival.

- A. You can see this in the wonderful days of **Josiah** in **II Kings 22** & in the early life of **Hezekiah** in **II Chron. 29**.
1. And perhaps revival is illustrated throughout the entire **Book of Judges**.
 2. Each case began with divine judgment, because God’s people were living for self and for sin.
 3. In some cases they were not as wicked as the heathen around them, but at other times they were worse.
 4. They were definitely not serving the Lord as He had commanded them.
 5. So God sent things like the pestilences to which Solomon referred in this prayer.
 6. Sometimes God’s people were living in poverty, or captivity, as a result of their worldly sinfulness.
- B. But then the Lord raised up someone – a judge, a king, or a simple servant of the Lord – and to him, or her, He revealed two things.
1. First, like everyone else, he recognized that he was miserable – “*I am hungry, I am enslaved.*”
 2. But then in a second revelation, not often seen by others, was a recognition that what they were receiving was the backhand of the Lord.
 3. The U.S. has a problem, and it has nothing to do with our Assyrian government, or our Egyptian economy.
 4. Our captivity, our spiritual poverty, our impotence, our complacency are judgments for sin.
 5. The problem is spiritual, but very few people can see this.
- C. And then that single, solitary soul became impelled by the Holy Spirit to live according to God’s pattern.
1. And sometimes he raised his voice: “*Hey, our sins & iniquities have brought this spiritual poverty on us.*”

2. As in the case of **Josiah**, Hilkiah the High Priest said to the king, *“I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the word of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.”*
3. When the Word of God was brought to bear, the king cast himself down before the Lord in repentance and submission to God. And at that point a spiritual fire was ignited.

IV. With that we come to my intended point: what does **FAITH** have to do with **REVIVAL**?

- A. Faith is infused into every aspect of it, but all I have time to do is give you a short list of those aspects.
 1. For example, faith must be a **part** of our **definition** of *“revival.”*
 - a. By that I mean, we need to trust the Lord to bless as He sees fit, not just according to what we want.
 - b. It is not up to us to tell God what sort of revival we want.
 2. For example, I long to see people repent and trust the Saviour.
 - a. If there was one such person every Sunday for the rest of 2023, I might call this a year of *“revival.”*
 - b. But that may not be the Lord’s definition, & yet He might still bless in other ways to His honor and glory.
 3. Some might say that Calvary Independent Baptist Church was experiencing *“revival”* if our membership rose to over a hundred within this year. But that may not be the Lord’s will.
 4. If the Lord used this church to start another church in the Silver Valley and one on the Spokane Indian Reservation, that might be considered evidence of spiritual *“revival.”*
 5. The Lord might open up the windows of heaven and pour out blessings that we might never imagine.
 6. But in the midst of it all, faith is necessary to trust God for **His blessings** according to **His standards**.
 7. And by the way, sometimes the Lord sends *“revival”* replying to people’s repentance & submission, but He might also bless unilaterally, without any input on our part, as He did in Nineveh during Jonah’s time.
- B. Let’s say that Judy and I were out really late one night, (I know, you’ll really have to use your imagination).
 1. One night in a dark part of town, someone approaches my wife with a knife or pistol, demanding her purse.
 2. It would be **more** than simple faith, but it **would** be **faith** for me to stepped between that man and my wife.
 3. If he pointed that gun at my head, I would have to trust something in him, or in the Lord, to keep him from pulling the trigger. Danger can excite several responses – faith, potentially, being one of them.
- C. Isn’t there a parallel to that when some saint of God comes to the realization that **God** has **His** revolver pointed at that man’s church, and he hears the hammer being pulled back.
 1. When that church member throws himself down before the Lord, if he is genuine, it is by faith he trusts that the Lord will spare his life and keep the promise He has given in ***II Chronicles 7:14*** and elsewhere.
 2. For example, it took faith on Abraham’s part stand between the Lord and his nephew Lot.
 - a. *“Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:*
 - b. *Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous wilt thou destroy all the city?”*
 - c. *“Oh let not the Lord be angry, & I will speak yet but this once, Peradventure ten shall be found there?”*
 3. There are hundreds of churches across this country, which have become so poisoned by the world and heresy that God is coming upon them with anger in His eyes, ready to pull their candlesticks.
 4. Perhaps ours is one of those churches.
 5. Is there an Abraham with faith enough to risk His soul to speak with God for restoration and revival?
- D. It takes faith to recognize that revival, whatever that means, is a gift of God, and not the creation of revivalists.
 1. There must be a **desire** to become **awakened**, and not many Christian have that desire.
 2. There must be a **yearning** for **holiness** in a person’s life before there will be any kind of revival.
 3. And just as in the work of evangelism there is the necessity of faith on our part.
 4. But ultimately revival, in any or all of its aspects, belongs to God, and our participation requires faith in Him.

- E. What part do any of us have in revival?
1. We are nothing but the fuel for the fire; the combustible material for God's conflagration.
 - a. Yes, we need, with the Spirit's blessing, to get out of the sewer and clean up.
 - b. And we must be dry in order to become good kindling.
 - c. But clean or dry, we are nothing but the means God might use to ignite a fire on our Mount Carmel.
 2. In order to be that material, we must be people of faith, as Elijah was that evening on the mountain.
 3. Our focus must be on the Lord, Who we can **only** see by faith.
 4. Every moment of attention upon ourselves may mean years of inattention by the Lord.
 5. Surrender involves dependence on the Lord, and to depend on God requires faith.
 6. Faith is the equivalent to God-consciousness. God is the key to revival.
 7. And there is the need of fearlessness.
 - a. From all that I have read about the great historical revivals, fearlessness has been obvious.
 - b. But the only way that this individual – that I – could be fearless, is in dependence upon the Lord.
 - c. I am a **Joshua** by nature; timid and in need of God's grace and power.
- F. **Jeremiah**, also, was a man of like passions to me: He was often less than an ideal servant of God.
1. But the Lord used him nevertheless.
 - a. However it needs to be recognized that he was not the spark of a great national revival.
 - b. He preached; he suffered; he testified; he threatened, but revival never came.
 2. However, the Lord used Jeremiah to spark a revival in Israel a couple generations after his death.
 3. **Jeremiah 29:10** – *“For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.*
 - a. *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*
 - b. *Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.*
 - c. *And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.*
 - d. *And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.”*
 4. We might liken the restoration of Israel to their land as an illustration of revival.
 5. But God declared, *“I will be found of you, only if you search for me with all your heart.”*
 6. And if you will remember, Daniel, that godly man living under the judgment of God in captivity, did exactly that, picking up the Word of the Lord through Jeremiah.
 7. By faith he believed what he read, and the Lord forgave Israel's sin, and healed their land to some degree.

V. Conclusion

- A. This is for what I am praying.
1. I am praying, and trusting God, to keep His word, blessing us in whatever way He sovereignly chooses.
 2. I am praying for a spiritual awakening with a desire for holiness in myself and in you.
 3. I am praying that there will be an excitement about serving the Lord sweeping through our church.
 4. And I am praying for the salvation of souls.
 5. *“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.”*
- B. Again, I am praying for these things in submission to the Lord, letting God define *“revival”* for us.
1. It seems to me that a key phrase in the sentence which leads toward true revival is this:
 2. *“Not my will, Lord, but thine be done.”*
 3. Is that a sincere part of your prayers?