

Revival and the Kingdom

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Micah 4:6–8 (NKJV) “*In that day,*’ says the Lord, *‘I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast and those whom I have afflicted; ⁷ I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcast a strong nation; so the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on, even forever. ⁸ And you, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, even the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.’ ”*

Our land needs revival. Many have marketed revival as if it can be bottled and sold. This is not revival. Revival is not an event. It is a work of God. It is a return back to God. Revival is preceded by a prophetic call to return back to God. God sends revival to cure the spiritual decline among His people. The process of spiritual decline is called backsliding. Backsliding is drawing back from a first love pursuit and passion for the Lord. Spiritual decline is characterized by ignorance and apathy. Backslidden people either do not realize how deeply backslidden they are (ignorance) or they no longer care (apathy).

The nation of Israel was in a backslidden condition prior to Christ’s first coming. People were religious but they did not know God. They worshiped God with their lips, but their heart was far from Him. Ritual had replaced relationship. Therefore God raised up a prophet named John the Baptist to bring a message of repentance: “*while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. ³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth; ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”’”*”¹ The return of God to His people meant a return of God’s people to Him. Returning to God meant preparing their lives for His return. Revival was the means by which this process began. If revival is the cure then what is revival?

Revival is the restoration of first love for the King—Jesus Christ. The indictment by Jesus against the church at Ephesus recorded in Revelation 2:1-7 is that, in spite of all of their good works, they had left their first love. Puritan Thomas Vincent said, “The life of Christianity consists very much in our love to Christ. Without love to Christ, we are as much without spiritual life as a carcass when the soul is fled from it is without natural life. Faith without love to Christ is a dead Christian, dead in sins and trespasses. Without love to Christ we may have the name of Christians, but we are wholly without the nature. We may have the form of godliness, but are wholly without the power... If He has their love, their desires will be chiefly after Him. Their delights will be chiefly in Him; their hopes and expectations will be chiefly from Him... Love will engage and employ for Him all the powers and faculties of their souls; their thoughts will be brought into captivity and obedience to Him; their understandings will be employed in seeking and finding out His truths; their memories will be receptacles to retain them... All their senses and members of their bodies will be His servants. Their eyes will see for Him, their ears will hear for Him, their tongues will speak for Him, their hands will work for Him, their feet will walk for Him. All their gifts and talents will be at His devotion and service. If He has their love, they will be ready to do for Him what He requires. They will suffer for Him whatever He calls them to. If they have much love to Him, they will not think much of denying themselves, taking up His cross, and following Him wherever He leads them.”

Revival is the restoration of the message and power of the kingdom of God. The message of the kingdom of God was the message of John the Baptist, of Jesus Christ, and of His apostles. Revival is predicated on the right message. Spiritual decline is the direct result of a failure to preach the right message. Spiritual decline can be traced back to what is being preached in the pulpits. Revival is predicated on a return to the gospel of the kingdom: “*And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ ”*²

Revival is the restoration of the priority of God’s kingdom. Spiritual decline is characterized by a lack of spiritual priority and discipline. Lesser things capture the heart and replace the priority of Christ and His kingdom in everyday life. Priorities are determined by what we value most; where our treasure is, there will our heart be also. Priorities are sometimes guided by what we fear the most. A focus on worry will replace our focus on God. Our focus on security will replace our focus on doing what is right. The kingdom of God and His righteousness must become our

¹ Luke 3:2–6 (NKJV)

² Matthew 10:7 (NKJV)

first priority: “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**”³³ Revival is a return to the priority and pursuit of the kingdom in our daily lives.

Revival is the restoration of kingdom order. Spiritual decline is characterized by disorder in the human soul, in the home, and in the church. Revival restores kingdom order: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, **to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.**”⁴ Chuck Colson said, “The Kingdom of God comes for revival as believers are daily transformed in their thinking, affections, and values to know and desire the things of God with increasing zeal and joy. That inward transformation, which is accomplished in the presence of God and His glory, works out in our lives, through all our words and deeds, to refract the resurrection life of Christ and the reality of His Kingdom into every facet, place, activity, role, relationship, and responsibility of our daily lives (2 Cor. 3:12-18; 1 Cor. 10:31).”

What are the results of revival? First, *revival results in a conflict with the backslidden religious and political order.* Spiritual decline opens the door for wicked men to fill positions of power and influence. Revival confronts the human heart and challenges ungodly practices. Thus, revival brings conflict between those who embrace God’s kingdom and those who resist His kingdom. Jesus said, “*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.*”⁵

Second, *revival results in an awakening among the lost to the reality of God’s kingdom.* Spiritual decline results in a failure of the church to be light and salt in the world. Revival awakens the church to its need to evangelize the lost. Revival among God’s people causes unbelievers to see the change and taste the difference. Unbelievers are awakened to their need for God and allow God’s kingdom to transform their government, laws, economy, businesses, and schools.

Third, *revival results in the extension of God’s kingdom in the world.* Spiritual decline results in the world infiltrating the church. Revival causes the kingdom to infiltrate the world: “*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*”⁶ One day when the kingdoms of this world will come under the rule and reign of the Lord Jesus Christ: “Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’”⁷

Revival is a restoration of the King and His kingdom in the church and in the lives of His people. It is when His kingdom comes and His will is done on earth as it is in heaven. Even so, Lord, let your kingdom come! Let Your will be done! O Lord, send revival!

³ Matthew 6:31-33 (NKJV)

⁴ Isaiah 9:6-7 (NKJV)

⁵ Matthew 11:12 (NKJV)

⁶ Matthew 24:14 (NKJV)

⁷ Revelation 11:15 (NKJV)