

Revival, the Church and Israel

✖ How do you define “revival”? To some, revival means longer, louder, emotionally packed services complete with signs and wonders. To others, revival is a semiannual, Sunday through Wednesday, camp-meeting style service that includes a guest speaker. Still others see it as an evangelistic campaign in which salvations and rededications are the only thing that matter.

While the intellectuals and religious pundits sort it out, I wonder what revival means to God.

To me, the answer is simple: Revival is God’s people wholeheartedly returning to Him. Revival occurs when God’s chosen ones can no longer be distracted from their commitment to Him, don’t need to be entertained to remain interested in Him and find deep satisfaction in a world that is centered on Jesus alone. Camp meetings and evangelical campaigns have their place, but unless the focus becomes all about Jesus and not about us, we have not seen revival.

A typical service in most churches is more like looking in a mirror at your own face than seeking the face of Jesus. We are hypnotized by the “gospel of self.” Each week, humanistic sermons continue to make God look more like us. Sunday morning is more similar to “group therapy” with Sigmund Freud than to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Today’s modern believer wants to be a consumer rather than to be consumed. Nevertheless, only a consuming revival fire can save us now. We need God’s fire to burn up our self-centered ways, our love for money and entertainment, and our need-of-nothing attitudes. Where are the preachers who can diagnose our symptoms and tell us why we are sick? Where are the

prophets who are not afraid to announce that God has left the building?

I believe that Jesus, right now, has both hands outstretched to us. In one hand is revival, and in the other is correction. If we ignore the hand of revival, there is only one hand left—the hand of correction. Correction can bring revival too, but who in their right mind would choose that method?

So, if correction comes, who will we blame? Will we blame Hollywood, adult entertainment, abortionists and the gay community? Probably. We always do. However, from God's perspective, it's inaccurate for His people to blame others when the faults lie with them: Both John the Baptist and Jesus began their public ministries by calling for God's people to repent.

Jesus was well aware of the Roman lifestyle, the Roman baths and the Roman pornographic statues in Israel. Yet, He did not preach one sermon to those sinful, vulgar Romans.

Rattling our sabers at the world will do no good. Our carnality may be cleaner than theirs is, but we are still carnal, and it's still the spirit of the world influencing us.

Neither the blessings nor the curses of God can ever be activated because of the world or some alternative lifestyle community. The future is in the hands of those who have a covenant with God. Will we repent? Will we be revived to live a committed, set-apart lifestyle?

What about Israel? What about revival in Israel? Paul said the church is to make Israel jealous and lead the nation to salvation. What do we Christians have that could make anyone jealous of? Our divorce rate? Our suicide rate? Our depression rate? What about our mega-churches, bus ministries, or outreaches to the poor? Can we impress the Jewish community with our various abilities to raise money or build buildings?

I know one thing that could make Israel jealous: the glory of God! Yes, the same glory that stood among the ancient Israelites as a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. The same glory that parted the Red Sea, fed them in the wilderness, brought down the walls of Jericho, fell on Mount Carmel, silenced the storms, raised the dead and shook the place where they were praying. Yes, I believe that would do it. We need a revival of the glory and presence of God on the earth today. Who is the King of glory? It's Jesus, the Lord, strong and mighty!

True revival is God's "stimulus package" to the world. If you can hear, then act: Respond by joining me in the fight for revival. Or perhaps I should say the fight for America's survival.

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