

## VII. Revival in Biblical Perspective

*Revive Us Again!*

“The Second Jerusalem Revival”

Acts 1, 2

Dr. Harry L. Reeder III

April 9, 2017 • Morning Sermon

I will be reading selected texts from this second great revival in Jerusalem. We looked at the first great revival in Jerusalem from Nehemiah 8 and 9 in the last study. Let's look now in Acts 1 for this is the Word of God and God's Word is the truth. Acts 1:6–15a says [6] *So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”* [7] *He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. [8] But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”* [9] *And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. [10] And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, [11] and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”*

*[12] Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. [13] And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. [14] All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.*

*[15a] In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and then he said...*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

This will be the second great revival that we have studied. I want to give you three questions that I'd like to have in your mind as we come to this study of the second great revival in Jerusalem. By the way, there have been a number of revivals but the Bible takes time to highlight two of them. One is the revival we looked at in the last study from Nehemiah 8, 9 and hundreds of years later this one in Acts 1, 2 takes place in the same city. I do want to remind you that we've had three texts that are crucial.

This year we are looking at this issue of revival, why? Here is one reason. We are praying that God will not only send the Gospel to the nations but He will bring it in a fresh way to our nation that we might see a Gospel awakening or to put it in the words of Jesus in Matthew 9, that we would see a Gospel harvest where He would harvest thousands into the Kingdom of God through the Gospel. But when Jesus does a Gospel awakening in a nation He does it through His church, a Gospel healthy alive church and that's why we're asking God for revival. We have a church today in our country that is five miles wide and one inch deep that is spiritually impotent and Biblically illiterate. Now there are a lot of things going on with some having some amazing statistics but the reality is that influence and power is not there. If there is to be a Gospel awakening then we need Gospel harvest then we need Gospel revival in the church of Jesus Christ.

Here's a question. Are we reasonably assured that revival brings Gospel harvest? I have tried to support this Biblically and with church history, and my premise has been that Gospel awakenings come from revivals in the church and that revivals in the church issue forth in Gospel awakenings. Is there warrant to believe that you can't have a Gospel awakening in a nation without a Gospel revival in the church and is there warrant to believe that a Gospel revival in the church will lead to a Gospel harvest, a Gospel awakening?

We have tried to use three key texts to support this as we started our studies this year with our theme 'Revive us again.' Key text number one was Psalm 85:6 which says *[6] Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?* When you see the word *again* that means the church and God's people need revival more than once. It means they need it time and time again. It also tells us that God's people have a penchant for fickleness and faithlessness but we have a God who is faithful. The word *again* also tells us He has revived before. He has not only 'vived' us, converted us but He has revived us when we have buried ourselves in the distractions of embedded sin or we've removed our focus from the Lord onto something else and God comes back when we've buried ourselves in the death of distraction or embedded sin or entangling sin to bring revival. He brings dead churches back to life again and again and again. He is gracious to His covenant people.

The second text we looked at dealt with how God designs revival. The unassailable and unimpeachable text on this is II Chronicles 7:14 where God says *[14] if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.* In the Old Testament we found God's people in Israel but we now find them from all the nations in His church. In this verse we see four clear statements in God's design of revival. One is His people humble themselves, two pray, three seek His face and four repent and turn from their wicked ways. Then blessings from heaven will flow and He will make them, not marginalized, but His instruments in the land for His glory by His grace.

The third great text we looked at was in Ezekiel 37 in which the whole picture of revival is given for us in a valley of dry bones. We found out five things from this text when God delivers revival. One is revival is not man's work but God's work and only God can bring it and send it. Secondly, when God brings/sends revival He first sends revival leaders. Thirdly, God brings/sends revival through His Word and by His Spirit. It is the inseparable, interdependence of the Spirit of God and the Word of God. Fourthly, God brings/sends revival not for a revival experience but for revival purposes. Revival is never the destination or the objective but it is the corrective that God's people are now able to achieve His objectives. Fifthly and finally, only God brings/sends revival because only God can bring life from death. Only God can make bones live.

So now we come to this study and my first question for this study was, does a Gospel harvest issue from revival and does revival issue in a Gospel harvest? I have counted 28 revivals in the Bible and there are probably more but I've selected ten of them for us to examine and we've already looked at one. Every time we look at another revival in Scripture I want you to ask yourself if it matches up with Psalm 85:6, II Chronicles 7:14 and the valley of dry bones. In other words, does our definition of revival hold up every time we look at revival? Does God's design and means of delivering it hold up every time we look at one of these revivals?

God's Word is never contradictory. If we are on track with what God teaches about revival then these revivals ought to match up with what the Scriptures say and have declared. So the definition we have of revival is revival is an extraordinary work of God's grace through

ordinary people in ordinary places by ordinary means with extraordinary consequences for God's glory. In our first study of the first revival in Jerusalem we noted a foundational evidence whenever there is an authentic God-sent revival and that is it always evidences itself with God-centered worship. He brings it through worship, motivates worship and not just the worship of worship or any worship or the worship of experiences but the worship of God. In the gathered worship of His people God is the audience of one and that we are the ones before Him. So when we leave worship it is how did we do, for we were doing the one thing He says He seeks and that is true worshippers in spirit and in truth. True revival is brought in and through and establishes God-centered worship and God is enthroned in the praises of His people and God inhabits the praises of His people.

Now we fast forward a hundred years later. We are currently celebrating Holy Week and the triumphal entry. Now were in Jerusalem coming in on this first day of the week, Sunday. Jesus comes in with this triumphal entry and then enters the temple and proclaims again the prophecy that He will die and be raised again. After He finishes at the temple He will go back to Bethany and that's what will happen on this first day but then a few days later we get to Passover Day. We call this Good Friday. It is when the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world. Our Passover Lamb will do His work and fifty days after Good Friday is a revival in Jerusalem – it's Pentecost. From that revival will come a Gospel harvest as 3,000 plus are brought into the Kingdom.

So what is happening in this revival at Pentecost? In Acts 1:6 it says 'when they had *come together...*' and that verb 'come together' plays off a noun that we use for the church. There are two words in the Bible for church – *kuriakos (cirice)* and *ecclesia*. The first is only used about three times but *ecclesia* is used most often and it means 'the called together ones.' Here we have a verb form of it – they had come together. This is the New Testament church, post resurrection, pre-ascension church. We know they have had four 'come together' meetings, church meetings where they have gone to church four times. The place wasn't the church but the assembly that was the church.

The first time was on the day of the resurrection when Jesus met them in the Upper Room. Not everyone was there like Thomas but they had a second worship service which was one week later in that Upper Room. Now there were more of the disciples that were there along with some others. Then He had a third meeting which was up in Galilee and that one looked like it had some other people around because Paul indicates that there was a time up in Galilee when 500 saw the risen Savior. He restored Peter there when he was given the fish and the three opportunities to reaffirm Christ when he denied Him three times. Then Peter was instructed to take care of His sheep.

Now we are at the fourth recorded church meeting of the post resurrection, pre-ascension of Jesus. It is at the Mount of Olives and Jesus is ascending. They ask Him there when He is going to restore the Kingdom to Israel and He tells them it's not for them to know the times but He wants them to go back to Jerusalem to pray and wait. God is going to take the Gospel through them to all the nations but He doesn't want them to run out to the nations. He wants them to run to Him because He is coming to them. He gives them the promise of the Father and when God promises something He secures it. When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, not if, you will receive power and you will be My witnesses, that's what He tells them.

Here is when you know the Holy Spirit comes – people don't talk a lot about the Spirit for they talk all the time about Jesus because that's what the Holy Spirit comes for them to do. When you receive power you then have a preoccupation and that preoccupation is to be His

witnesses and that is what He will come to do when they go to meet Him in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Then they will be His witnesses in Jerusalem and then this epicenter earthquake of the Gospel will go to Judea, Samaria, and to the utter most part of the world. The book of Acts we see where they turned the world upside down but it starts right here. It didn't start with them leaving the Mount of Olives and developing an organization and program to get to the nations. It meant when they left the Mount of Olives the worship service was not over.

They had come together there and then when Jesus ascended the worship service didn't end but the location ended for they left the Mount of Olives and went back to the Upper Room. In the Upper Room they were together and they began to pray. They were in one accord. This means they were together. They are still worshipping the Lord and calling upon Him. They didn't divide up because of preferences. No, they were one, together. Their unity is not about them and their diversity. Their unity is about the Lord and that's why they could enjoy their diversity.

As they have come together to pray with one heart, one mind and one soul praising the Lord Peter points out a leadership problem they have. One has faltered and that was Judas Iscariot. Peter faltered when He denied Christ three times but he was restored. Judas was not restored and he has died. His death is recorded in Acts 1 and the Bible says they have to replace him so they reached in to replace him. Likely they moved from the twelve Disciples to the seventy and in the seventy they found one named Matthias. That is a good name. My grandson is named Matthias and maybe my grandson will be like this Matthias. He is now numbered with the twelve.

Now it's not just a few disciples that have returned from their fear, fleeing and restoration like Peter but now there is a 120. So there is not only the twelve that are restored but probably most of the seventy and then it says there are women. There are probably two categories of women. One were the women disciples that surrounded Jesus to support Him like Joanna, Salome and Mary Magdalene etc., but then likely this would include some of the wives of the disciples. But the women are right there with them and not a separate category. Then another group has joined the 120 and that is some unbelievers, His brothers, who did not believe in Him. Now they believe in Him for after the resurrection some brothers believed in Him and were converted. Mary the mother of Jesus is also there as well.

This church of 120 is about to get revived. When it gets revived in one day they will go to over 3,000 and that is probably just counting the men so there are probably somewhere around 7,000 to 9,000. This church is going to take off in an amazing way that will be unbelievable out of the revival that takes place. I want to look at a couple of things that happen here from Acts 2.

Acts 2:1–13 says [1] *When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. [2] And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. [3] And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. [4] And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

[5] *Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. [6] And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. [7] And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? [8] And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? [9] Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, [10] Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, [11] both*

*Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” [12] And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” [13] But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”*

A person can go get filled with new wine, in other words get drunk but they won't pass a new language test if they do. Those mocking did not have a very good rationalization of what was happening but they felt they had to rationalize it and that's what they came up with. So here the reviving work of the Holy Spirit comes and He marks out His presence. He is fulfilling the prophecy of Joel 2:11 that the New Testament church is being established with the presence and power of the living God through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Whenever God does something gloriously in the work of redemption He marks it out many times with the miraculous.

The Bible uses the phrase 'signs, wonders and miracles' when this happens. If you work it backwards you see that miracles create wonder (they were amazed) for a sign (God's trying to say something. We tend to get fascinated with the miracles but we're supposed to get fascinated with what it signifies. Here there are three miracles. One is that the Holy Spirit comes *like* the sound of a mighty rushing wind. That is not saying a hurricane or a tornado came to Jerusalem that day. It doesn't say a might rushing wind came in. The presence of the Holy Spirit coming with power sounded like a mighty rushing wind.

The second miracle is that He appeared to each of them, affirming that each one is receiving the Holy Spirit and it's through the appearance of a tongue of fire – a cloven tongue of fire. The third miracle is they begin to speak a language they didn't know but other people knew it. It isn't gibberish or a download of pagan tongue speaking that would be prevalent among the Greeks. It's an unknown language to the person speaking it but it's known to someone else because it says they hear them speaking in their own language and these are Galileans. Each one is speaking what Peter is speaking in someone else's known language and they are being heard. How did that happen? Then there are those who say they got drunk that morning and that all of sudden gave them the ability to speak in another language? Please don't think you can pass the Spanish test by getting drunk the night before because that's just not going to happen. Don't get drunk period but certainly don't think it will help you pass a test. Unbelief will find anyway to deny the presence and power of God, even irrationality. Then God moves.

Acts 2:37–41 says [37] *Now when they heard this (Peter's preaching) they were cut (stabbed, meaning they were convicted) to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” [38] And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [39] For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” [40] And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” [41] So those who received his word (by the Spirit of God they were receiving His Word, not rationalizing) were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

In just a few chapters another Gospel harvest will take place where 5,000 will be added and it says that is just the men so I think they are using the Hebrew method of counting which is just to count the men. I think this one will be somewhere between 6,000 to 9,000, if you count all the rest but thousands are being ushered into the Kingdom of God and there is a Gospel harvest that is going on through this church that has been revived in the Upper Room.

So when the Holy Spirit showed up with signs, wonders and miracles God used that because the people heard the sound and wanted to know what was going on. As Peter preaches

each one of the 120 start sharing the Gospel in a language they don't know because the Spirit of God gave them the ability to do it. Then the Spirit of God now begins to move on 3,000 plus and they are brought into the Kingdom of God. The result of that is not simply a church that has been established with some fearful disciples, a few more, the brothers of Jesus, then 120 but now an epicenter church has been planted in Jerusalem that will go to Judea, Samaria and the world and turn it upside in less than 25 years, all the way to other continents. It is because they first, didn't go to the world but they first went to God who would bring power, enable and equip them. Then from there they won their Jerusalem, their Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the world.

So here is the takeaway. God-sent revivals lead to Gospel harvests secured by God the Father, through God the Son, by the power, presence and authority of God the Holy Spirit. Here is a revival of 120 and a Gospel harvest of thousands. I meant to ask this at the introduction to this study so here is my question. The Bible says in Matthew 9 to pray to the Lord of the harvest that He will send out workers, so who is the Lord of the harvest? We know what He does for He sends out workers into the harvest. He doesn't secure it He just harvests it through the workers He sends out.

The question I did ask was does this revival match Psalm 85:6, our definition of revival? Yes. God is going to use this to change the whole world and in it they are going to continually devout themselves to the Apostles teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread and great signs and wonders in the midst of them. They will sell their property giving to one another with sacrificial giving as they love one another, opening up their homes and sending out the Gospel and day by day the Lord is adding to their number. That is how it is explained at the end of Acts 2. This revival matches!

So the second question I asked at the beginning was did they follow God's design for revival by humbling themselves, praying, seeking His face and turning from their wicked ways? Yes, because they went to meet Jesus in the Upper Room, they prayed together in unity, sought the face of God and turned from their sins. Peter was a traitor and now he is a leader. So is this a God-sent revival or a man-manipulated revival? If God is not here this doesn't happen. Did God raise up revival leaders for this revival? Yes. Did God use His Word and His Spirit in this revival? Yes. Did God bring this revival for the revival experience or for the revival purpose of a church alive winning Jerusalem then to Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the world? The purpose was not for people to go around wanting another mighty rushing wind or another language experience. Those were signs, wonders and miracles. What they wanted signified the presence and power of the living God.

Was this God bringing death to life? Yes for here are people who had willingly walked away from the Lord without the Spirit of God who made them into the great church of Jerusalem in the hands of the living God. Here are 3,000 people who are dead in their sins and God brings them to life in Jesus Christ. This revival is the valley, II Chronicles 7:14 and Psalm 85:6. This also matches up with the first revival of God-centered worship that is taking place. They are praising God in the temple and everywhere they are meeting, Upper Room or anywhere.

Now another evidence is added. When they gathered there was God-centered worship and then they scattered with a Christ-exalting witness. Peter stands up and preaches the Gospel to those who could put him to death as they did Jesus fifty days earlier. It is not just Peter spreading the Gospel but the people are doing it too. They are hearing young men prophesying for they are sharing the Gospel too! Why would these people say do we not hear them speaking in our own language if they are not speaking? In other words, it's not just Peter preaching but

they are all sharing the Gospel and we call that personal evangelism. They are bearing witness of Jesus Christ and then the Lord uses it as they scatter.

Why is all this happening? It is because the Spirit of God is there. Who is the Lord of the harvest and the sends out the workers? It is the Holy Spirit. That is why at Antioch Paul and Barnabas are going to be sent out by the Holy Spirit. The Father has authored the harvest. The Son has purchased and secured the harvest and Jesus says 'I lose not one.' The Holy Spirit executes the harvesting. He sends us out with power and then He goes ahead of us because when you show up with Jesus people are going to rationalize and say 'that's not true' unless the Holy Spirit goes ahead. Here are people who come up with something that is inane, irrational and honestly just stupid. To say they spoke a language they never learned because of new wine just makes no sense but the unbelieving heart will do anything it can to explain away the glory and majesty of God, unless God Himself comes and gives a heart ready to receive. Three thousand people showed up that day and they had no idea that the Holy Spirit was not only going to send out harvesters but He was going to make them a harvest by giving them eyes to see and ears to hear. The Spirit of God is the One who is doing it and that's why we see Him in all of His glory.

Here is the way most of think and I confess I'm guilty too. I have always thought of the Holy Spirit as personal, He brings power and He is present with me so that I have the power to be His witness for Jesus and that's true but I'm asking you to go a step further. The Holy Spirit is not simply with you to help you share the Gospel with people but the Holy Spirit has come to you not for you to use Him so much as for Him to use you. He is sending you. Pray to the Lord of the harvest who sends out. The Holy Spirit comes to us not so much for Him to be used by us but for us to be used by Him. Use me Holy Spirit. Lord of the harvest, send me with power but send me. Let's pray.

Prayer:

You'll notice this emphasis on young men and women and students I can't tell you how much I love you. I am going to be meeting with high school students in a few moments. I love what God is doing in the lives of our young men and women. God, loves to do revival that lead to great awakenings, Gospel harvests and He loves to use students. He used them in Geneva and Wittenberg for a Reformation and their names were Calvin and Luther. He used them at Oxford for a great awakening and their names were Ainsley, Wesley and Whitfield. He used them at Yale for a second great awakening and other colleges. He will use you. Your young men and women shall prophesy. Speak the truth. Lead us. There are some fathers and mothers here that want to go with you. Some of you reading this today, every time you've heard the claim of Jesus you have reached for one of the rationalization but today the Holy Spirit not only sent the Gospel to you but sent to you eyes to see and ears to hear and you want to come to this Jesus who came on a donkey on that Sunday because He came, not to bring judgment, but to bear your judgment at the cross. Now you want to come to Him. We would love for this day to be the first day of your forever life and to pray with you. Please contact us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 if you want to pray with someone. Father, thank You for our moments together. We rejoice our Lord is King and He has sent the Lord of the Harvest. The Lord of the Harvest sends us in Your authority to the harvest that is ripe. God, continue to empower us. Revive us again, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

## Power Point

### REVIVAL

Revival is an extraordinary work of God's grace through ordinary people in ordinary places by ordinary means with extraordinary consequences for God's glory.

The foundational evidence of a God-sent revival is God-centered worship.

### THE SECOND GREAT JERUSALEM REVIVAL AND GOSPEL AWAKENING

The Revival

The Gospel Awakening

### LIFE TAKEAWAY

God-sent Revivals lead to Gospel Harvests secured by God the Father, through God the Son, by the power, presence, and authority of God the Holy Spirit.