

The Revival of God's People

II Chronicles 7:12-16

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Introduction: In II Chronicles we read about the building of the temple by Solomon. Chapter 5 begins the dedication of the temple. God's pleasure with the temple is made known by His presence (5:13-14). We see in the closing verses of chapter 5 (1) a thankful people, (2) our praiseworthy Lord, & (3) the indwelling glory. In chapter 6, Solomon preaches, then prays. Chapter 7 gives us the answer to Solomon's prayer. Our text includes perhaps the best known verse in the Bible describing revival, first given to Israel some 3,000 years ago. In the book, *Sinners in the Hands of a Good God*, we read: "When God has given revival in the past, it has generally been preceded & attended with preaching that sounded the depths of human sin & divine grace. We may be sure that if God chooses to send revival today, it will be both accompanied & encouraged by a greatly deepened awareness of His implacable hatred of sin & His astounding, free love for sinners." Let's us first define & distinguish 3 terms: (1) Evangelism is the presenting of the Gospel; (2) Revival is the preparing of the saints; & (3) Awakening is the saving of souls (the fruit of revival). Note with me this morning, the concern for revival, the conditions of revival, & the consequences from revival.

I. The **concern** for revival (:12-13)

Israel's trials paralleled by those of the Christian

A. Drought - "*shut up heaven that there be no rain...*"

1. Israel became a desert - see Deut. 11:10-17 & cf. Isa. 35:1-2.
2. Speaks of Christians who become "dis-heartedened" (no "heart")
 - a. Speaks of unanswered prayer.
 - b. Seen in Psalm 66:18 & Isaiah 59:1-2.

B. Starvation - "*locusts to devour the land...*"

1. Israel became desperate:
 - a. Lack of physical food.
 - b. Lack of spiritual food - see I Samuel 3:1 (& cf. Hosea 4:1, 6, & 8:12).
2. Speaks of Christians who become defeated (no "help"):
 - a. Blame (or shame) on the pulpit (a lack of sound 'heralding' - II Timothy 4:2) >
 - (1) Absence of supplicating on the part of the pastor - Acts 6:4.
 - (2) Absence of studying on the part of the pastor - II Tim. 2:15.
 - b. Blame (or shame) on the people (a lack of sound 'hearing' - II Tim. 4:3-4) >
 - (1) No appetite for God's Word - cf. Job 23:12.
 - (2) No attendance in God's House - Hebrews 10:25.

The answer: Acts 10:33, "...now then are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." > Note: [1] their attendance in God's house; [2] their attitude before God's presence, & [3] their attention to God's Word.

C. Affliction - "*pestilence among My people*"

1. Israel became destitute:
2. Speaks of Christians who become "dis-couraged" (no "hope").

There are 3 responses to affliction in Hebrews 12:3-11 >

 - a. Despise (or reject) - 12:5 > Those who get mad.
 - b. Despair (or resign) - 12:5, "*faint*" > Those who give up.
 - c. Delight (or respond) - 12:9-11 > Those who give in.

Summary: When we as Christians recognize our spiritual condition & find ourselves dis-heartedened (no "heart"), defeated (no help), & discouraged (no hope), then we will realize our need for revival!

II. The **conditions** of revival (:14) [The high price for revival]

{Note the relationship > “*If My people*” & the fellowship > “*which are called by My name*” & the stewardship > “*shall humble themselves...*” }

- A. An **honest acknowledgment** - “*humble themselves*” [Beware the robber of pride]
 - 1. Our weakness - how easily we are offended (pride is hurt).
The answer - I Corinthians 10:31-33.
 - 2. Our wickedness - how easily we are tempted (flesh is weak).
The answer - I Corinthians 10:12-13.
 - 3. Our willfulness - how easily we are misdirected (mind is deceived).
The answer - Isaiah 57:15.
- B. A **heart-felt appeal** - “*and pray*” [Beware the robber of prayerlessness]
 - 1. Prayer of confession - I John 1:9; Psalm 32; Psalm 51.
 - 2. Prayer of consecration - “*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*” - Acts 9:6 (cf. I Sam. 3:10)
 - 3. Prayer of commitment - John 7:17; Psalm 40:8.
- C. A **hungry appetite** - “*and seek My face*” [Beware the robber of preoccupation]
 - 1. Desire - Psalm 42:1-5.
 - 2. Discernment - Psalm 27:4 (Why do you come to church?):
 - a. To see the Lord's beauty (Worship).
 - b. To seek the Lord's blessing (Wisdom).
 - 3. Determination - Psalm 27:8, “*Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*”
- D. A **hasty abandonment** - “*& turn from their wicked ways*” [Beware the robber of perversity]
 - 1. Recognize where we are (away from God, separated).
 - 2. Realize where we should be (close to God, James 4:8).
 - 3. Reach where we ought to be (fellowship with God, I John 1:7).

III. The **consequences** from revival (:14-16)

- A. The **promise** of God (:14b)
 - 1. He will hear from heaven (answered prayer, Psalm 66:19-20).
 - 2. He will forgive their sin (restored fellowship, I John 1:9).
 - 3. He will heal their land (blessed nation, Pro. 14:34).
- B. The **presence** of God (:15)
 - 1. His eyes open (I Peter 3:12).
 - 2. His ears attent (Matthew 6:8 & :32).
- C. The **purpose** of God (:16)
 - 1. God's chosen vessel - speaks of salvation (John 15:16).
 - 2. God's clean vessel - speaks of sanctification (II Timothy 2:21).
 - 3. God's commissioned vessel - speaks of service (Philippians 2:15-16).

Conclusion: “*The truth is that there is no key to revival. Revival is not something we create or even something we ‘pray down’; it is a sovereign work of God, given in His timing & for His purposes & glory. We are more likely to produce rain by dancing than to produce revival by the use of our methods & techniques. If we really desire revival, we must turn to God. And that means both that we must pray to Him earnestly & humbly, recognizing that there is no power in our prayers but only in the God to whom we pray, & that we must be certain that it is the gospel we believe & the gospel we preach*” (*Sinners in the Hands of a Good God*).

Are you in the spiritual condition that pleases God? Can He use you as you are now? Are you holding on to some sin? Have you fully surrendered your life to His control? Do you really want revival? Are you willing to obey?