



THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST BIBLE OUTREACH

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Topic: What is Christian revival?

Revival refers to a spiritual reawakening from a state of dormancy or stagnation in the life of a believer.

It encompasses the resurfacing of a love for God, an appreciation of God's holiness, a passion for His Word and His church, a convicting awareness of personal and corporate sin, a spirit of humility, and a desire for repentance and growth in righteousness. Revival strengthen and sometimes deepens a believer's faith, opening his or her eyes to the truth in a fresh, new way.

It generally involves the connotation of a fresh start with a clean slate, marking a new beginning of a life lived in obedience to God.

Revival breaks the charm and power of the world, which blinds the eyes of men, and generates both the will and power to live in the world but not of the world.

Revival is known as the great reawakening.

It results from authoritative preaching that deeply moved the church members with a convicting awareness of personal guilt and the awesome nature of salvation through Christ. Breaking away from dry ritual and rote ceremony, the Great Awakening made Christianity intensely personal to the average person, as it should be, by creating a deep emotional need for relationship with Christ.

Revival, in many respects, replicates the believer's experience when he or she is saved. It is initiated by a prompting of the Holy Spirit, creating an awareness of something missing or wrong in the believer's life that can only be righted by God.

In turn, the Christian must respond from the heart, acknowledging his or her need. Then, in a powerful way, the Holy Spirit draws back the veil the world has cast over the truth, allowing the believers to fully see themselves in comparison to God's majesty and holiness. Obviously, such comparisons bring great humility, but also great awe of God and His truly amazing grace (Isaiah 6:5). Unlike the original conversion experience that brings about a new relationship to God, however, revival represents a restoration of fellowship with God, the relationship having been retained even though the believer had pulled away for a time.

God, through His Holy Spirit, calls us to revival in a number of situations. Christ's letters to the seven churches reveal some circumstances that may necessitate revival. In the letter to Ephesus, Christ praised the church for their perseverance and discernment, but He stated that they had forsaken their first love (Revelation 2:4-5). Many times as the excitement of acceptance to Christ grows cold, we lose the zeal that we had at first. We become bogged down in the ritual, going through the motions, but we no longer experience the joy of serving Christ. Revival helps restore that first love and passion for Christ. Revelation 2:10-11 refers to the church at Smyrna, which was suffering intense persecution. The cares and worries of life can beat us down, leaving us emotionally, physically, and spiritually exhausted. Revival can lift us up to new hope and faith.

Revelation 2:14-16 talks about the problem of compromise with the world and incorporating worldly values into our belief systems. Revival helps us to rightly discern what values we should hold. Revelation 2:20-23 discusses the problem of tolerating false teaching in our churches. We need to examine the messages that we hear and compare them to the message of the Bible. Revival helps us to find the truth. Revelation 3:1-6 describes a dead church, a church that goes through the motions outwardly, but there is nothing underneath. Here is a picture of nominal Christianity, outwardly prosperous, busy with the externals of religious activity, but devoid of spiritual life and power. Revival helps to resuscitate spiritual life. In Revelation 3:11, we are further warned against complacency, a life that does not bear fruit. All of these scenarios call for revival.

The evidence of revival, a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon believers, is changed lives. Great movements toward righteousness, evangelism, and social justice occur. Believers are once again spending time in prayer and reading and obeying God's Word. Believers begin to powerfully use their spiritual gifts. There is confession of sin and repentance.