

REVIVALS IN ISRAEL

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Those who like to read the history and causes of revivals of the Christian church often overlook that, in the Bible, not only do we find many events of revival in Israel, but also we find God's requirements for those events. The functions usually came about through a Godly king or God-appointed prophet, who had become aware of their sins. Though the holy assemblies came about in different ways, they had certain things in common.

They began with an awareness of their sins.

During the reign of King Josiah, for example, we read that someone found a copy of the Book of the Law. Through public readings, the people were reminded as to how far they had gone astray. Today, we, as a church, having drifted away from the teachings of the Lord, can also experience renewal by returning to a biblical structure for the body of Christ—the church.

They came before the Lord.

At many of those occasions, we read that in unanimous agreement they listed their sins. Would we be willing to do that today? While being engaged with a mission agency, I was in contact with many leaders and became aware of the many unbiblical practices we have in our churches today. In my book, *CHURCH ON THE ROCK(S)*, I've listed some of these practices that are in conflict with what we read in the Bible.

They confessed, prayed, and fasted.

The unbiblical practices we have in the church are a result of our not having come fully out of the Church of Rome. Together, with our forefathers, we have taken God's vineyard (church) and made it our own.

In Mark 12 we read the parable of the tenants who took over a vineyard while their master was absent. We read that the Pharisees understood to what Jesus referred, but haven't we done the same? Is Jesus still the Head in our churches? Do we have elders who know the leading and direction of the Lord? Are we extenders foremost of Christ's Kingdom, or has each denomination become a kingdom that is owned and controlled by men?

They showed remorse and repented.

The revivals in Israel were based upon a lot more than only prayer. The Bible clearly tells us that God will not hear our prayers if we do not confess our sins. This teaching means that we have to humble ourselves and repent of our wrongdoings before He will hear us.

In our churches, we have become all too often commercial and man-controlled. We have often lost sight of servants whom God has placed in our midst, those who would love to serve Him freely. Instead, we look for professionals controlled and trained by men, rather than seeking those being equipped by God's Spirit. We have installed a pay-as-you-serve system, and by doing so, we have formed a man-made, commercial organization.

They were open to correction.

If we want the Lord in our midst again, we must realize that two cannot walk together unless

they agree. This realization means that we must go back to the Bible to discover our wrongdoings as a church.

Most congregations today have become spectator-gatherings with great orators, many of whom serve the church as a form of employment. Many of these spellbinders preach salvation but without repentance, eternal security without an obedient walk, rapture without tribulation, and spiritual fullness without holiness. Ironically, many conduct revival without sacrificially asking the Lord to show us the errors of our ways and without teaching the purpose of repentance.

They experienced the Lord.

Studying the revivals in Israel gives us good insight as to what it takes to experience the presence of the Lord in our midst again. The Bible tells us that if we are willing to draw near to the Lord, He will receive us with open arms and grant us our requests.

Jesus warned us, too, that the end will not come unless a falling away occurs first. He stated that His Kingdom would suffer violence as sinful men came into control. I believe that falling away is what the Christian church is experiencing today. In fact, I believe we will never see a national revival like those Israel experienced several times in her history, unless we, as a church, are willing to change from within.

These things are written for our admonition.

Seeking God with all our heart is an antidote for “political correctness.” That discovery will end “seeker friendliness,” or the dilution of the message of salvation. Putting the Bible and Jesus first has a cost, but the Bible tells us that we will never obtain the pearl of great value unless we pay the price of total obedience.

The revivals in Israel are not written merely for information but as examples for us to follow. The prophet Joel also declared the following:

*“Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast,
call a sacred assembly” (2:15).*

God was eager for them to come to repentance and return in obedience to Him. His words to them were

*“Even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart
with fasting and weeping and mourning” (2:12).*

Do we want to go on playing church or do we want to come clean before the Lord? The choice is ours and the Father is waiting.

Revivals Israel experienced as listed by leaders:

Moses: Exodus 32-40; **Samuel:** I Samuel 7; **David:** II Samuel 6-7; **Asa:** II Chronicles 14-16; Jehosaphat: II Chronicles 17-20; **Jehoida:** II Chronicles 23-24; **Hezekiah:** II Chronicles 29-32; **Josiah:** II Chronicles 34-35; **Zerubbabel:** Ezra 1-6; **Ezra:** Ezra 7-10; **Joel:** Joel 1-2:27
Nehemiah: Nehemiah 1-13;

