



# **REVIVAL: IT'S TRUE MEANING AND GENUINE MARKS**

**From Ezra to Jonathan Edwards**

# THE TRUE MEANING OF “REVIVAL”

- The Revival Model of Ezra, the priest and scribe
  - Revival is a season of Divine visitation and spiritual renewal among God's people marked by genuine repentance for sin and hunger for God and for righteousness. It implies a previous season of spiritual and moral decline, compromise and complacency, along with attending disunity, among God's people.

# REVIVAL IS THE RESULT OF THE HAND OF GOD AT WORK

- It started with a man of *integrity* devoted *to the study of God's Word and prayer*: **DANIEL**
- In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, *according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet*, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. *So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed ...* (Daniel 9:1-4)

# REVIVAL IS THE RESULT OF THE HAND OF GOD AT WORK

- “In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, *the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia*, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing:
- “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and *he has charged me* to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah ...” (Ezra 1:1-2)

# REVIVAL IS THE RESULT OF THE HAND OF GOD AT WORK

- “Then rose up the heads of the fathers’ houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, *everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem.*” (Ezra 1:5)
- This initial “stirring up” of God would lead to the rebuilding of the temple until it was finished, 15 years later, during the reign of King Darius of the Persian kingdom (Ezra 6:14-15). But the former glory of God did not return as promised.
- The people’s spiritual life from then on became simply *ceremonial*. Soon they started compromising God’s laws and failed to keep themselves undefiled from the surrounding peoples. 57 years later, God was now about to move into the *central phase* of His revival work – *the restoration of holiness in His people*.

# REVIVAL IS THE RESULT OF THE HAND OF GOD AT WORK

- “this Ezra came up from Babylon. *He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses*, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he asked, *for the hand of the LORD his God was on him.*” (Ezra 7:6)
- He had begun his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, *for the gracious hand of his God was on him*. For Ezra had *devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.* (Ezra 7:9-10)

# REVIVAL RESTORES THE CENTRALITY OF GOD'S WORD IN THE HEARTS AND LIVES OF GOD'S PEOPLE

- **Ezra 7:12-14, 25-26**

“Artaxerxes, king of kings,

“To Ezra the priest, a *teacher of the Law of the God of heaven*:

“Greetings.

“Now I decree that any of the Israelites in my kingdom, including priests and Levites, who wish to go to Jerusalem with you, may go. You are sent by the king and his seven advisers to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem *with regard to the Law of your God*, which is in your hand.”

# REVIVAL RESTORES THE CENTRALITY OF GOD'S WORD IN THE HEARTS AND LIVES OF GOD'S PEOPLE

“And you, Ezra, in accordance with the wisdom of your God, which you possess, *appoint* magistrates and judges to administer justice to all the people of Trans-Euphrates—*all who know the laws of your God*. And you are *to teach any who do not know them*. Whoever *does not obey the law of your God* and the law of the king must surely be punished by death, banishment, confiscation of property, or imprisonment.”



# THE TRUE MEANING OF “REVIVAL”

- The Revival Model of Ezra, the priest and scribe
  - Revival is the result of deep conviction of sin when confronted by the Word of God leading to genuine repentance and radical change, manifest in a new resolve to obey God and His Word without compromise, greater hunger for and dependence on God, hunger for holiness and righteousness, and genuine love and compassion for others.

# REVIVAL BEGINS IN MOURNING FOR SIN AND ALL COMPROMISES OF GOD'S WORD

- After these things had been done, the leaders came to me and said, "The people of Israel, including the priests and the Levites, **have not kept themselves separate** from the neighboring peoples *with their detestable practices*, like those of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites. They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, and have **mingled the holy race with the peoples around them. And the leaders and officials have led the way in this unfaithfulness.**" When I heard this, I tore my tunic and cloak, pulled hair from my head and beard and sat down appalled. Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel gathered around me because of this **unfaithfulness of the exiles**. And I sat there appalled until the evening sacrifice. (Ezra 9:1-4)

# REVIVAL BEGINS IN MOURNING FOR SIN AND ALL COMPROMISES OF GOD'S WORD

- While Ezra was *praying and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God*, a large crowd of Israelites—men, women and children—gathered around him. They too wept bitterly ... Then Ezra withdrew from before the house of God and went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. While he was there, he ate no food and drank no water, because he *continued to mourn over the unfaithfulness of the exiles*. (Ezra 10:1, 6)
- This time of mourning for sin led to a movement among the people to separate from their foreign wives and children and consecrate themselves to God.

# REVIVAL IS MANIFEST IN GENUINE REPENTANCE AFTER HEARING GOD'S WORD

- Around 13 years later, the full revival was about to begin:
- So on the first day of the seventh month *Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly*, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. *He read it aloud from daybreak till noon* as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. *And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law* ... Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is sacred to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." *For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.* (Nehemiah 8:2-3, 9)

# REVIVAL IS MANIFEST IN GENUINE REPENTANCE AFTER HEARING GOD'S WORD

- On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, *fasting and wearing sackcloth and having dust on their heads*. Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and *confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers*. They stood where they were *and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the LORD their God*. (Nehemiah 9:1-3)

# REVIVAL RESULTS IN HUNGER FOR HOLINESS AND UNCOMPROMISING OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD

- “The rest of the people—priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, temple servants and *all who separated themselves from the neighboring peoples for the sake of the Law of God*, together with their wives and all their sons and daughters who are able to understand—all these now join their brothers the nobles, *and bind themselves with a curse and an oath to follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the LORD our Lord*. (Nehemiah 10:28-29)

# JONATHAN EDWARDS: THE 5 MARKS OF TRUE REVIVAL

1) it exalts Jesus Christ.

“He (the Holy Spirit) will bring glory to me (Christ) by taking from what is mine and making it known to you (Christians)” (Jn. 16:14)

2) it attacks the powers of darkness

3) it exalts the Holy Scriptures

4) it lifts up sound doctrine

5) it promotes love to God and man

# SUPERNATURAL MANIFESTATIONS DURING REVIVALS

- Supernatural manifestations during a season of revival are not to be confused with the revival itself. Revival is a matter of the heart leading to radical transformation of character and relationships according to the standards of God's Word. Supernatural manifestations occurring during these seasons must be tested, and, if proven to be genuinely of the Holy Spirit, are given by God as aids to the spiritual renewal of God's people, *but they are not to be sought after as ends in themselves*. The history of revivals prove that counterfeit manifestations from demonic powers also occur during seasons of revival *when people begin to unhealthily seek after such manifestations rather than seek after God and His holiness and becoming like Christ, which is the true essence of genuine revival*.



# SUPERNATURAL MANIFESTATIONS DURING REVIVALS

- Jonathan Edwards sought to show that not everything in revival is from God and Christians must be discerning, using scripture to backup his premise.

"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 Jn. 4:1)

His point was just because people wept, shouted out, shook, fainted, got religious and had visions did not prove one way or the other whether they had a true work of God. Even if these phenomena were unsolicited and unwanted did not prove God was in them.

# SUPERNATURAL MANIFESTATIONS DURING REVIVALS

- Edwards clearly understood that when true revival comes, Satan and his demons work overtime by counterfeiting and disrupting the movement of the Spirit. Edwards would agree with Jame Edwin Orr, one of the greatest authorities on religious revivals, who said, “In any true awakening, the first one to wake up is the Devil.”
- According to Edwards, a revival movement might be diluted, disfigured and even invaded by Satan and His cohorts. “And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.” (2 Cor. 11:14) He observed that the more the Holy Spirit worked in a revival, the harder Satan worked to produce false phenomena.