

Revivals In The Bible

by Dean Taylor

This sermon delves into the concept of revivals in the Bible, focusing on the revivals of Asa and Jehoshaphat. It emphasizes the characteristics of biblical revivals, such as occurring in times of moral darkness, beginning with consecrated servants of God, resting on the Word of God, leading to a return to worship, destruction of idols, separation from sin, obedience to God's laws, restoration of joy, and experiencing God's blessings. The sermon highlights the importance of fully trusting in God's promises, seeking Him in prayer and fasting, and worshipping Him in spirit and truth to bring about revival.

Duration: 34:59

Description

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Transcript

H.E. Pearson said this, But when do the acts of the apostles stop? How long will he continue to work and teach in this manner? So long as he has a believing body of disciples who still go forth into all the world as witnesses bearing his message. The wondrous story of the revival there in Acts, the wondrous story opens with the endowment of power and throughout exhibits its effects in qualifying witnesses for their work. There is never any hint that this power ever was or will be withdrawn.

The narrative stops, but the history goes on. Wherever devout disciples claim in prayer and by faith their full share in that Pentecostal fullness, they may go forth endued with power from on high. Throughout all the ages, wherever Christ's witnesses have gone forth in obedience to his word, the same essential marks have attended their service and explained their success.

Amen. I'd like to talk a little bit about revivals in the Bible, just a little bit. I'd like to focus down on perhaps two revivals, the revival there of Asa Jehoshaphat from the Old Testament and see some patterns there of revival from the Bible and also looking at those in the book of Acts.

I'm a pastor at a little church in northern part of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. My name is Dean Taylor. We were sent out a few years from Charity Christian Fellowship.

It's Living Hope Christian Fellowship was the name of our church. And I want what we heard about today, what Brother Don just told us about. I want that.

I don't want to just be nostalgic about it. I don't want to just think about the good old days. I want that in my life.

I want it for my children, Brother Don, and I want it for our church. I want to see those things again. It's my belief that God wants that even worse than I do, that in His Word, He's given us certain principles, certain things, certain promises, that if we come to those promises in faith and taking those for ourselves, we can experience what we just heard.

That's my prayer. So if we could, let's pray just for a minute. And then let's see what God has to tell us about these Old Testament revivals, the Book of Acts, and then look at our own life.

Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we come here in the name of Jesus Christ. I want to talk about Your name, Your honor.

Oh, Father, we want these things, Lord, but I know You want them more. Father, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, can You speak through me in this little time slot here, Lord, and let us hear what You have to say. It's in Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. We've looked at the revivals in the Old Testament. The first one I would like to look at is the revival there of Asa.

I like this little summary I found by Wilbur Smith. He was a writer of revival, and he gave a summary of what he sees as nine characteristics that are found throughout the revivals in the Bible. And to distinguish this from perhaps other outworkings of the Holy Spirit, this wouldn't be including like the Mount Carmel where Elijah saw the manifestations of God there.

But these are when revival comes out, it affects the whole community, and there are certain characteristics that he noted there. I'd like to give them to you. I think they're precious.

I like them. So we look at these nine characteristics. Wilbur Smith has this number one.

Number one, that revival occurs in time of moral darkness and national depression, when times are bad, when sin is abounding, when these things that we've heard, these different pastors here sharing about the burden and concerns on their heart, like we experience here today, times of national depression. Number two, each of these revivals that we see in the Word of God began in the heart of a consecrated servant of God, someone who themselves took these promises of God, took the Word of God in their own lives and became the energizing power behind those revivals. Number three, each revival rested on the Word of God, on the Word of God, and proclaiming the Word of God with power.

Number four, Wilbur Smith gives us, that all resulted in a return to the worship of God. So we look through these patterns. It's not just a reformation of manners, it's not just a reformation of their own life getting back together, but a reformation of the worship of God.

And each of these also, interestingly enough, there's a return to blood sacrifice. The worshiping of God and the blood sacrifice. We see both in the Old Testament and I believe we see in the New Testament, and I believe we see that same blood sacrifice today, as we have the blood of Jesus shed for our sins.

Number five, in each we witness a destruction of idols. Idols. In each revival there was a recorded separation from sin.

Recorded. Put down in the Word of God a separation from sin. In each revival we have people not only just separating from sin, but we see a returning of the people of God to following after God in His ways and His laws and obedience to God.

A turning away from sin, but also a turning to God's ways. It's one of the things we see as a pattern, Wilbur Smith gives us here. We see in number eight, a restoration of the great joy of gladness.

This is not a bad thing. This is not a sad time. It's a time of rejoicing for the people of God.

And that's a pattern we see all through the Scriptures. And number nine, he puts in there we see a blessing of God upon His people. I added two more as I looked into these things.

Looking upon maybe some of the idea from Charles Finney, we see that each of these times it was on the brink of judgment. That God's hand of judgment was on the people of God, on the church of God, and there it was, and was there going to be judgment, or was there going to be revival? In these cases we see here there's revival, but sometimes there's judgment. Another one that I find precious and I hold on to is that in each of these things I've noticed that these people did not have to have their lives entirely perfect, or let's say their theology completely perfect for God to bring revival in their life.

That God saw a heart that many times would say, and their heart was perfect toward God. And God saw that heart and brought revival there, and then worked that revival amongst those people that are there. Asa is one of the ones that are a perfect example of that.

So let's take those nine characteristics that Wilbur Smith gave us, and let's look at some of those things that we see in those Old Testaments, and taking that into the book of Acts as well. Turn your Bibles, if you have them here, to 2 Chronicles. And we look at 2 Chronicles chapter 14.

Asa's father was very zealous for the nation of Israel. He was one of the ones that fought against Jeroboam and trying to tell him that the worship of God was only to be through Judah, and the proper worship would be that way. Very zealous.

He did some wonderful things, but he was very zealous for that, but also during his time that he allowed idolatry. He allowed sin to be coming up and growing all around him. And it's interesting that here's someone who's very zealous for religion, and very zealous for the things of being very proper in his mind, but right underneath him was sin growing everywhere.

But then his son rose up, and his son, as soon as he came to office, as soon as he came to being king here, suddenly had something within him that made him want to seek after the Lord, and after revival, and Judah in that time. As we see here in Chronicles, 2 Chronicles 14, verse 6 here, and he built thin cities in Judah for the land at rest, and had no war in those years because the Lord had given him rest. And he went into many different things of putting away different gods and such.

In verse 3 up there, he took away the altars of the strange gods in the high places, and break down the images, and cut down the groves. That's the ashtaroth, the gods that displayed the image of the female. And he sought the Lord.

But as soon as they did this, as soon as Asa did this, and made these little changes in his life, a big test came his way. And this happens to us as well. How many can testify to that? As soon as you get yourself wanting to turn to God, God brings a big test.

And here's what happened to the entire of Judah right here. So there they are starting to have reformation in their life, getting things taken care of, getting rid of false gods, and God sent this, or this army came in verse 9. And we see that coming out of Ethiopia, somebody came up and told Asa, there's a million man army from Ethiopia with 300 chariots coming against us. What are you going to do? Fortunately, he had already started to get his life together.

He had already started turning to God. And so he had something to build on there. But instead of doing this in his own strength, notice what he did, because it's absolutely essential if we're going to understand revival in these other different ways.

It says here in verse 9, it tells us about the million man army. And in verse 10, then Asa went out against him and they set the battle in array in the valley. Look at verse 11.

And Asa cried unto the Lord his God and said, Lord, oh, note these words, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee, and in, notice this, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God.

Let not man prevail against thee. So the Lord smote the Ethiopians. There it is.

He didn't see his own strength. He didn't try to rest into something that he had, but he knew that he had no power apart from God. Well, as they were coming back from this little victory there, God sent a prophet to Asa, just in case Asa was able to take that minute where he destroyed those Ethiopians and just in case he was able to take the victory to himself, a prophet came to him and said this to him, Asa, 2 Chronicles chapter 15, verse 2, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah, and Benjamin, the Lord is with you while you be with him, and if ye seek him, he will be found of you.

But if you forsake him, he will forsake you. Now that's an impressive verse, isn't it? You know, God does not want to give us something that we can just put into our pocket and then we can walk away from him and forget about him. I love this writing by Evan Hopkins, who was one of the main writers in the Keswick people, the Keswick movement, and he said, he gave this analogy of a candle in a dark room, if this room was completely dark and Evan Hopkins says there that if I was to light this candle and then I'm going to tell you, I'm going to blow this candle out and every one of you hold on to the light.

You can't. But your illuminating source of light comes from the presence of that light and the same it is with God. God wants our power and our source continually to be resting upon him and that's a key.

And that's why the prophet went to Asa and said, as long as you're with us, as long as you're with God that he'll be with you. But if you forsake him, he's going to let you walk off. He's going to let you go try it in your own way.

He's going to let you try these things. Why? How shall you escape if you neglect so great a salvation? This is what he's saying. So he goes on.

Asa gets excited and this is when revival came. And it says here that he called the people together looking over. We're in chapter 15 verse 7 there and another prophet and he goes and talks to them and tells them to be strong therefore and let not your hands be weak for your work shall be rewarded.

He gave a promise to him in verse 8 and when Asa heard these words and the prophecy, it goes on to say that he gathered all Israel together and looking down verse 9 and they gathered all Judah and Benjamin and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh and out of Simeon and they fell to him in Israel in abundance when they saw the Lord was with them. Different ones came over with him. So they gathered themselves together in Jerusalem in the third month in the 15th year of the reign of Asa and they offered them to the Lord the same time of the spoil which they had brought and they offered to him 7,000 sheep and 700 oxen the blood sacrifice there.

We just want to worship the Lord and it was great joy. Now the people repented of their sin. They turned from their idols.

They destroyed these asteros and these things that were in their way and they turned to worshiping God in a blood sacrifice and here they made this covenant to seek the Lord. They got excited. I think perhaps a little too excited as you read this verse 12 and they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their souls that whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death whether small or great, whether man or woman and they swear unto the Lord with a loud voice and with shouting and with trumpets and with cornets and all Judah rejoiced at the oath and they rejoiced and praised the Lord there.

It even says that his mother had her own personal asteros there and it says there in verse 16 verse 16 there look at that and it says and it took his and the mother of Asa the king and removed her from her being queen because she had made an idol in the grove and Asa cut it down and Asa cut down her idol and stamped on it and burned it in the book of Kidron. He stomped on those idols even one that was in his own family. You know sometimes where God wants to bring something in our life but sometimes even our family ties can be something that needs to be stamped on so some bondage there that's there looking at that there's one thing he goes on and it makes us wonder why when did it ever end and as Asa went on as strong and as powerful as he saw God move with his people in there and the next chapter he started to get strong.

He started to rest in those things. He started to have all the riches and the abundance of the spoils of war and the different things of war and then he started to rest on his accomplishments. Remember that revival from that quote from Leonard Ravenhill that we are in grave danger when we allow our accomplishments become the source of our confidence and that's what happened.

He had an accomplishment but then he allowed that to be his confidence and he got into this little battle with the king of Israel and instead of trusting in the Lord he went and trusted in his own money and he went and actually got he got treasures out of the house of Israel and came to the king of Syria and made a league with them to go kill them and to kill the nation, the kingdoms, the army that's coming from Israel the army that's coming from the northern tribes there took the very treasures and gave it to him so God sent another prophet and rebuked him that he said wasn't it enough? Didn't you see the mercies of God and the wondering workings of God when you saw him destroy the Ethiopians? Didn't you see the miracles of

God and now you do this? He gave this wonderful scripture to him it's a scripture of revival in 2 Chronicles 16 verse 9 it says to him and the prophet rebuked him and said for the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth. That means God's like looking all around the earth to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him remember that Asa wasn't perfect but his heart was perfect toward him and God wants to show himself strong there to show himself strong to his heart who's perfect toward him. Herein thou hath done foolishly therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars well you know what happened to that prophet he was thrown in jail Asa started then trusting in God I mean trusting in the physicians to heal himself from these different things that happened and the Bible still gives a favorable account of Asa's revival and Asa's life but there it went on that in this little disclaimer so where are we in this thing? It's a very clear message when God had us trusting in only him in only him he brought the revival but then trusting in our own strength moving on to his son nothing would be more of a joy to a revival king a revival preacher than having a revival son and as Jehoshaphat came on to the scene soon as he was in in Chronicles chapter 17 as soon as he was there he also started to bring reform and to bring revival in the land of Judah there and started to make some beautiful things happen in verse 3 and the Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the first ways of his father David and sought not unto Balaam so he sought to do the things of God he set up a teaching ministry where people would go and hear the word of God and stand on God's word in verse 9 it says and they taught in Judah and had the book of the law of the Lord with them and went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people and it says in verse 12 and Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly and he built in Judah castles and cities and store God's blessing was on him while he was with them but now look what happened in chapter 18 the same thing that happened to his father the same thing that happens to us today now Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance and joined affinity with Ahab do you know who Ahab's wife was who was it Jezebel that's who he formed an allegiance with that's who he gave his own son to marry their daughter that's what happened to Jehoshaphat so he went out and they did the same thing we're going to go out to battle together to fight another war and God had to send another prophet and while he was there this time the king of Israel was going to disguise himself and they were going to do this full trick and try to go out to battle with this thing but now God sent them a test and my heart comes to this point look here in 2 Chronicles 18 looking at verse 31 and it came to pass when the captains of the chariot saw Jehoshaphat that they said it is the king of Israel therefore it came to pass when the captains of the chariot saw Jehoshaphat that they said it is the king of Israel therefore they compassed about him to fight and there it is they were about to kill him there is the imminent judgment but look at what he did but Jehoshaphat cried out and the Lord helped him our God is so merciful but you know what that day another one didn't come home an arrow went up into the air and killed the king of Israel that day you know we come to meetings like this we come to meetings and many times we walk out one or two ways either improved or shot one man walked out revived that day the other walked out shot well it changed his life and it changed Judah he went on and started to come he went on in 2 Chronicles chapter 19 God sent another prophet to him and Jehoshaphat actually became a missionary and actually went out into all of the lands and tried to bring them back from their gods and from their idols and from their asherahs and all these different things that they were experiencing and to bring them back into trusting after God he was crying to them and preaching to them and in chapter 19 9 and he charged them saying thus shall you do in the fear of the Lord faithfully and with a perfect heart and what cause whoever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in the cities between blood and blood between law and commandment statues and judgment you shall even warn them that they trespass not against the Lord and so wrath came upon you and upon your brethren this do and you shall not trespass he's going to them and he's telling them these things well again God sent a test again God sent a test and it came and this time the Bible just last time it

says there was a million man army this time the Bible just says a great multitude came and look what Jehoshaphat did you know you know he heard those stories of his father you know he did and so as he's there he's looking at these things and Jehoshaphat this is chapter 20 verse 3 and Jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah fasted and prayed now he feared God put a fear in his heart the Holy Spirit put a fear in his heart and there he did to call the people together to fast and pray and Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord now we're not going to have time to get into acts here but let me just focus on this last revival here with Jehoshaphat and finish this there's something here that Jehoshaphat does that I see when I read revival histories over and over again and I'll be honest with you I don't understand it I don't.

I read about it it almost makes me have to confess it almost makes me cringe a little bit they remind God of his promises I don't understand that but here it is somehow I wonder sometimes that we have upon our heart idols we have within our heart an image of God how we worship God and as A.W. Tozer said the way we behave is very much reflection on how we view God and our view of God I think sometimes needs to be arranged and we need to get those Gods that we have now placed upon our hearts out and when we remind ourselves of God's promises when we remind ourselves of God's law and his ways it's like taking all those false images of God out of our heart and putting the real Jehovah of God in and then we can worship God in spirit and in truth and I don't know that's the only way I come up with explaining this thing about reminding God and a fear of God reminding God but look what Jehoshaphat did Moses did the same thing in Exodus 32 but look at this the army is there and they gather themselves together and Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem in the house of the Lord before the new court and said O Lord God of our fathers, listen to this art not thou God in heaven and ruleth not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen and in thy hand is there not power and might so that none is able to withstand thee God's name is glorified there and art, verse seven, art not thou O God who did drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel and gave it to the seed of Abraham thy friend forever wasn't you O God who made those covenants and promised it was your word that promised those things that was you and they dwelt therein and have built thee a sanctuary therein for, notice this, for thy name, and here's the promise Lord, saying if when evil cometh upon us as the sword, judgment or pestilence or famine we stand before this house and in thy presence for thy name is in this house and cry unto thee in our affliction then thou wilt hear and help and now behold the children of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir whom thou wouldst not let Israel invade when they came up out of the land of Egypt but they turned from them and destroyed them not, behold I say how they reward us to come to cast us out of thy possession which thou gave us to inherit O God, wilt thou not judge them and look at verse thirteen, oh it's a precious verse and all Judas stood before the Lord, all Judas stood before the Lord with their little ones, their wives and their children now there was a multitude of army coming against them, perhaps over a million, they should have been mustering the troops, they should have been getting things together, they should have been organizing but there they stand with their wives and their little children there talking about the promises of God and it is but look what happened, God sent another prophet and he said this to them and he says it to us today as well, he said be not afraid nor dismayed by the reason of this great multitude for the battle is not yours but God's, you see it's God's name it's God's name that we blaspheme among the heathen, remember Ezekiel 36 tell them I'm not going to do this for your sake but for my sake whom you blaspheme among the nations that's why God saves us that's why this is happening, tomorrow verse sixteen, go ye down against them, behold they come up by the cliff of Ziz and ye shall find them at the end of the brook before the wilderness of Jeruel, now look at this ye shall not need to fight in this battle set yourselves stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord with you O Judah and Jerusalem, fear not

nor be dismayed tomorrow go out against them for the Lord will be with you and Jehoshaphat, look at his response, bowed his head with his face to the ground and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord worshipping the Lord and in verse twenty they believe, you know it says in Romans chapter four in Romans chapter four, I believe it is, isn't it there where it says talks about Abraham's faith being fully persuaded that what he had promised he is also able to perform therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness are you fully persuaded that what he had promised he is also able to perform, well here's what happened, they got up, notice and they rose early in the morning hallelujah, they didn't wonder what was going to happen they didn't happen to see if there would be maybe a little confusion, bingo, they rose up early in the morning and took the promises of God in the morning and went forth and went forth into the wilderness of Tikoah and as they went forth Jehoshaphat stood and said hear me oh Judah, he gives a big altar call here, and the inhabitants of the Jerusalem, believe in the Lord your God so shall you be established believe his prophets so shall you prosper and when he has consulted with the people he appointed singers into the Lord, Jehoshaphat's not getting an army together here, he's getting singers together, and he went out and appointed singers into the Lord and that they should praise the beauty of holiness the beauty of holiness the beauty of being a people of God, a choice people of God, and they went out in front of the armies and they went out there and God said he sent ambushments and they destroyed each other and it says that it took them three days to sweep up all the spoil three days Jehoshaphat learned a good lesson so as we look at these things and we look at these characteristics that we see in the Bible, I don't believe it's any different in the book of Acts it goes on, we don't have time to get into the book of Acts in the book of Acts it continues in the same way, over and over men believing the promises of God just one word about the book of Acts was Acts a one time event like I asked in the very beginning no, there's no hint that it ever ends in chapter 4 right after chapter 2 we see the same people who were filled with the power of God getting on their knees again and praying, expecting God to fill them again, and that's what we want, that's what we're asking God to do so, looking at these, in conclusion, looking at these things that Wilbur Smith gives us of these characteristics of biblical revivals they occur in times of moral darkness, are we there today? they each began in the heart of a consecrated servant of God is there one here today? each revival rested on the word of God please, leave your psychology at home if you want revival leave all that at home number 4 all resulted in a return to the worship of God the worship of God there's no other way and this blood sacrifice each witnessed the destruction of idols do you have idols in your life? you know we all came here attracted I'll just say this one thing we all came here attracted from something we saw on the internet an internet sermon and this is like a new thing, a new printing press, perhaps like it was in the time of the reformation able to get material out and get sermons out and many of the testimonies of people that are there have heard of these great things but let me tell you, you know what that asteroth was? it was the image of the female and men use that for an excuse to look upon the image of the female if you're here today and at one click you're clicking on sermon index and the next click you're bowing to the God of asteroth I ask you today to repent of that repent of it so that God can use this as a means to bring revival and purify the church there's gods, many gods in us, we need to get rid of each was recorded with a separation from sin and each revival the people returned to obeying God's law and number eight there was restoration of great joy and gladness and number nine, each revival was followed by a period of blessing great rejoicing over the things of God I, bless the Lord like I said, I want what we heard about today, I want that in my life, for my children for my church and for my country I want those things may God do it

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