

# Last Great Revival

by J.B. Stoney

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of the revival of truth and the need for the people of God to recall their hearts to the blessing.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:15, Luke 24:27, John 1:14, John 20:22, Revelation 3:7

**Topics:** "Revival", "Dispensationalism"

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## Description

J.B. Stoney preaches about the cycle of failure and revival in God's dealings with humanity, from Eden to the assembly, emphasizing the restoration of favor from God before each order is replaced by a new one. He highlights how God revives the greatest truth that His people had surrendered, focusing on the importance of understanding Christ's relation to His people. Stoney discusses the revival of truth within each dispensation, particularly in the assembly, where a marked revival of the truth is necessary before its final dissolution.

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## Transcript

Everything of earth consigned to man, from the garden of Eden to the assembly, has failed. However brilliant and effective its beginning, it soon became tarnished; the bright gold became dim, until at length there was a little or no trace of the original order of things.

Yet in every instance there was a season of marked favour from God, before that which was marred was utterly set aside, as connected with the first man on earth; for each form of God's ways with men, from Eden to the assembly, will be re-established on the earth, by and through the Son of His love.

But in each of them, after open failure, there is a reviving again, in peculiar manner, before a new order is introduced. In Eden and after the fall, man is restored to God, or rather, God renews His favour to men, in the midst of the wreck which his own unbelief had caused. And before the flood Enoch is translated; there is an expression of divine favour, enjoyed, and witnessed of, in a peculiar degree, before the old order of things is superseded. The son of Enoch must have lived to the year before the deluge. Thus with Noah. He fails; losing self-control, he forfeits the place of power and government, in which he was set here; but subsequent to his fall and in the very scene of it, the favour of the Lord is assured to him, and he can prophesy of the ways of God with his posterity in power and honour. Thus also with the children of Abraham. Though Jacob falls away to the land of Syria, and there is marked defection from the standing and hope vouchsafed to Abraham, and enjoyed by him, yet Jacob again before the discipline, and entire setting aside of that order of things, tastes of the favour of God in the old order, and in a very special way.

With the children of Israel in the land the same kind of thing occurs. After the captivity, after the destruction of Jerusalem, there is a return of a remnant to the land, and the rebuilding of the temple, etc., the Lord saying, "From this day will I bless you".

Great was the renewal of favour when, to this restored company, the Son of God was born of a woman among them. A wonderful revival, or recovery of truth, before the approaching hour when their house should be left desolate; when their history as a nation among men should be closed; before this mountain should be carried into the depths of the sea. So also with the assembly; though sunk in ruins, though torn into sects through internal divisions, though covered with reproach among men, yet before it is finally set aside, before it is spued out of Christ's mouth, as no longer fit in any way to be the vessel for testimony here, there is a marked revival of the truth.

The nature and mode of this reviving I desire to dwell on. In each dispensation, after the ruin of it, there has been, as we see, a reviving of the truth before the final dissolution of it. The truth revived in each case is the greatest and most important; the one in which the people of God had specially failed; but it is restored by an act of pure grace; God visiting His people and showing them how He can turn the dry ground into water-springs. He recalls their hearts signally to the blessing which they had forfeited by unbelief. Thus it is with the assembly in these days; the saints are recalled to the greatest truth; that in which they had failed most, is the one revived; and the knowledge and effect of it constitutes a Philadelphian. The truth the assembly has most failed in is with reference to Christ's relation to it, and its relation to Christ; and this has so affected the most pious souls, that for centuries this greatest of truths has not been known and, as might be supposed, with the loss of it all the other truths were compromised or falsified; but with the recovery of it, all the others have been restored to their true and vital character. In the Lord's rebuke to the assembly for her first failure, "Thou hast left thy first love", we are prepared for all the darkness and ruin which followed; for this, because of its gravity, entailed the removal of the candlestick out of its place. Surely, if first love, the new and peculiar sense of Christ's worth, declines in the soul, the most perfect knowledge of mere doctrines will very soon become ineffectual. The revival of truth that constitutes a Philadelphian is that, by the signal favour of God, he is awakened to comprehend Christ's relation to himself individually, and to all His saints; and Christ therefore appears to the assembly of Philadelphia in the way best calculated to help on and sustain them, as thus revived in truth. The truth revived is the disclosure, to the heart of the saint, of Christ in His place and relation to His people - simply, the knowledge of Christ. The state of the Philadelphian is, "Thou hast a little power", he must abide in Christ, for "without Me ye can do nothing", and "hast kept My word, and hast not be denied My name".

This comprises the gospel of John; the word and the name, the commandment and the character. You are not a Philadelphian if you are not in this state, and if you are not a Philadelphian, you cannot avail yourself of the aspect and grace in which Christ appears to the church of Philadelphia.

But as we have seen, in each dispensation, the leading and energy of His Spirit is to revive the greatest truth which they had in their deadness surrendered, because it is the greatest which goes first. Now in order to revive this truth, He must begin at the very beginning; He must begin at the point of departure and, as it was about Himself personally, He must needs go back to the same course which He adopted with the disciples at the first, who had believed on Him on earth. We find in Luke 24 and John 20 that there were two lines of truth in which the disciples must be instructed, as necessary and essential for the new ground in which the saints would now be set.

Mary Magdalene, and the two disciples going to Emmaus, are all believers. The truth they are taught there is communicated to them after their conversion and in advance of what they had already comprehended. Mary Magdalene represents the heart mourning the absence of Christ from the earth, as we find the bride in Canticles. She learns that the Lord is risen indeed, and now she is instructed in the truth of present association with the Lord, which she is directed to communicate to the disciples. The two disciples going to Emmaus are sad because of Christ's death; they have no hope of the redemption of Israel. They are encountered by the Lord and taught three things:

First, how the Scriptures speak of Christ, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself".

Secondly, He was known of them in breaking of bread; He is known in resurrection.

And thirdly, He takes His place in the midst of the disciples, already instructed through these two channels, according to the varied and important truth imparted to each.

After these communications had been made, the Lord appears in their midst, constituting and inaugurating the new ground which they should now occupy with relation to Him. As risen from the dead, He imparts unto them the virtue and the blessedness of His own elevation. He conducts them practically into it, and breathes upon them.

They are then formally and in reality introduced into entirely new ground. It has now begun, and is now known for the first time in power; established and promoted on the descent of the Holy Spirit, but now originated and propounded.

It is a wondrous scene - one of unequalled light and joy - when the soul enters into the effects of being in the presence of the risen Lord, though still in this scene where His death was required and where we are commemorating it. This was The Beginning, and thus only can there be a true sense of my relation to Christ or of His relation to His saints on earth. This was lost for centuries, and it is now revived, but not through the instrumentality of books. When the truth is revived, it is, as it was at the first, through channels immediately instructed by the Lord Himself. This is the revival and the manner of His grace in this day.

As He taught Mary Magdalene, as He taught the two disciples, so does He in His gracious loving-kindness teach in this day. The same steps have to be trodden, the same exercises have to be passed through. The church, so-called, with its writings of centuries, and its pious ministers, contribute nothing to this revival. It is entirely and absolutely effected by the Lord's instructing, and leading souls into it, as He did at the beginning; so that He can say of the Philadelphian assembly, "Thou hast a little power" (no power but from abiding in Christ), "and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name".

His word and His name are His doctrines and His character; and one who keeps this is a Philadelphian; and this is the way in which he is taught. The Lord give us to see the nature of the great revival in the present day, and to partake of the untold blessings connected with it.

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