

THEOLOGY OF REVIVAL

I. Definition of Revival/Spiritual Awakening

A. Various Definitions

"God's quickening visitation of his people, touching their hearts and deepening his work of grace in their lives." J. I. Packer

"extraordinary season of religious interest." Robert Baird

"the sovereign act of God, in which He restores His own backsliding people to repentance, faith and obedience." Stephen Olford

"times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3:19) J. Edwin Orr

"the awakening or quickening of God's people to their true nature and purpose." Robert Coleman

"the return of the Church from her backslidings, and the conversion of sinners." Charles Finney

"an extraordinary movement of the Holy Spirit producing extraordinary results." Richard Owen Roberts

"a community saturated with God" Duncan Campbell

"the work of the Holy Spirit in restoring the people of God to a more vital spiritual life, witness, and work by prayer and the Word after repentance in crisis for their spiritual decline." Earle Cairns

B. Is there a distinction between revival and awakening?

RENEWAL: When God touches the heart of a single individual

REVIVAL: When God touches a community of faith

AWAKENING: When the wider society is impacted

C. Relationship Between Revival and Evangelism

1. Revival and evangelism are different in nature.
2. Revival and evangelism issue from the same source and flow together.
3. Revival always produces evangelism.
4. Evangelism, when combined with discipling, sustains revival.

II. THEOLOGY OF REVIVAL

Jonathan Edwards, Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God

Begins with some cautions:

1. Just because it is "new and different" doesn't mean it is wrong. (p. 89)
2. We can't judge true revival by its effects on men's bodies (p. 91)

3. We can't assume the work was not from God just because means were utilized (p. 98)
4. We can't assume the work was not from God if some people go to extremes (p. 101)
5. We can't assume the work was not from God if some people "backslide" (p. 104)

A. Characteristics of Revival

1. It raises the esteem of Jesus.
2. Satan's kingdom suffers (genuine repentance)
3. Men and women will have a greater response to Scripture
4. Men and women will see more clearly spiritual truth and error
5. There will be a new sense of love towards God and others.

Some Additional Characteristics of Revival:

6. Variety
7. Excesses
8. Opposition
9. Recoil

B. Conditions of Revival or "What Precedes Revival?"

1. Jonathan Edwards -- A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God

2. Charles Finney -- Revival Lectures

"A revival is not a miracle, nor dependent on a miracle, in any sense. It is purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means--as much as any other effect produced by the application of means."

3. Toward a "Balanced" Theology of Revival?

Matthew Henry, *"When God intends great mercy for His people, the first thing He does is to set them a praying."*

C. Description of Revival -"what does it look like?" (Isaiah 6:1-8)

1. Our Need for a Fresh Touch from God (vs. 1a)
2. God as He really is (vs. 1b - 4)
3. Our sinfulness and need for cleansing (vs. 5)
4. God's Gracious Provision (vs. 6-7)
5. The Mission (vs. 8a)
6. We Respond with Joyful Obedience (vs. 8b)

III. Delay of Revival -- "how should we prepare?" (2 Chronicles 7:14)

IV. Dare of Revival -- "search me, O God . . ." (Psalm 139:23-24)