

# Revival Stories: Sam Jones

by E.A. Johnston

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of revival and the need for preachers to preach against sin in order to bring people to repentance.*

**Duration:** 17:48

**Scripture:** Proverbs 20:1, Matthew 6:24, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 6:10, Ephesians 5:18, 1 Timothy 6:10, James 4:7

**Topics:** "Biography"

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## Description

The video is a summary of the preaching and impact of Sam Jones, a famous evangelist in the late 19th century. Sam Jones was known for his boldness in preaching against sin and calling sinners to repentance. He was not afraid to confront societal issues such as fashion, alcohol, and covetousness, even if it meant offending some members of his congregation. Sam Jones believed that revivals were necessary because of the abnormal state of things in society. He preached passionately until his last sermon, warning his listeners about sudden death and the importance of getting right with God. He died suddenly after delivering this message, leaving a lasting impact on those who heard him.

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## Transcript

When God comes in revival to rejuvenate His people with His presence, then those days are truly days of heaven on earth. And when God comes in revival, many are swept into the kingdom of God. Oh friends, how we need to pray that God would seem pleased to send revival in our day.

For these are the last days and only a heaven sent revival can avert the ruin that America faces at this urgent hour. Well, our subject today in our series of revival stories is the great evangelist, Sam Jones. Sam Jones had this to say in regard to revival, show me a church that does not believe in revival, and I will show you a church that looks like an abandoned cemetery.

Stagnation, stagnation, stagnation. Stagnation is the last station, this side of damnation. I say we Methodists and Baptists and Presbyterians believe in revivals.

We go for them. But revival is not the best thing in the world. Rather, the need of revival is a proof that we are not right.

It is an abnormal state of things that makes revivals necessary. Well friends, God used Sam Jones to shake the citadels of sin in the South during the late 19th century. He preached hard against sin and

fought the devil head on.

Listen to his comments. He said, I once knew a pastor who upon taking charge of the church was met by a delegation of the deacons previous to delivering his inaugural sermon. They said, now brother, you must not preach against fashion because our fashionable members will be out to hear you.

And you must not preach against dram drinking or liquor selling because several of our members who are liquor sellers will be out to hear you. And you must not preach about covetousness because several of our millionaire members will be out to hear you. Well, what can I preach about? He asked in great perplexity.

About the Mormons, replied the good deacons. Give them blazes. There won't be a Mormon to hear you.

Well, that was Sam Jones. Things haven't changed much since Sam Jones's day. We still shy away from preaching against sin because we might offend some of our bigger tithers.

Well, Sam Jones wasn't afraid to preach against sin. In fact, Sam Jones, the Methodist evangelist, was one of the most powerful preachers in his day. His ministry occurred mainly during the late 19th century to part of the early 20th century.

And I would say that Sam Jones was the southern equivalent of D.L. Moody, his contemporary. D.L. Moody shook Great Britain for God with his anointed preaching, and Sam Jones shook the southern part of America with his spirit-empowered preaching. Sam Jones was known for preaching against sin.

He wasn't afraid to call sin black, and he fought against the liquor trade in his day to such a degree that he was literally run out of some of the towns that he preached in by armed men representing these liquor barons. He became known as the Apostle of Prohibition in his time. He knew his subject well, for he had been a drunken lawyer for years, so drunk that he ruined his law practice and had to get a factory job to support his growing family.

It was at the deathbed of his father where he gave up the drink. Sam Jones' father lay dying, and he told his son how disappointed he was in him and begged him to quit drinking as a dying wish. That very day, Sam Jones sobered up and soon after that became a Christian.

He went on to become an evangelist with the Methodist Church in the South. Sam Jones was vilified in the press, cussed out on the streets, and he was one of the most hated evangelists America ever saw. When I was visiting his home in Cartersville, Georgia, there is a poster from a Sam Jones meeting, and someone had written across it, Hang Him.

But the citizens of one city loved him dearly, and these were the people of Nashville, Tennessee, because when Sam Jones preached there in 1885, God sent a powerful revival, and thousands were gloriously saved, saloons closed, and the liquor trade came almost to a grinding halt in that city of Nashville that year. The citizens of Nashville were so thankful to Sam Jones for cleaning up their town, they built him a mansion in his home city of Cartersville, Georgia. It is a museum today.

Another testimony to how God used Sam Jones in Nashville is the Ryman Auditorium, home to the Grand Old Opry. That building was built for Sam Jones to preach in. His name is still on the building.

The Ryman Auditorium wasn't built to hold country music acts. Rather, it was built by a steamboat captain by the name of Tom Ryman, who owned a fleet of steamboats he kept on the Cumberland River. This

Captain Ryman was a rough character until he was converted in a Sam Jones meeting in Nashville.

After he was converted, he poured all the liquor out of his steamboats that were in the ballrooms there, closing them, pouring all that booze into the Cumberland River. Tom Ryman wasn't the only convert in those Nashville Crusades held by Sam Jones. You see, friends, God had come to Nashville in 1885 in a powerful revival under the preaching of Jones.

It literally shook the entire city for Christ. Thousands were saved, and it was recorded that over 10,000 persons joined the area churches after the Sam Jones Crusade ended. Sam Jones preached in a tent on Broad Street in Nashville that held 8,000 people at a time, and there would still be another 2,000 standing outside the tent to hear this famous evangelist listen to his opening prayer of that mighty Nashville Crusade.

Brethren of Nashville, at this hour, as Adjutant General of the Lord Jesus Christ, I point my finger at the soothed old sin in Nashville and tell you that my Lord and Savior presents you all his love, and I hope that in less than one month from today, I can say, blessed Christ, Nashville presents her love to you and also presents you the whole city saved by his precious blood. Oh Lord, grant it, and I want every man and every woman here today that wants to join in the warfare against sin, whether you are in the church or not, if you would be on the right side and try to win the entire city to Christ. Well, I believe that God used Sam Jones so mildly because Sam Jones did not fear man, but he did fear the Almighty.

He wasn't afraid to take on the devil and preach against sin. That kind of preaching is almost unheard of in our day of politically correct pulpits. We don't want to offend anybody, so we just offend God in the process with our meager attempts at evangelism.

Sam Jones said that repentance meant quitting your meanness. He would say, quit your meanness and tell God you mean it if you wish to be saved. You need not be skipping around the Lord with the devil's old musket on your shoulder.

Well, friends, God will raise up a man in each generation to influence that generation for good. The preaching of Sam Jones affected America's entire viewpoint on drinking alcohol. He believed that no man can be a Christian and drink whiskey.

When he would preach in a city, bar rooms would close and people would pour out their beer kegs into the streets under conviction of sin. He also faced great opposition, and he was literally run out of town in some areas. The people were so glad to get rid of this Methodist preacher who preached so hard against sin and who made them flinch with his pointed preaching by calling out their own sinful ways.

The devil hated Sam Jones, too. Well, I will let Sam Jones speak in his own words. How did I become a drunkard? By drinking wine like some of you do.

If any man had tasted what I have and been where I have been, he'd be recreative if he did not preach as I do. You get some letters as I do, and it would go to your heart. I'm not only not going to drink, but I'll fight it to perdition.

And when perdition freezes, then I'll fight it on the ice. And if you can make it any stronger than that, put my name to it. From a governor down to a dog pelter, I would not vote for a man that touches, tastes, or handles whiskey to save my life.

And you can never redeem America with a legislature whose breath is tainted with whiskey. This liquor traffic has come down to where it is, and it's a question of blood and death and hell. These women are getting tired.

They're seeing their husbands go down to drunkard's graves, and these mothers are tired of seeing their sons go to a drunkard's hell. Nobody but an infernal scoundrel will sell whiskey, and nobody but an infernal fool will drink it. There ain't a four-legged hog in the country that'll drink beer, but lots of two-legged hogs will.

Every ballroom is a recruiting office for hell. Well, listen, friends, we need more preachers today in the stamp of the Sam Jones, not afraid to call sin sin and call sinners to repentance. But who will stand up in our nation today and preach against sin? Hear how this dear man preached and why God was pleased to attend his ministry in revival.

Good Lord, make us so earnest fighting the devil and sin that we will forget which our church is. Politicians have no more heart than a Florida alligator or a society woman. When God gives a man a good wife and 15 children, he's all right.

When the devil gives him a society woman and a poodle dog, he's in a bad way. I want to be a good man and a good husband, but God keep me from being a nice preacher. The devil has no better servant than a preacher who is laying feather beds for fallen Christians to light on.

The greatest blessing that ever crowned America is a game preacher that is not afraid of man or the devil. When the doctor says you can't live but an hour, you want just such a preacher as Sam Jones talking to you. The back door of the church ought to be opened once a year and give all who have not lived up to its rules an opportunity to pass out.

They will put you in jail for stealing a man's money, but you can be an average church member and steal a man's character. The Christian who will do things in New York that he would not do at home is a very poor Christian. I believe the Bible just as it was written, and I believe the whale swallowed Jonah.

I would have believed it just the same if it had said that Jonah swallowed the whale. I've got no better sense than to believe the Bible. Call me a fool for it, but I'm a happy fool.

Whiskey is a good thing in its place, and that place is hell. Well, Sam Jones fought the devil to the very end. He stormed the gates of hell with his God-owned fiery evangelism, and he called sin, sin and pointed thousands to an old rugged cross where Savior bled and died for sinful man.

In his day, Sam Jones depopulated hell by the thousands. Well, friends, Sam Jones was in Oklahoma City when he preached his last sermon on earth. It was entitled, Sudden Death, and in that sermon, he warned his hearers to get right with God before they were suddenly cut off and cast into hell.

Listen to his parting words to the crowd gathered that day. Men of Oklahoma City, look out! Before my voice has died out in your ears, there will be deaths following this meeting that will shock this city and state and maybe even this nation. Well, he boarded a train the next day and while en route to his home in Georgia, as he sat in the Pullman car, he leaned over to tie his shoe and dropped dead of a heart attack as if to punctuate his final sermon and seal that message in the hearts of all who heard it that day.

He was so famous that his body lay in state in the state capitol building of Atlanta where it was said over 30,000 people came to pay homage to this fiery evangelist. There were memorial services held all over the nation and the great Wilbur Chapman preached a memorial service for him and he had this to say about Sam Jones and I will close with his remarks. Wilbur Chapman said, I heard him preach a sermon on all things work together for good and I can still repeat the outline and remember the sermon as if it were preached yesterday and the impression it made upon me.

I came away from that service with one of the most distinguished preachers in our country and I heard him say after he had listened to the same sermon, I have heard today the greatest preacher which it has ever been my privilege to hear. Chapman went on to say, I consider Sam Jones one of the most remarkable men of his generation. He was peculiarly called by God to rebuke sin.

Well friends, that was Sam Jones. He didn't fear man, but he sure feared the Almighty. We need more preachers like that in our day.

Men who aren't afraid to go after sinners and preach against sin. Oh friends, pray to the Lord of the Harvest that he will send us some revival men of the stamp of Sam Jones for our day and attack sin head on in this poor, sin-laden nation of ours to shake this country for God and his glory once again.

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