

# Revival - Part 2

by J.I. Packer

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*J.I. Packer discusses the nature of revival as a divine work of restoration that renews individuals and communities through the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 1:25:07

**Scripture:** Zechariah 1:7-17, Zechariah 4:1 - 5:4, Zechariah 7:8-10, Zechariah 8:16-17

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of revival and the pouring out of God's Spirit. He emphasizes the importance of practicing justice, mercy, and compassion towards others, as well as speaking the truth and rendering sound judgment. The preacher also mentions a vision of the people of God as a candlestick, symbolizing the constant and sustained power from the Holy Spirit in revival. Another vision portrays God's judgment on the immoral among his own people, highlighting the need for repentance and restitution. The sermon concludes with a vision of God displaying his sovereign lordship in the world through the imagery of chariots, symbolizing his power.

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## Transcript

Well, Brother Walter has already made my day by telling me that he agrees with me on the subject of spirit baptism. And if he's able to tell me after this present address that he agreed with what I'm going to say now, I shall be over the moon. And in light of what he's just said in his review of Dr. Lloyd-Jones' book, I think he even might.

And while I don't really know what to say about the saints in glory taking note of what goes on here on earth, I think that if Dr. Lloyd-Jones knows what I say this morning up there, he'll be smiling too. Our title is The Work of Revival. Our scripture is Zechariah, chapters 1 through 8. Please have your Bibles open.

We shall be referring that much to what goes on in these chapters. And I begin by reminding you of the things that we said yesterday, matters on which I hope we were able to agree together, positions certainly which are basic to what I'm going to say now. What is revival? It is God extending his kingdom through the restoring of his people, the restoring of his church, in a manner that a guy like Edwards could properly compare to the breaking of a wave, in a manner which Dr. Lloyd-Jones, as we've just heard, pinpointed as unusual and calling attention to itself by virtue of that fact.

It's God renewing, intensifying, accelerating and deepening his work of grace in the lives of individuals and of communities. Revival, we said, is a communal thing. Revival is God visiting his people.

Revival is God visiting people in groups. We didn't say yesterday, but we may say now, that Peter, following Joel, celebrates revival as God pouring out his Spirit. We may properly speak of revival as God pouring out his Spirit and spend a moment thinking of that picture.

You pour out liquid in abundance. The very image suggests that there's much there. And when you pour it out, there's a major flow of liquid.

And so it is when God pours out his Spirit in revival. I gave you a thumbnail analysis of the things that happen in revival. Some of these matters will be reviewed in more detail in a moment, but do you remember the phrases I used? In revival, God comes close and thus sin is seen.

And because sin is seen, the gospel is loved as never before. And repentance goes deep. And godliness grows fast.

And the church becomes itself. And the world feels the impact. There's an evangelistic overflow.

And Satan keeps pace, trying to spoil and corrupt what's going on. We saw yesterday that revival was the hope of prophets and psalmists. It entered into their prayers, and many of those prayers are there in the Old Testament for us.

Revival entered again into the hopes and prayers of Protestant Christians in the 17th century. In the 17th century, just for the record, they didn't use the phrase revival of religion as it came to be used in the 18th century. What they talked about in the 17th century was the spiritual aspect of reformation.

The Puritans and others in continental Europe used the language of reformation to express the desire of their heart in this matter. The reformation they sought was spiritual renewal in the church. They saw that as the inward aspect of the work of God, whereby the outward face of the church, as they expressed it, had been washed, and the outward life of the church had been put straight by scriptural confessions and scriptural patterns of worship.

Yes, but the people were not yet reformed. That's how they said it. And so they prayed that the spiritual reality of reformation in human lives might accompany the outward aspect of reformation in the ordering of the church.

In the 18th century, as we saw yesterday, the phrase revival of religion began to be used for this that was being sought. And that's the phrase that we have inherited. And when we use the term revival, well, it's in that sense that we use it.

And it's in that sense that it's truly been said that when the Lord Jesus comes back, he should find the church planning world evangelism and praying for revival. Revival, I hinted rather than explained yesterday, is a characteristic work of God in the same way that regeneration, the regeneration of an individual, is a characteristic work of God. What I mean by that is that though the details may vary from one instance to another, we've heard Walter echoing Dr. Lloyd-Jones who insists that not all revivals have all the same phenomena, all the same trimmings and trappings, shall I say, associated with them, yet they all of them have the same reality at their heart.

Just as when a person is born again, his or her temperament is peculiar to him or her, and that's going to mean that some of the trimmings and trappings of that individual experience will be peculiar to that individual. But the heart of the matter, the essence of the change, the series of new qualities which mark out regeneration of the reality that it is, those will be the same every time. The regenerate person will always trust Christ, always repent of sin, always love the Lord, always rejoice in Christ, always find emptiness in his or her heart as soon as he or she is seduced away from the Lord back to the broken cisterns of sin.

It happens, and the regenerate backslider is thus the most miserable person in the world. Regeneration produces all these effects. And revival has its own characteristic features which are always there, whatever else is or isn't there, and it's these characteristic features that are there at the centre of the narrative in Acts 2 through Acts 11, the narrative of revival in Jerusalem at the beginning of the Christian era, just as, in fact, they are there in the briefer and less elaborate narratives of revival at various times in the Old Testament story.

And it's these central characteristics that are reflected in the epistles of the New Testament. Some of the things that apply here, that appear here, we referred to yesterday. For instance, the way in which those verses at the centre of 1 Corinthians 14 show that it was standard Christian experience in the churches of those revival times for the presence of God when his word was preached to be such a powerful reality in experience that folk wandering in from the streets felt it.

And indeed, in 1 Corinthians in general, what one is seeing is the problems of overflowing and uncontrolled spiritual life. Paul is afraid that some of them are not converted, but he knows that others of them are. And he's just distressed at the disorder that they have allowed to come in when God's spirit has been poured out on them with such fullness.

And then I referred to 1 Thessalonians, where Paul, by the way he writes, shows that these people have matured in Christ in a very remarkable way in a very short time. And I said this illustrates the way in which God speeds up his work in times of revival. Because remember, Paul was only there for less than three weeks on the mission that produced the Thessalonian church.

And I might have made reference to 1 Peter 1, verse 8, a text of which Dr. Lloyd-Jones himself could never make enough. He would quote it over and over. It's Peter's reference to the fact that the saints suffering pressure, the beginnings of persecution as they were, rejoiced in the Lord whom though they'd not seen, yet they loved.

They rejoiced in him, says Peter, with joy unspeakable, unutterable joy, joy that has more in it than you can put into words, and joy that is full of glory. The Greek literally says glorified joy. And he would look round challengingly on congregations and say, do you rejoice in the Lord like that? At times of revival the saints do.

And he was right. The whole New Testament comes out of revival conditions. And we do well to realize that.

Or take, as yet another example of this from the epistles, what Paul is found praying that the Ephesian Christians will enjoy. Here we are in Ephesians chapter 3, verse 16. And Paul is praying for them.

And praying in words that I don't think would ordinarily enter into our prayers. Simply because they don't touch any realities that have become part of our own experience. But Paul uses these words because he's talking out of his experience.

And he needs all these words to express that quality of experience which he now wants the Ephesians also to share. So he prays that out of God's glorious riches, verse 16, he may strengthen you, you believers, with power through his Spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith and that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power together with all the saints to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. And to know this love that surpasses knowledge that so you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

What quality of experience lies behind words like that? And I did refer to Jonathan Edwards picking up from 1 John the distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God in a community where the Word of God comes to be honoured as never before and the Son of God loved as never before and the truths of the Gospel taken seriously as never before and eternal issues weighed as never before and love of one Christian to another overflows as never before then you know that the Spirit of God has been at work and that was revival. This was Edwards thesis and he got all his points as a matter of fact out of the first six verses of 1 John chapter 4 and as you know the whole of 1 John is concerned to pinpoint real, authentic, divine spiritual experience and distinguish it from counterfeits of whatever kind. Well, these things give substance, I believe, to my claim that this characteristic work of God in revival is reflected in the epistles and passages like this give us a theological basis for judging and discerning the essential characteristics of revival in the revival narrative of Acts chapters 2 through 11.

But it must always be that way, by the way, brethren. I hope you're clear on that. You judge Bible narratives by Bible doctrine.

You interpret Bible narratives by Bible doctrine. Bible doctrine tells you what's good and bad, right and wrong of God and not of God in those narratives. You need Bible doctrine in order to assess them.

And that's even true of the revival narrative of Acts 2 through 11. And then I said, and this is the point from which we proceed this morning, this characteristic work of God in revival, I said, is patterned out for us in Zechariah chapters 1 through 8. Zechariah in the books is described as a prophet of restoration. I won't argue with the word.

I will simply say that if you like to call God's work of revival restoration, that's okay by me. But it's really a total spiritual change wrought by the power of God that Zechariah is talking about from beginning to end. And that's what I mean by revival.

And so revival shall be my word as I move through these visions with you and try to build up for you the pattern which God is showing us here in this material. We look yesterday, remember, at verses 1 through 6 of Zechariah chapter 1, which is the introductory prophecy moving us into the whole section. And we saw that in those verses, God, God the creator, God the redeemer, the God of revival, God reveals three things really.

His anger. Much is said about his anger with the ancestors of those to whom Zechariah is speaking now. God had exhibited his anger by past judgments on those folk.

Earlier prophets had summoned them to return to him, just as Zechariah is now sent to summon the folk of his day to return to God. And those Israelites of past days hadn't taken their God seriously. They hadn't listened to the word of rebuke.

They hadn't changed their ways. So they come under judgment. Judgment.

And, as I said, we have to ask ourselves whether we today are taking seriously the word of God the Lord against sin. Against sin and unfaithfulness among his own people. Those things bring judgment.

God give us ears to hear and God change our churches before it's too late. Then, alongside the anger of God revealed in this passage, we saw God disclosing his appeal. His appeal to the Jews of the year of grace, 520 BC.

Appeal to them to return to him. As their forefathers didn't. But you return to me, says the Lord, and I will return to you.

And we ended yesterday asking ourselves whether we've yet learned to take that word seriously. We weren't able to say as much as I wish we could have said about what's involved in backtracking. Because that's what returning to God in repentance really is.

It's backtracking in order to move away from. Things that are displeasing God. And move back into ways that rejoice his heart.

If we had time, I would give you an analysis in terms of returning first to love of our neighbor. The kind of honesty that reflects real concern for the other person's well-being in our own family, with our own spouses, with our own children, with our own friends, with our own fellow Christians in the church. Love, you know, whether to neighbor or to God, is a matter of seeking to make the other person great.

And love of neighbor is a concern to make our neighbor spiritually great, because that's the only greatness that finally counts. And it would begin with activity like that which you have called for in Zechariah chapter 7, verses 8 through 10. This is what the Lord Almighty says.

Administer true justice, show mercy and compassion to one another. Don't oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor in your hearts. Don't think evil of each other.

And it's said again in chapter 8, verses 16 and 17. These are the things you are to do. Speak the truth to each other.

Render true and sound judgment in your courts. Don't plot evil against your neighbor. Don't love to swear falsely.

I hate all this, declares the Lord. That's where love to neighbor begins. And with that, there must be a return to love of God.

Love of God which gets us beyond the rebuke issued in Zechariah chapter 7 to the folk who came and asked him, asked the prophet, whether they were to go on fasting in the way that they had been doing a long time because of the captivity. The beginning of the prophet's answer in the word of the Lord to their question is to say, look at verse 4, verse 5, ask all the people of the land and the priests, when you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months, was it really for me that you fasted? First thing that Zechariah does is to nail the formality of their religion. They went through the motions, but their heart was

far from their God.

Again, we need to ask ourselves very seriously and quietly before the Lord, is my heart in the religious motions that I go through? Is there love to God my Savior in the outward forms of godliness that I follow? It's already been said in this conference that if the doctrine of God's sovereign grace has taken root in your heart, you have more to love God for, you have more knowledge that should induce love to him within you than any other sort of Christian in this world. The knowledge of God's grace does that if you allow it to produce its proper fruit. But brothers and sisters, there are such things as carnal Calvinists just as there are such things as carnal Arminians.

It's so terribly easy, in fact, to do it. Familiarity breeds content. We can go through all the motions of Calvinistic godliness and our hearts still be far from the God of sovereign grace.

Do you love me, says the Lord. And he presses that question on us as part of his summons to return to him. Do you love your neighbour? Do you love me? Love is the key word.

I have this against you, said God, said the Lord, Lord Jesus, rather, from his throne to the church at, where was it, Sardis, wasn't it? Revelation chapter 2, verses 4 and 5. I have this against you. You've left your first love. Repent and do what you did at first.

Go back to the beginning and learn all over again to love me because of who I am and what I've done for you. Love is the heart of Christianity. Love and nothingness.

Well, this is God's appeal. I wish I could say more about it. I mustn't.

We saw it yesterday. His anger expressed in past judgments. His appeal for a present return to him in love.

And his agenda hinted at in the words of promise, the word of expectation for the people, return to me and I will return to you, says the Lord. A promise of his future return in grace and power. From which the question comes to us, do we take the hope of revival seriously? Dr. Lloyd-Jones instructs us in the need for revival which we have.

I think we can all agree with that. Dr. Lloyd-Jones himself hoped for revival until he died. He is gone.

Just as the prophets are gone. But we should still be hoping for revival. Remember we said it.

Revival is a sovereign work of God. He fixes the timetable. The schedule is his, not ours to set.

But there's still hope. Return to me, he says, and then you may expect that in my good time, in my own way, I will return to you. I shall say more about that tomorrow so I don't develop the thought now.

What we're going to do now is to look through the series of visions which God gave to the prophets in which the elements of revival, the ingredients we might say, are set before us in sequence in a very wonderful analytical theology of this restoring work of God which God promises, this restoring work to which he refers us as his return to his covenant people. They're bewildering chapters. They raise all kinds of questions.

I can't touch on all those questions. They have in them many bits of symbolism which I shan't be able to touch on either. They raise also for us the problem of how we apply prophecies given in an Old Testament

situation and given therefore in Old Testament terms to our own New Testament situation and the realities of church life today.

Let me just say quickly what I think the answer to that latter question is. Here are the principles of interpretation which guide me in my handling of these prophecies. You ask where do I get them from? Short answer is I get them from the way in which the New Testament theologians handle Old Testament prophecies first to last.

I'm walking on eggs here. I may well be talking to folk who disagree with me about some of the specific applications of this to the book of Zechariah. There are different schemes for interpreting biblical prophecy as we know and they can't all of them be right and I embrace only one of them and reject the others.

So I have to walk on eggs. But if we can agree to leave those questions aside and just concentrate on getting New Testament theology a New Testament theology of renewal from this sequence of visions which exhibits the pattern of renewal well we shall do well. Here now are the principles which seem to me the proper controls for our interpretation.

One. God is the same. The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament.

His character hasn't changed. He still loves what the Old Testament tells us He loves. He still hates what the Old Testament says that He hates.

He is triune. He always was. In these prophecies we are going to meet that figure who pops up again and again in the Old Testament.

The angel of Yahweh. The angel of the Lord. Rightly do Christian expositors understand the angel of the Lord as a theophany.

A pre-incarnate manifestation of the second person of the Godhead. And this becomes plain when we see in what connections the angel of the Lord appears. You will very soon see that He appears in connection with what we call mediation.

That is to say, the work of bringing God's mercy as mercy to sinners who don't deserve mercy. Something has to happen if there is to be mercy from God to sinners whose lives evoke His wrath rather than anything else. And what happens is called mediation.

And the mediator fulfills that ministry which means that there is mercy from God to us. Well, the angel of the Lord is found in mediatorial contexts as we shall see. It's there in chapter 1, it's there in chapter 3 as well.

What I have to say by the way about the Holy Spirit in Zechariah is being reserved for tomorrow. There are some things to say about the Spirit also. I've said, however, what I'm going to say by way of introduction about Christ in Zechariah.

God then is the same. He's the triune God as He was in Old Testament times even though that truth wasn't yet revealed. He is most certainly the sovereign God and we shall see this sequence of visions highlighting His sovereignty.

And He is, let me make this point before we go any further, the jealous God of chapter 1, verse 14. This is what the Lord Almighty says, I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion. He's the jealous God of chapter 8,

verse 2. This is what the Lord Almighty says, I am very jealous for Zion.

I am burning with jealousy for her. He is the same God who in Exodus chapter 34 and verse 14 announced Himself as the God whose name is jealous. What does that mean? When we speak the word jealousy, it usually signifies to our minds something rather unpleasant.

But there's a good jealousy as well as a bad jealousy. A lover who has taken his or her spouse into covenant, in other words, a lover married in a right and proper way, is there after very jealous for the love of his or her partner. Married folk bear witness to that.

Of course it's so. And if it wasn't so, there'd be doubt as to whether you really love your spouse. That's the pattern.

The God of all grace has taken us into covenant with Him to be His bride. He is now very jealous for the exclusive affection of His own people. And then He's bound up with something further.

He is very jealous also for His own honour and praise and glory. But the two things are bound together. God enjoying the love of His people as He blesses them.

Is God manifesting His glory? God receiving praise and adoration from His people as He blesses them? Is God being praised as He desires to be? God's glory, God's praise for His revealed praiseworthiness is His end, His goal, the thing that He's always concerned about. We know that. We are Reformed Christians and Reformed Christians understand this very well.

Well, that goal of God, His glory, is something which He has bound up with the glory of His own people. He blessing them, they praising Him. It's all part of a single end and a single goal.

Don't set the two thoughts at odds with each other. They're not at odds with each other. God in a wonderful way has blended them together.

So He's jealous for His own praise. He's jealous for the affection of His people. He rejoices when His people love and praise Him.

He rejoices when His name is glorified among men. God is jealous for these things. And so His jealousy points both to His purpose to bless His people as they love and serve Him as well as pointing to His zeal for His own honour and praise from His people whom He blesses.

Hold the two things together and then you'll understand. This is the God of Zechariah 1-8. The God who is jealous.

Jealous, He says verse 14 of chapter 1 again. Jealous for Jerusalem and Zion. Jealous to recapture the affection of His own people.

Jealous because He is zealous to exalt His people again. Jealous because He looks for the day when His people will praise Him as is His view for the grace that He shows them. All of that is bound up in the phrase, I am jealous for Jerusalem and Zion.

That then is the God of Zechariah and that's our God. Principle number one in interpretation is that God is the same. Principle number two.

Godliness and ungodliness are the same. Sin displeases God now as it displeased Him then and repentance and faith and hope and love and joy in communion with God. Those things are the same whether it's Old Testament or New.

Those things don't change. The pattern of revival doesn't change either and that's what I trust we're going to see. God's work in quickening His people when they need to be quickened remains the same whether it's Old Testament or New Testament.

Here I invoke a principle which Reformed people have sometimes called the continuous fulfillment of prophecy as distinct from the specific fulfillment. And I'm maintaining that here you've got a pattern which is fulfilled over and over again in God's blessing of His church and as a pattern isn't linked to any one particular set of circumstances even though it was given in one particular set of circumstances in 520 B.C. Every time God revives His work among His people this pattern is fulfilled again. The fulfillment is continuous.

But now there are typical things in Zechariah also and we better note what they are before we go any further. Jerusalem, the city in Palestine and its temple which the people were struggling to rebuild in Zechariah's day, these are typical realities. Jerusalem and its temple Jerusalem and its temple were the place of God's presence.

His manifested, His experienced presence, His presence enjoyed and delighted in under Old Testament circumstances from that standpoint, Jerusalem and the temple correspond to the church viewed as a fellowship, a gathering of people in whose midst the Lord shows Himself through the preaching and ministry of His Word. That's the New Testament equivalent there. Then the material prosperity which God promised to earthly Jerusalem in these visions, that then was the sign of His favour according to the Old Testament order of things, but that was typical of the spiritual blessings that God bestows now on His people, and the heavenly inheritance that's reserved in glory for all of us who are His.

There again, therefore, you have a typical equivalent. And then finally, Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the prince, the secular king, they appear in these visions as joint mediators of God's blessing, and joint leaders of God's people. They're there as a pair, for instance, in chapter 4, verse 14.

They are pictured by the two olive branches supplying oil to the lampstand, which is the church. Again, we'll be thinking more of this tomorrow, but just look at what is said in verse 14. These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth.

That's Joshua and Zerubbabel. They, however, in their duality, are typical of one person, a mysterious person spoken of in chapter 3, verse 8, and again chapter 6, verses 12 and 13, a man whose name is Labranch That's picking up Isaiah's and Jeremiah's prophecies of the branch from the house of David. There's one coming whose name is Labranch, who will unite in himself the ministry of both high priest and king.

Well, we know who he is, and we need not spend time scratching our heads over the question. The angel of the Lord also, the angel of the Lord, is indeed a pre-incarnate manifestation of him, and is there in the prophecy also to point forward to him. It's the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, of course, who is being referred to in these predictions of the branch, of whom both Joshua and Zerubbabel, in their different ways, are prefigurings and foreshadowings.

There again you've got typology in the prophecy of Zechariah. I mention it simply so that we'll be clear of it. And we remember the historical situation, I trust, into which Zechariah is speaking.

The people for two months, ever since Haggai came and spoke to them, have been struggling to get back to the work of erecting the temple. And now comes this word, through Zechariah, calling for a complete spiritual renewal, a return to God from the heart, which their working for God hadn't yet brought about. Because, as we said yesterday, doing things for God is one matter.

It doesn't imply that you've yet returned to the Lord from the heart, to love Him. And it's into that situation, as I said, that Zechariah speaks, and that God sends these eight visions. They're given to the prophet in one night.

There's an angel who interprets them to him. Between them, they spell out God's agenda of revival. We can, of course, only zoom through them quickly.

That's all that time allows, and that's all that I'm going to attempt to do. But take them as a sequence. And I think you'll be amazed, as I was years and years ago, when I suddenly realized that this was revival, no less, is the thing that Zechariah is delivering God's message about.

Vision number one, chapter one, verses 7-17. A vision of divine intercession. Three parts.

Verses 8-11. Information from angelic observers. There's a man, verse 8, identified shortly as the angel of the Lord, verse 11, riding a red horse, and on that horse standing, that is to say, the horse is stationary, among the myrtle trees in a ravine.

The myrtle trees probably signify Israel. There are messengers, other horses, pictured as other horses, end of verse 9, whom the Lord, look at verse 10, has sent to go throughout the earth. They report, verse 11, for the angel of the Lord, who is standing among the myrtle trees, and this is what they report, we've gone throughout the earth and found the whole world in rest and at peace, everything's quiet, and Jerusalem is still in ruins and the temple not built.

Now comes the second thing, verse 12, intercession by the angel of the Lord. The mediator does intercede for his people as we know from Hebrews 7, verse 25, and Romans 8, verse 34, and what a precious truth that is. The Son of God at the Father's right hand in the power of His atoning work and His mighty resurrection makes intercession for God's own people.

Look at verse 12, the angel of the Lord said, Lord Almighty, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah with which you been angry these 70 years? And here is the answer to the sovereign intercession of the angel, verse 13, the Lord spoke kind and comforting words to the angel who talked with thee, Zechariah, and verses 14 through 17, now tell us what the message was. Information from angelic observers, intercession by the angel of the Lord, and now the initiative of the sovereign God. The angel who was speaking to me said, proclaim this word, this is what the Lord Almighty, the sovereign Lord says, I'm very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion, very angry with the nations that feel secure and indeed are secure in this quiet world.

I was only a little angry. I used them as my executioners of judgment against my people. They added to the calamity.

They let out their malice against my people. Now it's their turn for judgment, and it's Israel's turn for renewed blessing. So, this is what the Lord says, verse 16, I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there my house will be rebuilt, and the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem to measure its new dimensions as a rebuilt and extended city.

Verse 17, my towns will again overflow with prosperity. The Lord will again comfort Zion with that joy for himself that's unquenchable and unconquerable. The Lord will again choose Jerusalem as the place where he shows his glory in salvation and blessing.

I am jealous. I was angry. I will return.

Those three phrases express it all. And what do we learn from this? What we learn from this first vision is that revival flows from God's sovereign, merciful decision. Revival comes when it comes because God is jealous for his own people and for his own glory.

As we said, we can't induce it. We can't twist God's arm. But there's hope of revival always because God is jealous, is concerned for his glory, and does love his people.

Thank God he does. Where would we be otherwise? But it's God's sovereign decision, you see, which explains why God sent this message and gave this help, actually, to Zerubbabel and company in the year 520 B.C. and not in the year 536 B.C. when they first arrived. It's this principle that explains why God sent his blessing on the day of Pentecost, neither before nor after.

I mean, the day when he poured out his spirit was the day of Pentecost and wasn't another day. It's his sovereign decision. And we must simply accept his sovereign decision about the timing of spiritual revival.

That's the first thing which the first vision teaches. Revival is a matter of divine sovereignty. Right.

Now look at the second vision. This is verses 18 through 21 of Zechariah chapter 1. It's a vision of God overthrowing secular powers. Just look at this.

There before me, verse 18, were four horns. I asked the angel who was speaking to me, what are these? And he told me, these are the horns. You know, in the Old Testament, a horn is a symbol of a secular, military, human, this worldly power.

These are the horns that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. Then, verse 20, the Lord showed me four craftsmen. Smeth was the older translation.

The Hebrew word means folk who work in wood or stone or metal. Demolition agents is the best way, I think, to render the term here. Four demolition agents, I asked, what are these coming to do? And the answer is there in the latter part of verse 20, verse 21.

The craftsmen have come to terrify the four horns and throw them down. There the horns of the nations have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter its people, and the smeths have come to terrify and throw them down. What do we learn from that? We learn, second principle, that revival means the overcoming of hostile spiritual forces.

Forces against which the people of God have thus far been impotent. Forces which have run all over them. Forces of secularity.

Forces of worthiness. There's always opposition when revival begins, and regularly there's been opposition to the gospel before revival begins. Up from the day of Pentecost onward, there was opposition from those who had disposed of Jesus Christ, and were not in the least pleased, let's put it in minimal terms, they were not in the least pleased that now he should be proclaimed as risen and alive, and all men called to repent of the sin of putting him out of the way, and to submit to his lordship henceforth.

And so the authorities were arrayed against Jesus' followers, just as they'd been arrayed against Jesus before. There was opposition there. Did you know that in England, before the 18th century awakening broke out, it was generally agreed that Christianity was dead.

Hasn't that verdict got a modern sound? We hear that kind of talk today. It's a post-Christian society. Christianity's dead.

We've got beyond it. And the Lord raised up Whitefield, and Wesley, and Daniel Rowland, and Howell Harris, and on the other side of the Atlantic in a similar situation, Jonathan Edwards and his colleagues. God's arm is not shortened that he cannot save.

But you see, there was hostile spiritual forces there, forces of worldliness, treating Christianity as dead. They spoke too soon. And have you studied the East African revival of our own time? It broke out in the 1930s.

It's still going on. It dies down, and then it flares up again, like a forest fire. It began in Rwanda.

It's spread all over East Africa now. It prepared the people of God, toughened them for the appalling convulsions that they've had to go through politically and in terms of persecution. You know about the Mau Mau thing some 25 years ago, or have you forgotten? I hope you haven't.

The revival folks stood firm under persecution when the Mau Mau folk were trying to get them back to the tribal darkness of ethnic witchdoctor type polytheism. They wouldn't go. Many of them lost their lives at that time.

And then Uganda comes to East Africa for this purpose. It was the revival people who stood firm in the days of Idi Amin. If God hadn't quickened his people by revival blessing in the 1930s and thereafter, where would Christianity in East Africa be now? Revival is often preparation for more battles with hostile spiritual forces.

There's always opposition somewhere. There always will be, as long as the church is in this world. So, here's principle number two.

Revival means God's overcoming of hostile spiritual forces, forces that were there before, forces that will raise their head again. It's battle. You can't have battle without casualties.

You can't have revival without strain and pain and suffering for those who are in the midst of the blessing. Revival doesn't shield us from that. Look at the story of the apostles suffering arrest and imprisonment and hostility in Jerusalem in those early days.

But they took it in stride. Remember that prayer meeting in Acts chapter 4. Now, Lord, behold, they're threatening. And what? Give us an out from Jerusalem so that we can get away from it? No, nothing like that.

Behold, they're threatening and grant that your servants may, with great power, proclaim your word while you show your power to heal in the name of Jesus as God, you know, God did heal through the name of Jesus in the ministry of the apostles. Hostility? Yes. And who won? Well, spiritually, there's no question who won.

But was the battle hard and was the suffering great? And were guys like Stephen and others with Stephen actually put to death by hostile spiritual forces? Yes, they were. Revival means the overcoming of hostile spiritual forces, but it occurs. Nonetheless, there's no question whose is the victory when God resolves to renew His work among His people, and that's what we see in this second vision.

Third vision. Chapter 2, verses 1 through 13. It's a vision of God transforming Jerusalem.

I just have to hold myself back here because there is so much in this vision that I'd like to dilate on that the clock will ruin me if I don't hurry. So let's say it's a vision of a man with a measuring line in his hand, says Zechariah, what's this man here to do? End of verse 2, the angel who's explaining all this to the prophet says, he's here to measure Jerusalem and find out how wide and how long it is. And then a message is sent to Zechariah, the young man of verse 4, Jerusalem is going to be a city without walls because of the great number of men and livestock in it.

And I myself, verse 5, this is the Lord speaking, I myself will be a wall of fire around it, declares the Lord, and I will be its glory within. What's being said there? Why? That Jerusalem is going to be blessed with population. Verse 6 says that more of the exiles are going to return.

Verse 11 says many nations will be joined to the Lord in that day and will become my people. There's the picture of the evangelistic overflow once again. Folk will realize that God is with these folk and they want what these folk have got.

So they join themselves to these folk. They share in the blessing God's given. So the city is going to be populous.

The church is going to be expanded and extended at revival times. And prosperity will come. In verse 4 it's pictured as the great number of livestock.

Well, livestock was wealth and prosperity and livelihood to folk in those days. The spiritual prosperity of those who know that their salvation is with Christ and their inheritance is with Christ in glory, that's the New Testament counterpart of that. But real prosperity, my goodness yes, in revival times everyone can say, thankfully it is well with my soul.

In this earth I may be losing. At the Father's right hand there's treasures and pleasures forevermore and spiritually I'm rich. There's prosperity there.

And there's protection for the church along with the population, the increased numbers. That's in verses 4 and 5 too. Look at verse 5. I myself will be a wall of fire around the city, declares the Lord, just as I will be its glory within.

Glory, that's the shekinah, that's the manifested presence, and with that manifested presence is promised divine protection. This is God transforming Jerusalem. Verse 10 calls God's people to the proper reaction.

Shout and be glad, O daughter of Zion, for I'm coming and I will live among you, declares the Lord, and you'll know my fellowship in your midst. Shout, said Dr. Lloyd-Jones wisely and truly, there'll be emotional expression, emotional overflow, if you like, of the joy that's in the heart of God's people when revival comes, they'll become shouters before the Lord. The early Methodists did, even the Calvinistic ones, did you know that? We aren't much of shouters before the Lord these days because we've got very little to shout about.

Some folk go in for shouting of course as a kind of routine, but it's pretty hollow. But the kind of joy, the kind of exuberance that comes to God's people when Christ draws near to them again in revival, expresses itself in very vigorous speech, very loud utterance, shouts for joy become the natural and constant accompaniment of the fellowship of God's church. It's always been so.

And so this third vision gives us this third truth. Revival means a new experience of God's enriching presence. And you can see this in the Acts narrative.

I'm going to skip this bit because the clock is beating me as you can see and I just want to finish my overview of the visions, but study at your leisure Acts 2 verses 42-47. This is straight after the Pentecost sermon. The new community is together in fellowship and in joy.

It says, all was upon every soul. You ask why? Why? Because the presence of the Lord was a matter of experience in their midst. They were together and they wanted to be together.

You say, why? And the answer is because it was in their togetherness as they shared the word and loved each other, that they found the Lord's presence and enjoyed that glorious reality of communion which was for them in truth the beginning of heaven on earth. You study those verses at your leisure. That's revival life.

Acts 2 verses 42-47. That's the new experience of God's enriching power. A corporate thing? Yes, most certainly that is part of the pattern.

Next vision, chapter 3. It's a vision of God cleansing Joshua. Joshua, the high priest, appears standing before the Lord. Verse 1, and Satan stands at his right hand to accuse him.

The Lord rebukes Satan, the accuser. Says, you're not to accuse him. But there was reason why Satan should accuse Joshua and say out loud in Joshua's own conscience that Joshua is not fit to stand before the Lord because, look at verse 3, Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel.

What angel? It's back to the opening words of verse 1. It's the angel of the Lord, the mediator in theophany before whom Joshua stands. And the angel says to those who stood before him, take off Joshua's filthy clothes. And he says to Joshua, verse 4, see I've taken away your sin and I'll put rich garments on you.

And then he says, verse 5, put a clean, oh sorry, then I said, this seems to be the Lord for the moment speaking in his own person, put a clean turban on his head. So they put a clean turban on his head and they clothed him while the angel of the Lord stood by. What a transformation! And now the Lord Almighty, verse 7, says to Joshua, if you'll walk in my ways and keep my commands, then you'll govern my house and have charge in my court and I will give you a place among those standing here.

A place among the angels. A place of permanent access. A place of permanent acceptance in the presence of the Lord.

Joshua, you'll remember, was a representative person. The high priest had the names of all the tribes on his breastplate. Joshua represents the people, I believe, in this vision.

And what's it a vision of? Well, here's truth number 4. This is what it is a vision of. Revival means, as indeed we said yesterday, a rediscovery of the blessing of justification. Sin, guilt, defilement of conscience, gone.

All that uncleanness washed away by the blood of Christ. And henceforth, full acceptance and free access in God's holy presence. A place among the angels who stand before Him.

That's justification in its double aspect. Pardon of sin and acceptance of our presence. This is what's being pictured here.

Didn't I say that justification is the central revival doctrine? And that this central doctrine of the gospel is never loved so much as at revival times just because at revival times people realize so acutely how they need it. God returns to Jerusalem. Joshua, the high priest representing the people, is overwhelmed with a sense of sin.

The sense of sin is dealt with in the manner described through the ministry of the angel of the Lord, the pre-incarnate mediator. It's justification by faith. And revival means a rediscovery of justification.

Yes, I'm overrunning, so I must hurry on. I have more to say here, but it must be allowed to go. Vision number five need not occupy us here because I'm coming back to it tomorrow.

Let's simply say it's a vision of the people of God pictured as a great candlestick sustained and enabled to burn and burn and keep on burning through oil from heaven. And the truth being taught, the principle that's here for us to learn, is that revival means power, constant, sustained power from God's Holy Spirit for life and service. Sixth vision, chapter five, verses one through four, it's a vision of God cursing the immoral among his own people.

A flying scroll, an enormous flying scroll, thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide, verse two, moves across the face of the land like one of those great banners which the little planes pull, you know, for advertisement purposes nowadays. But what's being advertised by this great flying scroll, this great banner, is judgment on sinners. This, verse three, is the curse that's going out over the whole land.

According to what it says on one side, every thief will be banished. According to what it says on the other side, everyone who swears falsely will be banished. For the Lord Almighty declares, I will send it out, and it will enter the house of a thief, and the house of him who swears falsely by my name, and it will remain in his house and destroy it.

Now judgment begins at the house of God. This is one of the things that happens when revival comes. Peter makes reference to that, you remember, in the fourth chapter of his first letter.

Now judgment must begin at the house of God. There's always judgment when there's a visitation of God in revival. See it in the revival story of Acts.

You have heard of Ananias and Sapphira? Need I say more? They conspired to lie to the Spirit of the Lord. Peter puts their sin to them in just those terms. What happens? Judgment falls, and they're both carried out dead.

It's an awesome thing to live in revival times. This kind of judgment was not limited to Ananias and Sapphira. It's part of the pattern.

Here it is. So the sixth truth is revival means judgment on the lawless and the hypocrites among God's people. That leads on to the seventh vision.

It's a vision of God removing wickedness from his people. It's a strange vision. There's a great basket in which there sits a woman.

The commentators primly say that the reason why wickedness is pictured as a woman is that the Hebrew for wickedness is a feminine noun and there's no other reason and I hope that we all have settled for that. For what is said of the woman in verse 8, you see it is this is wickedness and once Zechariah's seen that the woman is pushed back into the basket, a leg cover is pushed down over the mouth of the basket so that wickedness can't get out and two women with the wind in their wings like wings of storks verse 9 lift up the basket and fly with it out of the land. What does this tell us? It tells us that revival means the purging out of sin from the lives of the saints.

How's it done? It's done actually through bringing them to repentance. Repentance which in experience and I hope you will allow me to say this in rather unlovely language Repentance which is experience has an enetic effect. Folk feel they must forgive me, pick up their sins.

Get them out of the system separate themselves from them so that the sins are no longer part of them so they vomit them up. Repentance in the New Testament is pictured in more than one place as a violent thing. When Jesus said in Matthew 11 and verse 12 from the days of John the Baptist the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violence press into it grab hold of it what he was talking about for sure is the violence of this kind of repentance.

You see it exhibited in Christians in 2 Corinthians chapter 7 verses 7 and following. Paul has written to these Christians at Corinth to remember that their very disorderly lots have been converted and are still living in revival conditions Paul has written to them to rebuke them for not having exercised church discipline in a particular case. And this is what he says about their response to his letter.

Even if my letter caused you sorrow 2 Corinthians 7 I don't regret that. I'm happy not because you were made sorry but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended.

Your sorrow was godly sorrow which, verse 10, brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret. For, and now this is what I wanted to call your attention to, verse 11 see what this godly sorrow has produced in you. What earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation what alarm, what longing what concern what readiness, eagerness again would be a good translation to see justice done.

That's quite a violent reaction, isn't it? Well in times of repentance sorry, in times of revival when rebuke for sin comes from the Lord like this rebuke through Paul the Apostle repentance is violent and folk are violent with themselves to get the evil out of their system they find it intolerable to retain it as it were in their system this is why they stand up in public and confess it often in a very embarrassing way but they feel they have to do that in order to get it out of their system you will know that this is one of the constant features of revival times people feel that they haven't got it out of their system until they've confessed it publicly that's the way of showing that between them and it there's now a great gulf fixed and they've

finished with it and in Acts, as a matter of fact where, as you've heard me say more than once, ministry was being carried on in revival blessing you've got at least one very striking example of this the occultists of Isis Acts chapter 19 verse 18 and following many of those who believed came and openly confessed their evil deeds a number who practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly and when they calculated the value of the scrolls the total came to 50,000 drachmas which was a great sum of money they felt they had to do it as a public gesture, you see that they finished with all of this occult stuff just as those who came and openly confessed their evil deeds felt they had to do it in order to get those evil deeds finally out of their system the Spirit of God come in power into human consciences that prompts this action you see it all pictured in the removal of wickedness from God's people in Zechariah chapter 5 verses 5 through 11 the truth we're learning is that revival means the purging out of sin which I had time to tell you all the things that I had here lined up concerning the extraordinary moral transformation that movements of revival brought about in situations where dishonesty had become, blasphemy had become just standard as in the Welsh mines in 1904 where the blasphemy down the pit simply stopped as in the shipyards of Ulster, in the Willie Nicholson revival in which the man under whom I served in my first ministerial post, as I told you was converted they had to build new toolsheds would you believe it, to accommodate all those tools from the shipyards that had been knocked off by men who now that they were converted knew that they had to bring them back and make restitution. It's a wonderful thing when you see that happening. That's what's being pictured in the second half of Zechariah 5. And quickly on to finish, the eighth vision is chapter 6 verses 1 through 8 God displaying his sovereign lordship in the world.

The power of God is being highlighted through all the details of the vision, it's rather like the first vision actually, but there are some significant changes. Verse 1 Here come four chariots chariots are emblems of power they come out from between two mountains mountains of bronze there again you have an emblem of power, an emblem of fixity, this points to the fixity of God's own empire over his world. The gates as it were of his empire are mountains of bronze.

Nothing can unseat him from his throne nothing can overthrow his empire, the gates of bronze themselves show it. Out come the chariots and says Zechariah what of these? And the angel who's explaining it to him says well, these verse 5 are the four spirits or winds of heaven spirit ruach, Hebrew word represents the power of God in action. Whether it's winds or whether it's spirits in the translation it's certainly the power of God in action that's being pictured here.

And says the angel the chariot with the black horse verse 6 is going towards the north country where there's still judgment to be inflicted and then the others go through different parts of the earth.

Then verse 7 we are told that the powerful horses were straining to go throughout the earth they were powerful horses the thought of God's power is being highlighted again by this detail of the picture and they go throughout the earth and then the angel explaining things calls to Zechariah and says look, those going towards the north country I say he, is it it might be Yahweh, Jehovah himself, those going towards the north country have given my spirit, God's spirit rest in the land of the north the commentators agree that the judgment of God on the foes of Israel in the north, Babylonia quite specifically that judgment's been inflicted that's how the rest was given it's a picture of divine victory divine victory over those who previously rejoiced at being victors over God's people power

and victory is the focus of this eighth vision and so the final truth that we're taught here about revival is that revival shows God to be still on his throne the Lord victorious and that indeed is how it is every time that

God visits his people to revive his work among them and renew life among them it's a demonstration of his sovereign lordship in sovereign grace all of this, all these eight truths that we've looked at together constitute the meaning of God's return to his people for God to return means all these things and this is the hope these are the elements in the hope of revival which is there for us in Zechariah chapter 1 verse 3, return to me says the Lord, to us today and I will return to you says the Lord, to us today you can see the spiritual counterparts in the pattern I've

tried to pinpoint them this is the work of grace that we too need in our situation and there is hope of it let that hope make us humble we can't do this, we have to look to God to do it let this hope make us holy the purging judgment of God if and when he visits his people in revival blessing is awesome and awful to experience we would do well even now to be praying search me O God show me if there be any wicked way in me teach me to put it away and lead me in the way everlasting this hope should make us prayerful that which we so badly need and which only God can give must be sought by earnest prayer, there is no other way to seek it let this hope make us patient God establishes the schedule it's for us to wait on him until he moves I finish with that rather abruptly, I've already

overshot my time rather grievously, but you can see why having started this I wanted to finish it I was thrilled when I saw these things, I hope your hearts are thrilled too, on from this tomorrow, God bless us all we're glad that you have heard this tape from the Southern Baptist Conference on the Faith of the Founders I'd like to say some things about what this conference is, what it intends to do, upon what principles it operates first of all, all who hear these tapes need to realize that this conference is not a political movement it has no designs on seeking to run any candidate for any office within any denomination it is strictly a conference for personal edification of pastors, elders deacons and members of Baptist churches it is not a political movement of any kind neither do we

consider it a place for airing negative and critical vendettas against other groups we're quite aware that there's much that could be said that could be said about pagans, Turks Jews, atheists, Pelagians, semi-Pelagians Catholics, Arminians, Moderates, Hyper-Calvinists and people of other theological persuasions including ourselves that would not be favorable but this conference is designed for a positive presentation positive edification is our goal to embrace the truth with such vigor that error must of necessity fall what are we? we are Southern Baptists we welcome people from other denominations from other traditions we cherish the fellowship that we have with them and we feel that the doctrines around which this conference centers are so broadly evangelical that many people can enjoy

them but our stated purpose is to provide edification for people within Southern Baptist life we affirm our Southern Baptist heritage and desire to recapture it we affirm the fellowship that is available in the network of all Southern Baptist life in associations state conventions and desire to sanctify it and we affirm the conscientious involvement in a multiplicity of benevolences that is characteristic of Southern Baptist life we desire to reform it we affirm the task of the foreign mission board, the home mission board the brotherhood commission, the Sunday school board, the Christian life commission all of these have good and proper goals and assignments we desire to see men within these who believe the gospel and we desire these men to come there not through political manipulation

but through the individual training of man so that God in his providence may place people who are prepared in those positions also what we are we are Calvinistic we do not apologize for that we believe that Calvinism is the gospel in its purest expression we could rightly call it Paulinism but what Christian would not call their doctrine Pauline we could rightly call it Augustinianism but Augustine developed his

understanding of the doctrines of grace in a context that was not so aware of the necessity of the doctrine of justification by faith and so we call it Calvinism because not only does it have the great Pauline and Augustinian doctrines of justification by faith but it also sets these within the context of imputed righteousness as our only standing before God as set forth in the

Reformation doctrine of justification by faith and a third thing we are in addition to being Southern Baptist and Calvinistic we are experiential we do not have the attitude of those guys out there don't know this but our attitude hopefully and prayerfully is this question has my mind and my heart absorbed and is it being molded by the reality of these doctrines and it is in this context that we seek to apply all the doctrines of grace we are happy that you have listened to this tape and pray that God may benefit you in it and perhaps in its providence may lead you to attend one of these conferences God bless you

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