

(Revival) Highlights of Past Revivals - Part 1

by Michael L. Brown

A biblical revival is a time of spiritual awakening and renewal, where people turn back to God and seek His presence and power in their lives.

Duration: 1:05:07

Scripture: 2 Kings 22:1-2, 2 Chronicles 7:14, 2 Chronicles 14:4, Psalm 85:6, Isaiah 1:19-20, Habakkuk 3:2, Matthew 11:28, Romans 11:22, Revelation 6:15-17, Revelation 19:11-16

Topics: "Repentance", "Revival"

Description

Michael L. Brown discusses the historical context of biblical revivals, emphasizing the Hebrew concept of 'Chaya,' which means to revive or bring to life. He highlights the story of Habakkuk, who cried out for God's revival amidst sin and judgment, and the significant revival during King Josiah's reign, where the rediscovery of God's law led to a national turning back to righteousness. Brown also reflects on the transformative power of past revivals, such as those led by Charles Finney and David Brainerd, illustrating how genuine encounters with God can lead to societal change and a return to holiness. He stresses the importance of recognizing God's holiness and the need for repentance in the face of sin, urging the church to seek revival in contemporary times.

Transcript

Little of this, little of this. I want to paint a picture for you of what's happened in terms of biblical revivals up to now. There are revivals that are recounted in the word, but they're not called revivals.

The closest thing you can get to it in the Bible, the Hebrew Chaya, which means to be alive, to live. Like you say L'chaim, to life. It can be used in an active sense, in a causative sense, meaning to make alive, to revive.

And on that level, the most famous verse in the word for revival is Habakkuk, the third chapter. We want to look at the history of revivals or highlights of past revivals. We want to stop for a moment and look at things in the word, even though they're not called revivals.

That's a term that we've put on it. But Habakkuk chapter 3 verse 2, a verse we'll look at again next time, says, Lord, I have heard of your fame. Habakkuk, the prophet, saw Judah come under the power of the Babylonians.

He cried out to God because the Judeans were living in sin with no judgment. God answered his prayer by sending the Babylonians in judgment. Then he had a worse predicament.

The Babylonians are totally godless and they're destroying your people with no fear of you whatsoever. What do we do? And God communicated to Habakkuk the foundation of trusting God and looking by faith and seeing the end. But Habakkuk could only look back to the things that God had done.

He heard about them, had an experience in himself. He heard about the great acts of God. Lord, I have heard of your fame.

I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time. Make them known in wrath.

Remember, mercy and that word, renew them, revive them. Triggers this verse to us as a key revival verse and one that we're going to look at again, as I said. Charles Finney's revival lectures begin with this verse, Habakkuk chapter 3 verse 2. How did God renew and revive his work and make his deeds known to Israel in the past? Well, you think of a man like Josiah, a godly king.

We'll just look at this as one biblical example over in 2 Kings. It tells us about Josiah coming to reign as king at just the age of eight years old. 2 Kings chapter 22, verse 1. He was eight years old when he became king and he reigned in Jerusalem 31 years.

Verse 2 tells us he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in all the ways of his father, David, not turning his side to the right or to the left. Then in the 18th year of his reign, when he's 26 years old, he sent the secretary, Shafan, son of Azalias, so on to the temple of the Lord to rebuild the temple, to restore it, to repair it, not rebuild, but restore and repair. And they found the book of the law of God.

There was a revival of lost truth. We didn't know, we didn't understand, we didn't see. Now they found the word.

There's a rediscovery of the word of God that takes place. But just so you can see the state of the people at that time, these are the only worshippers of Yahweh in the world. They have the only temple that is properly his anywhere in the world.

This is the true covenant people of God. That's it. They are the remnant.

Look at what it says in chapter 23, verse 4. The king ordered Hilkiah, the high priest, the priest next in rank and the doorkeepers to remove from the temple of the Lord all the articles made for Baal and Asherah and all the starry hosts. So within the temple of the Lord, there are idols to gods and goddesses. Verse five, he did away with the pagan priests appointed by the kings of Judah to burn incense in the high places of the towns of Judah and on those around Jerusalem.

Those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and moon, to the constellations and to all the starry hosts. You realize that only those from the tribe of Levi and then within that of the family of Aaron could be appointed as priests. And yet they were appointing pagans, non-Jews to be priests and to burn incense to all of the gods.

Verse six, he took the Asherah pole from the temple of the Lord to the Kidron Valley outside Jerusalem and burned it there. He ground it to powder and scattered the dust over the graves of the common people. He also tore down the quarters of the male shrine prostitutes, which were in the temple of the Lord and

where women did weaving for Asherah.

Can you believe it? They had homosexual prostitutes in the temple of the Lord, not as a separate thing, but as part of the fertility cult in the worship of Baal. It was in that state that the law, the word was recovered. Now, you have to understand, even though people were sinning and knew what they were doing was wrong, and many of them recognized that they were violating the covenant.

Still, there was no gravity to it. There was no no danger to it. I mean, look, there are different gods, different nations were incorporating these different gods into our own worship, into our own lifestyle.

We still worship Yahweh also. But when Josiah began to seek the Lord, when there was a revival in his heart, they absolutely, totally destroyed idolatry out of the land and the hearts of the people, the hearts of the nation were turned back to righteousness and to fearing God. In the reign of King Asa mentioned in Second Chronicles chapters 14 and 15, the people of Judah entered into a covenant with God that whoever did not seek the Lord would be put to death.

There was a revival, there was a national turning, there was a consciousness. We've got to get rid of the sin. Things are not right between us and God.

We've got to seek his face. And then he'd come and mightily deliver his people or postpone the judgment that had to come. So whenever the works of God, the acts of God just become a story, a memory, it's time, it's time for revival to come again.

Well, let me give you some quotes here of revivals that Winky Prattney refers to and some others that involve Charles Finney. I'll quote from another book. But on page 15 of Revival, Winky Prattney talks about the outpouring of the spirit that broke under the ministry of David Brainerd.

David Brainerd was the son-in-law of Jonathan Edwards. Jonathan Edwards was the president of Princeton University. One of the greatest philosophers and theologians in the history of the United States and a man greatly used by God in supernatural revival.

Brainerd was famed, as it says here, he prayed in the snow until it melted around him. And was stained by his blood as he coughed away his life with tuberculosis, even as he was dying. Sick at 28 years old, his testimony was shaking people's lives, just reading about his life, even how he died.

But the famous account, when he went into the woods in the snow to pray, snow up to his shoulders and he prayed with such fervor that when he next looked around, all the snow had melted around him. It says that he prevailed in prayer for revival among the American Indians. He describes in his journal how it finally began in 1745.

Look at this description. This is revival breaking. The power of God seemed to descend on the assembly like a rushing mighty wind and with an astonishing energy bore all down before.

I stood amazed at the influence that seized the audience almost universally and could compare it to nothing more aptly than the irresistible force of a mighty torrent. Almost all persons of all ages were bowed down with concern together and scarce one was able to withstand the shock of astonishing operation. Among the American Indians, and there was really one man that prevailed in prayer to see it happen.

Skip over to page 121. There's a description of the state of the American frontier before God poured out his spirit upon it last century. Now, I want to say this and it's important that you hear it.

Things many times before in the United States have been like they are now or worse in terms of the sinfulness of the society. In terms of rationalism and skepticism within the society. In terms of anti-God movements within the society.

But we don't know it because we're just comparing things to recent years and it's worse now than it was 10 or 20 or 30 or 40 years ago. I mean, remember that a little over 100 years ago, our nation was divided in a bloody war over the issue of slavery. How can we even countenance that? Believers were heavily persecuted in centuries past on college campuses that began as Christian college campuses.

And then the believers were just about driven out to hold a Bible study was almost an impossible thing. I say that to say that we see a lot of things happening. We say, oh, it must be the end.

Well, it's certainly time for revival and judgment on the United States, but it's not necessarily the end. The end of the society, the end of the country or the end of the world. In fact, God could wipe out America and there's no word that says in the word that that would mean the end of the world.

The great Roman Empire was wiped out and civilization has gone on all these centuries since then. But everybody feels that way. Oh, this must be the end.

This must be it. Well, it could be the end of society as we know it in our country. Or it could be a time of great upheaval, reviving, purging, judging.

But let's realize that our situation today is not unique in terms of world history. In terms of even the history of our country. Sure, there are differences and our technology has increased and there's all kinds of drugs and abortion available and all this other stuff.

But it's just sin in a different form. Well, look at the description here of the frontier country. A flood of rationalistic literature came from France and Great Britain, which Dr. Timothy Dwight described as the dregs of infidelity vomited upon us.

The whole mass of pollution emptied on this country. An enormous edition of *The Age of Reason* by Thomas Paine. He was militantly anti-God.

An enormous edition was published in France and sold in America for a few cents and where it could not be sold, it was given away. The effect on U.S. colleges was disastrous. Students looking for an excuse to rebel against the society of the day embraced rationalism and called themselves by the names of famous skeptics and infidels.

Bible colleges became centers of skepticism. Christian students became such a minority that on some campuses they felt compelled to meet secretly. In shades of the radical movements of the late 60s, students of those days held mock communion services, forced the resignation of a Bible college president, and attempted to blow up a campus building.

Now, skip down to page 126. Look at the description of how it was after the revival. The frontier was radically transformed.

Instead of gambling, cursing, and vice, spirituality and genuine Christianity characterized the early Western movement. It was God's great hour. Revival stopped skepticism in its tracks and returned the helm of the country to the gobbler.

How did these things happen? Well, people began to preach. They called for camp meetings, and to their shock, thousands of people showed up. Mass meetings in frontier land where almost all the people would be gathered.

If you think of a crowd of 20,000 in a sparsely populated area, you're talking a huge crowd. And people would be standing, six or seven or eight different people, preaching all over to the crowd, standing on fallen trees and anything else they could stand up on to be heard and be seen. And the power of God would just fall through the place.

This was in our country. Frontier. Daniel Boone was involved with it.

To just put a little flesh on it for you so you understand, you know, put a little reality into it. Look at the description. The noise was like the roar of Niagara, reading on 125.

The vast sea of human beings seemed to be agitated as if by a storm. It's 20,000 people there for a six-day camp meeting. I counted seven ministers all preaching at one time, some on stumps, others in wagons, and one standing on a tree, one up and falling, lodged against another.

Some of the people were singing, others praying, some crying for mercy in the most piteous accents, while others were shouting most vociferously. While witnessing these scenes, a peculiarly strange sensation, such as I had never felt before, came over me. My heart beat tumultuously.

My knees trembled. My lips quivered. And I felt as though I must fall to the ground.

A strange, supernatural power seemed to pervade the entire mass of mind there collected. I stepped out on a log where I could have a better view of the surging sea of humanity. The scene that then presented itself to my mind was indescribable.

At one time, I saw at least 500 swept down in a moment as if a battery of a thousand guns had been opened upon them and then immediately followed shrieks and shouts that rent the very heavens. We pray for people. Everybody falls down.

The custom now is that you drop the towels or the blankets on men and women. Maybe the guy's ankle is going to show or something. I haven't figured that one out.

But we have it all nice and organized, and oh man, the spirit, everyone I prayed for went down. Well, they always go down. It doesn't matter who prays for them.

You get the local vendor selling ice cream on there, put them in a suit and have them pray for people, they'll all go down. It's just learned reaction custom by so many of them. Oh, we're having a great moving of the spirit.

I mean, look, we're all psyched up. We're waiting for it to happen. We're standing there and still nothing happens.

Here you're talking about outdoors. Thousands of people gathered together, a lot of them hardened sinners, and the spirit falls and hundreds fall into the power of God. And they don't just fall.

I mean, our meaning is they fall and they get up the same. You know, the person goes down under tremendous anointing, it seems, and they get up, they're still sick, or they get up and they're still demonized, or they get up and they're still walking in sin and bondage and confusion. You say, what happened? I mean, there was a lot of divine energy, but there wasn't much of God himself confronting that person.

I've also seen it happen when the spirit falls on someone in one instant, they're instantly transformed. I've seen them laid out, unable to stand up, and when they finally can stand up, they're different people. I'm not saying it's all, nothing.

I'm exaggerating the point to emphasize this. But here, you know, Brainerd prays and the spirit falls and the American Indians just bow down into the power of God and hear the Frontier Revivals. I mean, we're talking the stuff that's involved and it's just a sweep of the Holy Spirit.

That's the powerful, that's the powerful. All the big thing about being slain in the spirit is only a fraction. What we talk about is only a fraction of the things that have happened among peoples and generations past that didn't even speak in tongues or pray for the sick or do any of that stuff.

So much more. Here it had a transforming effect on society as a whole. You look at the life of a Charles Finney.

Finney was saved to the bone. Seven years old, saved to the bone, saved to the core with weeping and total recognition of the holiness of God and Jesus' great love and his utter sinfulness. Deep transformation takes place to the point that within the next couple of days people come in and see him and are deeply convicted of sin and run out to the same place in the woods where he got saved and they bow down and get their hearts right with God.

The first year after he was born again, more than 63 people in his community were saved through him. Shortly after he was saved, he went to his house. His mother and father had not saved him.

His father, an old man. He came to the door and said, Father, you're an old man and I've never once heard a prayer other than this house. Charles, you're right.

Pray for me. His family is soundly born again. And for years, for several decades in the United States and overseas also, where Finney went, revival followed.

We won't spend most of our time talking about past revivals and highlights. We're just doing that tonight to really give you a picture and give you an understanding, give you a vision, give you a hunger. We want to see how these things happen.

We want to see the elements. We want to see how they work together. We want to talk about repentance and what it means.

We want to talk about denominationalism, stopping the things of God. We want to look at these various factors. You take a Finney, what was it? What was it about his meetings? Well, let me read you one of the most famous accounts, and it's also one of the most fun accounts to read because it's so incredibly vivid

and such a wild, remarkable story.

Finney had been preaching. He was saved in Adams, New York and had great revival meetings in the true sense of the word with thousands upon thousands saved. It's said that in his life, his last century, no big media, no advertising campaigns like we have today, no radio and television, but a half million people led to the Lord through his ministry.

We're talking about raw spiritual power and spiritual might. Well, he was ministering and he was invited to go to another town. And this was in Antwerp.

He would often preach in school buildings because they wouldn't have them in churches because he preached too common. He preached too clear. He spoke to the people instead of just talking in a high lofty ministerial language like we have in history and other classical literature.

He preached to the people. So instead of holding his meetings in churches, he held his meetings in school buildings. So a man invited Finney, a godly man invited Finney to come and speak in his town.

So it says, a Monday evening at 5 p.m. was set for the service. This is as Louis Drummond recounts it. Since the school was only three miles from town, Charles decided to strike out on foot.

He had labored long on the Lord's day and lost it. He sat down by the roadside and felt he could scarcely go another step regretting not taking his horse. But at the appointed hour, he trudged up to the schoolhouse and to his delight found it packed almost beyond capacity.

He actually had to stand in an open door himself to leave the services. The worship began with a hymn. Now Finney was a trained musician.

The people were terrible singers. Each one, quote, had physically trained senses. It was terrible.

Now get this scene. He finally put both hands over his ears to blot out the discordant fellows. He could still hear them, however.

The grating, irritating sound literally drove him to his knees in vocal prayer. So here he is there singing. He's on his knees covering his ears, praying.

God anointed his prayer and soon a deep consciousness of the Holy Spirit's presence took hold of him. He no longer thought of his sermon subject as was common for him. When he rose from his knees, he picked the text up.

Get you out of this place for the Lord will destroy the city. Genesis 19:14. He then proceeded to preach on the story of Lot and the destruction of Sodom.

He told in graphic terms of how God's judgment fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sin. He had not been on his feet for more than 15 minutes preaching in this manner and applying the truth to the people when all at once what Charles called an awful solemnity settled down on everyone. The people began to fall from their seats and cry for mercy. He described the unbelievable scene by saying, if I had a sword in each hand, I could not have cut them off their seats as fast as they fell.

In a few minutes, they were completely prostrate. The preacher could not go on. The people were in such an agony of prayer that loud cries for mercy completely dominated the scene.

The old man who had invited faith to the community sat there in stunned amazement. Finney looked at him and screamed above the den. Can't you pray? He instantly fell on the floor and poured out his soul to the Savior.

Finney's own heart was so overflowing with joy that he could hardly contain himself. Well, what was it? What had that tremendous effect? What was so incredible about it? Well, Finney didn't know anything about this town, but they had an incredible reputation for ungodliness to the point that they were called Sodom by all the surrounding areas. And there was only one godly man in the entire town.

That was the old man that asked Finney to preach and they nicknamed him Lot. And when Finney got up and began to preach about God pouring out fire and brimstone on Sodom he didn't know anything. But as he continued to preach the power of God and conviction was so strong and so powerful that the scene that I just read about ensued.

You see, revival brings the reality of the anger of God and the wrath of God. And I've asked this question a lot lately but who has ever heard any more of the wrath of God and the anger of God? We just want to talk about the goodness of God and the love of God and the mercy of God and the compassion of God and God wants to bless you and give you good things and do good things for you and He's not mad at you and on and on. And all those things that are being said have truth in them and God is love.

God is also holy. God's name is jealous and it's in the context of not tolerating sin that He says His name is jealous. If Yeshua is never angry with anyone why, pray tell, is He coming back and flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God? Why are they going to be destroyed from the presence of God forever? Because sin is hated.

Paul in Romans 11 says it plainly Behold therefore the goodness and the severity of God. Goodness to you who believe but severity to those who fall. If there's any term of endearment that we have for Yeshua it's the Lamb of God.

When I say term of endearment I mean a term that so totally speaks to us of His mercy. Nothing about His anger. Nothing about His ferocity as a lion.

Nothing about His power. The Lamb of God. The sacrificial servant.

That's what the Lamb of God communicates. And yet, Revelation the sixth chapter one of the most awesome verses in the Bible look at what it says. Revelation chapter six beginning in verse 15 Then the kings of the earth the princes, the generals the rich, the mighty and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains they called to the mountains and the rocks fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.

For the great day of their wrath has come and who can stand? Go over to the 19th chapter of the book of Revelation. The picture of Jesus there. Verse 11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse whose rider is called Faithful and True.

With justice He judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire and on His head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no one knows but He Himself.

He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood and His name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following Him riding on white horses and out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down

the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter.

He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has this name written King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Again ask yourself why is there so little fear of God on radio and television? With a lot of unsafe people watching people preach the gospel on television and hearing them on radio. Many unsafe people take these things in. Why is there no fear of God in their lives? Because they are told God just wants to do good things for you.

He just wants to bless you. He just wants to give you a better life. You don't have to repent.

You don't have to turn from your sin. Just ask Jesus and He will make your life even better. They are not told the reality of judgment.

They are not told the reality of the wrath of God. Consequently, consequently, there is no fear of God. I heard a guy preach a message the other day and I believe he loves the Lord and the Spirit of God is upon him.

It was a great show listening to him also. He was very entertaining, hysterical and everything else. He said I grew up and I didn't want God because I just heard how big, bad and mean He was and He is going on with this just dead religious picture of God.

That is not what I am talking about. He just wants to do good things for me. Then I got saved and amen to what he is saying.

The goodness of God leads us to repentance. But you have to ask the question, where is the fear of God going to come from preaching that message? If God is just this nice grandfather type figure who just wants to do good things for his little kitties, where is there the concept of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty? It is not there. And you get up and talk about it and people think you are anti-faith or anti-love or anti-compassion.

But I ask you with grace in one hand to paraphrase, grace in one hand and a sword in the other. Isaiah 1, if you are willing and obedient you will eat the fruit of the land but if you rebel you will be devoured by the sword. At the least that is the message that the world has to hear.

Fine for us as the people of God, the wrath of God has been diverted through the blood of Jesus and we are whole and clean and pure. Fine, amen. We could die and go to hell forever if we don't warn them, if we don't speak, if we don't bring the reality of judgment to them they will never repent, they will never turn.

I can't picture someone saying you know, a bunch of unsaved people, hard hearted, mockers, skeptics. I can't picture someone getting up and saying you know what, I just want you to know how much God loves you. I just want to tell you how good He is and I just want to tell you that heaven is a wonderful place and if you just love God He will just love on you and things go better with Jesus.

I can't picture people falling out of the seats screaming for mercy with a message like that. Sure if you preach a message with the love of God from the heart of God it can affect people and melt them and they can break down. But so much of our superficial gospel is not going to lead anybody to repent because

they haven't been confronted with God and His reality.

Why should I repent? Repent of what? Well if you have nothing to repent of you're in heaven. The only ones who have nothing to repent of are those who have already gone on before us. Every other single child of God because we slip, because we fall, because there are areas of our sinful nature that have not been totally put under our feet in terms of our own experience, every single one of us has to deal with it and at times go before God, God I'm wrong, I've sinned, this is not right, I turn from it, forgive me, cleanse my heart.

I had mentioned earlier 1857, the outpouring of the spirit and the abolition of slavery. The fact is you had a whole nation go to war over a change of heart and a change of conscience. A president was elected who was an abolitionist riding on the crest of the wave of the spirit of revival in the United States.

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