

REVIVAL -- WHAT IS IT?

A revival in the true sense is a restoration, or a renewal, or an awakening. It pre-supposes a state of weakness or even unconsciousness, the restoration to health of that which has been sick.

A revival is not just a series of special meetings which may be conducted by a church or a group of churches, perhaps under the leadership of an evangelist. That may lead to a revival, but that alone is not a revival.

It is not even a revival when a larger-than-usual number of people profess to be saved. Again, you see that during a revival but that in itself is not a revival.

Nor is it a revival just because the people of a church get excited about something religious, nor because suddenly a larger-than-usual number of people begin to attend church, or several churches in a community.

A revival is not something that is "arranged" by men; IT IS A SOVEREIGN WORK OF GOD. God blesses with revival as He sees fit, and according to His eternal purposes. As Paul told the Corinthians, we may plant, and water, but God gives the increase.

However, we may recognize that we are in a revival, or approaching a time of revival when we see certain things. Those who have studied the great revivals of the past say that these are the things to look for, and things for which we should be praying.

- 1) A renewal of Biblical preaching, accompanied by a renewed interest in the Scriptures on the part of people in our churches.

This will be a renewal in the reading of the Bible, and in living according to the teachings of the Word of God. People will stop ignoring the Scriptures, and they will stop twisting the Scriptures to make them mean what they want the Scriptures to mean.

Remember that the term revival means a bringing back to life or to a state of healthy life that which has been alive before. And so the reference has to do with the people of God in our churches more than it has to do initially with the people of the world.

- 2) A renewal of interest in holy living.

Christians will get concerned about their sinful way, and perhaps be bothered as never before about past sins.

There will be a renewed interest in prayer, both private and public (in the church).

The Lord's people will experience a renewed interest in knowing God and pleasing Him in all that they are and do.

Marriages are restored to a healthy state, and family life is transformed to conform more to the Word of God.

- 3) There will be a renewed interest in church attendance, and a growing concern that the fellowship of Christians be what the Lord wants it to be. Holiness will prevail in the churches, along with a deepening interest in the Scriptures.
- 4) A greater number of people outside of the church will come under conviction because of their sins, and will profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The chief difference about professions of faith which are the result of man's planning as compared with a time of true revival is that there will be a greater number of those who profess faith who will continue to go on with the Lord year after year.
- 5) Often, under the influence of a true work of the Holy Spirit, society will experience a change. Nations have felt the impact of the Gospel, and social ills have been made right through the mighty working of the Lord.
- 6) There will also be greater opposition to the preaching of the Gospel, and to the changes that are being made upon the lives of people in the church and also with those who previously were outside of the church.

There will also be false professions of faith. Whenever the Spirit of God is at work, Satan will also be at work, increasing all that he usually does to hinder and destroy the work of God in the lives of people.

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In considering the book of Romans, let us think together about two things:

- 1) Why study Romans? That is, why is Romans important?
- 2) What effects can I expect in my own life as a result of the studies in Romans? We will look at this from the effect that the truth of this Epistle had upon the Apostle Paul himself.