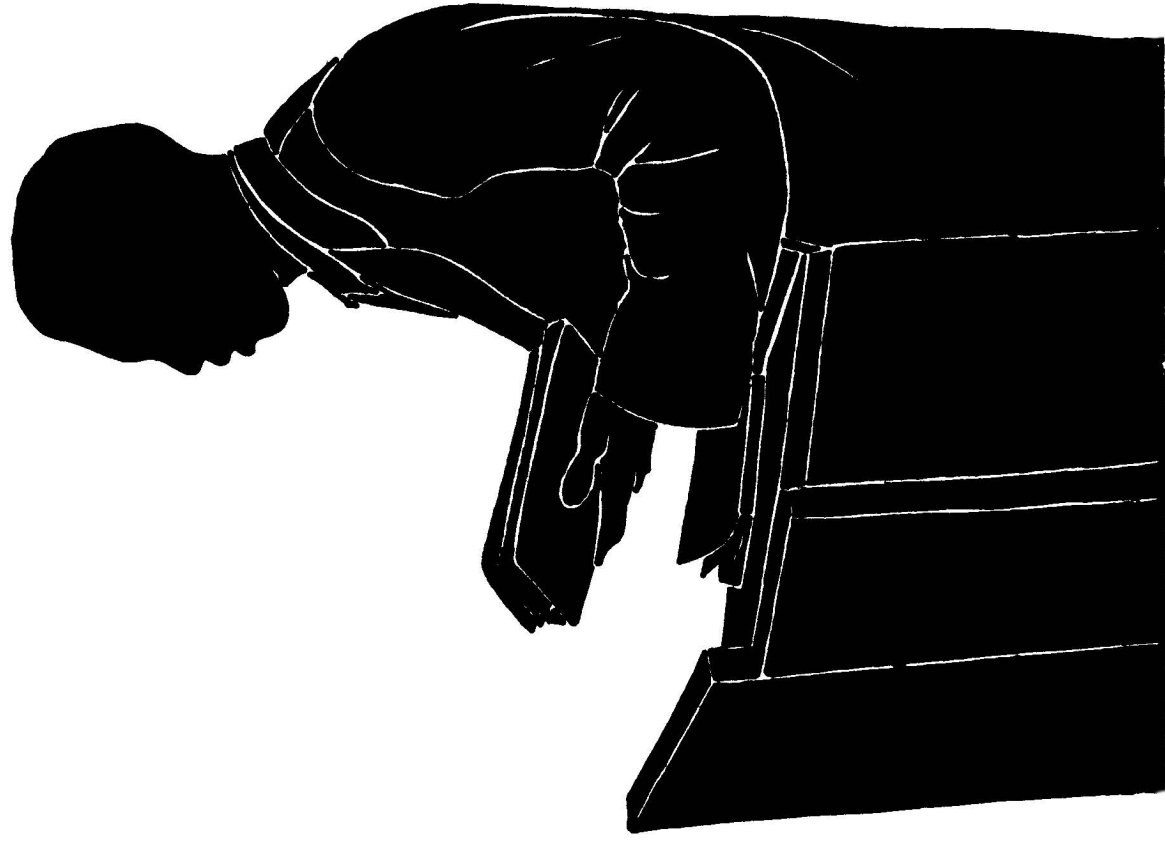


TIMES OF REVIVAL



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(NYANJA)

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is there in the midst of his people to give them strength and blessing in their time of great need. He is still working his miracles among his children.

LESSONS FOR LIFE

(1) Christians must follow the path to revival if they truly want God to send revival. If you are a Christian, are you willing to humble yourself, pray, seek God's face and turn from your wicked ways?

(2) Ask yourself this question: "Have I truly been born again; do I truly know Jesus as my Saviour?" What is your answer? If you do not know him as Lord and Saviour of your life, will you today confess your sins, repent, and accept him as your own Saviour?

(3) If you are a Christian, have you ever experienced the filling of the Holy Spirit in your life? Do you have God's power in your Christian service? What is your answer? If you do not have this experience, will you today confess your sins, repent of your sins and ask him to fill and control your own life with the Holy Spirit?

of her students had never accepted Christ as their Saviour, even though they had said they were Christians and had become church members. This teacher began to ask each student, "Have you been born again?" See John 3:31. She would also ask Christian leaders, "Have you been filled with the Spirit?" See Ephesians 5:18. Her teaching would be on sin. She would take a subject about one sin and spend an evening discussing it and reading what the Bible said concerning this sin. She taught about the sins of the flesh and the sins of the Spirit. This teaching brought a great spiritual hunger to the hearts of many Christians. They began to pray that God would forgive their sins and fill them with his Holy Spirit. Sins were confessed and restitutions were made where possible. First one Christian and then another experienced personal revival. God's power filled their preaching and their prayers. Soon whole churches were touched, then whole cities began to be moved in a great spiritual awakening. The Seminary which had only four pupils at one time soon found itself with 200 asking for admission to train as pastors and evangelists. Churches were filled for all services. Prayer meetings would last all night and sometimes on into the next day. There were miracles of healing. God was in the midst of his people.

Thousands of new converts were added to the churches. Homes were changed. Instead of hate, people were filled with God's love. Enemies were reconciled, and became one in Christ. Yes, in midst of political trouble, spiritual decay, and dead churches, God moved to revive his people that they might rejoice in him.

It was not long after this (in the year 1935) that the Communist armies invaded North China. Many Christians were killed and put into prison. Even today Christian people in this country undergo terrible persecution at the hands of the Communists who rule in their country. Word still comes from China that God

CHAPTER 1

THE WAY TO REVIVAL; THE RETURN TO GOD

AIM: To teach that revival means the sovereign act of God in which he restores his own backsliding people to repentance, faith, and obedience.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 1 Kings 8:23-61;
2 Chronicles 7:1-22.

MEMORY VERSE: *"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*
2 Chronicles 7:14.

LESSON BACKGROUND:

Solomon, whose name means the peaceful one, was the third and last king of the United Kingdom of Israel. He was the son of King David and Bathsheba. He was made king just before the death of his father. One of his first big jobs was to build the temple which his father had planned and instructed him to build. When the building was completed, an elaborate programme of dedication was held. Standing before the people, King Solomon offered a prayer of dedication (1 Kings 8:23-61). In 2 Chronicles 7:1-22 we see the acceptance of the temple by God. We see God's plan whereby people must return to him when sin has separated them from him (Isaiah 59:2; 2 Chronicles 7:14,

This is God's message for his people, the church, today. This is the path back to God. We shall study this path.

THE LESSON FOR TODAY: GOD'S TERMS FOR REVIVAL.

a. If my people:

Today God's people are those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. These are the people who make up local churches. Today, we apply this Scripture to church members. Revival means "to make alive again." God wants to make his people, that is, his church, alive again.

b. Humble themselves:

Many times people think that they do not need God, the Holy Spirit, in their church to lead and guide. They want to work in their own cleverness and work out their own plan. But if God is going to be allowed to make his people alive again, his people must put away their pride and self-sufficiency. God's people must humble themselves before him.

c. Pray:

Prayer is talking with God and listening to him talk to us. God's people must tell God of their love for him. They must praise him for who he is and what he has done. They must thank him for all his daily blessings upon them. They must confess all their sins, and ask for his divine forgiveness. They can present their own petitions to him and make intercession for those in need. Prayer must form a great part of the lives of Christians if they are to take God's path that leads them back to himself and brings revival.

d. Seek my face:

When we see someone's face, we recognise that person. God wants us to know him, understand him, and live daily in fellowship with him. This was the reason that God created man, so that man could become the object of God's love and could return that love in fellowship with God. We must seek to live in fellowship with God day by day if we are to walk in the path to God.

CHAPTER 13

A REVIVAL EXPERIENCE AMONG BAPTISTS IN CHINA

AIM: To teach that revival is more than theory and that through the history of the church God has moved in an unusual manner to bring spiritual revival.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS: John 3:1-21

MEMORY VERSE: *"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?"*
Psalm 85:6

LESSON BACKGROUND:

There have been occasions in the history of many denominations when God moved in a particularly powerful way. Everyone is aware that at that place and at that time something special and unusual happened. God's blessings came down upon them like the heavy rain during the rainy season that they had in Asia Minor. The Bible speak of these rains as the "latter, rains." These periods of great refreshing from the Lord have been recorded and their accounts can be read and studied (Acts 3:19). Today we want to see how God renewed the Baptist churches of China. We want to learn what the results were of this great revival. As we study this chapter let us pray that God will bless our churches with revival blessing.

THE LESSON FOR TODAY

Shantung is a very large city in the country of China. The Shantung Revival was conceived in the hearts of a praying band of Christians. For five years these Christians had been praying for the revival of dead churches in the North China Association. There were some 70 churches that were dead, with no witness and no spiritual power. One of the Bible teachers had discovered that many

people were saved. Peter found Christ and Peter experienced personal revival and renewal. If you are a Christian, this kind of experience can be yours today.

LESSONS FOR LIFE

(1) God, the Holy Spirit, wants to do his work in the lives of Christians hour by hour and day by day. In order for him to do this, each Christian must yield himself to God and obey his voice.

(2) A true spiritual awakening of the nation can begin in the heart of just one man, if that man wholly belongs to Jesus so that God can work in his life and through him bring revival upon a church or upon a nation.

(3) If you are a Christian and have no joy in God's service, in Bible study and in prayer, then ask God to revive you spirit and restore the joy of your salvation. Walk with him on the road to revival in your own Christian life.

e. Turn from their wicked ways:

To repent means "to turn from," but it also means to "turn toward." It is not enough to be sorry for our sins and to confess our sins, although this is necessary. We must also turn away from our wicked ways of sin. This shows God that we mean what we say when we say, "I am sorry for my sin." But when we turn away from our way of sin, we must turn toward God and his way for us, obeying him. True repentance is being sorry for sin, confessing sin, turning away from the way of sin, turning toward God and walking in his way.

f. Conclusion.

When God's people fulfill their obligations, then God will take away the darkness within their lives and in the life of the church. He promises that if his people take his path back to him, they will find him. He will hear them again. He will forgive their sins and iniquities for the sake of his Son, Jesus. He will heal their lives and churches. He will dwell in the midst of his people.

God wants to visit his people in this land. He wants his Spirit to make his people alive again. He wants to revive his people. If his people will follow his commands and his way and return to him, then he will hear. This is the way to revival.

LESSONS FOR LIFE

a. Do you, as a Christian, really want revival to come? This is the first question you must ask. Is your answer, "Yes, Lord, send revival?" If it is not a big "yes," you should begin to pray that God will burden your heart so that you will yearn for revival above all else.

b. Say again the memory verse for today (2 Chronicles 7:14). You have studied that this is God's way to revival. Are you one of God's people? If you are not, the first thing you

must do is repent of your sins and trust Jesus as Saviour. If you are one of God's people, then this verse speaks to you: To humble yourself, pray, seek God's face and turn from your wicked ways. Will you do all this now so that God can hear you, forgive you, and heal you?

c. We as Christians say we want revival. We now know God's way to revival. Are we willing to walk in this way? It means a daily walk. It means humbling ourselves, praying, seeking God's face. It means turning away from our wicked ways every day. When we do all this, we have God's promise to hear, forgive, and heal. Will we, as Christians, begin to walk in God's way today? Pray that he will give us the strength and power of the Holy Spirit to walk this way to revival.

(3) In a moment of spiritual revelation, Peter confessed Christ as the promised Messiah (Matthew 16:18).

(4) Peter was so sure of his own position, power, and love for Christ that he did not think he would ever fail Jesus (Matthew 26:33; John 13:36-38).

Yet with all these spiritual advantages, Peter failed Christ. Read Mark 14:26-31; 66-72. Failing Jesus is always a possibility for every Christian. In a moment of weakness, a Christian may be attacked by Satan and fall defeated, his Christian testimony destroyed.

How wonderful it is to know that when a Christian has fallen in defeat, he can pray as the Psalmist did, asking God to restore to him the joy of his salvation. God will hear and answer that prayer, if that Christian is willing to take the road to revival: to humble himself, pray and turn from his wicked ways. Now let us see how Peter was restored to fellowship with Christ and to a Spirit-filled life of service.

(1) He rediscovered Christ as the risen, living Saviour (Luke 24:12). (2) He had a personal encounter with Jesus (John 21:3-4, 15-19). This is the need of Christians today. Christians need to know Jesus better. They need to know more of Jesus, not just in name, but as the living, reigning Lord. They need to have a personal encounter with him in which he can probe their hearts and spirits and show them their weaknesses and needs.

(3) Peter was restored to fellowship with Christ. Peter would never fail him now. Peter had learned to walk daily with Christ. Peter was filled with the Spirit of Christ (Acts 2:4). Now he could let Christ work through him, for Peter wholly belonged to Christ, in heart, mind, and spirit. Jesus preached through Peter that day and 3,000

served that their witness is destroyed before they are scarcely aware of it. Let us list some of the signs of this decay. (1) There is no enjoyment of God in a Christian's religious profession and service. (2) There is no joy in reading and studying the Bible, God's Word. There are no discoveries of spiritual truth. (3) There is no sense of God's presence and fellowship in prayer. Prayer is neglected. (4) There is no fellowship with Christ. There is no abiding of the branch in the vine. There is no sense of drawing daily upon him for nourishment and strength for the day's battle. (5) There is an uncharitable attitude towards other Christians. There is strife. There is no sense of unity, no fellowship and no love in action or deed toward fellow Christians.

When we see these things happening in Christians, we know Christians are in need of spiritual revival, spiritual renewal, a new experience of Christ and a new filling of God's Holy Spirit.

The life of Peter is a good study in revival.

THE LESSON FOR TODAY

Peter was a man who had all the advantages a man could have in order to live his whole life on a high spiritual plane.

(1) He was called to be Jesus' disciple (Matthew 4:18-20). As a disciple he walked close to Jesus, heard his teaching, saw his miracles and was trained by him. Peter was one of twelve men in all the world to have this wonderful opportunity as a disciples.

(2) He was with Jesus on many of the great historical occasions during the ministry of Jesus on earth. He saw Jesus raise the dead (Mark 5:37). He was with Jesus at the time of his transfiguration (Mark 9:2). He tried to walk on the water to go to Jesus (Matthew 14:29-30)

CHAPTER 2

THE REVIVAL AT SINAI

AIM: To study how God visited his people at Sinai and restored them to repentance, faith, and obedience.

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Exodus 32:1-35; 33:1-23

MEMORY VERSE: "Restore us, O God of hosts;
let thy face shine, that
we may be saved." Psalm 80:7

LESSON BACKGROUND:

God chose Abraham to become the Father of his people. Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob. And Jacob had twelve sons. From these twelve sons and their descendants came the twelve tribes of Israel. These twelve sons and their families lived in Egypt during a time of famine in their country. After the famine was over they remained in Egypt. Through the years many children were born so that the descendants of Jacob, whose name God had changed to Israel, became a great people.

The Pharaoh, or king of Egypt, when the people first moved to Egypt, died. The new ruler was afraid of the tribes of Israel because there were many, many people in these tribes. He made a law that all the people were to be put to work as slave labourers. God was their King, but many had forgotten about him. However, as their lives became very hard under the laws of this Pharaoh, they began to cry to God for deliverance. God heard their cries and sent Moses to deliver them from the Egyptian king and lead them back to their own land, which was called Canaan.

While they were travelling from Egypt back to Canaan, they stopped at the mountain

CHAPTER 12

PERSONAL REVIVAL

AIM: (1) To teach that there is an experience of personal revival in which the Christian fellowship with Christ becomes more real, more thrilling, empowering; (2) to lead the Christian reader to seek this experience of a closer walk with Christ.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: The story of Peter.

His Call: Matthew 4:18-20.

His Close Walk with Jesus: Mark 5:37-43; 9:2.

His Great Compassion: Matthew 16:18.

His Fall: Mark 14:26-31; 66-72.

His Personal Revival: Luke 24:12;

John 21:3-4; 15-19.

Spirit-Filled Service: Acts 2:14-36;

Psalms 51:7-12.

MEMORY VERSE: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow... Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit."

Psalms 51:7, 12

LESSON BACKGROUND:

Regardless of what spiritual heights a Christian may reach, it is always possible for him to depart from God. This departure from a close walk with Christ can occur at any time and to any Christian. Jesus recognises this in Matthew 24:12. Paul recognises this in 1 Corinthians 9:27. The Christian is fighting a daily spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:12) in which the powers of wickedness would destroy his testimony for Christ. If Christians are not constantly on guard there can be a decay of their spiritual lives which can occur so secretly, so silently, and so unob-

called Sinai. Here God wanted to organise them into a nation. He wanted to give them his laws to follow and to teach them how to worship. He wanted to teach that sin is terrible in God's sight and that one day the Messiah would have to die in their place so that all people could be saved through faith.

Moses, their leader, went up on the mountain top to receive the law from God. He was gone forty days. The people thought that he must be dead and would never return. In their fear they decided to worship idols as they had seen the Egyptians worship. The people were filled with sin.

THE LESSON FOR TODAY

Let us see how God led his people back to himself on the path to revival. In the last chapter we studied about this path to revival. Remember, this promise is given to God's people, that is to Israel, to the church, and to the believer.

a. They humbled themselves:

The people had forgotten that God, the King, was Holy and Righteous. They wanted to worship him in their old way (Exodus 32:4). They did other things that were sinful in the eyes of God, their King. Read Exodus 32:6 and 32:25.

Moses corrected the people (Exodus 32:30). God sent a plague upon them (Exodus 32:35). God, their King, rejected them (Exodus 33:3). This brought humility and repentance. God can never bless his people until they repent from their sins. If the church is going to have revival, God's people must repent of their sins.

b. Pray

God heard Moses as he prayed for the people. This intercessory prayer made it possible for God, the King, to visit his people.

religion. The evil spirit said, "Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are you?" When this story became known, the name of Jesus was magnified (Acts 19:17). There was confession of sin (verse 18). There was a turning away from their wicked ways. People brought their magic charms, books on magic, idols, and burned them there before all the people of the city. There was a great spiritual awakening in the city. The idol makers were threatened with having to go out of business. "So the word of God grew and prevailed mightily." (Acts 19:20) Our God can move the cities for we know that they shall become the domain of Christ in the last day.

LESSON FOR LIFE

- a. Do we recognise the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of every believer?
- b. Do we use the name of Jesus as some sort of magic charm? Or do we work in the power of the Holy Spirit?
- c. Are we praying for a revival? Do we pray that the power of the Holy Spirit will be at work and that many will turn from their wicked ways, turning to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord of their lives?

(1) The first intercessory prayer is found in Exodus 32:11-14. God, the King, was able to turn from the destruction which the people deserved that day. We must pray that God will save our churches and the people around us from God's wrath.

(2) The second intercessory prayer is found in Exodus 32:31-32. In this prayer, Moses confessed the sins of the people before God and asked for God's forgiveness. Now, because of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, his Son, each man who confesses his sin to God can be forgiven (1 John 1:9-10).

(3) The third intercessory prayer is found in Exodus 33:12-16. This expresses a sincere desire to have a deeper understanding and fellowship.

These are elements in revival praying: intercession, confession, forgiveness, and a sincere desire to know God more personally.

c. Seek my face:

Moses, the leader, wanted to know God. God's people also desired to meet with God, that is they sought his face (Exodus 33:7, 10, 11). The people were now sorry for their great sin. They repented. They wanted to worship their one, true God.

d. And turn from their wicked ways:

It is not enough just to be sorry for your sins. There must be a genuine evidence of leaving the old way, the old sin. The people no longer sought to make their own gods and worship these idols according to their old ways in Egypt. They built a tabernacle for their one true God, according to his instructions (Exodus 35:5, 21, 36:43).

e. "Then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

In Exodus 40:34, we read that the Lord's presence returned to Israel. He led them forward. Their prayers had been heard. Their sins had been forgiven. Their separation had been healed.

LESSONS FOR LIFE

- a. We must not worship a holy and righteous God in any way that we choose to worship him or according to our old customs. We should worship God according to the instructions he gives us in his Word, the Bible.
- b. One person is enough to make the way possible for revival. One faithful Christian who is working, praying, and seeking God's face can make possible a visitation from God.
- c. Worship in the church, "the tent of the meeting," is important in preparation for revival.

Asia Minor. There was great wealth in the city of Ephesus. It was the seat of the government. The Roman governor came to Ephesus and great cases of justice were tried in the courts. It was a city where great athletic contests took place. It was the centre of a pagan religion. The great temple of the goddess, Artemis, was located there. Paul worked in Ephesus and the Holy Spirit founded a church there for the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE LESSON FOR TODAY

When Paul visited the city of Ephesus, he found some people who had heard about John's preaching on repentance for sin. They wanted to repent and as a sign of their sincerity, they accepted the baptism for repentance, John's baptism. They had not heard the good news that the Person John said was coming had indeed come. They did not know that Jesus, the Messiah sent from God, had died to take away their sins, and open the way for them to return to God, the Father. Paul recognised that the Holy Spirit was not living in them. You can always tell when a man has the Holy Spirit because there is an immediate bond of fellowship with him. Paul preached Jesus unto these people. They believed and were then baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. When this happened, God, the Holy Spirit, came to live in their hearts. We know that every believer has God the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19) The Holy Spirit made his presence known to all. Paul continued to preach and to teach these believers for a period of two years. (Acts 19:10). God worked miracles and used Paul in Ephesus. God is always looking for someone whom he can use and through whom he can work miracles. Some of the heathen there heard Paul call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, and they thought this was just some sort of magic word. They tried to use this word as a magic charm, too; but the evil spirits knew the difference and set upon the magicians! See Acts 19:13-16. The devil cannot be fooled by make-believe

THE REVIVAL AT EPHESUS

AIM: To teach that in the history of the New Testament church there was a continuation of the fulfillment of the prophecy in Joel 2:28-32 as quoted in Peter's sermon in Acts 2:16-21.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Acts 2:16-21; 19:1-20

MEMORY VERSE: *"And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath." Acts 2:17-19a*

LESSON BACKGROUND:

Some people think that all the miracles that occurred when the Holy Spirit came took place on the day of Pentecost and that nothing will ever happen again. But in today's chapter we see the continuing work of God, the Holy Spirit, as he brought a spiritual awakening to the believers at Ephesus. Many times men who are called to a city to preach are discouraged because of the great wickedness found in that city and the indifference to God's work and his church. Often times they feel discouraged because they do not think that they can reach that city for Christ. Ephesus was a great city in the time we study today. It was the market place of the area of

THE REVIVAL UNDER SAMUEL

AIM: To see how the preaching of one man made it possible for God's people to be revived.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 1 Samuel, chapters 1 through 7, especially 7:1-17

MEMORY VERSE: *"Then Samuel said to all the house of Israel, 'If you are returning to the Lord with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ash'taroth from among you, and direct your heart to the Lord, and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines'". 1 Samuel 7:3*

LESSON BACKGROUND.

A writer on revival said, "Whenever you see religion rising up from a state of comparative depression to a tone of increased vigor and strength....this you can say is a revival of religion." This is what we see in our lesson today. We study how God called his people back into fellowship with himself after they had lapsed into a spiritual sleep like unto death.

The children of Israel were the descendants of Jacob. They had been led from Egypt into their own land, which had been promised to Abraham when God called Abraham to follow him. This land was called Canaan or the "promised Land." After the children of Israel had defeated the "squatters" on the land, they divided all the land among the twelve tribes. This period of Old Testament history is called

the *Time of the Judges*. The religious life during this time was very low. There was a general air of decline and compromise which affected the people's worship. They often lapsed into idolatrous worship and into pagan practices of the neighbours. There was little faith in their one, true God, the King. They did not follow the way he had set out for them at Mount Sinai.

Into this situation God sent Samuel. Samuel was not only a judge, but he was also a prophet. He spoke for God. God used Samuel to lead the people along the path that led back to God. This path is the path of revival.

THE LESSON FOR TODAY

Today we study the path back to God taken by his people under the leadership of Samuel, his man.

a. They humbled themselves:

The children of Israel were led by the wicked sons of the good priest, Eli. They thought they could use the ark of God as a magic charm to win the battle against the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:3). The ark represented God's presence. The people should have turned to their God to ask him for deliverance. They thought this little chest, called the Ark of God, could deliver them in time of trouble. Instead of being delivered, they were defeated (1 Samuel 4:10, 21). The Israelites believed that God had left them. In 1 Samuel 7:2 we read that it was twenty years before all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.

b. Pray:

Prayer always forms part of the path back to God (1 Samuel 7:5). When Samuel saw that the people were ready to return to God, he told them to gather at a small village called Mizpeh. He promised to pray for them. Read 1 John 9:8. The people asked Samuel to

c. Pray that you may be yielded to the Holy Spirit. Pray that you may be filled with the Holy Spirit, empowered by him for service.

We will not want even one sin to remain in our lives. We will confess our sins to God (1 John 1:9-10). We will seek to turn others from their sinful ways. We will hate all sin, but we will love all sinners.

e. There will be great power in the preaching of God's Word. Men will gather in great numbers to hear God's Word preached. It may be a preacher who never could preach very well. Now his words are filled with power and mystical attraction. This is because God has taken over and is speaking through him.

f. There will be many repenting from their sins. There will be many confessing their sins. Many will make restitution for the wrongs they have committed in the past. Christian brothers will be reconciled. Peace will come among God's people.

g. There will be great joy and rejoicing.

h. Jesus will be honoured. He will be praised. He will receive all the glory and credit. He will be the chief priest.

i. Churches will be made alive. Church members will be made alive. People will again bring their gifts and tithes to the Lord. The whole community will be affected. All will realise that God has visited them in a supernatural way.

LESSONS FOR LIFE.

a. God, the Holy Spirit, is the author of revival. We cannot plan on revival; we cannot organise revival; we cannot buy revival. Only God can produce a true spiritual awakening.

b. The Holy Spirit is in every believer. He is waiting for that believer to obey God's voice and yield to the presence of the Holy Spirit. He is waiting for the believer to allow the Holy Spirit to take control of his life.

continue to pray for them. Today we do not have to ask anyone else to do our praying for us. Jesus has opened the way for each Christian to pray directly to God himself. Each church member can and should pray for revival to come to his church.

c. Seek my face:

The people repented and were sorry that they had forgotten the one, true God, their King. They were sorry that they had failed in their worship and service to him. They began to remember his blessings in the past and they longed to return to him (1 Samuel 7:2). They lamented after the Lord (1 Samuel 7:6). The people gathered for worship. They fasted and prayed. They confessed their sins and wanted to make right their wrong deeds. They asked Samuel to judge them and tell them how to make restitution. The pouring out of the water upon the ground was to symbolise their complete dedication to God, their King (1 Samuel 7:9). The worship of God was resumed. The sacrifice of the lamb was a picture of Jesus as he would offer himself for the sins of all men.

We must seek God's face in worship, repentance, and rededication of life, if revival is to come to God's church.

d. Turn from their wicked ways:

Repentance and confession of sin must be followed by a change in life. If we are really sorry for our sins, we will turn from these sins. The people of Israel turned from their wicked ways (1 Samuel 7:3, 4). They had been worshipping the idols of Baal and Ashtaroth. They had committed many sins of sexual immorality because this was the teaching of those who worshipped these idols. The people then repented from all these sins and turned away from worshipping idols. They wanted to worship the one, true God, their King, and serve him with all they had.

e. Then will I hear, forgive, and heal:

When the Israelites took the path back to God, he met them and made them spiritually alive again. He renewed them. They had true revival (1 Samuel 7:9). The Lord answered them by allowing them to conquer the Philistines (1 Samuel 7:11). His hand was against the Philistines from that day onward (1 Samuel 7:13). The captured cities were restored and he brought peace to the land (1 Samuel 7:14).

God's blessings will be upon his church and upon the individuals who will take the path to revival. Humble yourself. Pray. Seek his face. Turn away from your sins. God will faithfully keep his promise and dwell with his people in fellowship when they obey him.

LESSONS FOR LIFE

a. A prophet is one who speaks for God. In the New Testament, we read that Jesus has given gifts to men for the building up of his body (Ephesians 4:11). If Christ had given us a special gift, we must use it for his glory. We may be the Christians whom God is calling to lead others of his people back to himself. As he called Samuel and used him long ago, so he may use us now.

b. We cannot use the Bible, or preaching, or praying as magic charms. These must be used by the Holy Spirit if they are to be effective.

c. Prayer always plays a major role in the path to revival. God's people must pray and seek his face. This can be done individually, in small groups, and in large groups. Prayer cannot be neglected if we are to have God's power.

They were able to speak in different languages. What a thrill, what a joy! God had come to dwell in them and be with them as the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ. God, the Holy Spirit, is the person and instrument of spiritual awakening, revival. He is in charge and moves where he wishes. We must know him in our own lives. We must understand what God's Word says about the Holy Spirit. We must have daily and constant fellowship with him. We must seek to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit, praying always that he will come in power and move people. We must pray that he will make the churches truly alive and make Christians alive again. We were made spiritually alive when we first repented and accepted Christ as our own Saviour. Since that time many of us have hearts that have grown cold and indifferent to God's service. We must pray that God will revive these nearly dead Christians and churches.

What are the marks of revival?

a. There is a renewed interest in the services of the church. When revival comes, people have a deep desire to go to a church meeting place and worship God with fellow Christians.

b. There is a renewed interest in God's Word. There is a new desire to read and study God's Word. We see new spiritual truth that we had not realised or understood before. God's Word becomes like food in our mouths. It is sweet and satisfying to our souls.

c. There is a new desire to pray. We don't have to force ourselves to find a time for private worship and prayer. We will have a deep desire to go apart alone and pray, worshipping and praising God. We will long to meet with our fellow Christians for prayer to God and thanksgiving to God for all his blessings upon us, praising his Name.

d. There will be a new sensitivity to sin. Sin will become a hated, distasteful thing.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND REVIVAL

AIM: To see that God, the Holy Spirit, is the author of revival. It was his coming that brought revival to the first Christians.

SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:1-41

MEMORY VERSE: *"Not by might nor by power,
but by my Spirit, says the
Lord of hosts."*

Zechariah 4:6

LESSON BACKGROUND:

A man called Jesus had appeared upon the scene. For three years he preached and did many wonderful things. Some said he was the Messiah. Many people began to follow him. This made the religious leaders of that time very angry. They plotted together to kill him. They took him out to a hill called Golgotha and put him to death on a Roman cross. He was buried. On the third day, he arose from the grave. For days he visited with the believers before he ascended into heaven. Before he went up into heaven, he told them to wait for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4). These believers did not understand what Jesus meant. They asked themselves if the time had arrived when Israel would be restored as a great nation.

LESSON FOR TODAY

The disciples were in an upper room of a house. They had spent much time in prayer and supplication. They were in agreement. They were praying. Then something wonderful happened. There was the sound of a mighty wind. There appeared fire like tongues. The disciples felt a strange new presence and power.

REVIVAL IS THE DEMONSTRATION OF GOD'S POWER

AIM: To see how the faith and courage of one man made it possible for revival to come to the Northern Kingdom, Israel.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 1 Kings 16:28, 33-34, 18:1-40

MEMORY VERSE: *"I desire then that in every
place the men should pray,
lifting holy hands without
anger or quarrelling."*

1 Timothy 2:8

LESSON BACKGROUND:

The children of Israel had returned to their promised land of Canaan. They had rejected God as King, and had been governed by three earthly kings, Saul, David, and Solomon. When Solomon's son, Rehoboam, became king he increased the people's taxes. There was a revolt and the ten northern tribes formed their own country, which they called Israel. The remaining two tribes in the south were called Judah. This is the beginning of the period in Old Testament history known as the *Divided Kingdom*.

Our lesson today deals with the Northern Kingdom, Israel. The city of Jerusalem, the centre of worship for the Hebrew people, was located in the Southern Kingdom. Jeroboam, the king of Israel, tried to set up two places of worship. He chose the cities of Bethel and Dan. The desire of the people to worship and serve their one, true God was therefore weakened. The people began to worship idols. With this fatal policy, Jeroboam set the standard for his government. Each succeeding king followed this policy. This led to the downfall of the kingdom. Later, the worship of Baal, with all of its horrible practices,

found a welcome and congenial soil in the kingdom of Israel.

In our chapter today, Ahab, the sixth king, was ruling over Israel. His character is described in 1 Kings 16:30-33 and 21:25-26. Ahab married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Phoenicia, Sidon. She was a follower of Baal. From the beginning of her time in Israel, she was determined to destroy the worship of Jehovah God in Israel. She brought her heathen religion with its ritual and priests into the land of Israel. She had as many of God's prophets as she could find put to death. The cause of God seemed hopeless. Yet in such a situation God brought his people back to himself.

THE LESSON FOR TODAY

The people of the Northern Kingdom took the path to revival, but only after God had demonstrated his great miraculous power. Even though most of the people were following the wicked queen, Jezebel, in Baal worship, there were a few who worshipped Jehovah. Two of these were Obadiah, the governor over the house of Ahab, and Elijah, the Tishbite (1 Kings 17:1).

In studying the life of Elijah, we read over and over in the Bible, "and the word of the Lord came to Elijah." Elijah always obeyed God. Obedience to God's commands is important if God is to use a man to bring revival to his people. In 1 Kings 18:1 we read that Elijah was going to Ahab, even though he had been told that Ahab had searched all the country looking for him in order to kill him. Read in 1 Kings 18:17-18 that the real reason God withheld rain from the land was that the people had forsaken God's commandments. When we leave God's way, trouble always comes, whether it is in our own personal life, in the life of the church, or in the life of a nation.

sins. The king repented; all the government leaders repented; all the people repented.

Notice again the same road to revival: The people humbled themselves. They prayed. They sought God's face. They turned from their wicked ways. (Jonah 3:9) If Jonah had not gone to Nineveh and preached to the people, perhaps the city and all who lived there would have been completely destroyed by God. The people would have died in their sins.

God loves and cares for all nations and people. Read John 3:16. We must look upon the world as God looks upon it. We must love all the people in the world, regardless of their tribe. We must see that we are responsible to preach to them and bring them to Jesus Christ.

If we run away from the job God gives to us, many people may die in their sins. We must preach as if we will never have an opportunity to preach again. We must preach as dying men to dying men.

LESSONS FOR LIFE

a. Today we learn the peril of running away from a job given to us by God.

b. Like Jonah, we may have the temptation to selfish patriotism and religious bigotry. Jonah was a Jew and he did not want to preach to the Gentiles.

c. We learn that God uses imperfect men as channels of truth. He used a man like Jonah in spite of his sin in order to preach the truth of God to a lost and doomed city. It is not what we are, but what God is, that makes it possible for God to use us!

d. Let us think much about the wideness and greatness of God's love. Say again John 3:16. We need to praise him faithfully for his wonderful love.

go, and cry to the people." Nineveh was one of the largest cities in that area. It was a city filled with so much wickedness that God would destroy it if the people did not repent and turn from their wicked ways. God is patient and long-suffering (2 Peter 3:9). He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But there is a limit to his long-suffering. The days of Sodom and Gomorrah came to a close. The days of the wicked world of Noah came to a close. The days of our age will come to a close. But if we are faithful and preach so that people repent of their wickedness and turn to God, our days may be prolonged.

Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord because he did not want to obey God's command to him. He brought great trouble to the ship and its crew because of his foolishness (Jonah 1:4-15). It is always dangerous to try to run away from a God-given task. The future of a large city with thousands of people depended upon Jonah's obeying what God told him to do.

Jonah tried to run away from God. Now he was in trouble. He began to think again of what God had told him to do. His life was in danger. He had really made a mess of things. He decided to call upon the name of the Lord. (Jonah 2:1) Jonah's prayer recognised God as a personal God. Jonah knew that he had sinned and he knew that God only was able to save him. Read Jonah 2:1-10. God gave Jonah another chance. Again he gave Jonah the command to go to Nineveh and preach what God would tell him to say. Read Jonah 3:1. A preacher must always follow the Holy Spirit when he delivers a message, whether it is to a large group or a small group. The preacher must always preach only the message from God to the people.

This time Jonah obeyed God's will. What a wonderful revival there was! Jonah preached as the Holy Spirit led him. The people believed God's message. They repented from their

There was a great contest between those who worshipped Baal and Elijah, who worshipped the one, true God, Jehovah. Read Elijah's prayer in 1 Kings 18:36. Elijah's only interest was that God would be honoured; and his name would be made Holy among the people. A miracle occurred. Read 1 Kings 18:38, "The fire of the Lord fell." God visited the people in a great show of his power and majesty. The effect upon the people was immediate.

a. They humbled themselves: Read verse 39.

"They fell on their faces..." They recognised how little they were when they were in the presence of the almighty God.

b. They prayed:

Elijah took over the meeting. (1 Kings 18:30) The people obeyed his voice. Elijah set up a place of worship as instructed by God. The water poured upon the altar was a symbolic act of complete dedication to God. It pictured the setting apart of a person or thing wholly for God's service. Elijah prayed (1 Kings 18:36).

c. Seek my face.

Again on behalf of the people Elijah sought God's face in prayer and dedication. Elijah was God's representative. Today God can use one person, completely consecrated to himself, who will listen and obey his voice. God can use just such a person to bring revival to a church.

d. And turn from their wicked ways.

When God visited his people and the fire fell, the effect was immediate. The people acknowledged that Jehovah God was the one, true God. (1 Kings 18:39) They rejected the priests of Baal and Baal worship by killing the prophets of Baal as God had commanded. (1 Kings 18:20, 40)

e. Then I will hear, forgive, and heal:

God heard and visited his people. By allowing the fire to devour the sacrifice, the altar wood and the water completely, he symbolized his acceptance of their sacrifice, and the forgiveness of their sins. See Exodus 20:4-5. God sent the rain upon the dry and thirsty land (1 Kings 18:45). Rain is used as a symbol of blessing from God. The Bible speaks of the showers and then of the "latter rains," the main, hard rains of a rainy season. God wants to bless his church with great blessings described as the "latter rains." Let us pray that God will bring revival to our own lives and his church this year.

LESSONS FOR LIFE

a. We cannot worship God any way we please. They who worship God must worship him in spirit and in truth. God would not accept the Baal worship of Jezebel.

b. One man obedient to God's call, as was Elijah, is enough to do the "impossible." He overcame 400 prophets who worshipped Baal. There is no substitute for obedience to God.

c. When God demonstrates his great power, as "the fire falls," people will turn to him in awe and wonder. Let us pray that God will demonstrate his power through us.

CHAPTER 9

AN UNWILLING PREACHER SAVES A CITY

AIM: To teach that God's people must not run from the task that God calls them to do.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Jonah chapters 1 through 3

MEMORY VERSE: *"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou art there! If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there!"*

Psalms 139:7-8

LESSON BACKGROUND:

Jonah was a prophet who lived during the time Jeroboam was king of the Northern Kingdom, Israel. He is mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25. He was a Jewish prophet who believed that Jehovah God was interested only in the Jews. He considered that all the Gentiles were outside of God's providence. When God called him to go, preach, and cry out against the Gentile city of Nineveh he did not want to go. This was too much for his "Jewish blood!" This is racism in 800 B. C.

Jonah tried to run away from the presence of the Lord (Jonah 1:3). He did not understand the truth of our memory verse for today. There is no place where a man can flee from the presence of the Lord. Jonah had a God-given task which he did not want to do. Compare how Jonah acted when God gave him a job to how Nehemiah acted when he was given a job to do by God.

LESSON FOR TODAY

Jonah was given a job to do. It was an important, urgent job. God said, "Arise, and

So far as we know, the children of God never again returned to idol worship. Great was the spiritual awakening in Jerusalem that day!

LESSONS FOR LIFE

- a. If God calls us to do a job for him, are we willing to do that job regardless of the cost to us personally?
- b. Are we conscious that we are fighting a battle with the forces of evil? Do we look to carnal weapons or do we look to spiritual weapons to win our battles? Read 2 Chronicles 10:4.
- c. Are we engaged in some work to prepare for a spiritual awakening in our own country? Be faithful. Be on guard. Don't let the devil keep you from doing your job.

CHAPTER 5

THE DANGER OF BACKSLIDING AFTER REVIVAL

AIM: To learn that God's people must keep a guard on their lives and not go back into sin. When we as God's people have an experience with the Lord, we must be careful! We must not make the mistake of thinking that we are safe from the devil, from temptation, and from slipping back into sin. Asa, whom we study today, was a man used of God, but later he lapsed into sin. God then could no longer use him.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 2 Chronicles 14:1-15 15:1-19;
16:1-13.

MEMORY VERSE: "A perverse man will be filled with the fruit of his ways, and a good man with the fruit of his deeds."

Proverbs 14:14

LESSON BACKGROUND:

Our lesson takes place in the Old Testament period called the *Time of the Divided Kingdom* as studied in the last chapter. Review the chapter background for chapter 4. The chapter dealt with the ten Northern tribes of Israel. In this chapter we shall study about a king of the two Southern tribes of Judah. We shall study about Asa, the third king of Judah.

When Asa began to reign as king, he did many good things. He removed the idols from the land and led the people to worship Jehovah, the one, true God. God used Asa during his early years as king. It is sad that later in his life, Asa's heart grew cold. He did not look to Jehovah God to answer his own needs.

There is always the danger that a man's faith may grow cold and that he will lose his zeal to serve God. We must allow the Holy Spirit to control our lives from day to day so that we will keep our faith for God and love for him warm and powerful.

THE LESSON FOR TODAY

"And Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God." (2 Chronicles 14:2) He took away the idols and destroyed the places where idols were worshipped. He was a good king who cared for and protected his people (2 Chronicles 14:6). He acknowledged that his peace and prosperity were gifts from God (2 Chronicles 14:7). Asa was a man of prayer (2 Chronicles 14:11). When King Asa returned from battle, Azariah said some very wise words to him "If you forsake him (the Lord), he will forsake you" (2 Chronicles 15:2).

Asa forgot the words of God spoken by Azariah. God used Asa in a mighty way during Asa's early life. As Asa grew older, he began to grow cold in his relationship to God. God could not use him any more because Asa's great love for God was now dead. Because Asa left God, God left Asa, even as he said he would do.

Let us read 2 Chronicles 15:3-6. In these verses we see that when a nation forsakes God, God also forsakes the nation. There is no peace and no security for the nation that forsakes God. There is only trouble and destruction. In verse 4 we have the wonderful promise from God that when a nation turns to him in time of trouble, that nation will find him, willing and ready to help. A revival meeting could be a time of turning to God.

In 2 Chronicles 15:8, we read that when Asa heard Azariah's prophecy, he believed and took courage. He continued to remove the idols from his land. He rebuilt the altar of Jehovah and led the people to worship only Jehovah.

this battle of righteousness. We are on God's side. This is God's work. We read in verse 15 that God had frustrated the purposes of the enemies.

In Nehemiah 6:12, we read about the next subtle attack made by the enemies. They appeared as the exponents of sweet reasonableness. "Come, let us sit down as friends and talk this over. Surely we can compromise on a solution." We can hear the voice of the devil in many ways. If the devil can get God's people to give up their work for a little while to talk things over, he knows he has a good chance of keeping them from returning to their task. We must let no such diversion keep us from revival. Nehemiah replied, "I am doing a great work." Our task of reconciliation, of bringing men to God and God to men, is a "great work" and we must not neglect it for anything!

Having failed in this attempt, the devil then tried to work from within the group. The enemies bribed one of Nehemiah's men to get him to leave his work and hide in the temple. "His enemies were planning to take his life." Nehemiah refused (Nehemiah 6:11) - this was not of God, but came from the enemies of revival. (Nehemiah 6:12)

Because they had withstood all the attacks of the enemies of God's work, Nehemiah and the men were able to complete the work (Nehemiah 6:15). Then even the enemies acknowledged, "this work was done by God" (verse 16).

Now the people felt safe. They knew that their God was with them. They turned to God in a great spiritual awakening (Nehemiah 7:5; 8:1-18; 9:1-4). Fellowship was restored between the people and the one, true God, Jehovah. There was prayer, praise, thanksgiving, reading from God's Word, teaching God's Word, great joy, and rejoicing in the discovery of forgotten spiritual truth. There was confession of sin, repentance, and the acknowledging of God's hand in the life of his people.

God called him out and God gave him a task to do (Nehemiah 1:12). Conscious of his God-given task, Nehemiah led the people to accept the work that God wanted done (Nehemiah 2:17, 19). We can always be sure that the devil is an enemy of God's work of spiritual awakening. He does not want God's people revived. He will do all that he can to keep revival from coming. If he had been successful in keeping Nehemiah from completing the task that God had given him, revival or spiritual awakening would never have come to Jerusalem. Let us see how the devil tried to keep God's work from being done.

THE LESSON FOR TODAY

In Nehemiah 2:19, we read about the first attack the devil led against God's people. They laughed and made fun of those who were working. Nehemiah replied, "The God of heaven will make us prosper." God's children are the ones who will benefit from completing the task. The devil has no interest and will not gain but he will lose when God's work is complete (Nehemiah 2:20). The next assault came in Nehemiah 4. They ridiculed God's people, called them feeble, cast doubt upon their ability and upon the outcome, saying that the work would not stand (Nehemiah 4:2-3). Again Nehemiah, did not attack them. This would have diverted his attention and energy. He took the matter to God, and in effect, said, "God, you take care of those fellows because they have provoked you!"

The next attack follows very soon. Unable to divert the people's attention, unable to make them doubt their ability and the final outcome, the enemies decided upon an attack to stop the work by force (Nehemiah 4:8). Nehemiah wielded his weapon with might and strength. We read in verse 9, "We prayed to our God, and set a guard." Then in verse 14 and in verse 20, Nehemiah counselled the people, "Do not be afraid of them, remember the Lord." We must always remember that we are not alone in

The people were attracted to Asa and followed his leadership because they saw that the Lord God was with him. When people see the power of God in his churches and in our worship, they will come in; they will be attracted to God. Notice the effect upon the people of Judah: (1) They came for worship (verse 10); (2) They gave gifts to God (verse 11); (3) They made an agreement with God to seek him (verse 12); (4) They yearned for God (verse 12). They were so attracted to their God that they not only made an agreement with him, but they also took an oath, which is a much stronger term. Last of all, they rejoiced in their God. They sought him with their hearts. This was true revival. Our people and our churches will be affected in the same way when true revival comes. Asa was used by God because he obeyed God. As a young king he took a stand for God and led the people to revival.

The sad part of the story of Asa's life is found in 2 Chronicles 16. Asa made an alliance with an earthly king instead of continuing to trust Jehovah God to deliver him (16:1-3). God's messenger, Hanani, came to King Asa and gave him God's message that he had done foolishly. Read 2 Chronicles 16:7-9. Instead of listening to God's message to him, Asa became angry. Instead of repenting of his evil and asking for God's forgiveness, Asa punished God's messenger! Read verse 10.

As Asa grew older, he developed a disease. He should have gone to God first with this disease and asked God to lead him. But Asa had gone away from God, and he did not ask God for deliverance and help. Here was Asa's sin.

It is not a sin to go to a doctor for help. Many times doctors and medicines can be the tools God uses to bring help and healing to those who are ill. But the Christian must always seek God in everything, looking to him, depending upon him, thanking him, and praising him in every situation. Thus we see that the words God spoke through Azariah came true, as

he told Asa, "If you seek him (God) he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will forsake you." (2 Chronicles 15:2)

If God is using you and blessing you in his service, be careful. Do not become careless in your relationship to God, but press on toward the mark of our high calling in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12).-

LESSONS FOR LIFE

a. We can never have just one experience with Christ that will meet our needs for the rest of our lives. We must have an experience with Christ daily.

b. We must be on guard after a successful revival lest our love for God and his work grow cold and we no longer want to do his work or to let him rule in our lives.

c. Let us seek to be filled, that is controlled, by the Holy Spirit day by day. Ephesians 5:18b states: "But be filled with the Spirit."

CHAPTER 8

ENEMIES OF REVIVAL

AIM: To see that there are always enemies of God who want to keep his work from being done. There are enemies of spiritual awakening and revival.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Nehemiah chapters 1 through 13, especially chapters 8 and 9.

MEMORY VERSE: "For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

Ephesians 6:12

LESSON BACKGROUND:

This chapter takes place in the Old Testament period called the *Time of the Restoration*. It was during this period that the Israelites or the Hebrew people returned to Jerusalem. These people had been in captivity for about seventy years. The Jewish people were allowed to return to their homeland, Canaan, and to its capital city, Jerusalem. The first two groups did not make progress in restoring the city. Hanani, Nehemiah's kinsmen, returned to Babylon and told Nehemiah about the condition of the country.

Nehemiah began to pray (Nehemiah 1:1-11). He was under such conviction that he asked God to send him to rebuild the city (Nehemiah 2:5). This meant giving up a place of security and a position of authority and recognition where he lived in ease and luxury. But

Word is an instrument of revival!

LESSONS FOR LIFE

- a. Do I read God's Word, faithfully and prayerfully each day?
- b. Do I allow the Holy Spirit to lead me to the truth of God's Word?
- c. Do I seek to share what I have learned from God's Word by witnessing to others?
- d. Could I be the one who could stay God's hand of judgment if I would find personal spiritual revival today?
- e. Am I praying daily for revival?

CHAPTER 6

FRUIT OF REVIVAL: INCREASED GIVING TO THE CHURCH

AIM: To study how religious awakening (revival) brings a spontaneous stewardship of giving to the church.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 2 Chronicles 29:1-36; 30:1-27; 31:1-21.

MEMORY VERSE: "Since they began to bring the contributions into the house of the Lord we have eaten and had enough and have plenty left; for the Lord had blessed his people, so that we have this store left." 2 Chronicles 31:10

LESSON BACKGROUND:

This chapter takes place during the period of Old Testament history called the *Time of the Divided Kingdom*. This chapter is about King Hezekiah, a king of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. King Hezekiah ruled for 23 years. He was the first king to rule in Judah after the ten Northern tribes of the Kingdom of Israel had been defeated and carried away into captivity by the Assyrians (2 Kings 17:18; 18:11-12).

The king who ruled in Judah before Hezekiah was Ahaz, a very wicked king. Ahaz led the people into idol worship (2 Chronicles 28:2-4). He forsook the temple and worshipped in the valley of Hinnom. He offered his children as sacrifices to the idol, Baal. God allowed Syria to defeat the children of Israel because of their sin (2 Chronicles 28:5-6). The country of Judah was at a low time in its national and religious life.

THE LESSON FOR TODAY

In 2 Chronicles 29:1 we read that Hezekiah was 25 years old when he became king. From the beginning he was a man through whom God could work (2 Chronicles 29:3). He opened the doors of the temple which his father had closed. Closing the temple doors had symbolised that wicked Ahaz was closing off Jehovah God from Judah. Sometimes we close the doors of our hearts and attempt to close God out of our lives. The first step young King Hezekiah took was to open the temple doors. If we want to experience revival, we must open the doors of our hearts to our God. Hezekiah then called the religious leaders together and gave them instructions to get rid of their sin and get ready to lead the people in worship (2 Chronicles 29:5). The next step was to get God's house ready (2 Chronicles 29:5). King Hezekiah realised the cause of the trouble in his country (2 Chronicles 29:6-9). He determined to go to God and make an agreement with him - to walk before God in truth and with a perfect heart (2 Kings 20:1-11).

Then King Hezekiah gathered the city officials together. They went with him to the temple to worship the one, true God. All the congregation came together also to worship God (2 Chronicles 29:29). God moved mightily among the people who came to worship him.

After the people had consecrated themselves to Jehovah God, they brought their thank offerings to God. (Read 2 Chronicles 29:31) The people brought so many offerings that there were not enough priests to offer all the sacrifices!

The secret of success is recorded in 2 Chronicles 29:36. God had prepared the people. Revival is always the work of God the Holy Spirit moving in the hearts of his people, making them alive, giving them new power and new strength.

- a. Josiah's heart was tender.
- b. He humbled himself before God.
- c. He was sorry. He tore his clothes.
- d. He wept before God.
- e. Because he did this, God heard him.

Here again we see the path to revival: "If my people will humble themselves, pray, seek my face, turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear, forgive, and heal." Spiritual awakening can begin in the heart of one person and spread to the whole church or nation. Josiah's personal revival stayed the judgment of God upon a nation for 31 years.

Josiah was not content to enjoy his own personal, private little revival. He sent to gather all the elders together (2 Chronicles 34:29). God's Word was read to them. The King made an agreement with God and caused all those present to confirm it. (2 Chronicles 34:31-32) He began making changes in his kingdom. You may read the details in 2 Kings 23:4-16 and verse 24 and 2 Chronicles 34:33. Then Josiah called the people to worship the one and only true God, Jehovah (2 Chronicles 35:1). He had the religious leaders organise themselves and cleanse themselves from all their sins so that they would be ready when the people came to worship. Notice that this revival - this spiritual awakening - brought increased giving. (2 Chronicles 35:7-9) When all was ready, each one of God's people was found in his place of service (verse 10). God wants his servants in their places when the church is meeting for worship. In verse 17 we read the final results of the Bible reading that was done after God's Word was found. The nation was gathered for worship. It was the greatest service that had been held since the days of Samuel. Spiritual awakening will change our uninteresting, powerless, dead church meetings to worship services which are alive with God's presence and power. "The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword..." (Hebrews 4:12) God's

was about to be poured out upon his people.

In our chapter today we see how the discovery of God's Word converted the heart of a young king named Josiah. Because King Josiah turned to God, God's judgment upon Judah was delayed for 31 years. God's Word is a powerful instrument of revival that is, for making people spiritually alive.

THE LESSON FOR TODAY

From the beginning Josiah walked in the ways of his forefather, the model king David. (2 Chronicles 34:2) When he was sixteen years old, Josiah wanted a deeper experience and knowledge of God. (2 Chronicles 34:3) When he was twenty years old, he began to serve God by destroying the idols and the places where the people went to worship these idols. (2 Chronicles 34:3-4) It was good to destroy idols, but this is a sort of "negative reaction." This was a good work but it was not complete within itself. There must be something very positive in our religion and our service. People may know what we are against, and never know what we really stand for! When King Josiah was 26 years old, he took a positive approach in worship. He wanted to repair the house of the Lord, and restore the worship of the one, true God. (2 Chronicles 34:8-16) In this process of cleaning and repairing the temple of God, a priest found a long lost book. It was probably a scroll containing the first five books of Law that we find in our Old Testament. These books told the people how they should worship the holy and righteous God. When young King Josiah heard these words, he realised his own sinfulness. "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." God's Word is the laver that makes our sins known and by which our sins may be cleansed. Josiah heard the Word of the Law. Josiah was convicted of his own sins. God saw Josiah's heart. Read 2 Chronicles 34:26-27 and notice the following points:

After the priests, the officials of the city, and King Hezekiah had prepared their hearts, the whole country was invited to keep the Passover of the Lord (2 Chronicles 30:1). Their brethren who were left in the Northern Kingdom of Israel were invited to come. Revival brings a new unity and peace among God's children. It had been a long time since God's people had worshipped God. Some forgot to prepare themselves properly before eating the Passover meal (2 Chronicles 30:18-20), but King Hezekiah prayed for them and God forgave them. The people were so busy worshipping and praising God that the service was extended for another week. There had not been as much joy and happiness as this among God's people since the time of Solomon (about 350 years earlier). See verse 26.

The people went back to their homes and put away all their idols (2 Chronicles 31:1). The people freely gave gifts to the temple (2 Chronicles 31:5-10). Here we see the answer to the problem we face in our churches of not having enough money to take care of the work of the church. Does your local church have this problem? Do you have enough money given by the people in the church to pay the pastor, to purchase all the literature needed to teach the people properly, to keep the church building cleaned and repaired, to help the work of the Associations and to do mission work here in our country? If God's people are in the right relationship with their God, they always give freely and joyfully. When God moves in the hearts of his people, and they become filled with him, all that they have, including their money, belongs to him. They joyfully and eagerly bring their tithes and offerings to God's house. And God always blesses abundantly this kind of happy giving.

LESSONS FOR LIFE

We must make personal preparations for revival. How can we do this? Let us think of some ways:

- a. We must open our hearts' doors and ask God to come into our hearts.
- b. We must cleanse ourselves from all known sin (1 John 1:9-10).
- c. We must find our place in God's house, worshipping and praising his Holy Name regularly.
- d. We must study his Word, the Bible, and pray daily that we shall have the power of his Holy Spirit in our lives, so that we might walk in his way.
- e. We must be faithful in bringing our tithes and offerings to him. We should be happy that we can give to his church and his work.

Conclusion: Pray for a real spiritual awakening for yourself, your church, and your country.

CHAPTER 7

HOW A REDISCOVERY OF GOD'S WORD BROUGHT REVIVAL

AIM: To teach that God's Word is a powerful instrument of revival blessing.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 2 Chronicles 34:1-33; 35:1-19

MEMORY VERSE: *"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;"*

Psalm 19:7-8

LESSON BACKGROUND:

Again and again as we study God's Word we see the tragic sequence of a good father followed by a wicked son. This should make all parents conscious of their responsibilities to their children. Parents should never become so involved in certain parts of God's work that they neglect the work God gave them to do when he gave them children. This work is to rear children in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

After good King Hezekiah died, his son, Manasseh, became king. This son did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Chronicles 33:1). The worship of idols returned to the country. Manasseh again burned his children as a sacrifice to the gods. He practised soothsaying, augury, sorcery, and dealt with mediums and wizards (2 Chronicles 33:6). He was evil and he led the people into sin. When he died after 55 years, we are told in 2 Chronicles 34:23 that God was about to allow Judah to be destroyed because the people had completely forsaken him. His terrible wrath