

Nehemiah Sermon #20

Nehemiah 9

From chapter 8 – now in chapter 9 – what we have been witnessing is a revival; a spiritual revival – renewal of the people.

This began with the building of a pulpit for the purpose of reading and explaining the Word of God.

We see that the result of this great Bible reading was revival, but just reading the Bible doesn't bring revival – People must allow the Word of God access and authority.

The Holy Spirit brings conviction to the lost for salvation.

The Holy Spirit brings conviction to the saved for sanctification – holiness

Conviction of the Holy Spirit leads to repentance – a change of mind – for the sinner and the saint.

This chapter reviews the history of Israel and Israel's God; it reveals both the majesty of God, and the depravity of man, and it reveals the response of God to man and man to God.

I have entitled today's sermon "**The Revival of Israel**"

Nehemiah 9:1, and verse 1

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

Nehemiah 9:1-5

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

The Revival of Israel

Vs. 1a

The feast had finished on the twenty-second; those who stayed on were doing so by deliberate choice.

They were willingly assembled. The people lingered to hear more of the Word of God.

God is not going to force worship – we are free-will beings – we have a volition.

See, you can bring your child to church but you can't make him worship.

You can make your child moral guidelines, but you can't make him holy.

We are still in the same month as the beginning of Chapter 8. This tells us revival can happen in a short period of time.

Feasting had turned to fasting as the Word brought conviction and people started confessing their sins.

The Word of God revealed to them their sinfulness – the error of their ways.

Bible truth is the basis of Biblical revival.

Vs. 9b – Revival takes place with the children of Israel.

We cannot revive a soul that is dead!

That soul needs regeneration – quickening.

Simple trust in Christ and His redeeming blood brings eternal salvation.

We are justified by faith of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "Come unto Me" for salvation.

Jesus said, "Come after Me" – that's discipleship.

That is commitment to obey.

So, revival refers to believers, who are in a poor spiritual state, in poor health, being brought back to vitality and power – back to normal

In salvation, we receive a gift – eternal life – Romans 6:23

In discipleship, one gives as a gift – our bodies

Romans 12:1, *“that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”*

Salvation cannot fail

Discipleship is always in danger of failing – Luke 14:25-33

Living in sin, disobedience – out of the will of God is abnormal, subnormal. A vibrant close walk to God is normal.

Fasting, sackcloth (a grain bag), and dirt/earth – demonstrated their sincerity – repentance – fruits of repentance is demonstrated in decision making.

Jonah 3:4-5, *“And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.’ So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.”*

King made a decree – turn everyone from his evil way and God saw their works

Vs. 2

The children of Israel separated themselves from heathen alliances and practices

Look, if we want revival – a requirement is repentance – turning away from sin

The people determined to separate themselves from activities and involvements with unbelieving people that were in direct violation of the law of God, particularly intermarriage and idolatrous and immoral behavior.

The point is that the Word of God had an effect on the lives of these people.

If it has an effect on us, it will cause us to go to God in confession.

This is the road to revival; there is no other road.

Confession means to agree with God's Word instead of offering excuses or attempting to rationalize our actions.

Confession is calling what we are doing or thinking exactly what it is: sin.

When we do that, we have confessed our sins, and God is faithful and just to forgive us. He cleanses us.

We cannot live in our world today without our mind getting dirty, or our eyes getting dirty, or our ears getting dirty.

Perhaps even our feet and hands get dirty.

So we go to God in confession.

There are many people attempting to praise, live for, serve God today who are not walking in the light of God's Word.

I John 1:6-7, *"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."*

The people took time to confess their sins and seek the Lord's forgiveness.

Finally, we see the people separating themselves from the world as they drew near to the Lord.

Devotion to God without separation from sin is hypocrisy!

The nation of Israel was chosen by God to be a special people, separated from the pagan nations around them.

Leviticus 20:26, *“And ye shall be holy unto Me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed [set you apart] you from other people, that ye should be Mine.”*

The apostle Peter applied those words to Christian believers in the church today.

I Peter 1:15, *“But, as He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of life.”*

So what is the standard for us?

What would be normal living for the Christian? – righteous living, holiness

How do we stay holy? – as we learn the Book – as the Holy Spirit teaches and convicts

We respond – we are renewed.

Learning from the Book of the Law made the people realize that they and their ancestors had constantly failed to keep the covenant with God.

They confessed their sins—their own and the sins of their fathers.

James 4:8-10, *“Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.”*

Do you need reviving today?

That’s exactly what these people did – it’s what we should do!

Vs. 3a

They stood – the people must have had a genuine hunger to know God's will and His promises because they stood for hours.

The children of Israel read the Law for one-fourth of the day; then they did something about what they had read—they confessed their sins.

After hearing the Word of God, they made their confession; then they praised and exalted God.

I Peter 2:9-10, *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”*

What do we offer? Praise, ourselves

This is what we need to do. How we need to exalt God in our services and praise Him!

True worship involves many elements: hearing the Scriptures, praising God, praying, confessing sin, and separating ourselves from that which displeases God.

Worship involves the Word of God, for the Word of God reveals the God of the Word.

The better we know the Scriptures and respond to them, the better we will know God and become like Him.

Any worship service that ignores the Scriptures will not receive the blessing of God.

Many are confused about what revival truly is. Many others have given up on revival.

We must look to divine revelation – to the Holy Scriptures for the definition of revival and the directions for it.

We have too long regarded the revival as something supernatural for the church.

The word “revive” used in the Bible means “to restore life or to make alive.”

The Biblical concept of revival is God bringing His people back to the normal state of obedience and blessing.

The Revival of Jacob – Genesis 45

The revival of Jacob was an emotional revival.

Self-imposed depression for over twenty years, based on his belief that Joseph (his favorite son) had been killed.

The Revival of Samson – Judges 15

“when he had drunk [the water] . . . he revived.” The drink of water restored Samson to a state of physical health and normality. His revival simply brought him back to normal.

The Revival of the Widow’s Son – I Kings 17

“and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.” The “revival” of this child was his restoration to life. Being alive is the normal state of a child.

The word *revive* in English is used in this same way.

When we say that a person needs to be “revived” physically, we mean that he is in a bad state of health. Perhaps he is unconscious or maybe not even breathing. Something must be done to “revive” him.

The revival of which *chayah* [kayah – the Hebrew word for revival] speaks is nothing other than a physical, emotional, or spiritual restoration to the normal.

When people are revived spiritually, God brings them to a level of living that fits the scriptural standard.

God brings us back from carnality to spirituality, from disobedience to surrender, from love of the world – to love of the Father.

Romans 13:11-14

They turned from their sin and turned to Him in contrite and humble faith – God revived them

Every sin must be forsaken and every promise believed, but when we do, we can look expectantly for God to draw nigh to us again!

The idea that revival is a sovereign act falsely indicates that God revives people independently, without regard to their words or attitudes.

God does not send revival as a sovereign act, but rather as a promised response!

The Bible teaches that when men respond to God's call, He responds to their response.

This is why we can expect revival when we meet the conditions.

When God revives His people, He brings them from spiritual illness to spiritual health, from disobedience to obedience, from rebellion to surrender.

When we are not Spirit-controlled, we are in need of a revival.

Worldliness, carnality, and indifference have become so much the usual condition of Christians that passion, power, and purity seem extraordinary.

There Was Confession – Judges 10:15a

There Was Submission – Judges 10:15b

There Was Prayer – Judges 10:15c

There Was Repentance – Judges 10:16a

They repented of their sins, repaired their ways, and returned to the service of the true God because it was right to do so.

Vs. 4

Standing upon the stairs (i.e. the platform)

The first company seems to have voiced the distress of God's people and the second led their corporate praise.

This was the general sign of mourning – the first group as petitioners and the second as chanters.

The call in verse 5b, *Stand up and bless the Lord* – vs. 5c-e

In the Scriptures, God speaks to us; and in prayer and praise and confession, we speak to Him.

“Stand up and bless the Lord your God!” (v. 5) is a command every true believer wants to obey.

Real revival results in the exalting of God by His people.

God's name is exalted above every name and we should honor it as we praise Him. It should be “exalted above all blessing and praise.”

Psalm 113:2-3, *“Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the LORD's name is to be praised.”*

One of the most dynamic ways that God reveals Himself to us is through His name. If we are to praise His name as we are commanded in His Word, we must know what those names are and what they mean.

Jesus gave us an example on how to pray – *“Our Father which art in Heaven. Hallowed be Thy name.”* – Matthew 6:9

What Jesus was teaching here is that part of our prayer time each day should include worship and praising (lifting up) His holy name.

In fact, it is first in order of priority on the list.

Vs. 5b – The Lord your God

“In the beginning God” – The very first name the Lord uses to describe Himself is the name ELOHIM.

Every time the English word God is mentioned in the Bible, it refers to ELOHIM – our Creator.

ELOHIM is a plural noun which begins to reveal to us in the first verse of the Bible that God is a trinity.

“. . . there is no God [ELOHIM] like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee. . .”

(I Kings 8:23)

You are the One that has created me by Your great power.

You are the great God of the universe and yet You chose to give me a Bible full of blessed promises to live by.

Thank you, ELOHIM, for writing down your covenant in the Holy Scriptures.

Thank you for loving me so much that you gave to me the precious covenant of the cross.

Of all the names that describe the character of God, JEHOVAH is the most descriptive –
vs. 5

JEHOVAH is the most frequently used name of God in Scripture.
It occurs 6,823 times.

JEHOVAH describes for us a God that is absolutely self-existent.
“One who is what He is.”

That is why He could say to Moses to tell them that “. . . I AM THAT I AM. . . “

“. . . Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD [JEHOVAH] of hosts . . . “ His very essence is
holiness.

JEHOVAH loves righteousness in His people and blesses them accordingly.
By contrast, JEHOVAH hates sin and will judge iniquity (Exodus 20:4-6).

JEHOVAH is that name of God that is concerned with revealing new truth.
It is not “thus saith God” (Elohim). It is, “thus saith the LORD” (JEHOVAH).
Hundreds of times JEHOVAH reveals new truth to His servants.

JEHOVAH is above all else holy and because of His eternal holiness, He is grieved by
the sins of His people.

Then they began to review their history and how God helped them – vs. 9, 11, 12, 15 –
and how the people behaved – vs.17, 18, 26, 28
Vs. 31 and 33 – God is just and God is good.

Let us stand up and bless the Lord, Jehovah, your God, Elohim, Creator

Let us stand and sing “Glory to His Name”

Let us stand for closing hymn “Glory to His Name” Hymn #527

Let us bow for invitation

Do you need new life or reviving of your spiritual life?

Believer, will you confess your sins? Agree with God?

Will you repent and turn from them?

Unbeliever, will you realize that you are a sinner in need of a Savior?

Will you repent of your sins and trust in Christ alone for your salvation?

Come unto Him and He will give you rest, eternal life.