

July 23, 2017

- Jonah 3: 1-10 -

“The Impact of Revivals”

Introduction:

James Edwin Orr wrote numerous books—many of them histories of evangelical revivals. He was a professor of history at Fuller Theological Seminary from 1967-87. Dr. Billy Graham wrote, "Dr. J. Edwin Orr, in my opinion, is one of the greatest authorities on the history of religious revivals in the Protestant world. He records 10 great revivals of the church age. The first and number ten on Dr. Orr's list is “The Pentecost Revival”, A.D. 30; the Reformation Revival, 1517; The Pre-Reformation Revivals, 1300-1500; The Baby Boomer Revival, 1965-1975s; The World War II Revival, 1935-1950; The Layman's Prayer Revival, 1857-1861; The General Awakening, 1830-1840; The Second Great Awakening, 1780-1810; The Great Awakening, 1727-1750 and #1 Revival, the Welsh Revival of 1904.

The Welsh Revival began in England and reached America with similar responses. In Philadelphia, Methodists reported having over 6,000 new converts in membership. This is possibly the greatest revival of the church age. The pastors of Atlantic City churches claimed there were only fifty unconverted adults left in that entire city. On a single Sunday in New York City, 3,064 were received into membership and 286 converted to Christ. The revival also swept through the South. The First Baptist Church in Paducah, Kentucky, added a thousand people within a couple of months. Across the Southern Baptist Convention, baptisms increased by twenty-five percent in a single year. In the mid-west, Methodists reported "the greatest revivals in their history."

Every store and factory in Burlington, Iowa, closed to allow employees to attend prayer meetings. When the mayor of Denver declared a day of prayer in that city, churches were filled by ten o'clock. At 11:30, virtually every place of business in the city closed as 12,000 gathered for prayer meetings in downtown theatres and halls. Every school in town and the Colorado State Legislature closed for the day. In the west, united meetings attracted 180,000 people in attendance. By midnight, the Grand Opera House in Los Angeles was filled with drunks and prostitutes seeking salvation. In Portland, Oregon, the entire city virtually shut down between 11:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. for noon hour prayer meetings.

During the Welsh Revival, the culture was so transformed that new mules had to be obtained to work in the coal mines. The old mules would not respond to miners because they no longer cursed the animals to submission. As wonderful as all of these things were about these revivals they still do not compare to the greatest recorded revival of all time with only one more to be even greater. We will look at that one next time. This morning we will examine the revival under the reluctant prophet Jonah under the dispensation of the law.

I Jonah is Re - Commission to Nineveh 1, 2

1. In this chapter we see nothing less than the greatest mass conversion in the history of the world. The "great "(3:2) city of Nineveh gets a second chance because of the preaching of a

prophet who too got a second chance. The text begins by saying "the Word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time "(3:1). God gave Jonah a second chance to obey, and now He was giving the city of Nineveh one more chance to obey.

2. What intrigues me is that when "the Word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time "it was the same Word --"Arise, go to Nineveh "(3:2; 1:2). It doesn't surprise us that God pursues us when we wander. God is the God of the second chance... But one might think that God would take note of the fact that Jonah ran away the last time He told him to go to Nineveh and, therefore, change the command. But God does not change His command.

4. The first time Jonah is commissioned to go to Nineveh we read that, "Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord "(1:3). Two things I want you to notice. Jonah is supposed to be a holy and caring prophet of God. But he doesn't give a rat's tooth about the people around him. In fact, the unsaved captain of the ship cares more about the people than Jonah does! Jonah is asleep in the storm at the bottom of the ship!

But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. ---Jonah 1:5

Do we care about the people around us?

5. But now, after receiving the commission the second time, we read that, "Jonah arose and went... this is personal revival. Jonah's obedience makes this story more remarkable. For in this chapter we see God, in His mercy, use a reluctant prophet to convert an enormous city.

II Jonah Preaches to The City of Nineveh 3,4

1. The Bible said, "The city was a three days journey (3:3). So, Nineveh was a city of great magnitude in what today is modern Iraq. The city was 30 miles long and 20 miles wide. Its walls were one hundred feet wide and could hold four chariots riding side by side. It was the capital city of Assyria. Over 1/2 million people lived in and around this capital. In chapter 4, the text says that there are "more than 120,000 people "(4:11) living in Nineveh. Historians and theologians agree, however, that this number accounts only for the adults. With an average of 3-4 children per household, Jonah would have witnessed the conversion of nearly 600,000 people. Folks, that a great revival with the potential of greater fruit.

2. Nineveh was a city of depravity. Jonah knew about their cruelty and brutality. Its people were known for their savagery. They burned children alive and tortured adults by skinning them and leaving them to die in the scorching sun. Sexual immorality was the way of life with widespread worship of fertility goddess and temples of lewd worship. History says they were one of the worst. Anthropologists tell us that the Assyrian's were one of the cruelest people ever to live on the face of the earth. The Aztecs, Assyrian's and the Vikings were the top three. The impact of revival can change a people, a city or even the course of a nation

3. Jonah didn't want to share his faith with these wicked people. We may not be eager to share our faith, but if we do--who knows?--Perhaps we will witness a revival, not necessarily the conversion of an entire city, but perhaps the conversion of our entire family. Perhaps we

will see the conversion of our circle of friends. Perhaps we will see the conversion of those we work with or even many in our town.

4. Jonah's message as he walked through the city of Nineveh, "yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown "(3:4). Jonah was told to "proclaim" what the Lord told him to proclaim. God did the rest! He was already working in their hearts and minds. On the surface, Jonah's message is quite unimpressive. Jonah does not present any persuasive evidence nor does he utilize any clever arguments. In the same way, we Christians must deliver the message. **Psalms 126:6---** They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

Application: The question then is; are you going to "flee" from the commission of God, or are you going to share your faith with others? Let me remind you--that when Jonah fled, it got him trapped in the belly of a whale. When Jonah shared his faith, 600,000 became converted. While the world struggles to validate their beliefs on more than what they see on television, Christians have the trustworthy Scriptures to base their beliefs and message on. When you witness to others, follow the example of Jonah, and stick to God's Word.

III Jonah Witnesses the city of Nineveh Repenting 5-9

1. Notice that the Ninevites did more than just hear and believe Jonah's message--they "believed in God". And to demonstrate the genuine nature of their faith, the Ninevites acted on their belief, "they called a fast and put on sackcloth "(3:5). Even the king of Nineveh took part, issuing a "decree" for all the people to participate in the rituals of repentance, and by urging them to "call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way "(3:8). The news of their impending doom, gets off his throne, removes his royal robes puts on sackcloth and sits down in the dust. In all humility and contrition, he trades his robes for rags and his throne for the dirt.

This is what we need to pray will comes to Washington; a great awesome fear of God. Such a pouring out of the spirit of God that leaders would fall down and beg God for forgiveness and seek His face!!

a) When revival came to the Orkney Islands off Scotland, the Spirit of repentance was so strong that sailors sailing by it had to put into port and find a church to confess because the weight of their sin was so great... During the Welsh Revivals of the nineteenth century as people were led by the spirit to make restitution it unexpectedly created serious problems for the shipyards along the coast of Wales. Over the years workers had stolen all kinds of things, from wheelbarrows to hammers. They started to return what they had taken, with the result that soon the shipyards of Wales were overwhelmed with returned property.

2. The people of Nineveh were enemies of the people of Israel. We are often negligent in sharing our faith with others because we have a fear of rejection. Jonah, however, was not simply risking rejection by preaching to the people of Nineveh--he was risking his life. Jonah's courage should motivate us to be courageous in sharing our faith.

3. The entire city of Nineveh repents of their sin, and how does God respond? "When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, and then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it "(3:10). God, instead of destroying them, had compassion on the 120,000 people who lived there.

4. Folks like Nineveh, America needs revival? The awful effects of sin have seared the conscience of our people even we as Christians. We no longer govern according to what is right and wrong but according to what works and what makes money. Our creed is greed and our god is gold. The things that use to amaze us now amuse us. The things that use to embarrass us now entertain us. What use to be consider sinful behaviour is become a way of life in the world and in the church. Our culture has sold its soul to materialism. If we are going to go in the right direction, we must also have revival - to once again reaffirm the truths of Biblical principles.

---Luke 11:28-32

Ps. 85: [6] Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?

Conclusion:

The worst garbage strike ever goes to Naples, Italy which had a year-long strike in 2008. The standoff between city officials and the Mafia got so bad that the Italian military was brought in to clean up the mess! Rats were everywhere the smell was deplorable and it was an unsightly mess with rubbish accumulating everywhere. Rodents were seen daily scurrying frantically through six-foot-high piles of rotting garbage festering in the streets.

What this say to me as a spiritual illustration is the more time we allow to transpire, the more we get use to the trash and the more we get use to the trash the more disputable and despicable things we will allow into our lives, like the rodents. This is how we become im-pudent impudent children of God.

We need Revival because it's time like never before to deal with the trash. Are you praying for revival, both in your own life and in the lives of others?

Notes:

He served during the same time as Jeremiah and Daniel, he makes no mention of Jeremiah but three mentions of Danieland I saw visions of God.

I. 1-3) Eating the scroll.

1. Ezekiel 2 ended with God giving Ezekiel a scroll full of writing on both sides. Earlier in chapter 2 the prophet was told that he must eat the scroll ([Ezekiel 2:8](#)). Now, with the scroll in front of him the command is repeated. It is a great dish called *Mēgillah* /meg-il-law—*scroll*.

2. The context is almost certainly a vision God gave the prophet. He didn't actually eat a physical scroll, but experienced the happening of this in a vision, sort of a spiritual and divine virtual reality. It was real, but in a vision. It was a means of God conveying you must assimilate the word not just in your mind but in your heart it must be a part of you. People have eaten worst by the way....

3. In a sense, Ezekiel experienced what [Psalm 119:103](#)... The Bible is filled with passage after passage that anyone with spiritual sensitivity would find sweet like honey. Passages like [Psalm 23:1-3](#), [Psalm 8:1](#), [John 3:16](#), [Romans 8:28](#) or [Revelation 22:20](#) are just a beginning. If one can't find something sweet and satisfying in such verses, their spiritual taste buds are dulled.

II. (4-9) Ezekiel's call as a prophet--his calling by God.

1. Go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them: Ezekiel's call as a prophet is once again stated, as in [Ezekiel 2:3-5](#) and [2:7](#). As a prophet he could not be silent; he had to speak. Yet he could not speak his words, but God's words to them.

A part of the call is that it came from the Holy Spirit. No man can issue the call to himself. He can desire the office of a bishop (1 Tim. 3:7), but the call of God comes from the Holy Spirit. We read the account, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2)

III. 10-11--The prophet's work began with receiving.

1. He had to listen and receive everything God said. In the later words of Paul, he needed to receive the whole counsel of God ([Acts 20:27](#)). Go get to the captives, to the children of your people: Having received God's word, Ezekiel then needed to get among his people, those to whom he would speak. He needed to know them and be among them.

2. As a prophet he could not be silent; he had to speak. Yet he could not speak his words, but God's words to them. God promised to equip Ezekiel emotionally and intellectually to deal with the anticipated rejection. God had made the prophet's face and forehead just as hard as theirs. He would be able to 'butt heads' with his antagonists."

