

# Revivals in the Bible

## Old Testament Revivals

Jacob's Household at Bethel (Genesis 35:1–7): Jacob and his family renounced foreign gods and renewed their commitment to the Lord after returning to Bethel. Identified idols (and buried them), purified themselves and changed clothes and built an altar

Under Joshua (Joshua 24:1;14-23): At Shechem, Joshua called the people to renew their covenant with God, choosing to serve Him alone. Threw away idols and yielded their hearts to God.

Under Samuel (1 Samuel 7:1–4): After a period of apostasy and Philistine oppression, Samuel led Israel to repentance, removed foreign gods, committed themselves to the Lord and restored worship.

Under Elijah (1 Kings 18:21, 39): At Mount Carmel, Elijah challenged the people to choose between God and Baal. After the people acknowledged God, a powerful revival followed.

Under Asa (2 Chronicles 15:1-2;8–9): A revival during a time of prosperity, emphasizing national repentance and covenant renewal. Sought the Lord, removed idols, repaired altar, assembled to worship.

Under Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29–31): A sudden and sweeping revival involving temple purification, restoration of worship, and a national Passover celebration.

Under Josiah (2 Kings 22–23): The discovery of the Law in the temple sparked a massive revival, including the destruction of idols and the re-institution of Passover.

Under Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5–6): After the Babylonian exile, the remnant was revived through prophetic preaching, leading to the rebuilding of the temple.

Under Ezra and Nehemiah (Nehemiah 8–9): A revival centered on the public reading and understanding of God's Word, followed by confession, covenant renewal, and community reform. Ezra 10:9 standing in the heavy rain to hear the Word.

### **Characteristics of Old Testament Revivals:**

Rooted in the Word of God: All major revivals were based on the proclamation and reception of Scripture.

Corporate Repentance: A public turning from sin and idolatry.

Restoration of Worship: Rebuilding altars, purifying temples, and resuming sacrificial and liturgical practices.

Leadership came from Consecrated Servants: Revivals began with individuals like Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Hezekiah, and Josiah who were devoted to God.

## **New Testament Revivals**

The Ministry of John the Baptist: This marked the beginning of New Testament revival. His powerful preaching of repentance and baptism drew crowds from all walks of life, including religious leaders, and stirred a deep spiritual awakening (Mark 1:5; Matthew 3:7–8). His message prepared the way for Christ's arrival and signaled the in-breaking of God's Kingdom.

The Ministry of Jesus Christ: Jesus' teachings, miracles, and call to repentance brought a profound revival of faith and hope. His presence was accompanied by the Holy Spirit's power, healing the sick, casting out demons, and drawing multitudes to follow Him (Luke 4:14–15; Matthew 4:23).

The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2): This is the foundational birth of the Church Age. The Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples, empowering them to speak in tongues, and 3,000 people were converted in a single day. The Church was born, and the spread of the Gospel began in earnest (Acts 2:1–41).

Prayer for boldness after persecution Acts 4:23 –31

Revival in Samaria (Acts 8): Philip preached the Gospel in Samaria, and the people responded with belief and joy. Miracles and the reception of the Holy Spirit confirmed the message, leading to widespread conversion and the inclusion of a historically marginalized people group (Acts 8:5–13, 17).

Revival in Caesarea (Acts 10): The conversion of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, marked a pivotal moment in the expansion of the Church beyond Judaism. The Holy Spirit fell on Gentiles, proving that salvation was for all nations (Acts 10:44–48).

Revival in Ephesus (Acts 19): Paul's ministry there sparked a powerful revival. The Holy Spirit was poured out on believers, many confessed their sins publicly, and thousands burned their occult books. The Word of God spread rapidly throughout Asia (Acts 19:1–20).

Revival in Antioch (Acts 13): The church at Antioch was a center of missionary activity and spiritual vitality. It was there that believers were first called "Christians," and the Holy Spirit commissioned Paul and Barnabas for their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1–3).

### **Characteristics of New Testament Revivals:**

Starts with prayer

Power of the Holy Spirit

Came with bold preaching of the Gospel

Deep Conviction and Repentance

Strong Community and Unity

Miracles and Signs

Ongoing Growth and Missions

# Exploring Revival in the Bible

Throughout the Bible, revival never happens randomly. God does not suddenly move without preparation. When we study both the **Old Testament and the New Testament**, we see patterns that happen **right before revival breaks out**.

Let's define "revival". Revival is when **God brings His people back to life spiritually**.

We'll focus on these revivals:

- The reforms under King Josiah
- The repentance movement under Ezra and Nehemiah (after the return from Babylon)
- The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost
- The move of God after persecution

But every one of these was **preceded by something**. **What happens right before revival?**

## Spiritual Decline

Revival isn't needed if there is nothing to "revive". Spiritual revival in the Old Testament begins **after a season of spiritual decline**.

For example:

During the time of Judges (before Israel had a king), there was a repeated pattern of falling away (usually into idolatry), followed by oppression, crying out to God, God sends a deliverer and revival, then falling away again.

During the reign of King Josiah in 2 Kings 22–23, the nation of Israel had fallen deeply into idolatry. The temple had been neglected. God's law had been forgotten.

The Bible says the **Book of the Law was lost in the temple**. Imagine that—God's people didn't even know what God's Word said anymore. But when the law was rediscovered and read aloud, something powerful happened. King Josiah tore his clothes in repentance. Revival resulted.

We see the same pattern during the ministry of Elijah on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18. Israel had turned to the false god Baal. But before revival came, Elijah confronted the people and said: "How long will you halt between two opinions?"

Sometimes **God allows spiritual dryness so people will realize their need for Him again**.

## The Word of God Is Rediscovered

Before revival, **God's Word becomes central again**. During the revival under Ezra and Nehemiah in **Nehemiah 8:1-9**, the people gathered together and Ezra read the law **for hours**.

The Bible says: "The ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law."

As the Word was read: People wept, repented, then worshipped

Revival always involves a **renewed hunger for Scripture**. **Revival begins when God's voice is heard again**.

## Deep Conviction and Repentance

Before revival, there is **conviction of sin**. It is not about feeling bad or emotional guilt. Conviction yields changed behavior (repentance). It's a heart-level turning back to God.

In **Joel 2:12-17**, the prophet Joel calls the nation to repentance before God promises restoration.

Revival is preceded by **repentance that is real and deep**.

## Persistent Prayer

Before the Holy Spirit was poured out in Acts 2, something important happened. The believers were gathered, unified in prayer. **Acts 1:14** says: "They all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication."

Then suddenly, the Holy Spirit came. Prayer prepares the atmosphere for revival. Throughout history, revivals have always been **born in prayer meetings**.

### MODERN FAMOUS EXAMPLES:

#### **The Herrnhut 24/7 Prayer Meeting (1727)**

The Moravian revival at Herrnhut, led by Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf, began with a sustained 24-hour-a-day prayer meeting that lasted over 100 years. This continuous prayer effort, rooted in repentance and reconciliation, sparked a spiritual awakening that led to the sending of over 300 missionaries worldwide and laid the foundation for later revivals in England and America.

#### **Jeremiah Lanphier's 1857 New York City Prayer Meeting**

The most famous revival beginning in a prayer meeting was the 1857 Businessmen's Revival, initiated by layman Jeremiah C. Lanphier. Starting with just six attendees at a noon prayer meeting in New York City's Old Dutch North Church, the movement rapidly grew into a nationwide and global phenomenon. By January 1858, over 10,000 businessmen were meeting daily in New York. The revival spread across the U.S., Canada, and the British Isles, resulting in an estimated one million conversions in two years. It was fueled by daily prayer meetings, repentance, and evangelism, with the movement influencing the founding of organizations like the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)

### **The Ulster Prayer Meeting (1858–1859)**

In Ireland, a small group of men—including James McQuilkin—began meeting weekly for prayer and Bible study in a schoolhouse. Their consistent intercession, often in harsh conditions, led to a massive outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 1859, with an estimated 100,000 conversions in Ulster alone. This revival is considered a direct result of their persistent, focused prayer.

### **The Asbury Revival (2023)**

A modern example is the Asbury Revival at Asbury University in Kentucky, which began in February 2023 as a student-led prayer and worship gathering. What started as a quiet prayer meeting quickly grew into a multi-week, spontaneous revival with thousands participating, drawing international attention and inspiring similar movements on other campuses

## **Unity Among God's People**

Before revival comes, **God's people become unified**. Division quenches the Spirit. Unity invites His presence.

Jesus had prayed for this unity in John 17.

When believers humble themselves and come together, **God moves powerfully. Acts 4:23-31**

## **Putting It All Together**

Right before revival we see these patterns:

1. **Spiritual decline reveals the need**
2. **God's Word is rediscovered**
3. **Conviction and repentance spread**
4. **People begin praying fervently**
5. **Unity grows among believers**
6. **A deep hunger for God develops**

When those conditions appear, expect a revival.