

Revivals And Church History :: Where Did "Revival" Come From?

Where Did "Revival" Come From? - posted by twayneb (), on: 2023/11/16 11:08

Sometimes it helps reframe our thinking to ask a different question than that which has been asked before.

The term "Revival" is often used by Christians. But where did the term come from? Is it a Biblical concept, or an idea constructed by men? When did this term first emerge among Christians?

I believe in God moving among His people. I long for the salvation of precious people. But what of the origins of the term?

Does anyone have any study or any insight?

Re: Where Did "Revival" Come From? - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2023/11/16 12:10

From JD King book: "Thunder in the Whirlwind"

"The first man to use the English word this way was Cotton Mather (1663-1728), a prominent puritan. In his 1702 book, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, he associated revival with "covenant renewal" and "spiritual awakening." In Mather's judgment, revival was a return to God with the accompanying restoration of vitality and effectiveness of the Church. Well into the early twentieth century, this was still the consensus of the English speaking world."

Revival is "first love with Jesus" its being fully "in Christ" living in Gods' promises. Revival is Book of Acts Christianity.

Re: - posted by ESchaible, on: 2023/11/16 13:15

Travis,

I've been thinking about that very thing for a few years now. The Lord doesn't seem to let the term sit right anymore. Lately, I don't even have liberty to pray for it, and am checked every time I try (and I've been present for genuine revival, and the Lord for some reason has used my preaching in it, so I'm not biased).

What we deem as revival seems to me to be the normative state of believers, and those that are not "revived", I have begun to feel may actually need salvation (or sanctification/baptism with the Holy Spirit).

Deep in my spirit I feel that the pursuit of revival has allowed for the church to become apostate, seeking experience rather than salvation, and some ethereal work rather than Jesus.

What is usually deemed revival historically, is nothing more than salvation en masse; but since it happens usually in church buildings or among professing believers, our discernment is biased more towards a renewal than something brand new.

EDIT: When the Lord moved among our house fellowship in CA years ago, and before my wilderness, I was being led to believe that "revival" was an outpouring of the second blessing, as when the Holy Spirit moved in power among us it was when that was being taught. We had people trying to pile into our apartment and spilling outside to hear and seek God among us. But Satan got a foothold and division spread, and the work was quenched. Just an observation.

Re: - posted by Elibeth, on: 2023/11/16 14:29

John 12:32 (KJV)

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all unto me.”

Q But how do we do that?

â€â€â€â€â€
elizabeth

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2023/11/16 15:00

Elizabeth: I think John 12:32 is Jesus speaking prophetically of His death, resurrection, and ascension. He said He would be lifted up from the Earth. In a sense that happened on the cross, although I am not certain that is what He meant. For sure that happened when He returned to the Father. He said that no man comes to the Father except he be drawn of the Holy Spirit. He said later in John that it was necessary for Him to go so that the Holy Spirit, the drawer if you will, could come. Just my take on that scripture.

So I guess I am saying that I don't think that this is our job, to figure out how to draw men. That is the job of the Holy Spirit. Our job is to preach Jesus wherever we go, to make the gospel known.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2023/11/16 15:01

Greg: That is what I found to be true as I researched as well. The etymology of the word "revival" does not show much usage at all before the 17 or 1800's. So does that make this idea of renewal and awakening an idea from scripture, or the idea of Mather? And, what consequences does this have on how the idea has developed over time?

Re: - posted by Elibeth, on: 2023/11/16 18:59

Thank you Brother Travis, for your thoughtful answer.

As I continue to meditate on this Scripture, â€ this is my thoughts,..

When we are *Born of God,.. His Spirit has come to live in us,..

or have His *Life in us, then as we *walk in The Spirit, in everything, ,â€ letting Him speak through us.,,always, then we are *lifting Him ,.. (and not the *flesh up.)

(Christ in you, the hope of glory)..(not I that liveth, but Christ that liveth in me).

And that Spirit of God will draw men unto Him.

What do you think?

â€â€â€â€â€.â€™¶j,•
elizabeth

Revivals And Church History :: Where Did "Revival" Come From?

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2023/11/17 7:54

I agree 100% with what you are saying, I just don't think that it is what John is saying in this passage.

Re: Where Did "Revival" Come From? - posted by yuehan, on: 2023/11/28 21:05

You've posed a critical question, Travis - what does "revival" mean, is there an equivalent concept in the New Testament, and what is it supposed to accomplish.

I think Farley handles the topic very well in this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zA6yFrqZtxo>

What do you think?

Re: - posted by yuehan, on: 2023/11/28 21:33

More broadly, you might also want to check out this interview with Farley - where he discusses the danger of "adopting our own language to talk about God instead of getting to know God in His language, and the words He chose to express His love toward us":

<https://www.acc.edu.au/podcast/andrew-farley/>

That advice actually resonates with what Ron Bailey (Philologos) used to do on these forums - insisting that we use biblical vocabulary and language, so that our thinking is based on the truth. I can better appreciate his rigorous approach these days.

On the topic of "revival" - in so far as God is working amongst believers, I believe "visitation of God" or "movement of God" might be better phrases to use than "revival".

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2023/11/29 20:45

Pslam 85 6

4 Restore us, O God of our salvation,
And cause Your anger toward us to cease.
5 Will You be angry with us forever?
Will You prolong Your anger to all generations?
6 Will You not REVIVE us again,
That Your people may rejoice in You?
7 Show us Your mercy, Lord,
And grant us Your salvation.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2023/11/29 20:52

It's a biblical word, that literally means to live or to revive.

There was a clear example of this on the day of Pentecost, types and shadows happened under the old covenant, when through repentance restoration, and blessing that was bestowed again on Israel.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2023/11/29 20:58

psl 71 20 Though You have shown me many troubles and misfortunes, You will REVIVE me once again. Even from the depths of the earth You will bring me back up.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2023/11/29 20:59

Psalm 80:18

Then we will not turn away from You; REVIVE us, and we will call on Your name.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2023/11/29 21:00

Psalm 119:25

My soul cleaves to the dust; REVIVE me according to Your word.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2023/11/29 21:07

psalm 119 37 Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things,
And revive me in Your way.

38 Establish Your word to Your servant,
Who is devoted to fearing You.

39 Turn away my reproach which I dread,
For Your judgments are good.

40 Behold, I long for Your precepts;
Revive me in Your righteousness.

Re: - posted by yuehan, on: 2023/11/29 21:16

Hey Gary,

As you pointed out, the relevant Hebrew word for "revive" means "to live", "to restore to life".

And through the gospel of Christ, all Christians have already been restored to life. God has already "made us alive together with Christ" when we first received His grace for us (Ephesians 2:4-7).

Romans 6 tells us that once we accept Christ, we are united together with Christ in His death, and subsequently have all so been revived with Him. This is a one-time thing, as we are only born again once - and we are now permanently united to the Author of Life (1 Cor 6:17, Gal 2:20).

Re: - posted by yuehan, on: 2023/11/29 21:41

What Christians need is not to be revived again, but to realize what Christ has **already** accomplished for them - to know that they are already alive with Christ. This is the gospel - and when we renew our minds accordingly, we will be transformed into His likeness (Romans 12:2).

If anything, we need a revival of understanding concerning these doctrines. The Farley video I had shared elaborates on this really well.

I like this blog post by Derek Levendusky too, on gospel-centric revival: <https://web.archive.org/web/20120315131453/http://www.dereklevendusky.com/?p=1285>

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2023/11/29 21:43

Brother when Christians are in a backslidden state, or lukewarm, or vexed from hard trials that have wounded them, revival comes as a grace from God to restore and refresh them back into a state where revelation, realization comes, and to give boldness, among other things, like restoring their conscience from a state of being.

You can't will yourself through efforts of the flesh nor through just meditation of scripture, To Gain {realization} of the finished work. That is the holy Spirit's job to remind, reveal, restore, refresh, and he does this during outpourings of the holy spirit, whether it be corporate or personal.

It's all grace.

Not of works, or religious efforts and ritual

Revivals And Church History :: Where Did "Revival" Come From?

that no man may find a reason to boast.

Re: - posted by yuehan, on: 2023/12/1 8:07

The problem here is that terms like "revival" and "backsliding" are not found in the New Testament. What do these words exactly mean? Biblically, do those concepts apply to Christians or non-Christians?

In my view (which is shared by other Christians), the popular usage of these words fails to acknowledge the marked difference between Christians and the Israelites of old, or between the New Covenant and the Old.

Isn't it wiser to use New Testament vocabulary and New Testament concepts when it comes to describing the Christian experience?

It's certainly a much safer option - after all, the Word of God is settled in heaven forever (Psalm 119:89), and that includes its vocabulary.

Re: - posted by yuehan, on: 2023/12/1 8:24

I believe God cares about the words we use - for words shape our thoughts, and thus shape our emotions and behavior.

Words are important - their definitions may be clear or fuzzy; sometimes they may also carry hidden assumptions within them. Part of being a good Berean is to examine and question these hidden assumptions (as well as the hidden concepts they entail) through careful study of the Word.

And should we discover that a word carries with it some critical assumptions which are wrong, maybe we should stop using it altogether and adopt a more biblical word instead.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2023/12/1 9:17

There's really no problem brother unless you believe that there is one.

It's just using Old testament types as we see the apostles and other writers of the New testament used types and teach us what a type means.

Backslidden could mean something like being lukewarm or being in sin and that's a type of what Israel was when they were backslidden as described in the Old testament. I don't think it's a good idea to get all religious and create rules about what words we should use you're just creating laws that are not there or rules that are not stipulated.

If someone wants to use Old testament vernacular and figures of speech or types and shadows to explain a new covenant reality that's very much in line with how the apostles taught truths.

We see the principal being used with the word anointing and the Old testament and we see how that shadow has a reality in the new covenant.

The words and concept used in the Old testament for revived or revive, is used in the new testament with the word called quickened which carries the same meaning and is used in different contexts and can be interchangeable with that word.

Brother we may not be under the old covenant anymore but the apostles in the early church had one Bible as we do today and the Old testament was the Bible and our new testament is not a second book but it has always been called scripture even Peter considered Paul's letters as scripture.

The term back sliding would be referenced to the children of Israel under the old covenant having sinned against God and quenched the holy spirit to the extent that they disobeyed the prophets and the law, that applies to the Christian church.

church today or congregations that have quenched the holy spirit and disobeyed the gospel and have backslidden in the same way. Revival really applies in the same manner being brought back into a relationship with God where the holy spirit is flowing and all the spiritual blessings of joy and peace that comes with the outpouring of the spirit are experienced again in the church and on a personal level we see that type in shadow mentioned in the scriptures that I've shared with you so they most definitely apply to us.

We see in the book of Acts the tabernacle of David one might say well how would that apply to us today that's all Old Testament, but we see James in the book of Acts teach what the reality under the new covenant is, and he connected that with the outpouring of the holy spirit and particularly when it was poured out upon the gentiles he said there look the tabernacle has been rebuilt and that was a fulfillment of a prophecy, we see a clear type and shadow the Old Testament is full of these glorious truths and typologies.

Brother resist the temptation to create laws and rules that are not written and then bring yourself under some type of rule that man has created and say that this is how it must be because you bring yourself under the traditions of men and in doing so you can nullify the word of God or limit how God wants to reveal himself in the scripture.

Allow God to reveal and speak from his word through more than just a plain literal reading. *John 1:9*

Re: - posted by ESchaible, on: 2023/12/1 10:33

Amen Yuehan.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2023/12/1 12:52

Everyone that has experienced revival from the days of Great Awakenings to present didn't have any problem with calling an outpouring of the Spirit, a move of God a revival. Only those that believe that revival is not a biblical term have a problem with that word. You can't be more biblical, because revival means to bring to life again to restore to life.

Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. *(Revelation 3:2)*

You can't get any plainer than that. The church at Sardis was ready to die. It needed to be revived. There are churches all over the place that are ready to die. They need to be revived. There are Christians that are close to dying. They need to be revived they have life, but they have very little of that life.

They are not abiding in the vine, and are very close to being cut off. They need to be revived.

Leonard Ravenhill didn't have a problem calling a move of God, an outpouring of the Spirit a revival. Charles Finney didn't have a problem calling a move of the Holy Spirit, a revival.

If God does not save men by truth, he certainly will not save them by lies. And if the old gospel is not competent to work a revival, then we will do without the revival.

Charles Spurgeon

Let's continue to dream and pray about a revival of holiness in our day that moves forth in mission and creates authentic community in which each person can be unleashed through the empowerment of the Spirit to fulfill God's creational intentions.

John Wesley

Have you noticed how much praying for revival has been going on of late - and how little revival has resulted? I believe the problem is that we have been trying to substitute praying for obeying, and it simply will not work.

Aiden Wilson Tozer

We love to sing the song amazing Grace. You won't find amazing Grace in the Bible, but Grace certainly is amazing. So amazing, although not found in the Bible is one accurate description of grace.

Please define to us the SermonIndex motto statement?

Revivals And Church History :: Where Did "Revival" Come From?

Answer. This phrase 'Promoting Genuine Biblical Revival' was adopted early on as a motto statement. Any proper desire for revival points back to the very person of Jesus Christ. The experience of Biblical revival leads to true worship of Jesus Christ and nothing subsequently. Revival also will always be verifiable Biblically and even historically.

Re: - posted by ESchaible, on: 2023/12/1 13:21

Strange lately how God has not let me escape noticing the prevalence of appeals to men, emotion, subjective experience, cliché and religion. So much of it in our day, and the tragedy is it seems to hold the same, if not more weight and authority than scripture.

The Lord has brought me much peace in pursuing the complete and total obedience and dependence on scripture, the clear teachings of Jesus, and putting off the world (not the sin of it, but the trappings of religion and clichés). It's astounding how much of even my belief was based in cliché, and religious, man made jargon.

Re: - posted by ESchaible, on: 2023/12/1 13:21

Double post, internet issues due to a snow storm.

Re: - posted by deogloria, on: 2023/12/2 6:01

The Bible predicts a great apostasy

"The Great Apostasy refers to a significant falling away from the Christian faith. This isn't a rebellion against the government by unbelievers, this is a rebellion against Christian belief and practice, by previously believing and associating people. This appears to be the near consensus of most reformed and evangelical scholars." (Gospel Coalition)

You can't "revive" those who have fallen away. What we would need is "Repentance".
And "faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ." (Rom 10:17 NLT)

Markus

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2023/12/14 12:02

Quote:
----- Strange lately how God has not let me escape noticing the prevalence of appeals to men, emotion, subjective experience, cliché and religion. So much of it in our day, and the tragedy is it seems to hold the same, if not more weight and authority than scripture.

This is, in effect, the reason I posted the original question.

John tells us in his letter the purpose of Jesus performing the great miracles that he performed. "30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

The miracles of Jesus did were recorded so we would say, "Yes, He is the Messiah, the Son of God that was foretold by all of the law and prophets." And in believing in Him, by grace through faith, we will be given life. The Holy Spirit in the new covenant is the revival that the Old Testament people so often needed.

Paul tells us, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;" So I have already been quickened, made alive, in Him.

Hence the issue. What is revival and where did the term originate? I think there are probably as many different personal definitions of the word as there are groups of believers. We cannot just hear a person say "revival" and say "AMEN!" What, exactly, are we saying amen to?

Is it that men and women would seek God more diligently and grow in the Lord?

Is it that we would see some kind of great awakening with signs and wonders performed at the hands of a set of super saints that are the end-time manifest sons of God?

Is it that we would "disciple nations" until the seven spheres of society are ruled by the government of the body of Christ and Jesus can now return to rule a kingdom we have prepared for Him??

The last two are obviously very false teachings, however it does bring up a point. We talk about revival, but we have already been made alive. So what are we, in actuality, talking about? It is an important question that we need to seriously consider. If we have the life of God, how can we be more alive?

Are we correct in looking to the times in the past when many people in, let's say, a particular community such as Wales were born again a revival? Or was that simply a result of people who began to pray and focus on the lost, resulting in the lost being found? We use terms like revival and awakening, but are we really using nebulous terms because everyone defines them differently.

A word with many, many definitions really has no meaning anymore.

Hence, the reason for the question. Something I am considering lately.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2023/12/14 15:19

Travis, please don't make it more complicated than it is. The church is not what God has called her to be, and we need a revival that will awaken a sleeping church, and with that revival multitudes of sinners will be saved.

Revival begins with the Church, not the unconverted:

Revival is not something that God does first among the unconverted, but among His people. Revival simply means New Life, and that implies that there is already Life there, but that the Life has ebbed. The unconverted do not need Revival for there is not any Life there to revive. It is the Christians who need Revival. Roy Hession

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2023/12/14 15:42

There are many that are calling revival what it is not. Revival is not emotional excitement. Neither is it a display in signs and wonders or the gifts of the Spirit. Revival is not something that is planned on a Sunday in a church where an evangelist is coming to preach, So I do see the need to know and understand what true revival really is.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2023/12/14 16:18

Quote:
----- There are many that are calling revival what it is not. Revival is not emotional excitement. Neither is it a display in signs and wonders or the gifts of the Spirit. Revival is not something that is planned on a Sunday in a church where an evangelist is coming to preach, So I do see the need to know and understand what true revival really is

Mike: This is something that I can totally agree with. I am not trying to make it complicated, but rather trying to point out that we can use the same word as another person with a totally different definition. The question then is, is what we call revival a Biblical concept? Perhaps your definition is. But someone who uses the same term may have a totally different definition that is not at all Biblical. We wind up using the same language but we equivocate terms.

What you describe as what revival is not is, in my opinion, spot on.

Revivals And Church History :: Where Did "Revival" Come From?

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2023/12/14 18:42

I may be wrong about this Mike, but I think I remember revival on other forum posts being spoken significantly as a great ingathering of unbelievers as the Spirit is poured forth.

Am I wrong on that recollection? I agree with the definition you wrote here wholeheartedly.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2023/12/14 19:09

â€œI may be wrong about this Mike, but I think I remember revival on other forum posts being spoken significantly as a great ingathering of unbelievers as the Spirit is poured forth.â€

Robert, I believe that this is a correct statement. There is a great gathering of unbelievers when the spirit of God is poured out on the region or nation but the truth of the matter is that revival begins in the church and it comes through the church and itâ€™s always the result of the church, praying and interceding.

Because what God is concerned with is not just the salvation of many souls but with the making of disciples, and the church has to be ready and prepared to make disciples. The failure of the church is that in many large, evangelistic campaigns where thousands have come forward to receive Christ as savior, but many of them fell back into the world, because there was no follow up and discipleship..

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2023/12/15 8:54

I recall a conversation I had a few years back. We were discussing what revival looks like. I said something to this effect. Revival, to me, looks like this. Members of the body of Christ are growing in their maturity and relationship with God to the point that they begin to reproduce themselves by winning the lost and training them to do the same. Mass conversions are great. But at times I have wondered what happens to the masses after the fact.

Re: - posted by deogloria, on: 2023/12/15 12:35

"A word with many, many definitions really has no meaning anymore. Hence, the reason for the question. Something I am considering lately."

Having heard about "revival" for decades I have come to a simple conclusion:
The church should simply have followed and should continue to follow some basic teachings of Scripture:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you (Matth. 28:19, 20a. Ampl.)

For Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.

14 But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? 15 And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, â€œHow beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!â€ (Rom 10:13-15)

We would need churches who teach the Word of God and make disciples and send out missionaries to go out and preach the Gospel.

That is very difficult to find these days.

In other words we should pray that people can hear the true Gospel, repent and believe, find a good church, become disciples

Markus

Revivals And Church History :: Where Did "Revival" Come From?

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2023/12/18 9:43

Well said. That is exactly where I am at on the issue.