

Becoming Agents of Revival¹

“There is no growth without challenge, and there is no challenge without change.” (Unknown)

“Revival consists of nothing less than a new beginning of obedience to G-d” (Charles G. Finney)

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23, KJV)

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1, KJV)

In the Messianic Movement we call ourselves a “Revival Movement,” or the “Later Days Revival of our Jewish People.” We all want the revival to come. In fact, I have been praying, privately and publicly for the revival to begin in Gainesville, at Kehilat Kol Simcha. As you have heard me say nearly every week, ‘What is wrong with the Revival beginning with us?’ or ‘Why not us?’ I have been challenged to begin to expect the revival to start here in our own backyard and if that were to be so, do I know what I am to do? Is there a way to plan for when the *Ruach Hakodesh* releases His revival on our people or do we wait for it to start and then we will somehow know what to do when it begins? Should we not be ‘rehearsing’ (like we do on every *moadim*) for when this comes to pass? The L-rd convicted me that we, as a congregation, should be ‘practicing within when we are without,’ especially when it comes to something as important as the last days revival of His people—“*For if their (His Jewish people) casting Yeshua aside means reconciliation for the world, what will their accepting him mean? It will be life from the dead!*” (Romans 11:15). Do you know what true revival is all about? The answer to this most important question may be surprising to you! What part are we prepared to play in the revival of our Jewish people? (Maybe you haven’t really thought about it or have felt that this is to be exclusively the L-rd’s supernatural work. Revivals, some say, are to be experienced!)

Revival comes from the Greek *anazao*, meaning literally “*again—to live.*” According to Wikipedia: “*Revival in a Christian context generally refers to a specific period of spiritual renewal in the life of the Church. While elements such as mass conversions and perceived beneficial effects on the moral climate of a given culture may be involved, the key factor in revival is the restoration of the Church to a vital and fervent relationship with God after a period of decline. The word "Church" here refers to the body of believers in Christ as a whole and not to any particular group or denomination among them.*”

Who among us is capable of leading such a revival? We haven’t been trained nor do we feel spiritually adequate for such a task.

A Revival Mindset

Revival means ultimately to revive the heart. It is an issue of life (or lack thereof) and is linked to the heart directly in Scripture. (see Prov. 4:23). In the context of a Believer, spiritual revival is the bringing back to life of a person who has slipped back into sin and rebellion—whether of a former Believer who has backslidden or a person who has never know the L-rd. The Greek word *anazao* is used in the account of the physical resurrection of Lazarus, the resurrection of Messiah Yeshua and in the references to our future bodily resurrection. The classic Biblical picture of this process is seen in *Messiah Yeshua*’s parable of the prodigal son. The son who left his father’s house in rebellion, lived in disobedience and sin, but who finally came to his senses while in the pig sty, repented, went back to his father’s house, confessed his sin to his father, and was restored to life in full harmony with his loving father. (see Luke 15:11-32)

But this process is not exclusive of the *B’rit Chadasha*. In the *TNK*, there is a tremendous illustration from which we can derive five steps that are to be taken in being an agent of revival. We find guidance in the story of *David* and the prophet *Natan* in 2 Samuel 12:1-15:

2 Samuel 12:1-15

¹ADONAI sent Natan to David. He came and said to him, "In a certain city there were two men, one rich, the other poor. ²The rich man had vast flocks and herds; ³but the poor man had nothing, except for one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and reared. It had grown up with him and his children; it ate from his plate, drank from his cup, lay on his chest - it was like a daughter to him. ⁴One day a traveler visited the rich man, and instead of picking an animal from his own flock or herd to cook for his visitor, he took the poor man's lamb and cooked it for the man who had come to him." ⁵David exploded with anger against the man and said to Natan, "As ADONAI lives, the man who did this deserves to die! ⁶For doing such a thing, he has to pay back four times the value of the lamb - and also because he had no pity." ⁷Natan said to David, "You are the man. "Here is what ADONAI, the God of Isra'el says: 'I anointed you king over Isra'el. I rescued you from the power of Sha'ul. ⁸I gave you your master's house and your master's wives to embrace. I gave you the house of Isra'el and the house of Y'hudah. And if that had been too little, I would have added to you a lot more. ⁹"So why have you shown such contempt for the word of ADONAI and done what I see as evil? You murdered Uriyah the Hitti with the sword and taken his wife as your own wife; you put him to death with the sword of the people of 'Amon. ¹⁰Now therefore, the sword will never leave your house - because you have shown contempt for me and taken the wife of Uriyah the Hitti as your own wife.' ¹¹Here is what ADONAI says: 'I will generate evil against you out of your own household. I will take your wives before your very eyes and give them to your neighbor; he will go to bed with your wives, and everyone will know about it. ¹²For you did it secretly, but I will do this before all Isra'el in broad daylight.'" ¹³David said to Natan, "I have sinned against ADONAI." Natan said to David, "ADONAI also has taken away your sin. You will not die. ¹⁴However, because by this act you have so greatly blasphemed ADONAI, the child born to you must die." ¹⁵Then Natan returned to his house. ADONAI struck the child that Uriyah's wife had borne to David, and it became very ill.

Step 1: Natan was Commissioned by G-d (Vv. 1a) "*Adonai sent Natan to David.*" The first step is to be "commissioned," (ordained) to be given authority to carry out a particular task or duty, or to be granted certain powers. This is where you "*prepare*" yourself to go to a person in need of revival. When Natan stepped before *David HaMelech*, he had full assurance he was doing the Will of G-d. The deeper we feel that same assurance, the surer we'll be during the intense process of revival.

Step 2: Confront (Vv. 1b-9) As Natan began the process of reviving David, he had a clear perspective of where he needed to go and how best to get there. We have already been commissioned to bring back wayward sheep back to the fold. Therefore, the first step of all spiritual restoration is to lead the sheep to recognize their root problem—that through willful disobedience to G-d and His Word they have strayed from the fold and are living in direct opposition to the Will of G-d. To "confront" means to come face to face with; to stand in front of; to bring together for comparison or examination. Natan did this by telling David a parable (like Yeshua did often in His public ministry) (Vv. 1b-6), by describing the nature of G-d (Vv. 7-8) and by listing specific sins (Vv. 9-10). Confrontation is not easy for anyone, but the L-rd admonishes all of us to "*speak the truth in love,*" and commissions us to "*if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness...*" (Gal. 6:1) Note that we are commanded (and therefore given authority, i.e., commissioned) to "*restore such a one*" in meekness (not weakness) which means "yielding our rights," e.g., "*L-rd Your Will not mine.*"

Step 3: Commandments. The foundation of all of a Believer's confrontation with people must be G-d's Word, that is, Scripture. We should confront people when we are sure they have broken a clear "commandment" of Scripture. In fact "*All Scripture is God-breathed and is valuable for teaching the truth, convicting of sin, correcting faults and training in right living*" (2 Tim. 3:16), that is Scripture is "*profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*" *Revival must include the sinner's repentance from breaking the will of G-d as well as breaking the heart of G-d.* These are two parts of this step—first demonstrate the person has broken the commandment of G-d, and then that he has broken the

heart of G-d. **Guilt** is experienced at the breaking of the Torah and **grief** through the breaking of the relationship.

Step 4 Consequences. The goal of this process—whether used by Natan or us—is to “restore” the person who is “overtaken in any trespass.” For David, the climax is his confession, “I have sinned.” When a person disobeys G-d he underestimates two things: (1) the seriousness of his behavior, and (2) the negative consequences of that behavior to himself, his children and family, to others, and to the L-rd. As confrontation helps the person see his past and present sinful acts, so consequences help the person see the present and future harmful results. At any time the person expresses a genuine confession, the process has been wonderfully short-circuited and there is no reason to continue it (step 4 is discontinued, since they themselves have gotten into step 5).

Step 5 Confession. When *Natan* heard David say, “I have sinned against the L-rd,” he knew he and his target had touched the finish line. Rebellion had been broken and revival was on the way. To “confess” usually means “to thoroughly make known to others one’s error or wrongdoing.” Confession is the first step on the positive side of revival and represents the hinge swinging between rebellion and revival. In fact, we see in Psalm 51 David’s full confession before the L-rd, for all of Israel to see.

Illustration of the Law of Revival

What makes a Christian company Christian? Is it the employees, that is, is it people doing Christian things? No! Then, what is different? Is it honesty, character, the product, courtesy, etc? How is a Christian company different? For a Bible teacher/preacher, is it content? No! John 15:16 gives us the answer: “*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*” The CJB states it this way: “*You did not choose me, I chose you; and I have commissioned you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last; so that whatever you ask from the Father in my name he may give you.*” So why did G-d leave Believers on earth? Answer: **To bear fruit that remains.**

Now, the only kind of fruit that remains is eternal. Since only people and the Word of God are eternal, we are locked into working with those two things, that is, bringing the Word of God and people together. There are 3 ‘E-word’ characteristics to fruit that remains. First, we are linked to **Evangelism**—bringing the lost to *Messiah*. Secondly, we have **Edification**—helping a Believer to be more obedient to the Word. Thirdly we have **Equipping**—training and helping a Believer do the work of the ministry. This is the reason G-d left us here.

Why would G-d give us a company or a business? Answer: to get more fruit that remains than you would otherwise. Such a company has a different mission—to bear much fruit that remains. Else a company or business can become an idol. An idol is anything that gets in the way of reaching what G-d wants you to do or be. These concepts are blurred in our society. People say you do not mix business and work with religion. But just a few years ago, it was exactly the opposite. There was no separation of business and life. Back then integrity was the main thing. Integrity refers to the same thing as the number one does in mathematics—you see, the integer 1 cannot be divided. Integrity means that you are on a daily basis what you appear to be. Back then when a farmer sold a fruit basket the smallest fruit was on top and the best fruit at the bottom (so you would not be fooled but would rather be blessed by finding the best at the bottom of the basket. Cattle nowadays is given salt for a week prior to market, so the animal will drink excessive water and gain weight. It wasn’t long ago that a farmer would have instead not allowed his animals to drink prior to being taken to market so that there would be no deception in the weight of the animal. How far have we drifted from integrity in business!

Today there is a distinction between G-d's call into the ministry and a call into, say, engineering. We say we have a vocation in life. The word vocation comes from the Latin meaning *a divine call*. G-d does not have two categories of calls—only one. The fact is that we are all called to be ministers. G-d gave me my job because He knows being an engineering professor is the best way that I can minister. It may be that I can bring more fruit this way. My vocation is not just a way to make a living. It is a way to be fruitful—the means by which I seek ways to obtain fruit that remains. The word profession means to make a vow of religious consequences. According to the English language etymology of these words we routinely use to describe our work, we really do not have the excuse to separate G-d from our way to earn a living.

So, what makes a Christian company Christian? Answer: what the company is trying to accomplish. It should be bearing much fruit that remains. My business should be ultimately more about the way I bear fruit than the way I earn a living. If we get our eyes off that truth, we become carnal. In G-d's eyes, that is the purpose of our job.

What distinguishes a believer teacher/preacher from a secular teacher? Answer: bearing fruit that remains. We should purpose to make G-d's Word alive in those with whom we speak. We want fruit that remains. Share from the Scriptures with a goal in mind—we want an on-going revival. Whether it is by causing a believer to be more than *Yeshua*, or sharing with a lost individual about eternal life. We need to have an expectation for revival. Revival will never work if it is not an ongoing process first in us, then in others. You see, only a message from the heart reaches a heart. People need help to be obedient. We are to love them into obedience. Don't take for granted that people are OK but instead carefully consider that everyone has needs.

ABC's of Revival-Oriented People

Always aim for revival in the life of your people and yourself. Revival is not content. It is uniting people's spirit with G-d's spirit. It is always Spirit to spirit. There is no revival of skill.

Be careful to monitor regularly that your interaction with people seeks the lost and deepens the saved. We are to equip saints, and always be prepared to give the gospel.

Consider that Biblical revival is an on-going process and is never completed until the return of *Messiah Yeshua*. Revival is not an event, it is a process. We are never finished having a revival. We are never finished having more of G-d. We are to convict sin and deepen relationships.

Don't shy away from calling your audience to an ever-deeper commitment and holiness. *Yeshua* called for a commitment continually. So much of what we do lacks commitment.

Entreat G-d to make you His revival agent.

Closing Thoughts

If you have revival in your life, then you can impart revival in others. Don't go anywhere without a dynamic walk in your life. The purpose is that the fire of G-d come down. Start kindling a fire from which the *Ruach Elohim* can ignite others.

Remember, revival is our responsibility. (see 2 Chro. 7:14.) As we saw earlier in Gal. 6:1,2, whose responsibility is to restore? Answer: you who are spiritual.

Revival is only possible for those who have first experienced rebirth.

Revival always requires true repentance and forsaking of known sin.

Revival always results in seeking and serving Messiah with renewed fervency.

Revival is needed by most believers most of the time.

Anticipate revival to be accompanied by intense spiritual warfare.

Revival occurs in the life of the believer usually as a result of two things. The first is when the Believer becomes convicted of some known sin, confesses it to the Lord, and begins taking steps to restore godliness and holiness in his life. If this were to happen in your life today, what sins would you begin dealing with first? What hindrances to godly living openly exist in your life? What would have to take place for you to deal with those issues?

The second thing is a renewed seeking after God. Most people do not realize the need to continue seeking God. Revival is relationship. An intense intimacy with the L-rd.

L-rd, please let the revival start in Gainesville, in your congregation, in Kol Simcha. And yes L-rd, let it begin with me!

ⁱ Portions adapted from *The Seven Laws of the Learner*, Bruce Wilkinson, Multnomah Press, 1992