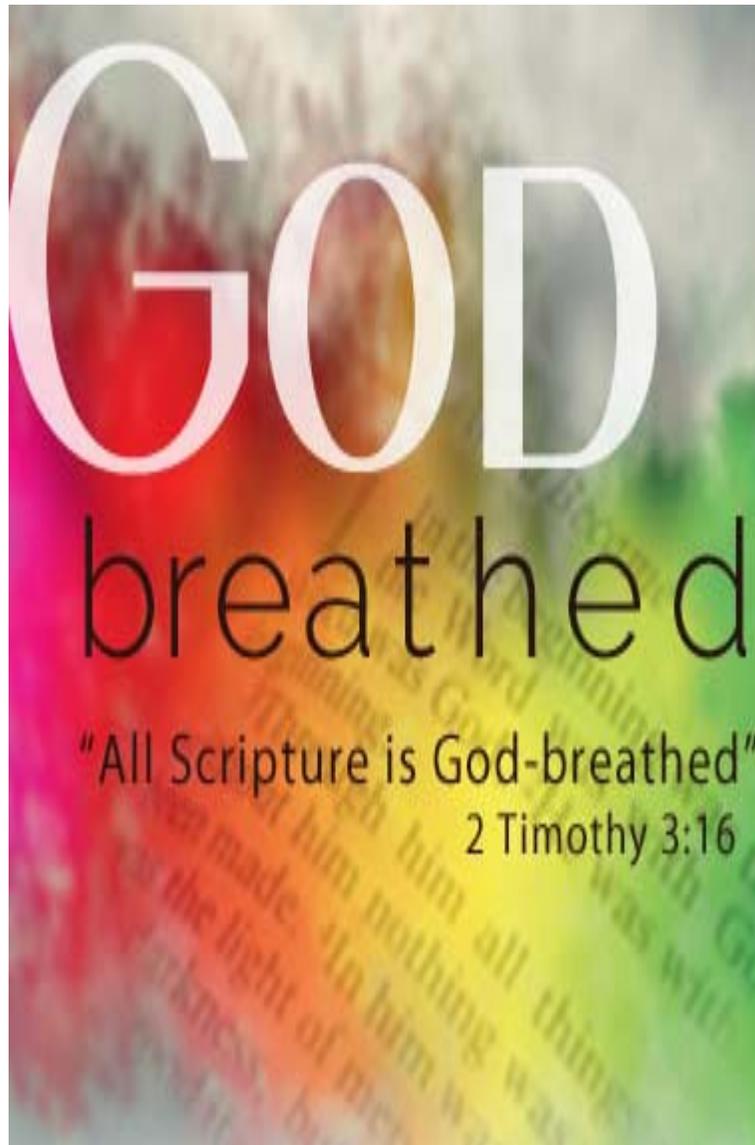


# Daily Devotional

January 2016



## Foreword

The congregation of Vistoso Community Church has been very responsive about their need to regularly study God's Word. Many have tried a variety of reading plans, and almost as many have expressed some frustration regarding their ability to successfully extract truth from what they are reading.

That frustration has prompted me to write a series of daily devotionals. This first booklet is formatted to provide material for every weekday in January of 2016. I am attempting this project as a trial, so we will see how many months of booklets we can complete this year.

Nonetheless, if you will try to read the Scriptures daily, I will draw your attention to a piece of truth you can ponder, and we both will trust in the Holy Spirit to guide us.

In His grace,



Kevin Redig



# In the Beginning

## Friday, January 1: Read Genesis 1

Of all the ways God could have chosen to begin His revelation to us, He chose the approach of Genesis 1. Why? If we consider Genesis 1 to be God's way of introducing Himself, then we can answer the question by asking what kind of God could do the things revealed in this first chapter of the Bible. What does it take to create, out of nothing, the raw material of our entire physical universe in an instant of time? At a minimum, an omnipotent God.

What does it take to shape that raw material over a period of six days into the balanced universe which we see today? Add omniscience to the list. How about a God who creates man in His image and likeness, provides everything for His special creation and then pronounces it "very good!" Why that would make God relational, loving and moral. And, from another angle, what can be said about a God who creates, forms and establishes in this way? How about, that He owns what He has created.



For some reason, many people think the beginning of the Bible is obscure or controversial and not worth studying. On the contrary, it reveals a tremendous amount to us about our God, much of which we would have no other way of knowing. I wouldn't give it away for anything, and I recognize attacks upon it for what they are—an effort to denigrate the nature of our great God.

Don't give away what He has revealed about Himself. Go ahead, spend a little bit more time meditating on this first chapter—you will be amazed at what else you can find.

# In the Beginning

## Monday, January 4: Read Genesis 2

Chapter 2 is no less revealing than Chapter 1. For example, how poignant is it that everything God had made was good until He made man—by himself? How gracious was God to make for man a “helper-suitable,” a complementary-partner? We could easily spend a whole lesson on just those two words and their ramification for valuing your marriage partner. And of course in just our second day of Bible reading, we have set to rest the confusion going on in our courts. For marriage has clearly been defined by the same God who created the heavens and earth, and there is no greater authority than His, and, thus, no one else has the prerogative to redefine marriage.

I would like to draw your attention to Verses 16-17. In the midst of a perfect creation and perfect environment—one without sin of any kind—God lays down a moral requirement for Adam. Calling this a moral requirement is simply to acknowledge that to eat would be wrong and to not eat would be right. Have you ever thought about why God does this? My opinion is that even in the Garden of Eden, God leaves room for man to make choices. There are many things wrapped up in these choices: the choice to obey or disobey, the choice to trust (depend upon) or to act independently, the choice to recognize the sovereignty of God or to rebel.

I would also tell you that this is an inherent part of what it means to be made in the image and likeness of God, and is equally true today, even in a fallen world. Mankind has choices to make. Will lost man choose to receive Christ or reject Him? Will the Christian choose to walk in dependence or independently? And just as there was in the garden, there continue to be consequences for the choices we make. Let this be an encouragement for us to choose to “trust and obey!”

# In the Beginning

## Tuesday, January 5: Read Genesis 3

First, there is a great irony in this third chapter of Genesis. What we have is the real story behind what we call *the Fall* of man. The fall is a pretty innocuous term for what is deception and open disobedience whereby mankind chooses to listen to Satan—the archenemy of God—rather than live in dependent obedience. What makes this so ironic is that—Eve was deceived because she weighed the Word of God against the word of Satan and chose the lie.



I can tell you that mankind has learned absolutely nothing. In our day, we are still weighing the Word of God regarding the origin of our physical universe, the origin of man and the purpose of man against the word of scientists and philosophers who have a priori rejected the existence of God. Once again we seem prone to choose the lie, and, for this reason, the tragedy is perpetuated.

A second thing to note as you read Verses 14 through the end of the chapter is the consequences of the fall. I can't tell you how many times I have heard people say, how could a loving God let this natural disaster kill so many, this illness cause so much suffering, and so on. In truth, the Scriptures tell us that every disease, every death, every natural disaster (Romans 8:20) is the result of sin. I have to admit when I look at the ongoing rebellion of man, rather than blame God, I am absolutely amazed at the extent of God's love, His long-suffering with His rebellious creation, and His so-great mercy to man.

If you can, let your friend, neighbor, family member have a glimpse of the hope of God's love for them.

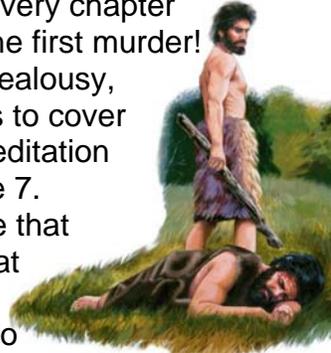
# In the Beginning

## Wednesday, January 6: Read Genesis 4

It doesn't take long for death and the consequences of sin to rear their ugly heads—for in the very chapter following the fall of man we have the first murder!

And it is not just murder, we see jealousy, anger, and deceit as Cain attempts to cover up his sin and self-pity. For our meditation today, I want to focus just on Verse 7.

First, even after the fall, do you see that we live in a moral universe? By that I mean issues of right and wrong continue. Cain is told, "If you will do what is right. . ." Part of God's claim on every human being, by virtue of His being the Creator of all things, is to do *right!* And, Oh, how much we all struggle with this!



The second aspect of Verse 7 that I want to draw to your attention is the amazingly clear way, right from the beginning, the sin nature has been such a foe for mankind. With the call to do right is also the pull to do wrong and this pull comes from the sin nature. In fact, the sin nature would like to control every aspect of our lives, even as Christians, if we will let it. (See Galatians 5:17-f.) God tells Cain very clearly that he must control the sin nature—he must master it! Of course, it is not possible to do this apart from the provision of God—that is one of the reasons Christ had to come and go to the cross. You can see the work He accomplished to this end in Romans 6:6 and 6:14. So to be clear—the same sinful nature that tempted Cain to kill his brother is active in our lives, desperately seeking to be in charge. We must first recognize the battle, and then turn to the Lord for His provision. For we are to “reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 6:11)

# Our Sin Nature

## Thursday, January 7: Read Genesis 5

Chapter five is still very early in the history of mankind after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. The first thing to note is the birth of Seth. The remainder of the chapter is a listing of the lineage through Seth all the way to Noah and his sons.



For today's meditation, I want you to consider Verses 1 and 3. Verse 1 repeats the great truth of Genesis 1:27, which tells us that mankind is made in the image and likeness of God. Although I believe some of this "image and likeness" is still visible, much has been compromised by the fall, and, by that, I mean the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden. One example of the change and deterioration would be Cain's sin nature as discussed in Chapter 4—it certainly is not part of the original "image and likeness."

Now consider Verse 3. It tells us that Seth was born in Adam's likeness—in his image. This is a startling change from the original "very good" creation. The whole issue of Adam's lost spiritual capacity and the consequences of sin have been passed on down from Adam to every succeeding generation of the human race. It is for this reason Adam is said to be the *federal* (representative) head of the human race. You can see this described clearly in the New Testament in the fifth chapter of Romans starting at Verse 12: ". . .sin entered the world through one man. . . and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men. . ." Can you see why not just Adam, but all mankind needs a Savior?

# Our Sin Nature

## Friday, January 8: Read Genesis 6

The world says, *“A loving God would never condemn anyone to hell! We just need to be sincere about our beliefs, basically good, and as long as you are not a Hitler or anything, it will all turn out okay in the end!”* But, that does not seem to be the message of Genesis Chapter 6.

In Gen 4:10 we learned about the sin nature that is “crouching at the door” and wanting to control our lives. In Genesis 6, we see that the human race has become almost completely dominated by the sin nature. So much so, that another aspect of God’s character comes to the foreground; specifically, His justice acting against the evil hearts and behavior of mankind. Furthermore, He did so in a decisive and sovereign manner, against which the evil of the day had no ability to resist.

No wonder Satan, and those who march to his tune, want so desperately to suppress the truth of the Noahic flood. For, right from the very beginnings of the Bible, God is making it clear that He will judge evil. Perhaps you are thinking, “Where is the love of God in all this?” There are two things to consider. First, Noah—reported to be a righteous man—is said to have “found favor in the eyes of the Lord.” The word translated “favor” is probably better translated grace. God’s love always provides, in grace, what we need. In the case of Noah that was a special accommodation in the form of the ark, which preserved Noah and his family from the wrath of God.

But, where was the love of God for the rest of the people? Second, II Peter 2:5 tells us that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. God’s love was displayed to the sinful generation of Noah because He allowed them to hear the Gospel for the 100 years it took to build the ark. Here is the principle—if you reject the love of God offered on His terms—expect His judgment.

# Our Sin Nature

## Monday, January 11: Read Genesis 7

One very straight-forward point of application from this chapter: Can you tell that our society is undergoing a steadily increasing rate of decay? Are the visible manifestations of sin in our society becoming more and more manifest? If you said yes to these two questions, I would agree with you. But still, I am not sure it has gotten as bad as the situation in Genesis Chapter 6. Do you have a sense that impending judgment is about to fall on America? I do. But that judgment is not going to be as bad as the judgment that fell on civilization during the days of Noah!

Do you see what Chapter 7 teaches us? If the evil was worse during Noah's day, and if the judgment that fell was worse than what might be coming



our way—and God could in grace preserve Noah and his family through both the evil times and the judgment that fell—then God can preserve us as long as He still has a purpose for our lives. As the ark was a “safe-haven” for Noah and his family during over a year of judgment, so too we can take shelter under the wings of the Almighty until whatever calamity that might befall our nation has also passed. (Psalm 91)

For our God is a strong tower, and the righteous run into it and are safe (Proverbs 18:10). He is the one sure Rock upon which to build. (Matthew 7:24) Thanks be to God who preserves His own—ours is to “trust and obey”.

# Our Sin Nature

## Tuesday, January 12: Read Genesis 8

When Noah and his family came out of the ark, the topography of the earth was certainly quite different, and it is possible that they had moved quite some distance from the point where they had built and entered the ark. I surely would be curious about my new surroundings, wouldn't you? Furthermore, it is quite possible that the earth's environment and climate had drastically changed with the flood—many creation scientists think so. So it would also have been very natural for Noah to be thinking about how he and his family were going to survive in this new and much more hostile environment.

No doubt, there was lots of work to be done in order to meet the challenges of survival in the post-diluvian world! And yet what does Noah do as the first recorded event after he releases the animals and comes out of the ark? He builds an altar and presents



a sacrifice to God! He worships the God who has saved and preserved, and I would expect he also gave thanks.

What a great model of godliness for us. Should we not also—in the midst of trying circumstances and many things vying for our attention—make sure that we regularly pause to worship and to give thanks that we too might find favor in the eyes of the Lord?

# Our Sin Nature

## Wednesday, January 13: Read Genesis 9

If the Bible were written by man, then Chapter 9 of Genesis would read something like the following, “And all the evil people perished in the great flood, but Noah and his family were preserved by almighty God who left His rainbow in the sky as a promise He would never do such a thing again. And they all lived happily ever after!”

But it wasn't written by man, and since man still has a sin nature, it is also not how the story unfolds. God does preserve Noah and his family and does promise to never again send a world-wide flood. But Noah and his family do not live so happily ever after. By pre-flood standards, their behavior is not particularly terrible; nevertheless, sin can be found in the behavior of both Noah and of his son Ham. And, we have a hint of worse things to come.



For a mighty flood of judgment may have swept the earth, but if mankind remains, then the sin of Adam remains, and fallen man's sinful nature remains. This is what it means when we say man has *fallen*. We are going to see this get worse and worse in the chapters ahead, so be prepared.

One point of application for us—man is a sinner in need of a savior. And that is true of every man, even a righteous man like Noah has a sin nature and needs a redeemer!

# Our Sin Nature

## Thursday, January 14: Read Genesis 10

I know what you are thinking—“What’s up with all these genealogies? Nothing important here! Can I skip this chapter?” A few observations for you:

- First, we have to realize that space is tight in the Bible. As a result, there has to be a reason why, out of all of the things He could have told us, God chose to communicate to us those things that have been recorded in His Word.
- Perhaps one reason is so that the people groups associated with the offspring of Noah would catch our attention. People like the Philistines, Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites. You should be thinking, “Aren’t those the pagan people who grew so wicked in Canaan and/or that persecuted the Jews?” Yes, they were. What’s happening to the godly line of Noah? We can see that through the generations to follow, it is descending back to gross sin, even after God has reset things with the great flood. Man is broken on the inside, and it is not just a matter of cleaning up the environment.
- And then there is Nimrod, mentioned in Verses 8-11. Notice the centers of his kingdom. Notice the location of these great cities and compare this with Genesis 11:2. Many theologians consider Nimrod to be the leader under whose direction work on the Tower of Babel began. At any rate, he is certainly a great source of industry—but these are all works of man that turned into centers of great evil.



There is a climax of sorts building--what is God going to do about fallen man?

# Our Sin Nature

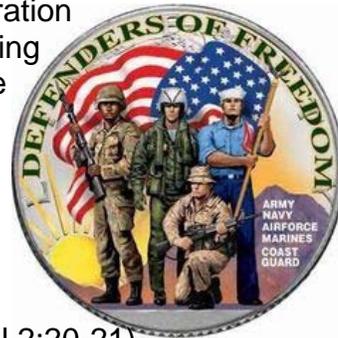
## Friday, January 15: Read Genesis 11

Verse 4 is of particular note—for it points out the fallen condition of man as well as any text in the Bible. Consider what we already know. Of the first two children born into the human race, one kills the other. In time, the heart of man is so evil, God needs to cleanse the earth of all humanity—except for one family.

Then, an even shorter time goes by, and here we are in Chapter 11 headed down the same path. God says in Genesis 9:1 to increase and fill the earth. In Genesis 11:4, man says, “. . . let us build ourselves a tower. . . and keep from being scattered.” Their plan is in direct disobedience to the command of God. Furthermore, their intent is to make a *name for themselves* rather than honor the One who created, and more recently, preserved them through the flood. How quickly mankind loses the Fear of the Lord.

God, however, is not going to let the whole thing unravel again. In short, He establishes nations. He does this by mixing up the languages of the people, so they can no longer collectively pursue disobedience. God scattered them over the face of the earth, and from that day we have had nations with boundaries ascribed by God (Acts 17:26).

Can you see how a multiplicity of nations would help both keep evil in check, and the concentration of evil in any one place from becoming too great? For a hundred years the United States was used mightily in this role. However, I must admit, I wonder if it will not soon be the case that we are the evil that needs to be checked. No more floods, but the Lord can certainly still raise up nations and tear them down. (Daniel 2:20-21)



# A New Covenant

## Monday, January 18: Read Genesis 12

It is extremely important to recognize the change God institutes in Chapter 12; specifically, a change in the way in which He is unfolding His great plan of redemption. Let me break it down for you.

First, although it is tempting to move from the Tower of Babel to the call of Abraham as if they were unrelated events, they must be seen as the unbroken thread of the Biblical story line. As I have developed in the past few devotionals, because man is fallen, he keeps spiraling down into sin. With the Tower of Babel incident—God has slowed this process by the sudden advent of language, and the dispersal of mankind—so far so good.

In Chapter 12, He takes the next step. Rather than work with a godly line and the human race at large, He is narrowing down His redemptive plan through one man, and his offspring (which eventually includes our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ). This man is Abraham and the nation is Israel. Do you see how completely different this is from what God had previously been doing?

Furthermore, look at the scope of the promises given to Abraham in Verses 2-3. A great nation will come from Abraham; God places a sort of *Divine bubble* around Abraham and his descendants (something that continues to this day); and He promises that all nations will be blessed through the descendants of Abraham. This latter promise has been proven over and over in terms of medicine, science, technology, music, literature, but has its culmination in the so-great salvation that is available through Jesus Christ.

At this point, the Biblical story line, and the book of Genesis, is going to change dramatically and concentrate on Abraham and his progeny.

# A New Covenant

## Tuesday, January 19: Read Genesis 15

We are skipping to Chapter 15 to make the essential connection between God's promise in Genesis 12 and Abraham's response in Genesis 15. So why did God choose Abraham? Was it because he was some kind of super-spiritual individual? You have already seen in Chapter 12 that this was certainly not the case. It certainly wasn't because Abraham had inherent character, bravery, or had accomplished a great work. No, God selected Abraham because God is gracious and "He works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform."

Note that Genesis 12:2 was not a one-time promise to Abraham. God brings up all or part of the promises (collectively called the Abrahamic Covenant) in Chapters 13, 15, and 17, and repeatedly confirms it to Abraham's offspring in later chapters. And now look at Abraham's response in Genesis 15:6: "***Abraham believed the Lord, and He credited to him as righteousness.***"

To have righteousness credited to you is to be justified, and this is the kind of standing Abraham now had before God. His belief wasn't perfect or continual, as the book of Genesis clearly documents. Nonetheless, his response of faith to the promise of God changed his standing before God forever. Furthermore, this continues to be the way by which every one of us can obtain righteousness, or be justified before God. Consider Romans 3:22-24 "***This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.***" We are, "***. . . justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.***" This is a life-changing, eternity-changing truth. Our standing before God is based upon our belief in His provision for our salvation—the Lord Jesus Christ. When we trust His work on the cross to have paid for our sins, God to this very day, credits it to us as righteousness.

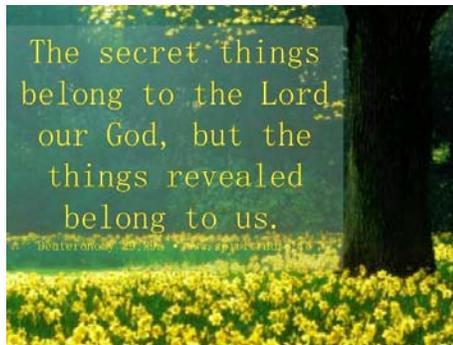
# A New Covenant

## Wednesday, January 20: Read Deuteronomy 29

You are without a doubt wondering why we have left Genesis and gone to Deuteronomy—and in particular this chapter of Deuteronomy! There are several reasons.

First, after looking at the first 12 chapters of Genesis, we are going to move in a new direction with tomorrow's reading. The first 12 chapters provide a tremendous framework for the rest of the Bible. They tell us what God is like and of what He is capable. They tell how mankind was created perfect, and then through his own choice fell to the consequences of sin. We see the guiding and preserving hand of God in the face of man's spiraling depravity, We learn of the call of Israel starting with Abraham. A tremendous amount of truth, which we would have no other way of knowing if God hadn't told us.

Second, we now move to Deuteronomy 29 because in this chapter we see God in the midst of establishing a covenant with His people—something He has done a number of times. Do the first 12 chapters of Genesis reveal to us whether or not God is capable of fulfilling each and every one of the promises He makes with man? They most certainly do! He is the one "promise-keeper!" In addition, notice verse 29. The things God has chosen to reveal belong to us—His people. This includes the content of Genesis



1-12. Don't let anyone take from you what God has provided, for it belongs to us--it is our legacy as God's people. The only way we can lose it is through unbelief!

# A Revival Reminder

## Thursday, January 21: Read Psalm 85

We will use this great psalm to refresh our memory on the topic of revival. Let's use Verse 6 as our focal point. First, note that the people of God are asking for revival. Biblically, revival always starts with the people of God and not the lost.

Next, do you see that in Verses 1-5 the people had been under God's discipline because of sin, but the issue of sin has been addressed and now the people desire to return to a *revived* state. This begs the question of what it means to be revived. The Hebrew word translated *revive* in Verse 6 means to give life, to preserve life, and to bring back to life; that is, to resuscitate. When used of inanimate objects, like a stone wall that had been damaged, it means to restore to the previous condition.

Consider this definition of revival, extracted from the Word after much study:

*Spiritual revival is characteristic of a Christian who returns to a condition of spiritual vigor, by means of the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The revived see God as bigger than any obstacle, faithful to keep all His promises, and are simultaneously convicted of their need for and the wonders of God's grace.*

As you can see, we all need to be *revived* from time to time. For we can become entangled in the distractions of this world, we can neglect our need to "abide in the vine" that is Jesus Christ, and sin can take its toll. There is always a remedy for sin—confession. God provides everything necessary for us to walk with Him, for "***the Lord will give what is good. ..and shall make His footsteps our pathway.***" (Ps 85:12-13)

# **A Revival Reminder**

## **Friday, January 22: Read II Chronicles 6**

The U.S. Mint provides a number of ways to know if a \$50 bill is genuine including a watermark, security thread, and color shifting ink. In the same way, there are ways that we can tell if a group of Christians, including our own fellowship, is flourishing spiritually. Two important ones are found in Solomon's great prayer of dedication.

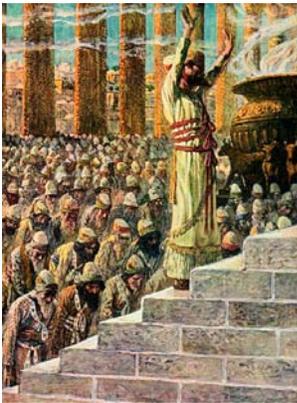
First, you know the potential for revival is there when you find a people who believe in a God who is a "maker" and "keeper" of promises! Look at Verses 12-17. Solomon is recognizing that God has done exactly what He had promised to do. Furthermore, Solomon is looking forward to the ongoing fulfillment of His promises in the future. In contrast, in Verses 22-f particularly Verse 36, it is clear that the Jews are going to fail to be faithful. I point this out because Solomon clearly understands what some Christians seem to be confused about—God is the One Promise-Keeper, while man is prone to break his commitments. Any emphasis on the concept of keeping one's promises needs to be centered upon God, who has made over 7000 promises in His Word and will keep every one of them, rather than on man who has a track record of being a promise-breaker, as can be seen in the life of Solomon.

Second, you can recognize revival when the God worshipped is "full-sized" and has neither been domesticated or reduced to a tribal deity. What do I mean by this? Look at vs. 18—Solomon clearly understands that the Creator God of the universe cannot be contained in a temple built by man. Neither is God the God of a particular nation (the U.S.) or a particular brand of theology. Rather, He is the awesome one Whom heaven and earth cannot contain. Simply stated, a spiritually vital people do not treat God like a genie in a bottle whose role is to do their bidding.

# A Revival Reminder

**Monday, January 25: Read 6:12-7:3**

Our Scripture shows us two more ways to authenticate true revival. First, revival springs from a clear understanding of, and unashamed confrontation with one primary issue—the issue of sin, that is rebellion against God and its consequences! Look at Verses 22-f, notice how Solomon clearly recognizes not only that the nation is going to sin, but that they are going to experience the consequence of discipline for doing so. As sinners saved by grace, it is important that we keep our eyes steadfastly “fixed upon Jesus—the author and finisher of our faith.” Furthermore,



any spiritually vital people recognize they have a propensity to sin and have prepared themselves to recognize it when it rears its head, to confess those sins, and to return to a Spirit-filled walk with the Lord.

Second, Solomon’s grasp of who God is and His provision of salvation for mankind—a fact that so grasps his heart and amazes him because the ramifications are so stupendous—that he can’t help but proclaim that it is not exclusive, but inclusive! Look at Verses 32-33—Solomon is actually praying for the surrounding nations to be attracted to the work of God among the Jews, and to have a resultant *Fear of the Lord* that is part of what it means to join the family of God. Amazingly, this is one of the few times in the Old Testament where you see any hint of evangelism on the part of the Jews. Without a doubt, a heart for the lost to have what we have in terms of salvation and a vital relationship with the Lord is something that irrepressibly springs from the heart of a revived people.

# A Revival Reminder

## Tuesday, January 26: Read Acts 2

Peter is prominent throughout this chapter, so here is something for you to consider—was Peter in a revived, spiritually flourishing condition? Before you answer, consider this comment of one theologian: “. . . by definition, a revival is something that happens amongst Christian people, among believers. . . something is revived and when you say that, you mean that there is *something* present that has got life. But the life was beginning to wane, to droop and had become almost moribund....Revival means awakening, stimulating the life, bringing it to the surface again.” (Jones)

Peter had denied the Lord, been anxious, guilt-ridden and afraid. However, he seems to be in a different condition altogether in Acts 2—could it be that he has been spiritually revived? If so, by what means? I am asking, what are the agents of revival in the life of a believer? The most obvious answer can be found in Verses 1-4 when the promised Holy Spirit is given to them. It is immediately after this that Peter’s ministry takes on new power.

But there is something else for you to consider as well—what makes up much of the message that comes out of Peter’s mouth? Why, it is the Word of God! The outline of the message is God’s plan of salvation centered in Jesus Christ, and the evidence to support the message all comes from the Scriptures. Peter is not only filled with the Holy Spirit, but with the Word of God. And then look at Verse 41. Something happened to those who accepted Peter’s message: They were saved! What was the message? It was the Gospel communicated in the power of the Spirit and as framed by the Word of God. Perhaps these are the agents of revival. We’ll see if we can support this further tomorrow.

# A Revival Reminder

## Wednesday, January 27: Read Acts 4

Once again, we have more evidence of Peter's revived condition and more response to the Gospel message. Peter



has been arrested and pressured by the Sanhedrin, and what does he do? He continues to fearlessly proclaim the Gospel despite mounting opposition—this

allows us to know Peter is flourishing spiritually despite hostile circumstances.

And look how clearly the two agents of revival we discussed yesterday are in evidence: In Verse 8, Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit. In Verse 11, and under great pressure, it is the Word of God that provides the substance of His message. This same theme continues throughout the chapter. In Verses 25-26, we have the Spirit and the Word. And then look at Verse 31, this gathering of believers was all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly! The twin agents of revival evident in the early Church were demonstrably the Spirit of God and the Word of God.

Notice there is nothing about marketing the church, making lost people feel comfortable, or any of the approaches of our day. Instead, the power of God caused a conviction within the heart which led to a response to the message. Pray that we, as a church fellowship, would ourselves flourish by means of the Spirit of God and the Word of God, and that these two *agents*—the alive and powerful Word of God and the third member of the Trinity—would be the means by which we impact and reach the lost in our community for Jesus Christ!

# A Revival Reminder

## Thursday, January 28: Read Jeremiah 1

As we continue to think about revival, we want to consider the question, "Can revival fail?" Given our study the past few days, this question is really asking: "Can believers who have the right view of God, and are walking by both the Spirit of God and Word of God, lose their spiritual vitality?" To answer that question, let's consider the prophet Jeremiah.

From Jeremiah chapter 1, we learn the chronological setting for his ministry. In summary, he ministered for over 40 years during a bleak time in Israel's history. The northern kingdom had already gone into captivity, and the south was in a period of decline that also was going to end in exile at the hand of the Babylonians. There is virtually no recorded fruit for his 40+ years of ministry. He was under constant attack by the religious establishment and the object of both murder conspiracies and false imprisonments. So back to our original question, "Did revival fail in the life of Jeremiah?"

Perhaps you are thinking, "What revival?" Be careful—we have already learned revival is not about the response of the lost, but the condition of the believer. Furthermore, it occurs whenever the believer has a vital dynamic spiritual life! So what about Jeremiah? We could spend much time on this, but considering just Chapter 1, look at verses 5, 9, and 18. Jeremiah was set apart, even before he was born, for God's purposes. He was given the Word of God to speak to the people and the power of God to stand in all circumstances. So to answer our question: can the call of God, Word of God, or power of God fail? Not our God's! The only thing that could have caused the loss of spiritual vitality in the life of Jeremiah would be unbelief, specifically unbelief as to the purposes and capability of God.

# A Revival Reminder

## Friday, January 29: Read Lamentations 3

The book of Lamentations was also written by Jeremiah, but after the fall of the southern Kingdom to the Babylonians. Jeremiah's ministry had failed to call the Jews to repentance, and, as a result, they suffered through the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of many of the people to Babylon—at a terrible cost of human suffering.

The book of Lamentations is a lament regarding this historical incident. So did revival fail? Again, I remind you, that we are asking about the spiritual vitality of Jeremiah. Take a look at Verses 19-24. Does this read like the mental condition of someone who is spiritually languishing or is it someone who has an ongoing, steadfast trust in the Lord? In fact, Jeremiah is one of the greatest Scriptural examples of an individual who was able to *keep on* in the face of tremendous opposition. At the end of his ministry, he is still standing for the Lord; and, in fact, he chooses to continue to minister to the remnant, rather than choosing his own comfort.

Here is the lesson to be learned: Everything necessary to live a spiritually revived life has been provided by the Lord. If we will appropriate what He has provided, we can have a vital life even in the darkest of times and worst of circumstances. The only thing that can keep us from having a spiritually revived life is unbelief! In order to check our tendency to fall into unbelief, let me remind you of our definition: Spiritual revival is characteristic of a Christian who returns to a condition of spiritual vigor, by means of the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The *revived* see God as bigger than any obstacle, faithful to keep all His promises, and are simultaneously convicted of their need for, and the wonders of, God's grace.

And all God's people said. . .Amen!

VISTOSO  
  
Community Church

He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit... *John 15:5*

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