

Revival—A Biblical and Historical Perspective

1. Preliminary Comments

- **The Challenge**

"I am sensible it is much more difficult to judge impartially of that which is the subject of this discourse, in the midst of the dust and smoke of such a state of controversy as this land is now in about things of this nature ... so it is more difficult to read impartially." Jonathan Edwards, *The Religious Affections*, 15.

- **The Premise**

"... what happens in revivals is not to be seen as something miraculously different from the regular experience of the church. The difference lies in degree, not in kind. In an 'outpouring of the Spirit' spiritual influence is more widespread, convictions deeper, and feelings more intense, but all this is only a heightening of normal Christianity. True revivals are 'extraordinary', yet what is experienced at such times is not different in essence from the spiritual experience that belongs to Christians at other times." Ian Murray, *Revival & Revivalism*, 23

2. Language and Usage

- **Old Testament Origins – Hebrew language and usage**

- *Chayah*: to live; to preserve life; to restore life
- *Michyah*: "reviving" (Ezra 9:8-9)
- *Chadash*: to renew
- *Chalaph*: to change

- **The concept of "revival" comes from the Old Testament**

- **"Revival" and "Awakening"**

3. Survey of Relevant Old Testament Texts

Psalm 19:7 - The law of the LORD is perfect, **reviving** the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

Psalm 69:32 - When the humble see it they will be glad; you who seek God, let your hearts **revive**.

Psalm 71:20 - You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will **revive** me again; from the depths of the earth you will bring me up again.

Psalm 85:6 - Will you not **revive** us again, that your people may rejoice in you?

Hosea 6:2 - After two days he will **revive** us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.

Isaiah 57:15 - For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to **revive** the spirit of the lowly, and to **revive** the heart of the contrite.

Habakkuk 3:2 - O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years **revive** it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.

Lamentations 1:16 - "For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears; for a comforter is far from me, one to **revive** my spirit; my children are desolate, for the enemy has prevailed."

4. Broad Principles Regarding the OT Use of "Revival"

- Revival in the OT must be viewed in the context of the Law and Covenant which the LORD established for and with his people.
- A deep and profound awareness of and conviction for sin (broken Law and Covenant) accompanies revival in the OT.
- Revival brings forth 'reformation'; or more specifically, a Spirit-wrought desire/endeavor after new obedience in accordance with Law and Covenant. (i.e., Repentance)
- Revival in the OT is rooted in Messianic hope—that is, it looks to Christ and the resurrection.