



4 | JONAH 3:1-2

WHAT IS REVIVAL?

God desires to give his people revival if his people will dare to ask him for it. Through personal revival, God often brings revival to entire cities and nations. He often sends revival to those who least deserve it.

Outline

1. IN REVIVAL WE ARE PREPARED FOR THE WORD
2. IN REVIVAL WE ARE PIERCED BY THE WORD
3. IN REVIVAL WE ARE PERSUADED BY THE WORD
4. IN REVIVAL WE ARE TRANSFORMED BY THE WORD

Call to Worship

My heart is steadfast, O God! I will sing and make melody with all my being! ²Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn! ³I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. ⁴For your steadfast love is great above the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. —Psalm 108:1-4

Songs

Love Ran Red
The Power of the Cross
Salvation is from the Lord (Gettys)
Before the Throne of God Above
Living Hope

Announcements

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet if you are visiting with us.

Introduction

I love to see something transformed. Our **church's parsonage was once a gang house for the Latin Kings**. I remember the gang signs throughout along with the vandalism. No one wants a gang house in their neighborhood. People in the town were mortified and afraid. With the help of some **volunteer union laborers from Leopardo Construction**, we **gutted that place to its bare bones**, put on a **new roof, new siding, new windows**. The community gathered for opening day with the **mayor** when we transformed that **gang house into a Spanish community center**, and then a parsonage.

In the text before us, we find the meanest, baddest city in the ancient world experience a revival of divine proportions. We see how powerful God's mercy is, and how the cruelest people can be transformed into a new creation. Their repentance was so radical, that Jesus used them as an example of repentance in

the New Testament (cf Mt 12:39-41). When we speak of "revival" we are talking about the life of God in the soul of man. The dictionary says:

Revival is an awakening of people to their spiritual concerns.¹ —*Webster's Dictionary*
1828

I like what Leonard Ravenhill said about revival.

Revival is when God gets so sick and tired of being misrepresented that he shows up himself.² —*Leonard Ravenhill*

Lloyd Jones said that revival is something utterly supernatural.

A revival is a miracle. It is the hand of the Lord, and it is mighty. It can only be explained as the direct action and intervention of God. It was God alone who could divide the Red Sea.... Revival is a mighty act of God.³ —*Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

Iain Murray gets to the heart of what revival is.

Revival is a manifestation of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in an uncommon measure, bringing refreshment to the church and salvation to the world. But although it is a sovereign work of God, it is also a work performed in answer to petitions offered by a praying people.⁴ — *Iain H. Murray*

In revival, God moves in what we think is an unusual way, where people are brought closer and deeper in their relationship with him. Often, in revival, there are great numbers of conversions as well. This is what Nineveh experienced.

It is my conviction that God wants to give all his people revival. We simply need to seek him in prayer for personal revival, as Jonah did, and God will pour out his grace through us. He may even overthrow the devil's power over your city as he did in Nineveh.

How does one man, without military or political power – without power over the learning institutions or philosophical empowerment **walk into one of the greatest cities in the ancient world** and overthrow it? Jonah is just a tool in God's hand to bring one of the **greatest revivals to one of the most unlikely cities** in the ancient world.

NINEVAH

When Jonah was spit out on the dry land, likely near Joppa where he had begun his run from God. He must have been relieved to be alive. He was back from the dead. This city stood on the eastern bank of the Tigris River.

The Place. He made a beeline for Nineveh around **six hundred miles** back to where God called him in the first place.

¹ "Revival," Noah Webster, *Webster's Dictionary: An American Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th Edition (New York: S. Converse Publishing, 1828).

² Leonard Ravenhill in Timothy Hill, *Beyond the Mist: A Quest for Authentic Revival* (Branson, MO: Tim Hill Ministries, 2010), 174.

³ Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Revival* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1987), 120.

⁴ Iain Harnish Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism, 1750-1858* (Edinburgh etc.: Banner of Truth Trust, 1996), 135.



In 1845, a famous British archeologist, **Austen Henry Layard** discovered ancient Nineveh under the city of modern Mosul, Iraq. The city's **towers** and **massive walls** were **uncovered**. Among the ruins of the city was a vast library consisting of more than **22,000 clay tablets with cuneiform writing** detailing 1200 years of history. In 612 B.C., the city of Nineveh would **be conquered and burned to the ground by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon**, but for now, they are given an opportunity to repent.

Protection. Nineveh was incredibly protected. When the archeologists uncovered **the walls**, they estimated the original walls were **100 feet high and 50 feet thick**, and the main wall, interspersed by **15 gates**, was over seven and one-half miles long.⁵ Of course **their army was fearsome and legendary in cruelty**. Their philosophy of war was to terrorize, humiliate, mutilate, and utterly desolate their enemies. They were the original prototype of a **psychopathic terrorist nation**.

Population. The total population was probably about 600,000, including the people who lived in the suburbs outside the city walls (cf 4:11).

Pagans. Out of all the dark metropolises, Nineveh was one of the darkest. The residents were pagan idolaters and worshipped Asur and Ishtar, the chief male and female deities, as did almost all the Assyrians. No one is deserving of God's free grace, so Jonah's heart was marred, and he had trouble really wanting them to be in God's family. Instead, we should have the burning evangelistic heart of Charles Spurgeon who once prayed:

Lord, hasten to bring in all thine elect—and then elect some more.⁶

The Power of God. We might ask ourselves today, how do we change and transform our culture? How can we who are so small **overcome the hostile atheism, self-centered worldliness, and insane confusion of our culture?** God gives us the answer in Jonah 3.

Jonah 3:1-5 | Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” ³So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. ⁴Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days,

⁵ *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, “Nineveh,” by T. G. Pinches, 4:2147-51; *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*, “Nineveh,” by Elmer B. Smick, 2:1208-10; and *The New Bible Dictionary*, “Nineveh,” by D. J. Wiseman, 888-90.

⁶ William Young Fullerton, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon, A Biography* (London: Williams and Norgate Publishers, 1920), 182.

and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"⁵ And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

Key Thought: God desires to give his people revival if his people will dare to ask him for it. Through personal revival, God often brings revival to entire cities and nations through the messenger's personal revival. He often sends revival to those who least deserve it.

When God wants to send revival, he often uses the most unlikely people to reach the most unlikely candidates.

God's persistent grace can transform you if you let it. It certainly transformed Jonah. God's grace is what gives us a **second chance**. If necessary, he will provide us with a third, and a fourth, and so on. God's grace is truly unrelenting!

Jonah wasn't much, but he was a man with a message. Right now, he was a soaking wet mess! **Fresh from the fish's belly**, Jonah stood on **shaky legs**, thirsty and hungry, but he was alive. You can imagine Jonah looking around with his heart beating, surveying the Mediterranean Sea for any signs of that great fish. Seeing none, Jonah likely submerged back into the water to **wash his face and clothes and body from the blubber** and mess of the interior of the great fish. Even with all the scrubbing, we can imagine that **Jonah's skin was pale, and his hair bleached white** from the gastric acids of the fish's digestive system.

Mustering all the strength he could, Jonah walked on his tender, bare feet a short way up the beach **toward Joppa**. Jerusalem wasn't far from here. He could very **easily just go home, or at least stay in Jerusalem and rest**. He just wanted to go home. But before he could contemplate running from God again, the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time.

1. IN REVIVAL WE ARE **PREPARED** FOR THE WORD

Jonah 3:1-2a | Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying,² "Arise, go to Nineveh."

Jonah was **prepared** for the word. Jonah had been in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. God's word had been hidden and treasured in his heart. He sang his own psalm to God. Jonah is spit out by the great fish onto dry land, probably in the vicinity of Philistia, near Joppa, where his journey away from God had begun. Suddenly, he hears the word of God!

2. IN REVIVAL WE ARE **PIERCED** BY THE WORD

Jonah was **pierced** by the word. "**Arise, Jonah!** Get up and **go to Nineveh**," came the Lord's gentle but firm voice. **God's voice was so much clearer now**. Jonah's heart was pierced by the word. You know you are experiencing personal revival when God's voice cuts deep into you.

3. IN REVIVAL WE ARE **PERSUADED** BY THE WORD

Jonah was **persuaded** by the word. There was **true fear in his heart** when he heard God's voice. His head was bowed. He was **a broken man**. He had defied God and lost. He had run from God, but there was no escape from the Lord's reach. God did a mighty work when Jonah was in the belly of the great fish.

Now he hears the word of the Lord. **Broken, he now obeys.** He begins to make his trek to Nineveh, some five hundred and fifty miles away.

4. IN REVIVAL WE ARE TRANSFORMED BY THE WORD

I had a Jonah-like experience in the belly of a Ford F-350 as it were. In November 2018, as I was stationary, making a left turn, a Ford F-350 pushed me into oncoming traffic where I was hit again and sustained a traumatic brain injury that laid me up for three months. It was a time of deep wrestling with God for me.

What did God do for me? I was like Jonah in so many ways. I knew the word of God well, but in some ways, I needed to know how to walk in the word like I should have. I knew all the answers, but there were a lot of spiritual walls in my heart that kept my heart filled with the noise of anxiety, which would lead to anger and frustration and even despair at times. I learned that I needed to give up everything except Jesus Christ. God squeezed me in the **"belly of the Ford F-350."** Jonah was no longer worried about his eloquence or prosperity. He had a personal revival and a renewed walk with God.

When we get right with God, we have a **new hunger for God's word.** We not only experience the glory of the truth, but the power of the Author of the word!

Conclusion

How do you overthrow a world power? No human being can, but God can. This kind of manifest power of God in revival happens individually and **it can happen nationally.** The Spirit can and has fallen on whole towns and cities and nations even in the recent past. And he falls regularly, suddenly, and shockingly at times in the lives of individuals. **We can shout with Jonah, "Salvation is of the Lord!"** Jonah is the most unlikely candidate for a preacher of revival. God uses unlikely candidates.

How do you overthrow the human heart? You start with your own personal revival. Start reaching out to the lost in your own sphere of influence. **The lost cannot hear without a preacher.** We must go with the word of God. The greatest place of weakness is that we won't go. We are like Jonah, comfortable. We like preaching to ourselves. We must see people like Jesus did. He left his comfort zone and came to this earth and died on a lonely cross.

Recently I had the exciting opportunity to go **wild hog hunting in Louisiana.** There are so many hogs that there is no limit to the hunting season. You can capture as many hogs as possible, and the season is all year round. So, there we were, eighty people in total covering 80 acres. It was quite a strange sight. There were about 15 people on horses, 5 four wheelers, and 2 tractors with about 30 people on each hayride.

All in all, **we caught 3 hogs.** It's pretty hard to catch a hog with a rope. With 80 people, we were able to only get three. It was exhilarating to chase them and to see those on horses who roped the hogs. I don't know about you, but I've never seen a wild hog up close. A big man took down the hog and sat on it. They he'd grab his legs and hog tie it until it settled down. Then they'd bring a cage with water in the bottom, and the hog delighted to get into the cage and cool down.

The point **is we got excited about catching wild hogs.** Maybe that's not your thing, but you'll chase after a sport's team. You'll chase hard after your hobbies, your kids' activities, and the fun things you like. All that is fine. But what about the souls of the lost? Will you pursue them?