

**2 Chronicles 15 — “King Asa: A Courageous Man Used of God to Bring Great Reformation!”**

Introduction:

**Revival:** “an extraordinary movement of the Holy Spirit producing extraordinary results.”  
(Richard Owen Roberts).

Francis Schaeffer once said: “we must unashamedly and unreservedly proclaim biblical truth to our post-Christian culture.”

**What is real revival? What is true reformation?**

*Some features:*

1. Invades A Time of Great Spiritual Darkness
2. Includes A Man of Great Spiritual Courage
3. Involves A People of Great Spiritual Desperation
4. Ignites A Commitment to Great Spiritual Holiness

*Background to 2 Chronicles 14-16 (Unit on King Asa)*

- Summary of King Asa’s kingship (2 Chronicles 14-16)
  1. Asa’s CONFIDENCE in God (14) (resolution) or recognition of God
  - 2. Asa’s CONSECRATION to God (15) (reformation) renewal/restoration toward God**
  3. Asa’s CAPITULATION from God (16) (rebellion) rebellion against God

**THESIS** — From this chapter, we’ll observe King Asa: a courageous man, used of God to bring great reformation & revival. **What is a GREAT REVIVAL — a working of God?**

## **I.A POWERFUL RECEIVING OF THE WORD OF GOD! (1-7)**

*The prophet’s speech divides into three sections:*

**1. Doctrinal, biblical truth** (v.2)

**2. Historical illustration** (vv.3-6)

**3. Application & encouragement** (v.7)

## **II. AN INDOMITABLE COURAGE AMONG THE LEADERS OF GOD! (8-10)**

## **III. AN UNASHAMED COMMITMENT TO THE PURE WORSHIP OF GOD! (11-15)**

This is actually like a “Formal Covenant-Renewal/Recommitment Ceremony!” (Joshua 24; cf. Deut 4.29)

### **Scripture provides another “Covenant Re-commitment Ceremony” in Joshua 24:**

*The ceremony includes 4 steps:*

- ❖ **First**, it begins with remembering God’s acts in Israel’s history (survey the past) (Josh 24:1-13)
- ❖ **Second**, then the restating of the covenant privileges and responsibilities (Josh 24:14-15)
- ❖ **Third**, then the covenant people respond with repentance and commitment (Josh 24:16-18)
- ❖ **Lastly**, Then Laws, promises, and terms of agreement are recorded (Josh 24:25)

So, like Joshua of old, Asa now leads the nation in renewal of commitments to the LORD (2 Chron 15:12-13)

The big issue: to “**seek**” the LORD.

“Seeking God” marries 3 elements together. To seek God includes....

1. **Earnestness** (*with your passion/desiring/hungry/passionate*)
2. **Constancy** (*at all times*)
3. **Genuineness** (*from the heart*)

**Application for Us?**

1. **It's a commitment to WORSHIP GOD TOGETHER (12-13)**
2. **It's a commitment to WORSHIP GOD PURELY (12-13)**
3. **It's a commitment to WORSHIP GOD WHOLLY/GENUINELY (14-15)**

## **IV.A HEARTFELT CLINGING TO GOD IN HOLINESS OF LIFE! (16-19)**

*Conclusion:*

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Four basic **essentials** can be observed that characterize **REVIVALS**. We shall examine each of these in turn.

### ***1. The sense of God's nearness and especially an awareness of His holiness and majesty.***

This first feature is vital. It consists of what is sometimes referred to as the ‘Shekinah glory’ of God’s presence. In Exodus 40:34 and II Chronicles 7:1 we read of the cloud of the Lord’s presence filling the tabernacle and the glory of the Lord filling the temple. There may not be any visible cloud, but in all true revival, the presence of the Lord is sensed in an awesome way.

This phenomenon is important because it focuses on the fact that revival is God coming down on mankind, with the result that they are humbled. There are religious movements in Africa which involve huge numbers of people who sing in a very impressive way. One can easily get the impression that a great revival is in progress. But it is always essential for us to use our minds and analyze what is going on (Rom. 12:1,2). Some consider such questioning to be sinful, but it is not. I do not mean that we should be censorious, rather, that we are duty-bound to test everything by Scripture.

When there is great emotion, we need to ask ourselves about the source of that feeling. Is it some- thing that has been worked up by manipulators who are experts in controlling crowds, or is it something which is from heaven? Is there a glorying in patriotism, or nationalism, or tribalism? Often religion is used as a veneer to cover what is, in essence, idolatry.

Many modern-day religious movements are characterized by a strong emphasis on the emotions. In mass meetings, there is sometimes a deliberate attempt made to bring great crowds to a high point of excitement and exuberance. This

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is emotion worked up from within, whereas revival is the Holy Spirit coming down. When He comes down, there is a prostrating effect; the awesomeness and glory of God’s holiness are felt in an overwhelming way.

We see this illustrated in the personal experience of the patriarch Jacob when the Lord met with him at Bethel. Jacob’s response was expressed in these words: ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven’ (Gen. 28:17).

An awareness of the nearness of God is the chief characteristic of all true revivals (Ps. 80; Isa. 64; John 14:17; I Cor. 14:24,25).

At Pentecost everyone was filled with awe (Acts 2:43). A realization of the holiness of God is also one of the hallmarks of revival. The initial experience of fear of God and conviction of sin is followed by intense joy and love.

The felt sense of the presence of God is reflected by this description of the revival at Northampton in 1735. Edwards writes, ‘Presently upon this, a great and earnest concern about the great things of religion, and the eternal world, became universal in all parts of the town, and among persons of all degrees and all ages. The engagedness of their hearts in this great concern could not be hid; it appeared in their very countenances. It then was a dreadful thing amongst us to lie out of Christ, in danger every day of dropping into hell.’

This sense of the fear of God is a vital element of true revival. It is the feature which is missing from contemporary evangelicalism.

**2. A greatly intensified work of the Holy Spirit in conviction of sin and giving repentance and faith.**

The second essential characteristic of genuine revival points us to the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration.

This is illustrated by the description given by Edwards of the revival in Northampton: ‘There was scarcely a single person in the town, old or young, left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Those who were wont to be the vainest and loosest, and those who had been most disposed to think and speak slightly of vital and experimental religion, were not generally subject to great awakenings. And the work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner, and increased more and more; souls did, as it were, by flocks come to Jesus Christ.’

Yet by no means all who in times of revival profess to have faith and repentance prove to be genuine. Time alone proves whether they are or not. Satan seeks to counterfeit revival, and he is very active in genuine revivals to sow false seeds and promote false professions. Having witnessed revival, first in his own church in 1735, and then later, on a wider scale in the Great Awakening of 1740, Jonathan Edwards realized the need to provide principles by which we can distinguish the true from the false. He wrote two crucial works on this theme: the first, a short work, was called *The distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God*, and the second, a much fuller and more detailed book, was entitled *The Religious Affections*. The latter, which is regarded as his best work and the most profound book ever written on the subject, is really an enlargement of the first. Edwards proceeds in a straight-forward way to describe what are not signs of true revival and then goes on to show what are the signs which characterize a true work of God.

In brief, Edwards shows that none of the following are true signs of a work of God: great emotions; great effects on the body, such as tears, groanings, loud cries; agonies or prostrations; an appearance of love, joy, or great excitement; much time and zeal spent in duty; great expressions of praise or moving testimonies. Edwards observed that people can exhibit all kinds of emotions and yet fall away after the true revival. So what then are the true signs?

A true sign of a work of God is a delight in the excellency of God, His holy character and His truth. True religious affections are attended by what Edwards calls ‘evangelical humiliation.’ The believer has a sense of his own utter insufficiency and the hateful nature of his own sin, from which he turns, coming to depend on God’s provision of

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righteousness. One of the true signs is a change of nature, the new birth, the creation of a new disposition which has the likeness of Jesus. A vital sign is fruit in Christian practice.

**3. A marvelous increase in the numbers added to the church.**

In the Great Awakening in 1740-42, it is reckoned that 50,000 were added to the churches of New England, and about 300,000 across all thirteen colonies. In what we now call the ‘forgotten revival’ between the years 1790 and 1840, 1,500,000 people were gathered into chapels in England and Wales alone. That constituted one out of every ten people in the country being converted. In the revival in 1859, around 100,000 were added to the churches in Ulster and 50,000 to the churches in Wales. It is estimated that in the 1859 revival in the USA over 2,000,000 were added to the churches.

Revivals are times of God’s personal intervention in great power. True revivals always have a powerful effect on society as a whole in turning back the tide of immorality and vice. True revivals are bad news for breweries and distillers and for the gambling industry. True revivals will bring down the divorce rate and heighten society’s view of the sanctity of life.

**4. Powerful preaching of the gospel.**

The primacy of preaching in revival is seen in the book of Acts. Where is power for preaching to be found? The only way of power suggested in the New Testament is with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven (I Thess. 1:4,5). That is unlikely to be our experience if we misrepresent what the Holy Spirit has inspired in the Word of God by faulty exegesis or shoddy expository workmanship. The apostles summed up the dual needs of prayer and hard study when they explained the necessity of the appointment of deacons: ‘It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables . . . We will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word’ (Acts 6:2).

It is easy to forget that the power lies in the Word of God. But ‘the Word of God is living and active’ (Heb. 4:12). Paul exhorted Timothy, ‘Preach the Word’ (II Tim. 4:2). This is so basic, yet it seems that many ministers cease to believe that preaching the gospel is ‘the power of God’ (Rom. 1:16). They direct their principal energies to activities of all kinds, to the neglect of study combined with prayerful meditation. The life of piety, combined with evangelistic enterprise and constant work in God’s Word, is vital. It is as we continue fervently in that way that we intercede for and look for revival today.

– Errull Hulse, *Essential Characteristics of Genuine Revival*

J.I. Packer gives a pattern of genuine Revival: *What can you expect when God really comes & brings revival?*

1. God comes down.
2. God’s Word pierces.
3. Man’s sin is seen.
4. Christ’s cross is valued.
5. Change goes deep.
6. Love breaks out.
7. Joy fills hearts.
8. Each church becomes itself—becomes, that is, the people of the divine presence in an experiential, as distinct from merely notional, sense.
9. The lost are found.
10. Satan keeps pace.

**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**

--Martin Luther

A mighty fortress is our God,  
 a bulwark never failing;  
 our helper he, amid the flood  
 of mortal ills prevailing.  
 For still our ancient foe  
 does seek to work us woe;  
 his craft and power are great,  
 and armed with cruel hate,  
 on earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,  
 our striving would be losing,  
 were not the right Man on our side,  
 the Man of God's own choosing.  
 You ask who that may be?  
 Christ Jesus, it is he;  
 Lord Sabaoth his name,  
 from age to age the same;  
 and he must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled,  
 should threaten to undo us,  
 we will not fear, for God has willed  
 his truth to triumph through us.  
 The prince of darkness grim,  
 we tremble not for him;  
 his rage we can endure,  
 for lo! his doom is sure;  
 one little word shall fell him.

4 That Word above all earthly powers  
 no thanks to them abideth;  
 the Spirit and the gifts are ours  
 through him who with us sideth.  
 Let goods and kindred go,  
 this mortal life also;  
 the body they may kill:  
 God's truth abideth still;  
 his kingdom is forever!

**Arise My Soul Arise**

--Charles Wesley

Arise, my soul, arise; shake off thy guilty fears;  
 The bleeding sacrifice in my behalf appears:  
 Before the throne my surety stands,  
 Before the throne my surety stands,  
 My name is written on His hands.

He ever lives above, for me to intercede;  
 His all redeeming love, His precious blood, to plead:  
 His blood atoned for every race,  
 His blood atoned for every race,  
 And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

Five bleeding wounds He bears; received on Calvary;  
 They pour effectual prayers; they strongly plead for  
 me:  
 “Forgive him, O forgive,” they cry,  
 “Forgive him, O forgive,” they cry,  
 “Nor let that ransomed sinner die!”

The Father hears Him pray, His dear anointed One;  
 He cannot turn away, the presence of His Son;  
 His Spirit answers to the blood,  
 His Spirit answers to the blood,  
 And tells me I am born of God.

My God is reconciled; His pardoning voice I hear;  
 He owns me for His child; I can no longer fear:  
 With confidence I now draw nigh,  
 With confidence I now draw nigh,  
 And “Father, Abba, Father,” cry.