

THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

“REMOVE NOT THE ANCIENT LANDMARK, WHICH THY FATHERS HAVE SET.” PROVERBS 22:28

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TRUE REVIVAL

by J. O. Howard

Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee? Psa 85:6.

As I prepare this article concerning Revival, the church I am blessed to serve is now preparing for her annual summer “revival” meeting held in the third week of July. Most churches in our area have summer meetings set aside at a certain time each year to petition God to send a revival. It has been sort of a joke that apparently, “God can only move in certain weeks of the summer.” For us, it is the third week of July.

All joking aside, it has been the practice of the Lord’s churches in recent history to have protracted meetings in hopes of being revived by the Lord. I have been blessed to be involved in many of these, either in the churches I have pastored, or in preaching these meetings for other churches. Sometimes these meetings are a week, other times less.

In regard to revival, the Psalmist asked a great question, “Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?” I think most of those reading this article would agree that it is God’s desire to see His people revived. We don’t have to look very far in scripture to find the Lord’s heart and mind concerning His people. A few examples will suffice. The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Saints at Rome said, “And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.” Rom 13:11-14. What did our Lord say concerning the church of Laodicea? “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou

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PRICKS OF THE SPIRIT

by T. S. Austin

Acts 9 details the conversion of Saul, a despot of the early Christian church. In an awesome, supernatural exchange that left Saul “trembling and astonished,” Jesus clearly revealed Himself while confronting Saul with the reality of his ongoing struggle with the Holy Spirit. “And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.” Acts 9:5.

Only two Bible translations include the direct quote from Jesus Christ to Saul stating “it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.” Perhaps this can be attributed to differences in translations from the Latin and Greek manuscripts to the English version. But one must ask why the vast majority omit this important statement from our Savior. One seemingly obvious conclusion would point to mankind’s eagerness to absolve himself from the reality of a basic yet essential Biblical tenet: repentance from—and conviction of—sin.

Saul had made it his mission to persecute anyone who professed belief in Jesus Christ. When Jesus confronted Saul on the road to Damascus, He accosted him of his persecution and then specifically addressed the internal struggle between Saul and the Holy Spirit—the proverbial kicking against the pricks.

Clearly, this revelation by Jesus was not in relation to physical obstacles that Saul was having to overcome. There was no tangible, physical opponent pricking, goading, or piercing Saul’s body; there was no one placing obstacles in his way of “haling men and women” to prison and wreaking “havock of the church.” Acts 8:3. In fact, the opposite was true, as he had the blessing of the high priest to “breath out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord” and to “bring them bound unto Jerusalem.” Acts 9:1-2.

Undoubtedly, this phenomenon of “kicking against the pricks” is in reference to an internal struggle between an individual and God and the concurrent

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BAPTIST BELIEFS

by M. A. Brawner

The history of the Lord’s Old Testament people found in the Bible shows periods of time when they drifted into the practice of false religion. God gave clear instructions at the hands of men such as Moses, Joshua, and the prophets so that His people could remain a separate people and serve Him in the truth. God called these His statutes and judgments. The Bible record shows how they left off keeping these statutes and judgments by adopting the practices of the peoples around them. In the end, this always led to them losing power with God and weakening them in the world.

In the history of the Lord’s true New Testament Church, we find them facing a unique period in their existence. After going through 1,260 long years of persecution, they came to a time of guaranteed freedom. The union of Church and State practiced by Catholics and Protestants resulted in the death of millions of Baptists and their forefathers. However, when the constitution of the United States was signed and ratified, they found freedom granted at a level they had never experienced before. The constitution was signed in 1787. Once enough states ratified this document, it was agreed that the government under the U. S. Constitution would begin on March 4, 1789. The Bill of Rights was finally ratified in 1791 granting Baptists throughout the country the privilege of freedom of religion.

Just like God’s Old Testament people, the true New Testament Church soon began to drift into beliefs and practices which would lead them away from the Head of the Church. Brother J. R. Graves took note of the condition of Baptists in both the southern and northern states when he became editor of a newspaper titled *The Baptist* located in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1846, he found that pulpit affiliations, union meetings, receiving the immersions of Protestants, and inviting the ministers of these groups to seats in associations had become the general practice in a number of southern areas. In the North,

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the ministers of Protestant groups were also invited to assist in Baptist ordinations. Needless to say, seeing how God responded to such practices of His Old Testament people, it could only be anticipated what would happen to New Testament Churches who remained entangled with Protestants. So, a number of brethren responded to the situation.

Three men who wrote widely on this topic have recently been researched to discover what beliefs and practices they found that preserved Baptists down through time. These are the historical beliefs and practices held-to by Baptists from the time the Lord established His Church to their present day in the 1800s. These men include Jesse Mercer in Georgia; J.R. Graves in Tennessee; and D.B. Ray in Missouri. The information they discovered and advocated is grouped below by topic.

In 1880, after thirty-four years of declaring these teachings as editor of *The Baptist*, Brother Graves noted marked improvements among Baptists in the South and the North. He said he found only one weekly Baptist paper in the South, out of the sixteen in print, that would approve alien immersion or pulpit affiliation. More than that, he found no association in all of the South that would endorse an alien immersion. The "heavy drift of sentiment" in the West and Northwest was strongly in favor of Baptist Churches doing their own preaching, ordaining, and baptizing. They favored restricting participation in the Lord's Supper to the membership of the Church practicing it.

The teachings are grouped below: JM = Jesse Mercer; JRG = J. R. Graves; DBR = D. B. Ray

Nature of the Kingdom of God:

JM—The Kingdom of God is made up of the true Churches.

JRG—The Kingdom of Christ was established by the Lord Jesus Christ during the days of John the Baptist consisting of all of the Lord's true Baptist Churches.

DBR—The Kingdom was established by the Lord Jesus Christ during His personal ministry. It consists of the sum total of true Baptist Churches during any period of time.

Origin of the Church:

JM—There is only one true Church and the Lord established it during His personal ministry.

DBR—The Origin of the Church occurred during the Lord's ministry before His crucifixion.

DBR—The Baptists, as a church or kingdom, recognize Jesus Christ alone as their founder and head.

Nature of the Church:

JRG—The Church is defined as a company of scripturally immersed believers who have voluntarily entered in a covenant relationship with each other.

JRG—The Church is a local and visible organization.

DBR—A Church (i.e., a true Baptist Church) is an assembly of baptized believers associated together in the doctrine and fellowship of the Gospel.

Baptist Succession:

JM—The Church will continue in an unbroken lineage down to the return of the Lord.

JRG—A succession of true Baptist Churches exists from the Church the Lord organized during the days of John the Baptist to this day.

JRG—The Church is to perpetuate the doctrine of the divine origin and sanctity of the churches of Christ, an unbroken continuity of Christ's Kingdom, "from the days of John the Baptist until now."

DBR—All well-informed Baptists are agreed in the belief that we, as a people, have continued from the time of Christ until the present time resulting in Baptist Succession.

DBR—True Baptist Churches can be traced down through history by the beliefs and practices they held rather than by any particular name explaining the nature of the Baptist Succession.

Status of "Other" Churches:

JM—Churches organized since the Lord organized His are out of gospel order and should not be recognized as true Churches.

JRG—The Church is to protest against all human societies as scriptural churches and remain separate from them lest any construe by the recognition of them that the Church deems them to be equal with the Lord's true Church. It is inconsistent for true Baptist Churches to admit otherwise.

Preaching Ministry and Ordinations:

JM—Only ordinations performed by a true Church are valid while such as are performed by churches which are out of

gospel order cannot be recognized as such.

JM—The ordained membership of a true Church is subject to the Church rather than being in charge of it.

JRG—Preaching of the gospel is an official act or duty of the local church.

JRG—The ministers of religious societies who fail to meet the model of a true Baptist Church need to be barred from the pulpits of Baptist Churches.

JRG—The Church is to preserve the doctrine of a divinely called and scripturally qualified and ordained ministry to proclaim the gospel and administer the ordinances under the direction of the local Church.

The Church is to Consist of a Regenerate Membership:

JRG—The Church is to consist of a regenerate membership and none are to be received as members without confessing personal faith in the Lord.

DBR—The Baptists perpetuate the Bible order of the commandments; they teach repentance, faith, baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

Authority, Government of the Church:

JM—There is no higher authority on the earth than that found in the Church meaning a true Church is subject to no other Church or association of Churches. JM—Churches are independent of each other.

JRG—The Lord only gave authority to His true Baptist Church to carry out the work of the ministry including the administration of the ordinances.

JRG—The Church is to preserve the divine, inalienable, and sole prerogative of the Church to: preach the gospel; select and ordain her officers; and absolutely control her own ordinances.

JRG—The ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ were enjoined on the Church and are to be maintained in number, mode, order, and symbolic meaning until the Lord returns.

DBR—Each true Baptist Church is fully authorized to administer the laws of the

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sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Rev 3:15-17. The church that thought it had so much, in reality, and in the eyes of the Lord really had so little. And so, the same may be said of many of the Lord's churches today. God be the judge.

When we seek the Lord for Revival, we must understand what it is we are seeking, and what is the result of that which we are seeking. There are two points I'd like to emphasize in this article: one, the absolute necessity of the work of God's Spirit in relation to Revival; and two, what are the results of the work of the Lord's Spirit. Sadly, there are those today who confuse revival with emotionalism. And equally as sad, there are those preachers today who have become well equipped to play on the emotions of people and have learned to create quite a stir in the process. This they call revival, but it is NOT. True Revival is a work of the Spirit of God, and to be able to recognize the Work of the Spirit, we are taught to "try the spirits."

In order to recognize Revival, which is the work of the Spirit of God, let's briefly examine 1st John 4:1-7, and in doing so notice some truths mentioned in relation to trying the spirits. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

In the first place, when the Spirit of God is

at work, as opposed to a false spirit, there will be a greater emphasis placed upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice 1st John 4:2-3. Jesus himself said of the Spirit in John 16:13-14, "...for he shall not speak of himself...He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." It is the work of the Spirit of God, to impress upon the hearts and minds of His children His only begotten Son.

In the second place, when the Spirit of God is at work, as opposed to a false spirit, there will be a greater emphasis on being an overcomer. Notice 1st John 4:2-3. Being an overcomer is in relation to the statement, "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." This statement, of course, speaks of the indwelling of God's Spirit, and it is the Spirit of the Lord who enables our sanctification, our circumspect walk, temperance, faithfulness, etc. It is the work of the Spirit to enable us to overcome even at times our own selves, which is probably our greatest hindrance to revival.

In the third place, when the Spirit of God is at work, there will be a greater emphasis upon heavenly things. Notice 1st John 4:5. Those who are of the world speak of the world, and the world hears them. The contrast then is this, those who are of the Lord should speak of heavenly things. Paul said, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Col 3:1-2.

In the fourth place, when the Spirit of God is at work among us, there will be a greater emphasis among God's people; a more desirous and attentive attitude toward the Word of God—Truth. Notice 1st John 4:6. Our Lord said of the Spirit, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." John 16:13.

And lastly, when the Spirit of God is moving among His people, as opposed to a false spirit, there will be a greater love for the brethren, which is to say, a greater love for His church. Notice 1st John 4:7. Revival will bring people together, whereas Satan tries to tear us apart. When the Spirit of the Lord is at work, He will lead us to be reconciled one to another.

The Psalmist asked, "Wilt thou revive us again." We might ask of ourselves, "will we be revived?" There is a great and pressing need in our time for Revival—a true work of God's Spirit among His people. I did not include in this article prerequisites for revival, nor did I feel impressed to discuss obstacles to revival as these topics have quite often been fully discussed and been in front of God's people. The great questions are: do we desire revival? and would we know it if it came? Try the spirits!

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kingdom of Christ in its community, including the discipline of its membership.

DBR—Each true Baptist Church has the authority to conduct the work of God bestowed on them by the Lord Jesus Christ.

DBR—Baptists recognize equal rights or privileges in the execution of the laws of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Scriptural, Valid Baptism:

JM—Only the baptism administered by true Churches who descended through the ages of time and still maintain the gospel order is valid.

JRG—Baptism was entrusted to the true Baptist Church as the method whereby born again people are brought into it.

DBR—The right to administer baptism has been entrusted solely to the Church. The Church is provided with officers who are her agents to administer this ordinance.

DBR—Baptists immerse, or bury with Christ in baptism, only those who profess to be dead to, or freed from, sin.

Scriptural, Valid Observance of the Lord's Supper:

JM —True Churches are to only administer the Lord's Supper to themselves inviting none other to participate with them.

JRG—The Lord gave His true Baptist Church guardianship of the Lord's Supper such that a Church can only administer it to its own membership.

DBR—Baptists observe the Lord's Supper at His table in His kingdom.

The Standard for Belief and Practice:

JRG—The New Testament, and that alone, is the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice.

DBR—The Baptists regard the Bible alone as their rule of faith and practice.

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"pricking" of the heart by the Holy Spirit. The Biblical definition would connote a sting or sharp pain filled with remorse. Contrary to the wishes of unbelievers and many well-intentioned but unconverted "do-gooders," God's indisputable work through His Holy Spirit does in fact cause troubling and unsettling feelings to occur in the soul of an individual. Saul's response, well in line with basic human nature, was to try and resist the uncomfortable prods and pricks and drawing power of the Holy Spirit. Saul was a highly-educated and staunch advocate of the laws and teachings of his Jewish upbringing. Like his contemporaries in the Sanhedrin and upper echelons of religious sects, he was an adherent to religious legalism, attempting to earn his righteous standing before God through the strict following of Mosaic laws and customs. Lending credence to an internal spiritual uneasiness, much less one caused by the influence of the witness of disciples of an accused heretic, would have certainly been met with a fight.

Those who are contrary to the essential role of the Holy Spirit in the conviction and salvation of sinners have persisted throughout church history and are ever-present still today. Analyzing the criticism and attempted debunking of the vitality of the Holy Spirit, particularly the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, is not a matter of debate but of simply quoting the thought leaders of these viewpoints. During the period of great spiritual revival in the first half of the 19th century known as the Second Great Awakening, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, forerunners of the modern-day churches of Christ denomination, accused Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian clergy (at the time, all proponents of the Holy Spirit's integral role in the work of salvation) of "not teaching the Bible" and that "they mostly appealed to people's emotions." The Campbells further criticized these revivals because they "stressed that a fresh divine work was essential to each person's salvation" and that "the Holy Spirit must do an immediate miraculous work before a depraved sinner can believe." (As a young man, Alexander Campbell himself "experienced the seeking, the despair, and sudden assurance of salvation," but "later abandoned much of his early religious heritage.") In addition to attempting to

debunk the Spirit's direct interaction with an individual during salvation, Campbell also questioned the authenticity of the ministerial call as a work of the Holy Spirit. (All quotes from this paragraph reference Robert Richardson's *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* and/or Lee Synder's *The Spirit and the Ministry, According to Alexander Campbell*.)

Campbell and his ilk seem to assert that the prevalence of the Holy Spirit in salvation is not essential because individuals can choose in and of themselves to obey the directives of the Bible. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Pro 16:25. (Also see Romans 8.) In contrast to this troubling viewpoint, the Holy Scriptures clearly show the undeniable and essential work of God through His Holy Spirit to draw, direct, and guide mankind into the ways of righteousness. At Pentecost, Peter preached not to pagan Gentiles, but to seemingly "obedient" Jews. After expounding upon the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and plainly asserting the Davidic lineage of Jesus, Peter's message laid bare the guilt of unbelief of these "obedient" Jews in crucifying the Lord and Christ. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:37. Peter had already made it clear "that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Acts 2:31. They were further instructed to repent and believe in Jesus Christ and follow Him in baptism. Peter proclaimed the true Gospel, just like Philip did to the Ethiopian eunuch, and the Holy Spirit did His exclusive work of drawing, "pricking," convicting, and witnessing to the miracle of salvation.

Unbelievers do not always react receptively to the pricks of the Holy Spirit. When we consider the response of his adversaries, Stephen's message just before his execution was clearly accompanied by the Holy Spirit. "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." Acts 7:54. This was in response to Stephen calling out the hypocrisy of their strict adherence to the Mosaic law that blinded them to the salvation that could never be obtained through obedience to the law but rather through repentant faith in Jesus Christ. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the

Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." Acts 7:51.

Let us ever serve as preservers of the true Word of God and Its foundational doctrines. The heartfelt work of the Holy Spirit cannot be replaced by "a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

SPREADING THE GOSPEL

by H. B. Little

The Lord has left to His churches the awesome responsibility of spreading the gospel. He commanded us to "teach [disciple] all nations", Mat 28:19, and to "preach the gospel to every creature [inhabitant of the creation]," Mark 16:15. In the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, we see the efforts of the Savior and His churches in spreading the gospel.

After Christ's resurrection, the Jerusalem Church spread the gospel by holding public meetings. In this way, our churches today spread the gospel during our weekly services and revival meetings. While this is an effective way to share the gospel, it is not the only way to do so.

Our churches ought to preach the gospel beyond the walls of our meeting houses. We are to be witnesses "unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8. The New Testament churches were very much missionary minded. Philip the evangelist went from the Jerusalem Church to neighboring cities preaching the gospel. Paul, Barnabas, and Silas went from Antioch Church into other regions preaching the gospel wherever they could. The Lord blessed them in their efforts. He blessed our forefather's tent, brush arbor, and schoolhouse meetings. And He would bless us in our efforts to preach beyond our regular assemblies.

As individual church members, we can do our part to spread the gospel. In John 4, the Lord revealed Himself as Messiah to a Samaritan woman at a well where she had come to draw water. This woman's religion would have hindered her from attending the places where the gospel was being preached, so the Lord shared the truth with her where she was. We ought to follow this example and witness to those we encounter "outside of church" in addition to our inviting them to our weekly services and revivals.

Let us renew our efforts to spread the gospel. Let us go "out into the highways", Mat 22:10, preaching Christ where He is "not named." Rom 15:20.