

“Spiritual Revival”
(Genesis 4:26)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation. Last week, we saw the beginning of the work of redemption at the Fall of man.

1. When Adam and Eve sinned against God by eating the forbidden fruit, the Lord did not destroy them. Why? It was because the Son of God immediately took up the work the Father called Him to.
 - a. He stood before His Father – He stood in the gap.
 - b. He took the role of Mediator and began to plead His merits before the offended majesty of God.
 - c. And the Lord listened; He didn’t destroy Adam and Eve or the world.
2. Instead of destroying Adam and Eve, He saved them by His grace, through Christ’s mediation.
 - a. The Son of God took up His prophetic role and prophesied to them about His coming: the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent – Christ would come into the world and destroy the works of the devil by destroying him and by repairing the damage done to man and the world.
 - b. He took up His priestly role and instituted the first sacrifice: He killed some of the animals and clothed Adam and Eve – this was a picture of the atonement Christ would offer to cleanse man and cover his sin.
 - c. And He took up the role of King: He began to subdue His enemies by subduing Adam and Eve to Himself – they were the first who willingly submitted to Christ because He overcame their hearts by His grace – and by subduing and restraining the serpent, by placing him under a curse.

B. Preview.

1. This morning, we’re going to see another way the Lord advanced this work: through revival.
 - a. As time went on, the kingdom of Satan continued to grow.
 - (i) Cain sinned by killing his brother Abel, and as a result was cast away from the church, the kingdom or city of God.
 - (ii) He settled in the east, began having children, and built a city.
 - (iii) And as his descendants continued to multiply, so did their ungodliness (as we’ll see in the coming weeks).
 - b. But God’s kingdom continued to grow as well.
 - (i) Adam and Eve had more children, and their family continued to grow.
 - (ii) The Lord gave them Seth; then to Seth, a son by the name of Enosh.
 - (iii) It was at this time, the Lord decided to do something to build up and to strengthen His kingdom – something He would do in future years as well – He sent revival.

2. This is what we'll consider, as we look at two things:
 - a. First, that this was, in fact, a time of revival.
 - b. Second, why the Lord sent revival.

II. Sermon.

- A. First, let's consider that the next thing God did to promote His work of redemption was to pour out His Spirit in the days of Enosh. In Genesis 4:26, we read, "Then men began to call on upon the name of the Lord."
 1. It's not immediately clear what Moses meant here.
 - a. Some believe this is when men first began to pray and seek the Lord.
 - (i) But it can't mean this since men already knew prayer was a part of worship – even nature teaches us that since God exists, we are to come to Him both to worship and to ask for the things we need.
 - (ii) Certainly Adam and Eve, who regularly prayed in the Garden as they walked with God – remember, prayer is speaking to God in worship and by way of asking Him for things – must have continued to pray – since they were redeemed – and taught their children to pray.
 - (iii) Moses can't be telling us that no one was praying for over 200 years.
 - b. Neither are we to see this as the time when men began meeting together for worship.
 - (i) After the Fall, we see Cain and Abel bringing their sacrifices to God at the end of the week, or on the seventh day, as God had instituted and as Adam and Eve had taught them.
 - (ii) As their family continued to grow – and remember, Adam and Eve and all their descendents, excepting Abel, would still be alive at that time – they would have continued to worship the Lord together.
 2. He must mean that this is when the Lord began to pour out of His Spirit in an unusual way.
 - a. The effect of such an outpouring is always the same: He gives men a greater desire to assemble publicly to worship the Lord; He also gives them a greater earnestness in seeking Him, especially in prayer.
 - (i) After the Lord stopped Paul on the road to Damascus and converted him, the next thing we see him do is pray (Acts 9:11).
 - (ii) The early church was also marked by a spirit of prayer both before the Spirit was poured out (as the disciples met in the upper room for prayer) and afterwards. Both were brought about by the Spirit's work: He gives the desire to pray and He comes in answer to that prayer.
 - (iii) It was foretold in the book of Zechariah, that there would be a great outpouring of God's Spirit in the latter days, and when He was poured out, He would come as a Spirit of supplication, "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication" (12:10), and in Zephaniah 3:9, "For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him shoulder to shoulder."

- b. When we read here that man began to call upon the name of the Lord, what Moses means is that this was the first time the Lord poured out His Spirit to this degree.
 - (i) The Spirit was already present as we see from the fact that there were converted men.
 - (ii) But He had not come with as great power until now.

B. Second, let's consider why the Lord sent this revival.

- 1. In a word, He did this to advance His kingdom.
 - a. Edwards believed that from the Fall to his day – and by extension, even to today – the work of redemption has been carried on mainly through these outpourings of the Spirit, through revival.
 - (i) There is, of course, the ordinary constant work of the Spirit through the means Christ has appointed for the salvation of men: the Word, prayer, worship, sacraments (after one has come to believe), and so forth.
 - (ii) But there are also these extraordinary seasons when God works powerfully causing His work to move forward much more quickly – we'll see more of this as we progress through Scripture,.
 - (iii) This outpouring of God's Spirit in the days of Enosh was the first of these revivals. Though the Spirit was already applying the work of Christ to the hearts of some, He was now bringing in an even larger harvest to add to His church.
 - (iv) Matthew Henry suggests that one of the means the Lord may have used to bring this about was the very wicked example from the seed of the serpent, the kingdom of Satan. Sometimes the Lord provokes His people to seek Him through the very sinful examples we have in the world (as we consider the upcoming election and the issues at stake, how can we keep from praying for revival).
 - b. And again, why does God send revival?
 - (i) The answer to this question is the same as His purpose in the work of redemption, since they are the same.
 - (ii) Edwards writes, "When God manifests himself with such glorious power, in a work of this nature, he appears especially determined to put honour upon his Son, and to fulfil his oath that he has sworn to him, that he would make every knee to bow . . . to him. God hath had it much on his heart, from all eternity, to glorify his dear and only-begotten son; and there are some special seasons that he appoints to that end, wherein he comes forth with omnipotent power to fulfill his promise . . . to him. Now these are times of remarkable pouring out of his Spirit, to advance his kingdom; such is a day of his power . . ." (*Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival*).
 - (iii) He further writes, "Such a work is, in its nature and kind, the most glorious of any work of God whatsoever. It is the work of redemption (the great[est] of all the other works of God, and of which the work of creation was but a shadow) . . . it is the work of the new creation, which is infinitely more glorious than the old. I am bold to say, that the work of God in the conversion of one soul . . . is a more glorious work of God than the creation of the whole material universe . . ."
 - (iv) Revival promotes God's work to glorify His Son, by converting souls and striking terrible blows against the enemy's kingdom. Perhaps an apt analogy

would be that the ordinary operation of God's Spirit is like gunfire against the enemy, but revival is like using the heavy artillery.

(v) It was now a time to advance Christ's kingdom.

2. Application: What can we learn from this passage?

- a. First, revival is something sovereignly ordained by God.
 - (i) It's not something we can make happen – as Finney believed.
 - (ii) It's not something we can force God to send.
 - (iii) God will send revival when and where He wills.
- b. But on the other hand, it is something God is pleased to send in His time.
 - (i) It advances His cause in every way: by subduing Christ's enemies, gathering in His sheep and advancing His glory.
 - (ii) It's something the Lord tells us we ought to pray for:
 - (a) In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught us to pray that God's name would be revered, and that His kingdom would come, His will would be done, on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:9-10), which, if you will recall, is not so much a petition that His secret plan would be fulfilled, as it is a prayer that all men everywhere would fear, submit to, and obey Him, as the saints and angels do in heaven.
 - (b) In other words, the Lord is teaching us to pray for the advancement of the work of redemption.
 - (c) The greatest way He does this is through revival.
- c. Finally we need to understand how God's sovereignty and our responsibility meet together in revival.
 - (i) We can't force God to bring a revival, but we can diligently ask Him to send one, as we are commanded.
 - (ii) And when we ask, we're not running a fool's errand by casting pebbles against an ironclad will that can't be moved.
 - (a) God has ordained our prayers as a part of the means of accomplishing His will.
 - (b) This means He will be moved by them, because this too is part of His plan.
 - (c) The Lord tends to bring revival during times when things get particularly dark, so that when He acts, His glory will shine all the brighter.
 - (d) Now is such a time. Things are very dark – in just about every way.
 - (e) Each election brings less worthy candidates.
 - (f) Each election brings items on the ballot we thought we might never see.
 - (g) We need revival, and for God to send one, we need to pray.
 - (h) Don't wait for a special movement of the Spirit or an encouraging or convicting message from the pulpit to begin earnestly seeking God; pray because that's what your Lord commands you to do. Perhaps in His mercy, He'll send revival, as He did in the days of Enosh.
 - (i) May the Lord grant that He would in His mercy. Amen.