

# **Revival and Reformation**

## **Reformation: The Outgrowth of Revival**

Lesson #9 for August 31, 2013

Scriptures: 2 Chronicles 20:17-20; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Revelation 2:1-6; Romans 1:16-17; Revelation 14:6-7,12.

1. What is supposed to be the result of revival? What signs are supposed to appear in the life of a revived Christian? A true revival will lead to a reformation. And a reformation implies a change in our thought patterns, habits, even lifestyle. Read 2 Peter 3:17-18. What does it mean to "grow in grace"? How do we give the Holy Spirit permission to change our lives so we are transformed? Is that genuine self-control?
2. Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-25. Compare Deuteronomy 20:1-4. Jehoshaphat was one of the few good kings from the southern kingdom of Judah. He ruled from approximately 872-848 B.C. He was a coregent with his father Asa during his early years and coregent with his son Jehoram in his final years. What did the Jewish nation learn from this encounter with their attackers?
3. After making an unwise alliance with King Ahab in the northern kingdom of Israel—whose reign occurred at almost the same time as Jehoshaphat's—he returned home and, once again, began religious reforms. By trusting in the Lord, he was able to lead his people out to face a much larger army of Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites in which Jehoshaphat and his people did not even have to fight; they simply watched while their enemies destroyed each other. Jehoshaphat is an excellent example of someone who turned immediately to God for help when faced with a serious problem. Why wouldn't every king want to win battles as Jehoshaphat did?
4. Notice these words about that experience from Ellen White.

God was the strength of Judah in this crisis, and He is the strength of His people today. We are not to trust in princes, or to set men in the place of God. We are to remember that human beings are fallible and erring, and that He who has all power is our strong tower of defense. In every emergency we are to feel that the battle is His. His resources are limitless, and apparent impossibilities will make the victory all the greater.

"Save us, O God of our salvation,

And gather us together,

And deliver us from the heathen,

That we may give thanks to Thy holy name,

And glory in Thy praise." 1 Chronicles 16:35.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 202.4; *Conflict and Courage* 217.5.

5. In this time of crisis, Jehoshaphat led the people of Israel in fasting, prayer, and trusting obedience to God. How might the principles and lessons of that experience be applied to us in our day? How could we do this in our day? Could we stop a hurricane?
6. After receiving the call of God to come over to Macedonia, (Acts 16:9) Paul traveled through Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens, and finally arrived at Corinth. Paul spent one and one-half years in the wicked city of Corinth, raising up a fairly large church. Then, he left to return to his home church of Antioch. Some time later, he returned to his work in Asia Minor and spent three years in Ephesus. While there, he received word that things were not going well in Corinth. Apparently, he wrote a short letter to them; that letter is mentioned in 1

Corinthians 5:9. When that did not seem to have the desired effect, he wrote a longer letter which we call 1 Corinthians. Then, Paul received word that things were still not going well in Corinth, and he decided to visit there. He probably traveled by boat a few days from Ephesus across to Corinth. (2 Corinthians 12:14; 13:1) Many in Corinth treated Paul with contempt and ignored his advice. The results were certainly not what Paul had hoped for. Read 2 Corinthians 2:1-4. So, Paul returned to Ephesus; after a lot of thought and prayer, he wrote a very strong letter to them which is probably the material found in 2 Corinthians 10-13. That very strong “Sinai” letter apparently had its desired effect, and he was able to rejoice with them because of the reformation that had resulted. (2 Corinthians 7:8-16)

7. Since the Corinthians had written letters and actually sent messengers to Paul, he felt authorized under the Holy Spirit’s guidance to recommend a number of things to them. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 9:24-27; and 15:1-2,27-28. When Paul again finally reached Corinth after writing his fourth letter to them—2 Corinthians 1-9, probably written from Philippi—he spent about three months there, writing Galatians and Romans.
8. Do we need a “Sinai” type of letter from a prophet in order to reform our ways? Why do you think that “Sinai” letter worked when 1 Corinthians did not? Which do we need today?
9. Read Revelation 2:1-6. The church at Ephesus began under the strong leadership of Priscilla and Aquila, and later, Apollos. Paul himself spent three years there. Later still, John the disciple and apostle apparently spent a number of years there. But unfortunately, the book of Revelation tells us that the early enthusiasm that had proved such a blessing to the people in Ephesus gradually died out; John wrote that they lost their first love. (Revelation 2:4) What do you think actually happened? By comparison, what happened between the early years of the Seventh-day Adventist Church when the leadership was on fire for God and some years later when their preaching was described as being “as dry as the hills of Gilboa”? (*RH*, March 11, 1890 par. 13; *ST*, February 8, 1892 par. 4) Is this a common occurrence among religious revivals and reformations?
10. Martin Luther, the great Protestant reformer, was educated first as a lawyer and then decided to become a monk. While receiving further education from the Roman Catholic Church, he discovered a Bible in the library at the university. He began to study that Latin Bible and realized that the Catholic Church had gone far away from God’s original Christian principles. Luther spent a lot of time reading the book of Romans. Read Romans 1:16-17; 3:21-26; 5:6-11; and 8:1-4. These verses tell us a great deal about the plan of salvation. Do we understand what God is trying to tell us? Do we respond as Martin Luther did?
11. Revelation 1:16-17 talk about God's righteousness being revealed. Since the days of Martin Luther, theologians have spent a great deal of time discussing justification by faith, sanctification by faith, salvation by faith, righteousness by faith, and a great number of other theological ideas described by long English/Latin words. Maybe the most important thing we need to recognize in all of this is that our part is the faith/trust in God; God's part is the justification, sanctification, righteousness, salvation, etc. We do not need to work out the minute details and differences between these processes. Our part is to learn to really trust God.
12. Ellen White said it in these words:

Sinners can be justified by God only when He pardons their sins, remits the punishment they deserve, and treats them as though they were really just and had not sinned, receiving them into divine favor and treating them as if they were righteous. [Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 10:16-18] They are justified alone through the imputed righteousness of Christ. The Father accepts the Son, and through the atoning sacrifice of His Son accepts the sinner.—Ellen

G. White, *Ms 46*, 1891, "Justified by Faith," January 6, 1891; *8MR* 355.3; *Selected Messages*, book 3, page 194; *OHC* 52.3 [content in brackets supplied]

13. What is the relationship between grace and faith? Grace is not some kind of commodity that can be bottled or poured out! Grace is a description of our gracious God. Romans 2:4 tells us that "the goodness/kindness of God" should lead us to repentance. So, getting a clearer picture of God's grace and understanding is a life-transforming experience. Jesus Himself said life eternal comes from knowing God. (John 17:3) So, what is the relationship between "revival and reformation" and getting to know God better?
14. In light of what we have learned from these four stories, are we growing in grace? Are we getting to know God better every day? Satan is doing everything he possibly can to prevent the knowledge of God from spreading throughout the earth. He knows that when people learn the truth about God, his days are numbered. Consider these words from Ellen White about the life of Jesus:

The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary. He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. **The only way in which he could set and keep men [and women] right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. . . .**

**Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to him the praise, and giving to him the credit, of the whole purpose of his own mission on earth,—to set men right through the revelation of God.** In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion, he declared, "I have manifested thy name." "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." [John 17:4,6] **When the object of his mission was attained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men."** *The Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1890, par. 6,9; compare *ST* December 4, 1893 [Bold and content in brackets supplied]

If that was the whole purpose of Jesus' mission, what should be our purpose?

15. Seventh-day Adventists have always stated that our end-time message for the world is found in Revelation 14:6-12. We believe that the pre-advent judgment is taking place as we speak. We also believe that God has commissioned us to call faithful people out of the other communions to join our church. But, despite their Bible studies, the early Adventists were not quite sure what to do with the third angel's message. The time is coming when, as Revelation 13:16-17 tell us, Satan and his side will mastermind things so that we will not be able to buy or sell unless we have the mark of the beast. The third angel's message is God's response to that threat from Satan. Whose side will you be on?
16. But, we will never reach that spot—at least during our lifetimes—unless we can learn to experience how to have true revival and reformation. After quoting the Laodicea message

as found in Revelation 3:15-18, Ellen White said:

God calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. Unless this takes place, those who are lukewarm will continue to grow more abhorrent to the Lord, until He will refuse to acknowledge them as His children.

A revival and a reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. **Revival** signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. **Reformation** signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.—Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, February 25, 1902 par. 7,8; *LDE* 189.3; *1SM* 128.1

17. When we come to know God as it is our privilege to know Him, we will learn to do right because it is right.

**We should choose the right because it is right, and leave consequences with God.** To men of principle, faith, and daring, the world is indebted for its great reforms. By such men the work of reform for this time must be carried forward.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 460.2

18. God is making an individual and personal appeal to each one of us to make a commitment to His side. We need to come to know the truth more thoroughly through Bible study, prayer, and witnessing to prepare us for the time when we will be expected to stand singly and alone before the great men of the earth to give our testimony. (*5T* 707.2)
19. Times are fairly easy for us these days. Things will become much more difficult in the future. What does God need to do to inspire us to get ready now when it is easier to do so than sometime in the future when it will be more difficult? It is only by beholding God, by liking what we see, and then asking the Holy Spirit to come into our lives to transform us so that we can become more like Jesus that we have a chance of being saved. (*GC* 555)
20. Our own attempts at righteousness are useless. Consider the following words:

What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. When they begin to praise and exalt God all the day long, then by beholding they are becoming changed into the same image. What is regeneration?—It is revealing to man what is his own real nature, that in himself he is worthless. (*Letter* 73, written October 12, 1896, from Adelaide, South Australia, to "Dear Brother and Sister Maxson"; *20MR* 117.2,3; *Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers* (Series A, No. 9, 1897), pages 62.2; *TM* 456.3; *FLB* 111.2)

21. Are we prepared to let the Holy Spirit transform our lives? Are we ready to set aside our selfish aims and goals so we can take on God's plan for our lives?

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