

## MODERN REVIVALS

page1

Pastor Jack Jones

There has been something in the news lately that you may have heard about, it's a religious revival taking place in a Christian seminary in Kentucky by the name of Asbury University. If you haven't heard about it by now you probably will, just get on the Internet and type in Asbury and you'll find all kinds of comments about it.

As I have thought about what's going on there, I think this might be the perfect opportunity for us to talk about the kind of revival and reformation that must and will take place before Jesus comes. However, we should know also that before a true revival comes there will first be a counterfeit. Satan's counterfeits in these last days will come before the real thing; otherwise, the devil couldn't deceive anybody, because once the real thing comes, it's too late for Satan to introduce his counterfeit.

For example, inspiration indicates that Satan is going to impersonate the second coming of Christ, but what good would that do if Christ has already come? So, we are to look for a counterfeit revival before a true revival, and regardless of whether it begins at Asbury or someplace else, it's going to start somewhere, so we should know what the real thing looks like. Does this make sense so far?

Satan is a master at counterfeiting, and his counterfeits very closely resemble the truth, but the only ones who will be deceived by them are those who are willing to be deceived; those who choose to ignore the self-denial and sacrifice demanded by the truth. But here's the good news, it's impossible for him to deceive even one soul who honestly desires, at whatever cost, to know the truth, because in the word of God, we have a chart pointing out every waymark on the heavenward journey, and we don't have to guess at anything.

It's being claimed that this revival at Asbury, which began on February 8 of this year, has been spontaneous, and has been ongoing for several weeks and has spread to other universities. Some say it is, and some say it isn't, but regardless, when one does a little checking around, it becomes evident that it wasn't spontaneous at all, but was planned, at least one week before it started, and friends, you can't plan a true revival; you can't use the Holy Spirit that way, He is to use us.

Several so-called revivals have sprung up at Asbury eight different times in the past, and all eight just happen to have started in February, which is a little odd and seems other than coincidental. And the other thing is, it's been reported from some who have been there and taken part, that some of those leading out in it identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or whatever other title you can think of. Some have just started calling them "the alphabet people", because there seems to be a new identity every other day. However, to be fair, leading educators at Asbury say that that is not the case, and that the school is against the LGBTQ lifestyle and that they have no students who identify as such, but at the same time there are Internet posts from people there on the ground that state otherwise.

But regardless of that, let me just say something about professed Christians identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer, even if they claim to be celibate, as some who attended this revival claim to be. When a person has been gay and then becomes a Christian, they are not to continue to identify as gay, and if they do, something is terribly wrong.

Notice what it says in **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**. The apostle Paul says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators (**that's sex outside of marriage**), nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (**which has to do with pedophiles taking**

**advantage of young boys**), nor abusers of themselves with mankind (**homosexuality**), nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. **(Why? Because they're all labeled as unrighteous. But notice this last sentence)** And such were some of you **(past tense)**: but ye are washed **(or cleansed)**, but ye are sanctified **(made holy)**, but ye are justified **(forgiven)** in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Also think about what Jesus said in **Matthew 16:24**. He said, “If any man will come after me, let him **(do what?)** deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Denying self is to deny a personal identity that is contrary to the list we just read in **1 Corinthians 6**. And so, someone who has been cleansed and forgiven of sin and made holy is not supposed to continue to identify with their past life of unrighteousness, unless in their heart they still prefer unrighteousness to righteousness.

This really isn't hard to understand, because just as there is no such thing as a Christian thief, a Christian idolater, a Christian drunkard, or a Christian adulterer; there is no such thing as a Christian homosexual, or lesbian, or gay person. To the true believer these things are past and washed away, and that person is to walk in newness of life and no longer identify with their former sinful lusts.

Now, one thing we know for certain, with a true revival comes true repentance followed by reformation, because true repentance includes two things, sorrow for sin and a turning away from it, that's the reformation part. But here's the thing, people will not renounce sin unless they know what sin is and what it has cost. Until people turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life.

So, if a true revival is followed by reformation, it will be followed by what? Obedience to the ten commandments, which includes remembering the seventh day Sabbath, to keep it holy. According to **1 John 3:4**, sin is defined as “the violation of the **(ten commandment)** law” and **Romans 3:20** says, “by the law is the knowledge of sin.” So, no obedience to the law, no true revival, it's just that simple.

Now, is it possible that a true revival can begin with students who attend Asbury University? Or should I say, those who are not keeping all ten of the commandments? Because clearly, they don't keep the fourth commandment. Well, you may be surprised to know that, yes, it is possible, because sin is not imputed to those who don't know any better, but as soon as they find out that they are violating even one commandment, and that's the job of those of us who know that obedience to all ten is required, then they become guilty of all, according to **James 2:10**, and that's when true revival and reformation ceases, if indeed the real thing has started.

In **Acts 1:8**, just before Jesus ascended to heaven, He said to His disciples, “You shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me.” It should be obvious that the Holy Ghost is behind every true revival, right? And how can one be Christ's witness and violate the very law that He Himself wrote upon tables of stone, which indicates its immutability?

Have you ever thought about why God wrote the ten commandments on stone? There's a good reason for everything He does. Stone is enduring, is it not? In other words, God meant for His law to be binding for all time, and we are not at liberty to take a jackhammer to the parts we may not like. This world, according to the Bible, is about 6000 years old, but even if it were millions of years old, as evolutionists believe, there would be no noticeable change in the appearance of stone unless it was deliberately marred.

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And just as a side note; there is strong evidence in the Bible that the stone God wrote the ten commandments on was sapphire stone. Sapphire stone is blue in color, and if you read **Ezekiel 1:26** you’ll find that God’s throne is also made of sapphire, which indicates something about His character in connection to His law. It’s interesting also that the children of Israel wore a ribbon of blue around the border of their garments, indicating that they were not to walk contrary to the law or put forth their hands to do something that was contrary to the law.

Notice what it says in **Numbers 15:37-39** “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember **(what?)** all the commandments of the LORD, and do them.”

Why blue? Why not yellow or green or orange or some other color? It seems obvious to me that the fringe of blue was because the law was written upon two blue tables of sapphire stone. I could be wrong, but that seems logical to me.

Also, just before Moses received the ten commandments, in **Exodus 24:10** it says he and a few others with him, went up into the mount and “saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone.” I find it interesting that the foundation of His throne rested upon sapphire stone as well.

Of all the gemstones, there’s only one that is harder and more enduring than sapphire, and that’s diamond. Then why didn’t God write the law on diamond? We don’t know for sure, but I would say that something clear in color, like diamond, wouldn’t be as noticeable and stand out on the fringe of a garment, but blue certainly would.

As already mentioned, everything God does is for a reason, and He wants us to understand that the law, written upon sapphire stone, is for all time; it's meant to be permanent. God having a throne of sapphire, a paved work of sapphire under His feet and a law written on sapphire is telling us something else important; it's telling us that the law is a transcript of His character.

Now let me share two more texts with you that are dealing with this subject and then we'll move on. In **Revelation 4:3** John was in vision, and he saw Christ sitting on His throne, and notice how he describes the scene: "And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."

Here we have a description of Jesus like unto jasper and sardine stones. Jasper can be several different colors, but a sardine stone is blood red in color. Jesus, like jasper, is represented as many different things to the believer; Saviour, Lamb of God, the door, the great shepherd, the light of the world, the great I AM, the vine, the bread of heaven, etc., but the sardine stone is blood red, representing His shed blood for the forgiveness of sin.

Now go to **Revelation 21:19**, and we find there a description of the twelve foundations of the Holy City, and guess what the first foundation is made of? Jasper, which John represents as Jesus Himself, connected to His shed blood, and of course, He's the number one foundation of His church. And so, the first foundation is the most important. And what about the second foundation? It is Sapphire, representing the law of God. So here we have the Lamb of God who sacrificed His life, shedding His blood to save those who have transgressed His law, the foundation of His government in heaven and earth.

In **Malachi 3:6** God says, "I change not", and in **Matthew 5:18** Jesus said, "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Last I checked, heaven and earth have not yet passed, so why would God change His mind about the law, as many Christians believe, and say that it was binding for people who lived during Old Testament times perhaps, but today during New Testament times, Christians are somehow exempt? The truth is, to say that God changed His law when He says He doesn't change, is to say that He either lied or made a mistake, and I don't think any sincere Christian wants to go down that road and expose their ignorance.

And so, bottom line, we are not to think that any part of the law of God has been changed or has been rescinded, and that includes the seventh day Sabbath. The same seventh day Sabbath of creation week is the same that was later written on tables of enduring stone, kept by the Jewish nation, kept by the early Christian church, and according to **Isaiah 66:23**, it's the same that we will keep in the earth made new.

So why do most Christians today honor Sunday as a holy day? It's because the devil has taken a jackhammer to the fourth commandment. Think about it, the Sabbath command is not a suggestion, it's a command, or a requirement, and it's the only one of the ten that seemingly, and I say seemingly, has no moral reason to keep except that God said so, which makes it a test of loyalty, even more so than the other nine.

Satan knows that all you have to do is violate one of the ten in order to be guilty of all, and if you're guilty of all, you forfeit eternal life unless you repent and reform, and that's why I believe the devil has picked on that one command in particular. And because he has picked on that one in particular, that makes it more important than all the others, and besides, you can keep nine of the commandments and worship a doorknob, because the fourth commandment is the only one of the ten that identifies who you're worshipping; the One who made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is.

A little bit ago we read that Jesus said, when we receive the Holy Ghost we will be witnesses unto Him. Therefore, when true revival comes, people will not be satisfied with just worshipping in a church building once or twice a week, but they will be witnesses unto Him by living in obedience to God's law all through the week just like Jesus did. That's what makes us His witnesses. We are to be witnesses to the fact that Jesus kept the law by keeping it ourselves, or by reproducing His character.

In **Acts 7:48** the apostle Paul said, “The Most High doesn’t dwell in temples made with hands,” i.e., church buildings, but rather He lives within the believer and then that believer brings forth fruit to the glory of God as they follow in the footsteps of Jesus and reflect His character, and again, of which the law is a transcript. How is the law a transcript of God’s character? **Romans 7:12** says, “the law is holy, the commandment holy, just, and good.” Are these not the characteristics of the God of heaven? Isn’t He holy? Isn’t He just? Isn’t He good? Yes! The principles contained in the law are a carbon copy of what God is in character, and that’s why I believe God’s throne and the written law are both made of sapphire stone.

Now, let me just say this, because I don’t want anyone to misunderstand what I said about church buildings. Just because God dwells in us doesn’t mean it’s OK to disrespect a building that has been dedicated to the God of heaven, but we need to realize that attending services in a building once or twice a week is not good enough. **1 Corinthians 6:19** says, “Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own.” When we sin, are we not disrespecting our body and by extension disrespecting God when our body is supposed to be His temple?

So, when a true revival takes hold of a people, there will be conviction of sin; conviction that the law has been violated, because according to **John 16:8** that’s the work of the Holy Spirit, and when the Holy Spirit is grieved because of our disobedience, revival, after having started, is effectively stopped in its tracks. When one ignores, or stifles the conviction of sin, that’s when the work of the Spirit upon the life quits advancing, and thus revival and reformation ceases.

In the Bible we’re given a good example of true revival and reformation that came about through the life and ministry of a man who wore camel’s hair clothes, ate raw honey and the fruit of the carob tree. Did a revival brake out as a result of the preaching of John the Baptist? It certainly did! And what did he talk about more than anything else? “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand,” and that those baptized were to “bring forth fruit, meet for repentance,” or do those things that show that they have turned from your sins.

After receiving the gospel, we are to be baptized and rise from the watery grave to walk in newness of life; to be new creatures in Christ Jesus and not fashion ourselves according to our former lusts, but by the faith of the Son of God we are to follow in His steps, to reflect His character, and to purify ourselves even as He is pure. (**1 John 3:3**)

If we have been born again, the things we once hated we now love, and the things we once loved we now hate. Has that been your experience? If not, then something is wrong. That’s why I said that there is no such thing as an LGBTQ+ Christian. True revivals always bring forth deep heart-searching and humility and are characterized by solemn, earnest appeals to sinners to stop sinning and become new creatures, otherwise it’s not a true revival, it can’t be! Obedience to God’s law will always be the result of the working of the Spirit of God. And so, if there is no evidence of genuine repentance that works reformation, then we can know that it’s a false revival.

At Asbury, instead of singing some of the good old hymns that have a real message, there’s a lot of singing praise songs with arms waving and bodies swaying and where the same phrases are repeated over and over again for 30 minutes or more; where speaking in tongues is taking place, but it’s a bunch of gibberish no one understands, and not at all like what happened in **Acts chapter 2** when at Pentecost they spoke in actual languages they hadn’t known before. There are also demons being cast out and physical healing taking place, supposedly, but nothing about repentance because of a broken law, and that’s just the way Satan would have it.

And here’s an important point we should never forget; just as Satan can make people sick and bring on disease, he can also make it appear that it has been removed. So, what looks like divine physical healing is no evidence that God is at work, but could very well be another spirit at work, and more than likely it is when there are other factors going on that don’t add up.

Does Satan have the power to perform miracles? Did the magicians of Egypt perform miracles and duplicated the miracles that God did through Moses, remember that? Also, in **2 Thessalonians 2:9**, speaking of how Satan will work through the antichrist in these last days says, “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” And how about **Matthew 24:24** where Jesus said, “there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

Also, in **Revelation 13:13** where it says that Satan, working through the beast power, will be able to do “great wonders, so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceives them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do.” It says, “which he had power to do.” And so, it’s clear that people will be deceived by the miracles which Satan’s agents have power to do, and not just that which they pretend to do.

And what about what Jesus said in **Matthew 7:21-23**, “Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. **(And God’s will my friends, is to obey His law)** Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have **(What?)** cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you **(it wasn’t Me working through you, but another power)**: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” And what is iniquity? It’s another word for sin, and again, sin is the transgression of the law. So, according to what Jesus said, there will be people in the last days casting out devils while they are at the same time violating the law. And Jesus says of that class, “depart from Me.”

And so, here’s the bottom line; even though someone can work real miracles is no evidence that God is working through them, and we should never forget it, because we already know that these things are prophesied to happen, and they’re going to be so convincing that even “the elect” will have a hard time telling the difference. And who are “the elect?” They’re described in **Revelation 14:12**, “here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

Now, it’s true with all revivals, even false ones, that a widespread interest is awakened, and many profess conversion, which swells the ranks of the churches. But even with a true revival, and certainly with a false one, if the flame dies out because there’s no real change in the life; no repentance and reformation, guess what? It leaves the people in a darkness denser than before, which makes it much more difficult in the future to reach them with the truth should a true revival take place, and thus the reason for a counterfeit before the true. It’s kind of like the little boy who cried wolf too many times until the towns people wouldn’t listen to him anymore, and that’s the devil’s goal with a counterfeit revival.

If a revival simply excites the emotions and gratifies a love for what’s new and startling, or if it’s of a sensational character, or if people just want to be a part of something that’s happening or that’s out of the ordinary, then that kind of spiritual revival, if you can call it that, will only produce a desire for more of the same, and will make the study of the Bible and obedience to what it says unattractive, and thus the plain warnings in God’s word, relating directly to their eternal interests, will go unheeded.

It’s kind of like spending many hours in front of the television every day watching exciting and thrilling programs and then trying to spend a little time with God’s word; it just doesn’t work. When a person does that, television seems much more exciting, and spiritual things dull, and soon they scrap the Bible altogether, or just spend 15 minutes in the morning with their hand on the doorknob thinking they’ve done their spiritual duty for the day. So, we need to be careful that this doesn’t become our experience.

By contrast a true revival will produce a spirit of consecration to God, and those who are truly revived will renounce their pride and love of the world and be willing to deny self and to take up their cross and follow Jesus in obedience, because Jesus said, “if you love me, keep My commandments.” In other words, if we truly love Jesus, we will keep His commandments. And wouldn’t it be wonderful if some at Asbury would take hold of this truth? Perhaps they will, because I heard that there were those there

who were handing out truth filled literature during their meetings that would help them to see what true revival and reformation should produce.

Listen to this quote from **The Great Controversy, page 464**, “Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. **(And who are God’s children? Jesus said they are those that do the will of My Father in heaven, and David said God’s will is to delight to do His law)** At that time **(when a primitive revival comes)** many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord’s second coming. The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; **(of course he does. Now listen)** and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing **(guess what?)** a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God’s special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, **(just like at Asbury)** when the work is that of another spirit. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world.”

So, does Satan want revival? He certainly does, more than anything else, but it will be after his own order of things; the kind that will bring an emotional excitement and a mingling of the true with the false, and by the way, that’s what Babylon is all about, a mixture of truth and error. If the church you attend has a mixture of truth and error, then you ought to know about it, and if it does, then it’s a Babylonian church and you are to come out, now, and not wait for things to get worse, because by then it may be too late. The Bible says, today if you hear God’s voice, harden not your heart.

Satan isn’t stupid! He knows that if people don’t study for themselves, they will be fooled by this Babylonian mixture. But God has given us His word so that we can determine what the truth is, so we don’t have to be deceived.

Listen again to what it says in **The Great Controversy, page 465**, “In the light of God’s word it is not difficult to determine the nature of these movements **(speaking of false revivals)**. Wherever men neglect the testimony of the Bible, turning away from those plain, soul-testing truths which require self-denial and renunciation of the world, there we may be sure that God’s blessing is not bestowed. And by the rule which Christ Himself has given, ‘Ye shall know them by their fruits’, it is evident that these movements are not the work of the Spirit of God. . . The nature and the importance of the law of God have been, to a great extent, lost sight of. **(So true)** A wrong conception of the character, the perpetuity, and the obligation of the divine law has led to errors in relation to conversion and sanctification, and has resulted in lowering the standard of piety in the church. Here is to be found the secret of the lack of the Spirit and power of God in the revivals of our time.”

So, you see dear friends, you just can’t get away from obedience to God’s law. When you think about it, the neglect of keeping the law is the very reason why revival is needed in the first place, and the reason it will come when this neglect is seen and repented of. Remember what David said in **Psalms 119:97**? He said, “How love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day.” And in **Psalms 40:8** he said, “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” What is God’s will? The law of God written in the heart or internalized. The principles of the law on stone is to be written upon the fleshly tables of the heart, and when that happens, obedience becomes a delight.

If in a true revival there is no realization that the law of God has been broken and that there is a need to keep it, then we can know that that revival is false. Simple! If a person doesn’t love the law, then he doesn’t love the gospel, because the law, as well as the gospel, is a mirror reflecting the true character of God. And another thing that a true revival will produce is a fear of God’s justice. Law and justice go hand in hand, and they cannot be separated. Is God’s law good or evil? It’s good, we already read that. If this is so, then justice is good; for the purpose of justice is to enforce the law and penalize those who break it.

If the ten-commandment law has been done away with, or nailed to the cross, as many believe, then there's no such thing as sin any more, because without the law we wouldn't know what sin is. And don't you think that makes the devil happy? In fact, most Christians today wouldn't know how to define sin if you were to ask them. Most would just say it's doing bad things, or immoral things, and yes, that would be true, but who defines what immorality is other than the Creator? No one, and He has done it by giving us the ten-commandment law, or the moral law. And so, without the ten commandments we wouldn't know what immorality is. And how many commandments are there? Ten! It's not the nine commandments, but the ten commandments. And again, guess which one of the ten people forget? It's the one that God said to remember! Isn't that ironic? This is not by accident however, but by design. This has been a purposeful act by the devil's agents that has been going on now for centuries, and the result of this forgetfulness is just what Satan has been hoping for, because it results in eternal destruction for those who choose to forget once they've been enlightened.

It's a fact that God's law is being violated today, not just by the world in general, but by most Christians as well, and it's because they don't think they have to keep it to prepare themselves for Christ's coming. With that kind of false teaching, it's no wonder this world is getting more and more wicked. But at the same time, let's not be confused about the function of the law, because law keeping can't forgive sin, it can only condemn the one who breaks it. Only by faith in the shed blood of Christ can sin be forgiven. So why keep the law? The law, dear friends, is like a mirror that shows us where we're dirty and need cleansing, but it has no power to do the washing. Only the shed blood of Jesus can do that, and once that's done, then we'll be given a heart that is inclined to obey, and that kind of heart makes all the difference in the world.

Notice what God says in **Ezekiel 36:26, 27**, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Willingly!

If you love to do something, it's not hard to do, is it? When you love to do something it's hard not to do it, and that's what God is looking for, a people that love Him and find it a delight to obey the law that is a transcript of His character. Rather than thinking the ten commandment law is a yoke of bondage, when we love God supremely it becomes "the law of liberty," as **James 1:25** says, and in **chapter 2:12** he says we're going to be judged by that same law, and **Revelation 22:14** says, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Is that your goal? Is that what you want more than anything else? I hope so, but I'll tell you right now friends, to enter those gates is going to take a full commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, because no one is going to arrive there by accident.

Never forget this one thing, had it been possible for the law of God to be changed or set aside, then Christ would not have had to die to save man from the penalty of sin. The death of Christ, rather than abolishing the law, proves that it's immutable. And as we close, I want you to think about one last thing; true revival is coming, but before it comes, there's going to be "a great falling away first" as the apostle Paul says in **2 Thessalonians 2:3**, and it's going to culminate in a false revival where there is no repentance for the transgression of God's law.

And so, I hope what we have talked about this morning will be helpful to you in the coming days, because in the very near future, if we are a part of the elect of God, we're going to have to be able to tell the difference between the genuine and the false. And so, may God help us to "study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."