

Chapter 1

SETTING THE STAGE FOR REVIVAL

I can still vividly recall the expanding ball of flames enveloping me. Stunned by the searing blaze fueled by gasoline fumes, I checked to see if I was still in one piece—though my clothing bore burn marks, and much of my hair, eyebrows, and mustache were turned to ashes by the fireball, I was unhurt. I staggered to the other end of the large brush pile to find my friend Paul lying on the ground, similarly singed. Surrounded by the stench of burnt hair, we knelt in the wet grass and gave thanks to God we were still alive.

The night had started wonderfully. Paul and his wife, Deb, friends of ours from church, had invited a few couples to share a meal at their house; the evening was to conclude with a bonfire. Following dinner, Paul, I, and a couple of the other men went out to the field behind their house where a large brush pile waited to be burned. The evening air was dead still, cool, and wet. A light rain had been falling for some time. To give the fire a good start in the wet conditions, we poured gasoline in strategic spots around the 40-foot-wide mound and placed wadded-up newspapers at either end of the pile. Unseen, gas fumes gathered under the drooping canopy of limbs still carrying their leaves, forming an explosive fuel-air mixture. Paul handed me one of two small propane-fueled lighters. Taking

the other, he went to the far end of the mound. Simultaneously, we struck the ignition triggers. The fumes exploded, producing a powerful “whump” that shook the house 75 yards away and ignited the ball of flames that had encompassed us.

Unwittingly, my friend and I had set the stage for this memorable experience. The spark from the lighters had ignited the charged atmosphere that had developed at the brush pile. In the same way, if the right conditions in the spiritual realm exist among believers, the spark of God’s presence will kindle revival in the Church.

Some local churches are experiencing God’s fiery presence. On the whole, however, we cannot deny the need for the illuminating, cleansing warmth of heavenly fire in the Church today. Despite God’s loving faithfulness, the sad, consistent testimony of both Scripture and church history is that *God’s people fall into a lukewarm state—even apostasy—with alarming regularity*. Christians need times of radical recommitment and refreshing. We have a tendency to establish religious traditions that must be challenged and sometimes dismantled. We can harbor pharisaical, prideful attitudes, and many are bound by ungodly strongholds of habit. Worldliness in the form of greed, bitterness, rebellion, and sexual sin are common in the Lord’s house. Who can deny the obvious need for revival?

The flames passing over my friend and me that night made some changes in us—we now have a deeper respect for the combination of fire and gasoline. Beside this new-found wisdom, our appearance was modified. Similarly, heavenly fire passing over our churches will transform God’s people. Actually, the changes will be much deeper and more permanent; for the flames of revival bring wisdom and profound alterations in attitude and behavior.

The blessings of spiritual renewal are much to be desired. Scriptural and historical accounts offer proof that times of revival bring change to the Church, evidenced by heightened spiritual life and power. When revival

fire falls, the Word of God is preached with powerful anointing. Love becomes the watchword. The power and gifts of the Holy Spirit flow like a river, and supernatural healings regularly confirm the Word. Repentance wells up in hearts exposed to the life-giving message of the Gospel and many are converted. When spiritual opposition assails the revived church, it is met with divine intervention, just as God stayed the moon in the Valley of Aijalon for Joshua (see Josh. 10:12), and struck down attacking armies as He did for Asa and Jehoshaphat.

Most Christians do not doubt the need for revival; nor do we question God's promise to renew His people. The question is, how can a needy church enter into that promise? Therein lies a difficulty—many of those in the pulpit have been taught or have come to believe that revival is totally beyond our control. Consequently, most in the pew believe this also. Most view revival as exclusively God's choice. In other words, the Church believes that the Lord pours out times of refreshing in what seems to be a rather haphazard manner without much regard to what is happening in the local church or region. If this is true, it means we can only hope and pray that revival will come our way.

While God is sovereign and certainly acts as He chooses, the thought that God behaves capriciously or with partiality is inconsistent with what we know of His nature and desire. He wants to revive lukewarm, dying, and worldly churches more than these churches desire his reviving fire. God is neither capricious nor inconsistent. He is a God of purpose and plan. He simply waits for His conditions to be met; when they are, He manifests His presence in undeniable power and blessing—what we call revival.

We cannot engineer what the Lord will do; yet, relegating ourselves to pleading and waiting for a move of God is not the sole option. The situation at the brush pile that night illustrates this point. The fireball was unplanned. It was the result of a chance combination of circumstances: the still night, the leaves on the branches, and our unwise decision to use

gasoline to prime the fire. It was an accident. Sometimes we have accidental revival in church. *The right elements come together by chance and there is a spiritual explosion.*

The premise of this book is that instead of simply hoping and praying that God will sprinkle revival in our area or that accidental revival will develop in our churches, we can proactively prepare an explosive spiritual atmosphere, ready to be ignited by the spark of God's presence. When a favorable environment exists, the Lord willingly kindles a flame. A study of the great revivals recorded in God's Word confirms that the Lord's people have a necessary part to play in ushering in times of awakening.

Intentionally pursuing revival is not questioning the sovereignty of God, as some say. It is cooperating with His desire to partner with humankind. I began to recognize this principle some years ago when studying the dedication of Solomon's Temple. Questions gripped me as I read Second Chronicles 7:1, "*Fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house.*" Why did fire fall and glory fill the house? Why did God appear in such a powerful way that day? Was this response due to the perfection of Solomon's prayer? Was it because of the beauty of the building? Solomon prayed admirably, and the Temple was indeed a special building. Even so, I realized as I poured over the preceding chapters that the fire fell that day because Solomon and the people followed a Spirit-led plan that had started years earlier. This could be described as God's people partnering or cooperating with Him by doing what they were supposed to do. As they did so, a situation developed so favorable to the Lord revealing His manifest presence that God did not hold back His glory and fire.

I began finding other scriptural accounts of revival and studied them to see if the basic pattern found in Solomon's revival was evident. I discovered that each of the 12 major revivals in the Old Testament began as God's people cooperated with him by following the same general blueprint. This blueprint—what I call the revival protocol—gives us guidance

for returning to the Lord. This process of returning to God sets the stage for His presence to be made manifest in our midst. “*Return to Me, declares the Lord of hosts, that I may return to you*” (Zech. 1:3). Before examining the revival protocol in detail, it will be helpful to define the terms:

Revival: *Biblical revival is actually a two-stage process.* The first stage of revival is a return of God’s people to Him.¹ This requires a fundamental realignment of believers’ affection for God and obedience to Him, resulting in a positive change in attitudes and actions.

The second stage of revival is a gracious response by the Lord to His returning people. This is often seen as the “revival.” It is characterized by supernatural displays of His presence and/or protection, miraculous encouragement, and copious amounts of grace—all leading to greater unity, worship, and joy. Widespread repentance and conversion among the lost accompany this stage.

Protocol: World leaders and nations recognize protocol whenever dealing with dignitaries, foreign diplomats, and heads of state. Protocol expresses *etiquette* that displays appropriate honor for individuals, their relationships, and any agreements they have reached. Protocol determines the *proper conduct* in these situations. The word *protocol* is also used to describe *standard procedures* for the medical, scientific, and computer fields.

Revival protocol then, *is the etiquette and proper conduct expected by our heavenly Head of State. It is the standard procedure to use when returning to Him.*

Revival protocol consists of 20 elements repeatedly evident in the accounts of major revivals in the Bible. Taken together, they define the etiquette, conduct, and procedure for returning to the Lord and inviting His presence. A consistent, albeit not identical, pattern using these components can be traced in each of the 12 major Old Testament revivals.

The first five components are nonnegotiable. They are present in each of the 12 revivals. All 20 components are important, and each revival has

more than these core five. Even so, they are apparently essential in returning to God:

1. Strong godly leader
2. Shared vision
3. Return to the Word
4. Gathering in unity
5. Obedience to authority
6. Praise/worship
7. United prayer
8. Giving/tithing
9. Covenant
10. Offerings of sacrifice
11. Concern for the temple
12. Confession/repentance
13. Consecration
14. Destruction of idols
15. Prophetic ministry
16. Construction project
17. Fasting
18. Gathering of leaders
19. Teaching ministry
20. Moving forward

Table 1, on pages 24 and 25, shows the components that were present in each of the 12 revivals discussed in this book.

It is encouraging to note that perfection in following the protocol is not necessary for God to respond. Thankfully, we don't have to be faultless to

succeed in cooperating with God. Every strong godly leader in Scripture had a heart aflame for God but also had feet of clay: David struggled with lust; Solomon set up idols for his foreign wives; Joash showed weak character; Hezekiah became prideful. In addition, the people sometimes failed to follow through wholeheartedly. They intermarried with other nations and satanic high places were repeatedly rebuilt. The revival protocol was never applied perfectly in the 12 scriptural examples. However, when it was implemented, even imperfectly, it always led to a gracious response from the Lord.

Just as we can chart the components of a return to the Lord, we can chart the results of that return—stage two revival (See Table 2 on pages 26 and 27). The return of the Lord’s manifest presence and intervention in stage-two revival brought blessings to God’s people and increased their desire to please Him. Fifteen distinct spiritual results can be identified:

1. Miracles/victory
2. Praise/worship
3. Great joy
4. Others come in
5. Peace
6. Ministry set in order
7. Sacrifices offered
8. Giving/tithing
9. Inheritance restored
10. Passover observed
11. Separation from world
12. Idols destroyed
13. Covenant made
14. Healing
15. Opposition

THE POWER OF RETURN

TABLE 1 COMPARISON OF COMPONENTS OF THE REVIVAL PROTOCOL APPLIED IN THE MAJOR OLD TESTAMENT REVIVALS

Components	Stage One Revivals			
	Joshua	Samuel	David	Solomon
1. Strong Godly Leader				
2. Shared Vision	Enter the land	The people return to God	Bring the Ark into the city	Build the Temple
3. The Word of God	X	X	X	X
4. Gathering in Unity	X	X	X	X
5. Obedience to Authority	X	X	X	X
6. Praise/Worship	X	X	X	X
7. United Prayer		X		X
8. Giving/Tithing	X		X	X
9. Covenant	X			X
10. Sacrifices		X	X	X
11. Concern for the Temple			X	X
12. Confession/Repentance	X	X		X
13. Consecration	X	X		X
14. Destruction of Idols		X		
15. Prophetic Ministry		X	X	
16. Building Project				X
17. Fasting		X	X	
18. Gathering of Leaders			X	X
19. Teaching Ministry				
20. Forward Movement	X			
Major Lessons	Gilgal	Prayer power	Do it God's way	Obedience
Problem Areas	Overconfidence	Disobedient sons	Ignorance of Scripture	Built idols

SETTING THE STAGE FOR REVIVAL

TABLE 1 CONTINUED

Stage One Revivals						
Asa	Jehoshaphat	Hezekiah	Joash	Josiah	Zerubbabel	Ezra
All seek God	Cleanse the land of idols	Consecrate temple & workers	Crown the true king	Repair God's House	Rebuild the Temple	Know, teach, live the Word
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X			X	X
X			X	X	X	
X		X	X	X		
		X		X	X	
		X		X	X	X
				X		X
		X		X		
X	X	X		X		
	X	X		X	X	
X		X			X	
	X					X
		X	X			
X	X					X
					X	X
Depend on God	Praise power	Consecration	Power of influence	Find the Book	Prophet power	Confess Repent
Jailed a prophet	Hearts not wholly given	Pride	Weak character	Alliance with Ahab	Discouragement	Intermarriage

**TABLE 2 RESULTS OF APPLYING THE REVIVAL PROTOCOL
IN THE MAJOR OLD TESTAMENT REVIVALS**

Results	Stage Two Revivals				
	Joshua	Samuel	David	Solomon	Asa
1. Opposition	X	X	X	X	X
2. Miracle or Victory	X	X	X	X	X
3. Praise/Worship		X	X	X	X
4. Great joy	X	X	X	X	X
5. More people/converts			X	X	X
6. Peace	X	X	X	X	X
7. Ministry set in order			X	X	
8. Sacrifices offered			X	X	X
9. Giving/Tithing					X
10. Restoration of inheritance		X			X
11. Passover	X				
12. Separation from the world					
13. Destruction of idols					X
14. Covenant					X

Generally speaking, the greatest effectiveness of the protocol was obtained when the largest number of components was put in place over the longest period of time. In brief, the more components present, the greater the results.

Some of the results in stage two revivals, such as praise/worship, giving/tithing, offerings of sacrifice, the destruction of idols, and making of covenant also appear as components in the initial effort to return to God. The difference is that in stage two revivals these results were done

SETTING THE STAGE FOR REVIVAL

TABLE 2 CONTINUED

Stage Two Revivals						
Jehoshaphat	Hezekiah	Joash	Josiah	Zerubbabel	Ezra	Nehemiah
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X			X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X		X		X
X	X	X	X	X	X	
X	X	X				X
	X	X	X	X		X
	X			X		
	X	X	X			X
				X	X	X
	X		X			
				X	X	X
	X					
		X				

in acknowledgement and appreciation of the Lord’s presence and power rather than in preparation.

Opposition is a result that is present in all of the biblical revivals.² We must expect, and be prepared to struggle with, the kingdom of darkness when we return to God. Scripture and experience teach us that criticism will pursue even the greatest revivals. God’s enemies will angrily oppose any move to restore power and life to the Church. Others, who do not fully understand the ways of God, will object to things that happen when

human beings are in the white-hot fire of revival. Valid objections can arise as well; for, revival leaders and their followers make mistakes, as is evidenced in the accounts we will examine. However, when spiritual renewal is based on the scriptural principles of the revival protocol, the genuine nature of what occurs will speak for itself. A church filled with Christians walking in holiness, loving God and people, living transformed lives, not to mention the display of supernatural power and conversion of lost souls will validate the reality of revival.

Concerns about what happens in revival beg the question, “What should revival look like?” While it is easy to say, “We just want what God wants,” having a clear picture of what revival really entails will help us immeasurably as we pursue a move of God. Vision is critically important—“*Where there is no vision, the people perish*” (Prov. 29:18). Here again, a knowledge of the scriptural awakenings can help us. Each leader of the 12 major revivals had a powerful vision he vigorously pursued.

1. Joshua was determined to lead Israel into the Promised Land (see Josh. 1,3-6).
2. Samuel longed to see the people return to God and conquer the Philistines (see 1 Sam. 7).
3. David wanted to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (see 1 Chron. 13,15-16; 2 Sam. 5-6).
4. Solomon obediently received the vision of building the Temple from his father and made it his own (see 2 Chron. 28–2 Chron. 7; 1 Kings 6-8).
5. Asa discovered the power of prayer and wanted all Judah to seek the Lord (see 2 Chron. 14-16; 1 Kings 15:8-24).
6. Jehoshaphat was set on cleansing the land of idols (see 2 Chron. 17-20).

SETTING THE STAGE FOR REVIVAL

7. Hezekiah commanded the priests and Levites to consecrate themselves and the Temple to God (see 2 Chron. 29-31; 2 Kings 18-19).
8. Jehoiada was determined to depose the evil authority of Athaliah and crown the true King (see 2 Chron. 23-24; 2 Kings 11-12).
9. Josiah's vision was that the people would agree to "perform the words of the covenant written in the book" (2 Chron. 34:31-32).
10. Zerubbabel's vision was to rebuild the Temple that had been destroyed (see Ezra 1-6).
11. Ezra set his heart to know, teach, and live the Word of God in Israel (see Ezra 7-10).
12. Nehemiah had a deep burden to rebuild the city wall of Jerusalem (see Neh. 1-13).

When taken together in the light of the New Testament, these individual visions give us a description of what should happen in a present-day revival. They lead us to see revival as a time when the Church enters into the promise of a victorious life (the Joshua vision); Christians experience triumph over the flesh (the Samuel vision); the presence of the Lord is carried into our services by consecrated servants of God (the David vision); the Church is built up in beauty and is a house of prayer (the Solomon and Asa visions); false gods are removed from our hearts as we seek the Lord (the Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah visions); ungodly authority supplanting the place of Jesus in the Church is removed (the Joash/Jehoiada vision); the Bible is rediscovered among God's people (the Josiah vision); the Church is set free from captivity caused by apostasy, and worship is restored (the Zerubbabel vision); God's people set their hearts to know, teach, and live the Word of God (the Ezra vision), and Christian character is rebuilt in

our lives, homes, and churches (the Nehemiah vision). It is important to understand that these individual revival visions are all elements of stage one revival—the return of the Church to God. The other things we crave—the manifest presence of God, various miracles, raising the dead, healing the sick, and the conversion of large numbers of unbelievers—are all elements of stage two revivals.

Recognizing the value of the revival protocol does not minimize the centrality of Jesus Christ and the influence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. All revivals must be led by the Spirit of God and focus on God's Son. Obviously, there can be no revival without Jesus. He is the center of all Scripture. Types of Him can be found in each of the revival accounts. He is the strong and godly leader. He is the magnanimous King and the obedient Son. He is the Word. He is the suckling Lamb offered up by Samuel. He is the house of the Lord. The list goes on and on. In addition, the Holy Spirit is faithful to convict us of our need to return to the Lord and lead us in applying the elements of the revival protocol. After all, a plan found in Scripture must, of necessity, have been birthed by the Holy Spirit.

GOD'S GOT A PLAN!

Knowing that a God-given plan leading to revival exists frees us from unproductive syndromes that can cause frustration. The first one of these frustrating syndromes we might call *running after revival*. This occurs when believers try to “get revival” by traveling far and wide to churches experiencing a move of God. I don't want to discourage people from visiting these places, for great benefits can be gained by being in such a setting. Our primary passion, however, should be preparing ourselves and our context for His supernatural presence, which will surely come as we wholeheartedly apply the principles of the revival protocol.

The second unproductive syndrome is *special speaker scheduling*. This is when we invite speaker after speaker, hoping they will bring a revival with them. Although an anointed individual can trigger a revival, the preparatory work of applying protocol principles must be done.

Understanding the revival protocol also helps us cope with the third frustration-producing syndrome—*incomplete implementation*. This may happen if we diligently practice some protocol components, and still find that revival does not blossom. For example, a church may major in a few of the 20 components, based on the scriptural record. However, if at least the five core components are not in place, there will be no heavenly fire.³

GOD ILLUSTRATED HIS PLAN FOR US

Some may object to using Old Testament passages to illustrate a plan for us today, but this is exactly what Romans 15:4 instructs us to do: “*Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*” The revival protocol does not propose a return to the Old Covenant. Rather, the protocol simply invites us to apply the timeless principles of the Kingdom.

This is not a choice of Old Testament or New Testament, for “*all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness*” (2 Tim. 3:16). The components of the revival protocol are New Testament truths illustrated in the pages of the Old Testament. The experiences of God’s people in times past reveal mistakes we can avoid and effective behavior we can emulate. In First Corinthians 10:11 Paul refers to the events in Israel’s history this way: “*These things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*” Ignoring the scriptural record of how times of spiritual refreshing came in earlier days only hinders us in pursuing new outpourings of God’s grace.

THE ONLY BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS OF REVIVAL

The Old Testament accounts of revival are especially important in light of how God structured the Bible. The Old Testament spans a time period of some 1,400 years. Consequently, we clearly see cycles of falling away and returning to God (e.g., the Book of Judges alone records several such cycles). The New Testament, on the other hand, covers a span of only 60 years (or less) of church history. As a result, the cycle of falling away from God and returning to Him is discussed, but not chronicled. Church history in the last 2,000 years, however, bears abundant witness that the cycles seen in the Old Testament continue in the Church today. Gleaning wisdom from the revival accounts that God gave us in the history of Israel is essential to encouraging and maintaining a revived state in the Church.

Scripture shows us a clear pattern to follow when returning to the Lord, but because spiritual life is about the heart and a relationship with God, we must not view the revival protocol as a *vending-machine* theology: Put in the coins of prayer, vision, unity, etc., and out pops the revival *candy bar*. Nonetheless, let us be intentional in preparing for the presence of the Lord. We must pray and hope for revival, but, in addition, let us do everything Scripture reveals to be effective in returning to the Lord, and thus set the stage for Him to do something wonderful among us.

We will examine how the components of the revival protocol were applied in the scriptural examples of revival. A dramatic narrative based on Scripture introduces each chapter bringing the revival to life, showing us that each move of God happened among real, imperfect, yet spiritually hungry people. The accounts of these revivals cause us to wonder at the displays of God's power and rejoice at the results that followed a return to God.

ENDNOTES

1. While personal revival is necessary, and the revival protocol can be applied individually, this book is primarily concerned with a pattern of *corporate* revival found in Scripture.
2. Chapter 13 deals with opposition and the correct response to it in some detail.
3. Strong godly leader, Shared vision, Return to the Word, Gathering in unity, Obedience to authority.

POINTS TO PONDER

1. Many have argued that the time and place of revivals is totally dependent on God. The idea of a “revival protocol” in which the Church has a critical part to play, flies in the face of such teaching. How do you see it?
2. Stage one revival is a return to God by His people. This return can be described as a combination of up to 20 components (see Table 1). Which 11 components are present in over half of the awakenings?
3. The author mentions that sometimes there is “accidental revival.” What is meant by that, and how does it relate to the idea of intentionally preparing an atmosphere that is ready for a divine spark?
4. When God returned to His people in power there are many wonderful results (see Table 2). Which blessings occur in more than half of the revivals? Which result appeared every time God’s people returned to Him?
5. What light do the great awakenings recorded in the Old Testament shed on what we should envision and desire in modern-day revivals?



Chapter 2

THE JOSHUA REVIVAL FROM WILDERNESS TO PROMISED LAND

JOSHUA AT THE BATTLE OF JERICHO¹

Eleazar slid his hand along the smooth gold sheathing of the pole on his shoulder. He was one of 12 men who moved in unison. They carried the Glory of Israel—the Ark of the Covenant. Eleazar rejoiced in the privilege, knowing the wings of cherubim were over his head. He was always amazed at how the weight of the solid gold angels and gold-clad chest seemed almost more than he could bear when he first lifted it. *Then Spirit-born strength would flood in, thrilling his senses and empowering him for his sacred task.* Surely, the Lord Himself helped the Levites carry the Ark.

The sun, beginning to peek over the horizon, behind him, softly illuminated the walled city that lay to his right. Eleazar scanned the entire plain ahead. As the lead priest on the right pole, he had an excellent view of the long human procession curving far ahead of him around the city.

Several hundred thousand armed men stretched in a wide flow in what was now a well-worn path, circumscribing the Canaanite fortress of Jericho. They knew the path well. They had walked it once a day for six days. Behind Eleazar and his fellow priests strode a rear guard of 30,000. The women and children remained at camp.

This day would differ greatly from the previous six. The preceding days had been preparatory; today would bring triumph. The Israelites had risen well before sunrise. The camp at Gilgal had been a beehive of activity. Eleazar licked his lips. He could still taste breakfast; the wheat bread was quite different from the usual fare of crunchy sweet manna cakes. He missed those cakes, having eaten them since childhood. He had savored the grapes however, the cool tangy juice flooding his taste buds.

Eleazar, now 48, was only 10 years old the last time he tasted a grape. He recalled it was the same day the 12 men returned from scouting the territory ahead. The men had brought back a huge cluster of grapes from the Promised Land. Eleazar had been one of the fortunate ones who had tasted. Ten had proclaimed that conquering the land would be an impossible task. Fear spread like wildfire through the camp as these ten leaders of Israel described the Canaanite inhabitants, some of whom stood over nine feet tall. “We were like grasshoppers before them!” said the Ten. In sharp contrast, Joshua and Caleb argued valiantly that victory could be won with God’s help. Sadly, these two brave men were shouted down by the frustrated, fearful crowd. The children of Israel, thus, lost their chance to enter the Promised Land. The sight

of Moses, angry and heartbroken, was etched in Eleazar's memory. Israel—so close to the Promised Land—had simply struck their tents and headed back into the vast wilderness.

Now, on Jericho's plain, seven priests walked ahead of Eleazar and the others. The priests were blowing large rams' horns that seemed to carve the warm air, making a way for the Ark. Other priests willingly cycled in to keep the shofars sounding continuously. Eleazar's eyes found Joshua, Caleb at his side, their gray hair ruffled by the breeze. They strode confidently ahead of the trumpets. Joshua, the undisputed leader of Israel, carried a javelin as a staff.

The plan God had given to Joshua to take the city seemed outrageous; even so, Eleazar believed it would work. After all, when they crossed the Jordan in flood tide, hadn't the river meekly slowed and then stopped altogether as he and the other priests stepped into the water? God would bring the stronghold of Jericho down, and He would use Israel to do it!

Excitement and anticipation coursed through the huge mass of men like waves flowing over shoals of fear. Today was the day Jericho would fall; those imposing walls would be breached and the city would be conquered! "We must have victory," Eleazar mused. His jaw tightened as he remembered how they had buried his father and the others in dry desert ground when they fell over the long years. He lifted his eyes to the skies as he whispered to

himself, *“I, for one, am not going back to wander and die in the wilderness. God has given us this land!”*

The men walked on into the morning. An hour passed and Eleazar and the other 11 surrendered their positions at the poles. The hourly shifts were taxing. Even with the Lord’s help, the Ark weighed heavily on their shoulders. The thick line of marchers eventually made a complete circle around the city. By noon, the Israelites had circled the city almost three times. They kept a distance from the walls, staying well out of bow range. They could see people on the walls occasionally making gestures and mouthing faintly heard jeers and insults. Other than the shofars sounding in harmony, the huge mass of Israelites marched on in eerie silence. Eleazar’s turn under the golden wings came again. With barely a pause, as his team of 12 resumed their labor, the Ark continued to move forward.

No one attempted to enter or leave the city. Jericho was large, obviously well-supplied and heavily armed. The high stone wall surrounding the city was wide enough in places to support entire houses. It offered no obvious weakness. Eleazar wondered how the wall was going to come down. He saw concern mirrored on the faces of his brethren, but no one grumbled. On they trudged around the city, four times, five. Shadows lengthened. Well into the afternoon they completed the sixth circuit of Jericho. Finally, they were on the seventh time around. Their pace had been measured and stately throughout the day, but now began to pick up speed. Grass had been worn into dust that rose in puffs under their feet. Their eyes often shifted to the grove of palm trees that was the landmark

for their circular progress. Still, no one talked; Joshua had commanded silence. The leading edge of the army of men passed the palms. Eleazar could feel triumphant emotion growing in the ranks as they achieved the seventh circuit. In only minutes the Ark itself would pass the trees. Soon the plan, whatever it was, would unfold. “God will do whatever He has purposed,” the priest thought to himself, “Surely the Lord God will triumph!”

Joshua stepped out of line as he reached the palms. He turned to watch the shofars pass, studying the Ark as it approached. Eleazar straightened as he felt Joshua’s gaze fall on him. The Ark was well past him now, but the procession continued so that the rear guard could complete the last lap. As they did so, the huge procession slowed to a halt. The shofars that had been blown continuously since dawn, suddenly fell silent. Joshua pivoted toward the city, as did the rest, with an audible shuffle of over a million feet. Joshua waited, face lifted toward Heaven. Eleazar saw people filling the ramparts of the city wall, drawn by the silencing of the horns and the now stationary encircling throng.

All eyes were on the distinguished figure with the javelin. Slowly, he turned to point at the seven priests with the rams’ horns. They put them to their lips again and blew a thunderous sustained blast that could be heard across the plain. As those clear, piercing notes faded, Joshua thrust his javelin into the air with both hands raised. Rising to his full height, he commanded in a voice that seemed to carry supernaturally, “*Shout!* For the Lord has given you the city!” Eleazar and the others were ready. As Joshua had

THE POWER OF RETURN

instructed, *they took a deep breath and more than 600,000 men of Israel shouted with all their might* (see Num. 26:51). They had been quiet for seven days. Now they shouted with a great shout! *The sound welled up in a deafening wave pummeling the air.* Ebbing, then strengthening again and again, this shout of faith, obedience, and approaching victory was a palpable force.

At first, nothing seemed to happen, but as the surging waves of sound crescendoed to a climax, Eleazar saw people on the wall begin to run. The actual collapse began near the gate. Huge stones began to tremble. In one grinding motion around the city, mortar suddenly lost its bond. In a crashing, crushing jumble of rocks, the wall fell. The rumble of the collapse began to give way to the sound of screams coming from within the city.

Eleazar noticed that a curiously small portion of the wall, with a house perched stubbornly on top, still stood. While Eleazar and his cohorts remained with the Ark and the rear guard, the army of wilderness-hardened men advanced on the remnants of a city now shrouded by a huge, billowing cloud of dust.

THE SETTING FOR REVIVAL

Some might wonder if the story of Israel crossing the Jordan River, the battle of Jericho, and the subsequent settlement of the Promised Land ought to be included in the revival protocol, but this certainly was a revival situation. In many ways, it is the prototypical revival. The children of Israel came out of Egypt and arrived at the entrance to the Promised Land two

years later. Because of rebellion motivated by a lack of faith, they refused to enter the land. As a result, they spent the next 38 years in the wilderness. Except for those first two years, *the wilderness experience was a lengthy, needless detour filled with pain, regret, and longing for what could have been.* The generation of Israelites preparing to enter Canaan under Joshua's leadership had never shared a Passover. They were not circumcised, nor were they living in, and, enjoying their inheritance.

Their story is an analogy of the Christian experience. The Israelites were liberated from Egypt and Pharaoh's dominion. This represents our deliverance from the world and freedom from Satan. The initial two years in the wilderness was a time of revelation and training. The subsequent decades of wilderness wanderings illustrate the experience of Christians who are in covenant relationship with God, yet because of fear and some degree of rebellion, fail to enter a victorious Christian life.

After the death of that rebellious and fearful Israelite generation, God brought their descendants back to the edge of Canaan. This illustrates the mercy and love of God, for the Promised Land represents the abundant and victorious Christian life we are privileged to enter (or return to, if we need to be revived).

STAGE ONE REVIVAL (GOD'S PEOPLE RETURN TO HIM)

The scriptural accounts of revival always include a key leader. These leaders were catalysts for change. Joshua was one of the best of these **strong godly leaders** (revival protocol component #1).² For 40 years Joshua was privileged to be the protégé of one of the greatest men of all time. Together with Moses, Joshua saw the Lord on Mount Sinai (see Exod. 24:13) and heard God's voice in the tent of meeting (see Exod. 33:11). He demonstrated courage and skill on the battlefield against the Amalekites (see Exod. 17:13) and was a man of proven character. Now it would be Joshua, not Moses, who would take the children of Israel

into the Promised Land. Moses was 120 years old, and a new leader was needed. In addition, Moses could not enter the Promised Land because of the incident at Meribah, where he angrily struck the rock instead of speaking to it, as the Lord had commanded (see Num. 20:11).

There was another reason Moses could not lead Israel into the Promised Land. Moses, as the lawgiver, represents the Law. Even the most diligent adherence to the Law will never lead us into the abundant Christian life. Entrance into all that God has promised us must be by grace through faith. Joshua's name (*Y'shua* in Hebrew) means "the Lord is salvation." We spell this name today J-E-S-U-S. His very name represents grace. Jesus, not Moses, is the one who leads us into our promised inheritance.

By faith, the children of Israel **shared a vision** (Component #2) of leaving the wilderness and possessing the Promised Land. We also need to look forward by faith to see the vision of revival, of living in obedience, righteousness, and victory. The land of Canaan is beautifully and clearly described in terms that will help us cultivate a desire for the spiritual Promised Land:

First, the land was a gift. God told Joshua; "*Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you*" (Josh. 1:3). Notice that although the land was given, it still had to be conquered. They had to "tread upon" it. *Similarly, our title to the victorious life is the gift of God, but possession demands an obedient walk.*

Second, God also revealed to Joshua that the land was large; "*From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory*" (Josh. 1:4). The spiritual Promised Land of revival is expansive.

Third, Deuteronomy 8:7-9 relates that the Lord God was bringing Israel into a pleasant and productive place:

THE JOSHUA REVIVAL

[It is] *a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey.*

God assured them that Canaan would be a place of plenty and thanksgiving:

[It is] *a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you (Deuteronomy 8:9-10).*

Fourth, the Promised Land would also be a place of victory. The Lord said to Joshua, *No man shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life, as I was with Moses so I will be with you* (see Josh. 1:5). In other words, when you enter the land, you are going to have to fight, but with God's help, you will win. Though conflict would abound in the Promised Land, victory was assured. These qualities of the Promised Land illustrate to us that the abundant life is available to us as a gift. It is an extensive and wonderful *land* in which we find all we need in every area of our lives. And while strongholds must be torn down and *giants* must be slain, we know that Jesus is with us in the struggle and the power of God is undergirding us.

The wilderness was supposed to be a temporary experience for the Israelites. Instead, it became a life-long dwelling place for a generation of them. Similarly, *the church may experience a transitional time of wilderness travel to promised blessing but spiritual wilderness is not to be the norm.* Realizing the stark contrast between the wilderness and the Promised Land will help us be determined to abandon the status quo and press forward into revival. Reasons abound for choosing to leave the wilderness and endeavoring to cross the spiritual Jordan:

First, the wilderness was a place of bare survival, of minimal existence. Israel had manna every morning and shoes that never wore out. It was life with God, but it was still a life of frustration. The promised inheritance remained a mystery. Israel did not even enjoy a glimpse of the land filled with milk and honey. Christians *can* survive in the wilderness, but they *do not* experience all that God has promised.

Second, the wilderness was a place of restlessness and insecurity. Israel never knew from one day to the next where they would lay their heads. They wandered about without destination, simply marking time until death overtook them. The wilderness life for a Christian is one of restless insecurity in body, mind, and spirit.

Third, the wilderness was a place of discontent. Murmuring and complaining against God and His chosen leadership was endemic among the people (see Num. 11,12,14,16). What God provided was never enough, nor good enough for that generation. Similarly, Christians living in the spiritual desert are preoccupied with troubles and dissatisfaction and are often found murmuring against God and their leaders.

Fourth, the wilderness was fruitless; it was dry and barren. Israel did not plant nor harvest for 40 years. Similarly, fruitful productive Christians are rarely found in the spiritual wilderness.

Fifth, many in the wilderness wavered in their commitment. It was a place of vacillation. The Israelites could not decide if they really wanted to enter the Promised Land. Moses led Israel out of Egypt; the lingering challenge Moses faced was getting *Egypt out of the Israelites*. Their experience in the desert was like a roller coaster ride. As long as things went well, they followed Moses willingly. When life became difficult, however, they wanted to return to Egypt—this in spite of the fact that Egypt enslaved them and murdered their children. Those living in the wilderness today can become beset by doubts and the desire to return to their old lives.

The children of Israel finally arrived on the east side of the Jordan River and pitched camp at a place called Shittim. The Promised Land was within view, but close was not good enough. Remaining on the wrong side of the Jordan proved dangerous. Balak, king of Moab, hired Balaam to curse the Israelites (see Num. 22:39). Balaam was unable to curse God's people, but he told Balak the secret of defeating them, "*Balaam [taught] Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality*" (Rev. 2:14). The results were disastrous:

While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the Lord was angry against Israel (Numbers 25:1-3).

The cost of this dalliance, so close to the Promised Land, was high. Israel incurred God's wrath. As a result, many who were involved in this spiritual adultery lost their lives; and some leaders of the congregation were executed (Num. 25:1-9).

Numbers 33:49-51 adds important details about Israel's campsite; it actually stretched from a place called Beth-jeshimoth to Abel-shittim (Shittim's full name). The meaning of the names of these places is instructive. *Beth-jeshimoth* means "house of wastes."³ *Abel-shittim* means "mourning of thorns."⁴ After the disastrous delay at this inhospitable place, Israel must have been intent on crossing the Jordan. We also must have a level of dissatisfaction with where we are before we will move forward. *Have you lived among the waste and thorns long enough? Are you ready for the Promised Land?*

God had better things in store for His people than Egypt, the wilderness life, or camping close to, but oh so far from, the "milk and honey" land of Israel. This new generation of Israelites stood on the precipice of

a God-given choice—remaining in nomadic slavery to self until they also died or following Joshua into the Land of Promise. It was the seeming safety of the seen and known, as uncomfortable and dangerous as it might be, versus the risk of faith and change. None of that generation of Israelites had seen the land. They had to trust God’s Word, and the witness of Joshua and Caleb, that what was ahead greatly surpassed Egyptian servitude, the dry wilderness, and their present camp.

God commanded, *“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night. . . . then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success”* (Josh. 1:8). Joshua—and the millions who followed him—got **direction from the Word of God** (Component #3). They applied the Word and thus experienced success. It will be the same for us. Only by regularly hearing the voice of God will we have the courage to do God’s will and overcome the fear of giants.

Israel had changed; it was no longer a ragtag assembly composed of competing factions existing in the wilderness. They now shared a common vision and commitment. God had forged them into a determined, **unified** army (Component #4) that would not be denied the victory. Similarly, *a local church must have a transforming sense of togetherness and purpose to move boldly toward revival.*

Israel **demonstrated obedience to God-ordained human authority** (Component #5) by quickly obeying the commands issued by Joshua. The directions were passed along a chain of command:

Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, “Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, ‘Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you’” (Joshua 1:10-11).

In other words, get yourself together and get ready to go forward. The next command was to the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who had taken their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan River. Joshua commanded them to, “*Cross before your brothers...and help them*” (Josh. 1:14). This imperative was directed to those who already possessed their inheritance. This illustrates that those who walk in victory need to assist others to do the same.

The people accepted Joshua’s leadership and pledged obedience. They wanted an anointed leader and were ready to enforce obedience to that leader among themselves:

All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the Lord your God be with you as He was with Moses. Anyone who rebels against your command and does not obey your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death; only be strong and courageous (Joshua 1:16-18).

Moses had been the recognized leader, and now the mantle of leadership passed to Joshua. We do not see the people grumbling or complaining as they went forward. The Israelites illustrated well the powerful principle of obedience to God-ordained leadership. Too often we sacrifice this important component in the revival protocol to our independent spirit.

*The Israelites were on the verge of entering the Promised Land—a life-changing experience for each of them. They would not return to Egypt, nor would they continue to wander in the wilderness. However, entrance to the land was blocked by the Jordan River in flood stage. They had no idea how they were going to cross it, but they put their trust in Joshua to lead them forward. His direction at this point was, “**Consecrate yourselves** (Component #14), *for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you*” (Josh. 3:5). In the same way there may seem to be an impenetrable barrier*

between us and true revival. The lesson for us is clear. When we have gone as far as we can go and the way is blocked, we must give ourselves completely to Jesus and trust Him to do something wonderful.

Understanding the principle of consecration is very important.⁵ Although it is not specifically mentioned in every revival, it is evident that consecration is part and parcel of every move of God. To consecrate something means to set it apart to God, to no longer use it for something else. The Jewish nation had come to the doorstep of Canaan, but the dust of the wilderness still rested upon their garments. Joshua's command to consecrate themselves meant the Israelites were to give themselves to God. We are also commanded to separate ourselves from the world and give ourselves to God. John, the apostle, said,

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world (1 John 2:15-16).

Consecration symbolizes the end of life lived according to the desires and dictates of the world. It is the beginning of, or recommitment to, life lived according to the desires and dictates of God. Consecration means death to worldly and "wilderness" living.

The people of Israel were at the banks of the *Jordan*, which means "descender." They stayed there for three days, giving us a picture of the grave (Josh. 3:1; Esther 4:16; Matt. 12:40). The Jordan runs below sea level as it approaches the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth. This river illustrates humbling ourselves and dying to the works and attitudes of the flesh, which Paul tells us are: "immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these" (Gal. 5:19-21). All these

things must be jettisoned from our lives and left on the “east bank of the Jordan.”

Joshua said, “*Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you*” (Josh. 3:5). Like the Israelites, we choose to consecrate ourselves—not only because of what the Lord has done, but in anticipation of what He *will do* in our lives. Specifically, we can anticipate that *He will stop the waters of the Jordan and miraculously make a way for us to cross into the Promised Land of abundance and victory.*

If your vision is to succeed spiritually, there comes a time when you must intentionally set out from where you are, determined to become what you want to be (see Josh. 3:1). Those who enter the “Promised Land” of revival are tired of the world’s ways, tired of living in the wilderness among waste and thorns, tired enough to get up and **move forward** (Component #19). Joshua encouraged the wilderness-weary people by reminding them of God’s promise:

By this you shall know that the living God is among you and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite... Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over ahead of you into the Jordan (Joshua 3:10-11).

They took this encouragement of victory to heart and boldly followed the Lord as the Ark of the Covenant showed the way.

STAGE TWO REVIVAL (GOD RETURNS TO HIS PEOPLE)

An amazing miracle occurred (revival protocol *result* #1).⁶ The nation’s spiritual preparation and consecration was an open invitation to the Lord to act. As the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant entered the Jordan River a stupendous miracle took place:

THE POWER OF RETURN

The waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off so the people crossed opposite Jericho (Joshua 3:15-16).

The waters of the Jordan piled up and waited obediently while a nation of at least two and a half million people crossed over into Canaan land.

Note that some brave individuals had to trust Joshua enough to pick up and carry the Ark of the Lord into the flooded river. Some had to be in that lead group. They were Levites and priests—servant leaders. They stood confidently in the river bed while the nation safely walked past them. The need for consecrated “presence bearers” still exists today.

The sons of Israel crossed the Jordan, fully expecting to conquer the land quickly. However, ahead of them lay the intimidating walled city of Jericho, not to mention some giants and the rest of Canaan. God promised His people victory, but they were not ready. As night fell, they pitched their tents on a plain near Jericho, a place that came to be known as Gilgal. There they would erect the Tabernacle and reside for the next 14 years while the land was conquered and apportioned. In Gilgal they would deepen their relationship with God in a transforming way and prepare for victory. Gilgal became crucially important to the Israelites as a center of worship and a base of operations.

We also need a “base camp.” We, too, have been promised spiritual victory but like the Israelites, we need to be transformed and prepared for the coming battles. *Gilgal should be a well-known name and place for Christians*, but regrettably, it is not. We must not run past spiritual Gilgal in our zeal to take down the strongholds ahead of us. If we do, we will see little victory. The Church needs to learn about Gilgal and experience what I call the 12 Rs of Gilgal.

THE TWELVE RS OF GILGAL

1. Gilgal is the place of *Remembrance*.

From the riverbed, a dozen preselected men each carried a stone to their camp. There they stacked these 12 stones as a memorial so that all Israel would remember the miracle-working power of the Lord who brought them into the Promised Land. They needed to remember what God had done. Joshua told the Israelites that stopping the Jordan was just as the Lord “had done to the Red Sea,” and that it was a reminder that “*the hand of the Lord is mighty, so that you may fear the Lord your God forever*” (Josh. 4:24).

We also must remember the miraculous hand of God in our lives. We must remember that God not only saves us and delivers us from slavery to sin, but that He makes a way for us to enter a land flowing with spiritual milk and honey. *This will give us courage to encircle the strongholds and face the giants.*

2. Gilgal is the place of *Renunciation* of the flesh.

The children of Israel had crossed the river, but God commanded circumcision as a symbol of their renunciation of the practices of the worldly kingdom and the rebellious ways of the wilderness (see Josh. 5:2). None of the men born in the wilderness had been circumcised, a requirement for all male descendants of Abraham. Circumcision was more than an initiation ritual or badge of membership. It was the mark of God’s Kingdom—signifying the circumcised man lived under God’s authority and by His rules. Through circumcision, the Israelites rejected the culture of Egypt and chose to live under God’s lordship.

Today, the circumcision required by the Lord is that of the heart, not the body. This spiritual surgery is required for God's people because it marks the inner, rather than the outer, man. The Scriptures reveal that it has always been God's desire to circumcise this inner man.

The Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live (Deuteronomy 30:6).

He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart (Romans 2:28-29).

After circumcision, the Lord's message to Israel through Joshua was, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you" (Josh. 5:9). When those in the Church live in an ungodly manner, they are a reproach to God. When we circumcise our hearts and renounce our fleshly ways and accept God's rule over us, He removes this reproach from us.

Circumcision represents submission of the most intimate part of our lives to the Lord. It means we hold nothing back from the Lord. It says, in effect, "God, cut away my flesh." Some of us need to submit to this spiritual knife; we must let "Doctor Y'shua" operate on us, for this open-heart surgery can only be done by Him. Colossians 2:11 states, "In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ."

The cutting away of self is a painful process and will require a time of healing (see Josh. 5:8). Yet, this surgery must take place before we can go on to win victories. Do not be afraid of the Spirit's knife; it brings freedom. If we are unwilling to renounce the flesh, we carry the reproach of Egypt, and that is spiritually dangerous. Paul talks about those who used to walk with the Lord but now are enemies of the cross of Christ. "[Their] *god is their appetite, and their glory is in their shame, [they] set their minds on earthly things*" (Phil. 3:18-19). These one-time believers apparently had not experienced a deep circumcision of the heart.

When God first commanded circumcision establishing covenant relationship with Abraham (see Gen. 17:1-3), He gave Abraham some significant promises. The Lord said to Abraham, "*You will be a father*" (Gen. 17:4-7). Circumcision does not destroy our ability to produce life. On the contrary, it enables us to be a conduit for true life. He also promised him "*the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession*" (Gen. 17:8). God's gift of the land to Abraham and his descendants was directly associated with circumcision. Circumcision of the heart is still required today to gain our spiritual inheritance.

3. Gilgal is the place of restored *Relationship*.

*"While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal, they observed the **Passover** (Result #10) on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho"* (Josh. 5:10). They had not celebrated Passover since Israel camped at Mount Sinai. In the years that followed, they had wandered pointlessly in the wilderness. The application is clear: we cannot feast on the Lord when our hearts are rebellious or doubting. However, immediately after submitting to spiritual circumcision—the cutting away

of fleshly desires—we experience a renewed relationship and closeness to the Lord.

I love the fact that Israel was camped on the plains of Jericho, under the watchful eyes of their enemies. This is a truth that David immortalized in the 23rd Psalm, “*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies*” (Ps. 23:5). This was also a significant day of the year: the fourteenth day of Nisan. This was the day Noah opened the Ark. It was also the day an angel would roll away the stone from a tomb in Jerusalem.

4. Gilgal is the place of *Reaping*.

On the day after the Passover, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. The manna ceased the next day (see Josh. 5:11-12). Bread from Heaven was great, but Israel had to learn to bring in the harvest. They would learn and be more involved in the process of growing and gathering food. God’s people had been spoon-fed for a generation. Now God was requiring more responsibility from them. For us, it illustrates the Lord’s expectation that when you cross the Jordan you must mature and be able to feed yourself spiritually. It also represents bringing in the spiritual harvest that will be available to us in the Promised Land.

5. Gilgal is the place of *Revelation*.

Joshua met the Captain of the Host at Gilgal (see Josh. 5:13-6:5). After the preparation of circumcision, Passover, and partaking of the produce of the land, Joshua had an amazing experience. He saw a man with a drawn sword. Joshua asked him, “*Are you for us or for our adversaries?*” The warrior replied, “*No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the Lord.*” Joshua bowed and **worshiped** (Result #2) the one with the

drawn sword and said, “*What has my Lord to say to his servant?*” (Josh. 5:13-14). The visitor did two things:

- He declared Gilgal to be holy ground, demanding that Joshua remove his sandals (see Josh. 5:15).
- He revealed a plan of attack on the Canaanite stronghold of Jericho (see Josh. 6:1-5).

We also need to worship the Lord before spiritual battles for strongholds, find ourselves on holy ground, and affirm our allegiance to the Captain of the Host. In addition, we desperately need direction on how to proceed in battle. God often has a unique and creative plan for bringing the strongholds down. *This kind of revelatory experience readies us for the conflicts to come*, giving us confidence and faith that with the Captain of the Host we can overcome whatever might lie ahead.

We also read that “*Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh...* (which are “opposite Gilgal,” see Deut. 11:30) *and the Lord appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land’*” (Gen. 12:6-7). God will reveal Himself and His plan where people move forward at His direction.

Moses commanded that a complete reading of the Pentateuch be done when Joshua and the children of Israel entered the land. You may recall reading about this great event conducted between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal (see Josh. 8:32-34). Consider where these two mountains are located—“*opposite Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh*” (Deut. 11:29-31).

We should also take note that later the school of the prophets was established at Gilgal (see 2 Kings 4:38). Those who would

prophesy for the Lord today can learn much in this spiritual, holy place of revelation.

6. 7. and 8. Gilgal is the place of *Reproof, Reconsecration, and Redirection*.

Achan's thievery at Jericho, which had been dedicated to the Lord as first fruits of the land (see Josh. 7:1), created the situation for the next three *Rs*. Because of sin in the camp, Israel lacked the Lord's support when they attempted to conquer Ai, the next city (see Josh. 7:11-12). In addition, Israel apparently grew overconfident after they defeated Jericho. There is no record of Joshua seeking the Lord for direction about how to proceed. As a result, the assault on Ai failed and they lost 36 men in the process (see Josh. 7:2-5). The defeat was disastrous for morale (see Josh. 7:5). Joshua and the elders entered an overly dramatic time of repentance (see Josh. 7:6-9) to which God responded somewhat surprisingly with a reproof, "Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face?" (Josh. 7:10). In other words, "*Get up and set things right.*" This illustrates that the Church can lament over our defeats, but unless we are ready to remove blatant sin from our midst, we will have a tenuous hold on the Promised Land of victory.

The Lord demanded a fresh consecration and proceeded to tell Joshua how to deal with the Achan situation (see Josh. 7:11-15). The people reconsecrated themselves and the unrepentant offender was removed (see Josh. 7:16-26).

Once this situation was dealt with, God immediately gave fresh direction to Joshua on how to proceed against Ai (see Josh. 8:1-2), which was quickly overcome (see Josh. 8:3-29).

The Achan/Ai experience provides a powerful example of the need to keep any revival holy. A move of God is not for

personal profit. Greed and selfishness can derail, or at least postpone, victory and cause great loss. In addition, there is a warning note here about proceeding without direction. When God stops speaking to us about how to go forward, a red flag should be raised until we seek Him and correct any problem.

9. Gilgal is the place from which Israel *Responded* to attack.

After their victories at Jericho and Ai, the Israelites responded to a plea for help from the Gibeonites. They were under attack because they had made peace with Israel. “*Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him and all the valiant warriors*” (Josh. 10:9). They came upon the enemy army surrounding Gibeon by marching all night from Gilgal. If we are spiritually camped at Gilgal, we are properly prepared to fight spiritual battles. We can march suddenly and effectively on the foe under Jesus’ leadership.

10. Gilgal is the place of *Rest*.

Gilgal was the place to which the children of God repeatedly returned after victory (see Josh. 10:15-43). Here they could enjoy their God-given victories, recuperate, and gain strength. We, too, need to return to holy ground after battle to rejoice and be refreshed.

11. Gilgal is the place of **Receiving a promised inheritance** (Result #10).

Gilgal was where Caleb approached Joshua to claim his long-deferred inheritance. Joshua 14:6-15 tells how the tribe of Judah stood before Joshua in Gilgal at the time for apportionment of the land. The oldest one among them had patiently waited for the inheritance promised to him 45 years before. Caleb, 85 years old but strong and capable, said, “*Now*

then, give me this hill country about which the Lord spoke on that day...’ So Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance”(Josh. 14:12-13). Spiritually, Gilgal is the place where, by faith, we approach our Joshua (Jesus) and receive our promised inheritance. This inheritance could mean a place of ministry, financial blessing, peace, fellowship with Him, or other promise of God.

12. Gilgal is the place of *Renewal*.

- When God’s people suffered defeat at Ai, they came back to Gilgal and received fresh direction from the Lord. Similarly, when our hearts are crushed in spiritual battle, or we experience a dramatic reversal or loss, we can come back to Gilgal and say, God you brought us into this land. What would you have us do?
- Gilgal is where the message and call to revival is nurtured and brought forth. In Judges chapter 2, the children of Israel again needed to return to the Lord. We read that the Angel of the Lord “*came up from Gilgal*” (Judg. 2:1). He spoke two things to the people. First was a comforting word: “*I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you.’*” But He also spoke rebuke:

“[I told you to] make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars. But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done?”... When the angel of the Lord spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept (Judges 2:2-4).

If we are to experience true revival, we must not only hear the comforting Word of the Lord to us, but we must also embrace His rebuke, and

weep over our disobedience. May the “Angel of the Lord” come up from Gilgal and speak to us also.

Four hundred years later, Samuel said to Israel, “*Come and let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there*” (1 Sam. 11:14). He must have been reading the Book of Joshua at the time. It is time for us to go to Gilgal and renew the Kingdom.

Following the time of preparation at Gilgal, **a miraculous victory** ensued (Result #1). The walls of Jericho fell before Israel. This was a crushing defeat for the Canaanites. The most formidable of their walled cities was reduced to rubble and its population was totally destroyed (see Josh. 6:20).

Typical of all revivals, organized aggressive **opposition** (Result #15) arose to counter this great advance by God’s people. Resistance is the response of the enemy’s kingdom to revival and victory in God’s camp:

When all the kings who were beyond the Jordan, in the hill country and in the lowland and on all the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, heard of it (the defeat of Jericho), they gathered themselves together with one accord to fight with Joshua and with Israel (Joshua 9:1-2).

Shrewd and deceitful attempts to subvert and compromise the work also take place as evidenced by the Gibeonite fiasco:

When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, they also acted craftily and set out as envoys, and took worn-out sacks on their donkeys, and wineskins worn-out and torn and mended, and worn-out and patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and had become crumbled. They went

to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us" (Joshua 9:3-6).

We must be prepared for warfare when we return to God and pursue revival. Let not our faith, obedience, and wisdom fail, for God has promised us the land.

REVIVAL THEME

The Joshua revival teaches us we must leave the wilderness and enter the Promised Land. Rather than wander short of the goal or remain encamped at Abel-Shittim God's people decided to cross the Jordan. A strong desire to advance into the destiny promised by the Lord and actually crossing whatever barrier is in the way is critically important if there is to be revival. God stopped the Jordan in flood tide long enough for at least two and a half million people to cross. This initial miracle enabled the Israelites to enter the Promised Land. It must have made them giddy with joy and excitement. We could understand had they rushed forward to try to conquer Jericho at this point. However, we should take note of the time of renewing and deepening their relationship with the Lord at Gilgal before advancing to take down the stronghold that lay before them. *Gilgal is the great secret of the Joshua revival.* This base camp was where preparation took place that enabled the ensuing victories in the Promised Land.

ENDNOTES

1. A narrative based on Joshua 6.
2. Numbering of revival protocol components corresponds to Table 1 on pages 24 and 25.
3. Matthew G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1897).

THE JOSHUA REVIVAL

4. Roswell D. Hitchcock, *Hitchcock's Bible Names Dictionary* (Austin, TX: WORDsearch Corp. 1869).
5. Chapter 8 contains a more extensive discussion of consecration.
6. The numbers used to identify the results of returning to God correspond to Table 2 on pages 26 and 27.

POINTS TO PONDER

1. Contrast the characteristics of “wilderness living” with life in the Promised Land.
2. Israel was finally ready to enter the Promised Land but they faced the Jordan in flood stage, a great barrier to entering the land of Canaan. What sort of barriers might a church face when poised on the border of God’s promised land of victory?
3. The barrier of the Jordan was breached by some brave individuals the author describes as “presence bearers.” What was their key job, and what were the results?
4. The author states that “the great secret of the Joshua revival is Gilgal.” What does he mean by this, and why is this critically important stop on the Israelites’ journey so little known?
5. Of the 12 *Rs* of Gilgal, which 3 would you consider most important?

