

# The Word: The Foundation of Revival



## SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week's Study:** *Ps. 119:50, 74, 116; Heb. 4:12; 11:3; John 5:39; Heb. 4:1, 2; Acts 20:27–32.*

**Memory Text:** “Plead my cause and redeem me; revive me according to Your word” (*Psalms 119:154, NKJV*).

Just as serious Bible study spawned past revival movements, we believe that it will happen again in the last days. The Holy Spirit will move upon a generation of committed Adventist Christians who have discovered His will in His Word and are passionate about proclaiming it to the world.

They will have found grace and strength and hope in His Word; they will have come face-to-face with the matchless charms of Christ in His Word. Thus, God will honor their commitment by pouring out His Holy Spirit in abundance, and the whole world will be lightened with the glory of the three angels' messages. The Holy Spirit will be poured out beyond measure, and the gospel will be carried to the ends of the earth, and Jesus Christ will return (*Matt. 24:14*).

In this week's lesson we will study the role of the Bible in revival and how God's Word can make a life-changing difference in us if we surrender ourselves in faith and obedience to its precepts and truths.

*\*Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, July 20.*

## Revived Through the Word

**Look** up each of the verses below. On the first line write the plea. On the second line write the circumstance that led David to make the plea.

*Ps. 119:25 (Plea)* \_\_\_\_\_

*(Circumstance)* \_\_\_\_\_

*Ps. 119:107 (Plea)* \_\_\_\_\_

*(Circumstance)* \_\_\_\_\_

*Ps. 119:153, 154 (Plea)* \_\_\_\_\_

*(Circumstance)* \_\_\_\_\_

**In** the Psalms, David talks about the blessings of the Word in his own spiritual life. Read the following verses from Psalm 119 and choose a word from each verse that best summarizes the blessings that the psalmist discovered in that Word. *Ps. 119:50, 74, 116, 130, 160, 169, 170.*

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David found courage and strength in God's Word. He discovered hope and divine guidance in God's Word. The Word of God brought light to his darkened mind (*Ps. 119:130*). It nourished his famished heart and quenched his thirsty soul (*Ps. 119:81*). When Saul threatened to kill him, he clung to God's promise of deliverance (*Ps. 34:4*). Plagued with guilt after his adulterous affair with Bathsheba, he clung to God's promise of forgiveness (*Ps. 32:1, 2*). Perplexed regarding the future, he clung to God's promise of guidance (*Ps. 32:8*). David jubilantly exclaimed, "Your word has given me life" (*Ps. 119:50, NKJV*). The foundation of revival is all about finding new life in God's Word.

**How can you learn to draw hope, strength, assurance, and light from the Word of God? That is, how can you have a deeper experience with the Lord through coming to know Him as He is revealed in the Bible?**

## The Word's Creative Power

**Read** Hebrews 4:12. The passage states that God's Word is living, powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing our inmost being. How is God's Word alive? What does that mean?

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**In** what way is God's Word different from the intelligent counsel of any other wise teacher, pastor, or counselor? What do the following texts say about the power of God's Word? *Ps. 33:6, 9; Heb. 11:3; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.*

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There is value in wise human counsel. We have all been helped by the advice of others. The problem is that human counsel does not carry with it the power to accomplish the kind of change that God's Word can. God's Word is a living, dynamic, powerful agent of change. The same power that was in God's spoken word at Creation is in the Written Word of God. Accepting God's commands and promises by faith, we receive the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish that which Christ commands.

"The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature, and re-creates the soul in the image of God."—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 126.

A casual reading of God's Word very seldom produces spiritual revival. Studying the Bible to prove one's own position, or to convince someone else of his or her mistakes, does very little good for our own spiritual life. Change comes when we prayerfully read God's Word, asking the Holy Spirit to give us the power to be more like Jesus. Real transformation takes place when we ask the God of creation to re-create us in His image. Change comes when Jesus' teachings in Scripture become part of our lives, and we live "by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (*Matt. 4:4*).

**In what ways has the power of God's Word changed your life?  
In which areas do you need to see more of that change?**

## Jesus and the Word

**How** are the functions of the Word of God and the Spirit of God similar? Read *John 5:39; 16:14, 15*.

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The Word of God bears witness of Jesus. The Holy Spirit also bears witness of Jesus. The Spirit leads us to a deeper experience with Jesus through His Word. The purpose of the Holy Spirit in revival is not primarily to manifest Himself through supernatural signs and wonders but to exalt Jesus through His Word. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not about our power to accomplish great miracles. It is about God's power to transform our lives—and that's what revival and reformation are all about.

The Word of God provides the foundation or the basis for all genuine revival. Our experience flows out of an understanding of God's Word. Our praise and worship spring from minds saturated with the Word. A transformed life is the greatest testimony of true revival.

Positive feelings of praise may accompany revival, but they are never the basis for revival. Any so-called "revival" based solely on external feelings or experience is shallow at best, deceptive at worst. It is an illusion of spirituality, not genuine godliness. When revival is rooted in the Word of God, it is an experience that lasts and makes a difference in our lives and in the lives of the people around us.

The story of Jesus' appearance to the two disciples on the Emmaus road reveals the role that the Bible plays in initiating true revival. These followers of Christ were filled with confusion. Gradually, however, He "expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (*Luke 24:27, NKJV*). He repeated the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah. Jesus could have worked a miracle to prove His identity or showed the scars in His hands. He did not. Instead, He gave them a Bible study.

Notice their response as they reflected on what had happened that day. "They said to one another, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?' " (*Luke 24:32, NKJV*).

What an example of genuine revival!

**Why can't we trust our feelings? How can our feelings deceive us? What role do feelings have in our walk with the Lord, and what role do they not have?**

## Revival, Faith, and the Word

Speaking of the time just before His return, Jesus said, “‘When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?’” (*Luke 18:8, NKJV*). Evidently, faith will be in short supply in the last days.

How might we define biblical faith? Is faith believing that God will give us anything we want? Is faith centered in our desires? Is faith about asking God for what we want and believing we will receive it if we only believe hard enough?

We should know the answers to those rhetorical questions, shouldn't we?

Faith, true faith, is always focused on God's will, not on our wishes. It is trusting in God, believing in His promises, and acting on His Word. Our faith grows as we listen to God's Word and put it into practice (*Rom. 10:17; James 2:17, 18*). Opening our minds to the teachings of God's Word builds faith; and doing what God says—even if it is contrary to our personal desires—prepares us to receive the fullness of the Spirit's power.

**Why** do some people receive little benefit from reading the Bible?  
*Heb. 4:1, 2.*

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Our spiritual experience is revived when we accept and claim God's Word by faith. There is little benefit derived from hastily reading the Bible out of a sense of obligation or duty. We are changed as we internalize what we read, and allow the teachings of the Bible to mold our thoughts and our lives.

**Compare** the faith of the Roman centurion, the paralytic at Bethesda, and the disciples on the stormy Sea of Galilee (*Matt. 8:8–10, John 5:6–9, Matt. 14:29–33*). What can we learn from each account?

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Faith does not grow merely by reading or listening to God's Word. It comes as we claim His promises as our own and when we believe that what He said applies to us personally. God has given each one of us a measure of faith. It is one of Heaven's gifts (*Rom. 12:3*). When we exercise the faith that He has already placed in our hearts, that faith cannot help but grow.

## The Word: Revival's Guardian and Safeguard

The Holy Spirit mightily moved through the teaching and preaching of the apostle Paul as he established the Christian church in Ephesus. Ephesus was a city of approximately two hundred fifty thousand people. It was considered the marketplace of Asia. As ships brought their wares from throughout Asia, people flocked to Ephesus to buy fine silk, rare jewels, flavorful spices, hand-woven carpets, exquisite art objects, and exotic foods. It was also the center for the worship of the goddess Diana and the future home of the famed Celsus Library, with 12,000 volumes. The city had a magnificent amphitheater seating 15,000 people. It was used for massive concerts and theatrical productions. Sexual promiscuity was commonplace. If there ever was an unlikely place for Christianity to take root, grow, and flourish—it was Ephesus.

**Read** Acts 20:27–32. What was Paul's concern for the believers at Ephesus? What was his counsel to the church members in Ephesus? What role did he give to the Word of God?

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**Read** 1 Peter 1:22, 23; James 1:21, 22; 1 John 2:14. Summarize the teachings of Peter, James, and John regarding the importance of the Bible in the life of each Christian. Especially notice the disciples' teaching regarding the impact of the Bible in our spiritual lives.

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What similarities do you see in all of the above texts regarding the role of the Word of God? Why, then, must the Word of God be central to spiritual revival, both on a personal and on a corporate level?

**Further Study:** “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions. At every revival of God’s work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.

“Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 593, 594.

### Discussion Questions:

- 1 Read carefully the Ellen G. White statements in Friday’s Further Study. What role does she give to the Word of God, especially in the context of the last days and the final deceptions? Dwell on the implications of this line: “So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures.” What does this tell us about how we need to be careful about judging truth based only on personal experience or on the way that we feel?
- 2 During the week we read James 1:22, where we are told to be “doers of the Word.” What does that mean, and why is that so essential for us if we are to have any kind of true spiritual revival in our lives? Why is reading about faith and teaching about faith and talking about faith so much easier than living it? Think through your week: how much of a “doer of the Word” were you?

## Show Me Your Church: Part 2

Roger asked his pastor to visit his school and explain what Seventh-day Adventists believe and why the congregations in the Republic of the Congo met in houses, sheds, and covered courtyards.

The next day Roger struggled to listen in class while the pastor and the field president met with the school director. The meeting seemed to last forever. Then moments after the pastors left the school, the director stepped into Roger's classroom and said, "From now on no exams will be scheduled for Saturday." Then, looking at Roger, he added, "Now I understand why you honor your Sabbath."

One day Roger's biology teacher urged Roger to consider his future and set aside his faith until he graduated. Roger told him, "I can't do that, sir. God commanded me to keep the Sabbath day holy, and I must obey." Then he told his teacher about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who refused to bow to the king's image and were thrown into the fiery furnace. "These men didn't know if God would choose to save them," he said. "But they preferred to die rather than dishonor God. I can do no less."

The teacher asked Roger where his church met. Roger explained that during the civil war in Congo, the government had confiscated the church's clinic and church building. "Today we have no building." He reached into his book bag and pulled out his Sabbath School lesson quarterly and showed him the map on the back cover. "We are few in the Congo, but we are millions around the world." The teacher was amazed that there were millions of Seventh-day Adventists around the world. He asked many questions about the Seventh-day Adventist Church and what its members believe, and Roger answered them all. He gave the teacher some books by Ellen G. White. Many other teachers and fellow students asked Roger questions about the Bible.

As the national exams approached, the school director asked Roger what he would do if an exam fell on Saturday.

"That's not my problem," Roger said. "My duty is to keep the Sabbath. If that means that I fail the exam, so be it." When the exam dates were posted and no exams were scheduled for Sabbath, Roger knew that God had done this to help him to show others that God honors those who choose to obey.

Today thanks to your Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings, two churches stand as lighthouses in the Republic of the Congo. Your mission offerings do make a difference.

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ROGER WAZOUA *passed his exams and is preparing to become a pastor in Africa.*