

Why Revival Tarries

by Henry T. Blackaby

Ezekiel 18:31b-32 is the heart cry of God to His covenant people, Israel: "... why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,' says the Lord God. 'Therefore, turn and live!'" God had just reminded His people that if "a righteous man turns away from his righteousness ... and dies ... it is because of the iniquity that he has done that he dies" (Ezekiel 18:24-26, 26).

Like the "house of Israel," God's people continue to sin against God in our day and live without any awareness of the consequences.

We seem to be totally indifferent to any judgment whatsoever, as if that only happened in the Old Testament. But, of course, that's just not true. It was to the people of God in Rome that Paul wrote: "... the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord." For anyone who sins and continues to sin without repentance -- especially God's people -- it leads to "death."

And did Jesus not warn God's people that they must repent or perish? Read the accounts in Matthew 4:17, Luke 13:1-9 and Luke 17:20-36. Repentance among God's people requires an immediate turning that changes our heart, will and actions. Repentance requires a changed lifestyle. Therefore, we too must heed Christ's warning for our own generation.

We must possess a wholehearted desire to return to God.

Many of us today are aware that America is in desperate need of revival, but we haven't made the connection. While we see the spiritual darkness around us, we do not recognize that the greater problem is with the light! Light dispels darkness! Jesus said that His disciples are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14-16). When the light of Christ is dimmed by our sin, the darkness flourishes. But when we repent, His light shines in us and through us to a watching world; people "see" and God is glorified!

For now, however, America continues to move steadily closer to God's judgment. And there remains a prevailing carelessness among God's people concerning this activity of God.

Revival tarries because God's people will not repent, and we see no reason to do so. So, even if we recognize that the times are urgent and the spiritual climate is dark, and even if we cry unto God for a mighty revival, without our repentance He will refuse to hear us because we keep iniquity in our hearts.

We must, therefore, heed His call: "... Return to Me, and I will return to you,' says the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 3:7b). We must repent and return to Him in holiness, love and obedience, or the nation will surely perish under the judgment of our sin! (2 Peter 3:9).