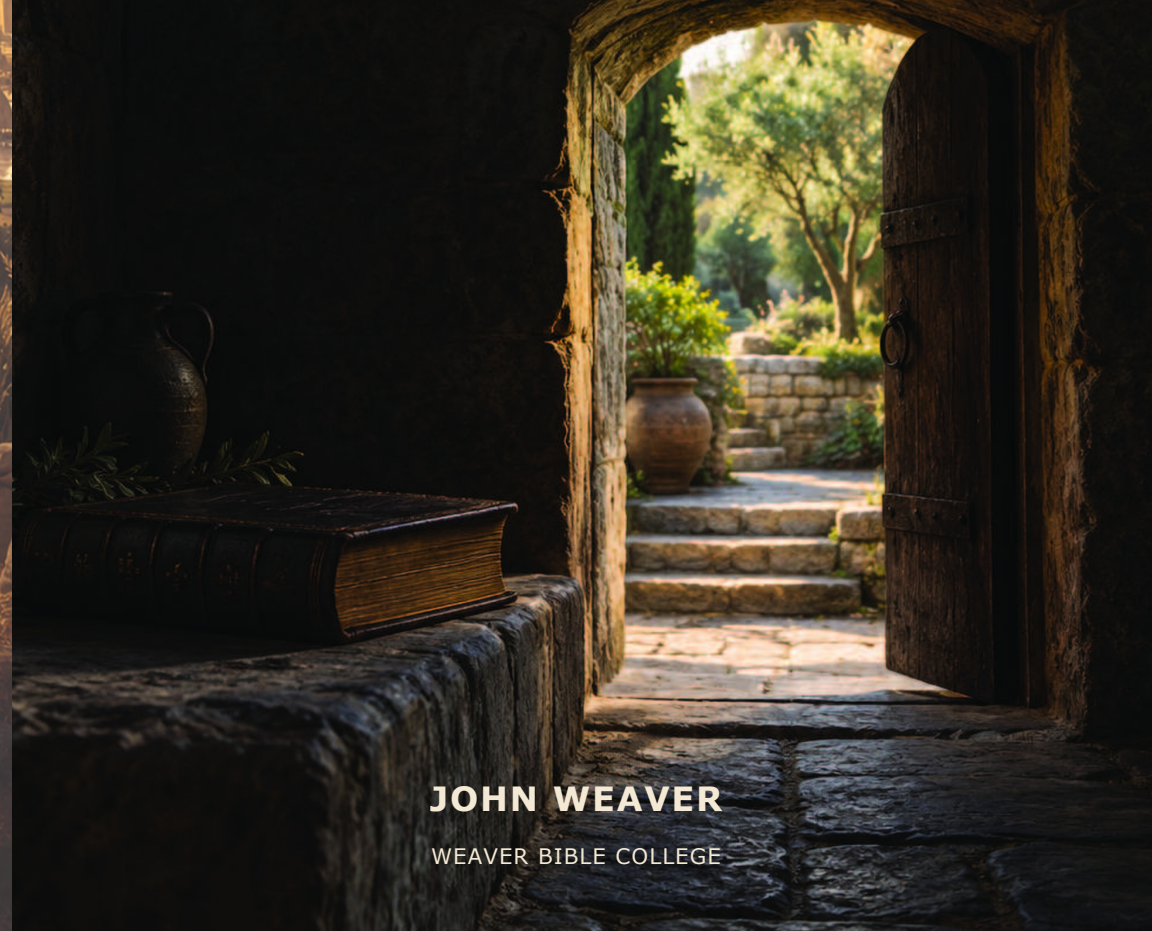
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BIBLICAL STUDIES

# The Trouble We're In
# And the Way Out

*"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,*
*and a light unto my path."*

PSALM 119:105



**JOHN WEAVER**

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

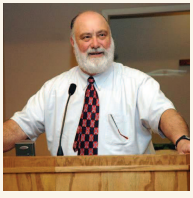
*Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.*

**LAMENTATIONS 3:40**

Recognizing trouble is not the same as understanding its cause or remedy. John Weaver examines responsibility, repentance, and a biblical response to the difficulties under discussion. These messages ask readers to move beyond complaint and consider the faithful conduct required for a different course.

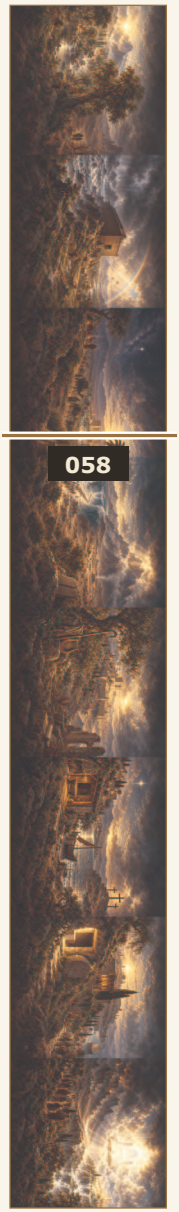
*“The way out of the trouble we are in—as individuals, families, churches, and a nation—is through confession and renewed obedience to God.”*

JOHN WEAVER



## John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.




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# The Trouble We're In And The Way Out

Covenant Theology

John Weaver

Weaver Bible College

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# The Trouble We're In And The Way Out

John Weaver

Weaver Books
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Edited from the sermon corpus of John Weaver.

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CHAPTER 1

# The Trouble We're In And The Way Out

*Part One of Two*

## The Trouble We Are In and the Way Out

**SCRIPTURE READING - Nehemiah 9:32-38 (KJV)**

Nehemiah chapter 9, beginning with verse 32, the Bible says:

"Now therefore, our God, the great, and mighty, and terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, and our princes, and our priests, and our prophets, and our fathers, and all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day.

Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly: Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them. For they have not

> served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works. Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it: And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins."

## Introduction: We Are in Trouble

"Also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress. And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests seal unto it." We are in trouble. I am in trouble. You are in trouble. We may not realize it yet, and we may not fully grasp how deeply we are in trouble. We may not even understand the implications of it, but the truth is we are in trouble. In verse 32, Nehemiah is praying and confessing, and he says, "Now therefore, our God, the great, and mighty, and terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee." Nehemiah is saying that the trouble we're in may seem little to thee because you're the great and terrible and mighty God, but it's certainly not little to us. The problems and trouble we are in today may seem insignificant to some individuals.

## Historical Contrast: From Christian Foundations to Secular Rejection

But even to those who are true and genuine believers, the trouble is indeed great and even gargantuan. Let me give you a couple of illustrations. First of all, Congressman Jerry Nadler, on February the 25th, 2021, at approximately 3:45 p.m. on C-SPAN, said, and I quote, "God has no authority in the House of Representatives." A little bit later, he said, "The will of God is of no concern to this Congress." In fact, Congressman Nadler was simply admitting publicly what many politicians refuse to admit. The truth is, we now have a totally secular, anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Christian government.

Contrast the words of Jerry Nadler with some historical examples. From the Mayflower Compact: "Having undertaken for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith and honor of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a

The civil body politic was established for our better ordering and preservation, the furtherance of the stated ends, and the general good of the colony. It was empowered to enact and frame just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, to which all promised due submission and obedience. So they were thanking God and saying that this undertaking was for God's honor and glory and the advancement of the Christian faith.

The New Haven colony charter, on April 3, 1644, adopting the laws and rules for that colony, said, "The judicial laws of God, as they were delivered by Moses, are to be a rule to all the courts in this jurisdiction." It was the law of God that was to control the courts.

The Charter of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, granted by King Charles II to Roger Williams on July 8, 1663, followed Williams's departure from Massachusetts in 1636 with his followers to establish a new colony with religious liberty and freedom. He also established there the first Baptist church in America in 1639. The royal charter read: "We submit our persons, lives, and estates unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, and to all those perfect and most absolute laws of His given in His holy word, that they pursuing with peaceable and loyal minds, sober, serious, and religious intentions of godly edifying themselves and one

“Another in the holy Christian faith and worship, together with the gaining over and conversion of the poor ignorant Indian natives, a most flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintained grounded upon gospel principles.”

We come to the Continental Congress on September 10, 1782. During that time, there was a great need for Bibles. Most things in that period were brought in from England, and since the war was still going on, not many Bibles were being printed. The Congress

therefore enacted legislation to print a new edition of the Holy Bible for our schools.

That Bible came to be known as the Bible of the Revolution. Its first-page endorsement stated: “Whereupon resolved, that the United States in Congress assembled, recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States, and hereby authorize Robert Aitken, to publish this recommendation in the manner he shall think proper.” The Congress of the United States authorized a printing of the Bible.

The Constitution of the State of Delaware in 1792, Article 22, declared: “Every person who shall be chosen a member of either house or appointed to any office or place of trust shall make and subscribe the following declaration: I, [blank], do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed forevermore, and I do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration.”

I could probably sit here and go just about all afternoon over each charter, each constitution. But let me say this: it doesn't matter which charter or constitution you examine. Whatever charter or constitution you examine, all basically say the same: no one could hold public office or trust unless he confessed faith in Jesus Christ and believed the Bible was the inspired Word of God.

John Jay, the first Supreme Court Justice appointed by George Washington, was also a founding father. He was a member of the First and Second Continental Congresses and was instrumental in securing ratification of the Constitution, for he was one of those who wrote in the Federalist Papers, along with James Madison and Alexander Hamilton. On October 12, 1816, John Jay said: "Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers."

That was John Jay. The Congress of the United States in May 1854 passed another resolution which said this: "The great and vital and conservative element in our system is the belief of our people in the pure doctrines and divine truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

That was Congress. The United States Supreme Court, on February the 29th, 1892, in the case of the Church of the Holy Trinity versus the United States, it was Justice Josiah Brewer who rendered the High Court's decision and he said this: "Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of the Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise; and in this sense and to this extent our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian." And then the Congress of the United States on October the 4th, 1982, by a joint resolution appointed 1983 as the Year of the Bible. Here is the public law, 97-280: "Whereas renewing our knowledge of and faith in God through Holy Scripture can strengthen us as a nation and as a people, the Bible, the Word of God, has made a unique contribution in shaping the United States as a distinctive and blessed nation.

Deeply held religious convictions springing from the Holy Scriptures led to the early settlement of our nation. Biblical teaching inspired concepts of civil government that are contained in our Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States."

Here we are today. We are a totally secular nation. We're not only totally secular, but we're now denying the very truths upon which the foundation of this country was built. We've turned our backs upon God. We've thumbed our collective noses to Him, we've challenged Him, we've dared Him, we've ridiculed Him, we've mocked Him, we've rejected Him, we've blasphemed Him, and we're in trouble up to our eyeballs and we don't realize it. Moreover, we don't realize what we are facing, nor do we understand the implications of His justice and His judgment. Nor have we really thought about what is our due and just reward for our sins. We have been blinded, practically speaking, by our sins. And we've also, I think to a large extent, been judicially blinded by God.

## The Current State: Ripe for Judgment

Because we are now what I'm calling absolutely ripe for judgment and full punishment. So we are finding ourselves today in exactly the same position that Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem found themselves. I don't know any other way to express it except by saying it like this:

Our rulers are insane. They're wicked. They're greedy for money, power, advancement. Our economy has been destroyed. Our character as individuals and as a society has been wrecked. Our work ethic has been destroyed.

We've become immoral, stiff-necked, recalcitrant, and rebellious as a people, as a society, and as a nation. When you look around, you have to say, this is reality. That which brought the judgment of God upon Israel, especially Judah and Jerusalem, was the fact that they constantly and continually violated His law.

If you would hold Nehemiah 9, we're certainly coming back there, but look in Deuteronomy 28. This chapter contains both the blessings and the curses—in other words, positive sanctions and negative sanctions. The negative sanctions fall upon a people for disobedience. Beginning with verse 45, God says: “Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: And they shall be upon thee for a sign, and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever. Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things.”

**SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 28:45-57 (KJV)**

I think it's important that you remember this particular verse in just a little bit. He said,

"Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young: And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep,

> until he have destroyed thee. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee."
>
> So here is part and parcel of the curse or the negative sanction that God is going to actually cause to come to pass on these people who violate his law.

Today, we are basically at the same point in history. All you have to do is look around: look at Washington, D.C.; look at our state capitals; look at our society; look at our churches; look at our families. When it comes to government, families, and churches, we can use only such words as dysfunctional, disobedient, and divided. We are basically a dysfunctional people. Nehemiah and his people found themselves in the same predicament.

## Nehemiah's Context: Sin and Captivity

Nehemiah and the people with him were the remnant that had escaped from Babylon: Ezra and Nehemiah. Ezra was concerned about rebuilding the temple, while Nehemiah was concerned about rebuilding Jerusalem, especially its walls. The people who came back with Ezra and Nehemiah were those who escaped from the Babylonian captivity after the Persians had taken over. Now they had come back into the land.

Without reading all the context, let me tell you this: They were certainly sinning against God because they had intermarried with the heathen, which I will show you next week, and God had specifically said, “Do not do.” Moreover, they were abusing the Sabbath. They were working on the Sabbath, buying and selling, and doing everything contrary to God's law. On top of that, they were enslaving their own children, grandchildren, and people, making handmaidens and servants out of their own people who owed them. Instead of releasing them in the sabbatical year as they were supposed to, they kept them enslaved. So now, of course, they were in great trouble.

We are at the same point. Everywhere you go, you hear people say, “They ought to do something about this.” Well, who is the “they”? Usually they are referring to government: Government ought to do something. Government ought to pass a law.

## No Political Solution to a Spiritual Problem

There is no political solution to a spiritual problem and no governmental solution to the sins of the heart. Laws cannot save us. As holy and righteous as God's law is, it was never intended to save as far as salvation is concerned. The Apostle Paul said in Galatians 2:21, “I do not frustrate the grace of God.” He continued, “For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” In Galatians 3:21 he made it even clearer: “Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.”

The Apostle Paul is saying that it is not a law that can save. If there had been a law that could save, Christ did not need to die. Obviously, God's law is holy and righteous, but it was never intended to save anyone. Certainly, government—corrupt government and depraved, fallen man—cannot pass laws that will save anyone. Let us just mark her down and put it in our minds: government is useless, worthless, and unable to resolve spiritual problems. Government is not the solution; it is the problem, or at least part of the problem, by truth.

How in the world did Nehemiah and the people in his day get themselves out of trouble? Look again at verse 32: “Now therefore, our God, the great, and mighty, and terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee.” He is admitting and confessing that they are in trouble. You would have to be absolutely foolish, almost blind, not to see that we are in trouble. Everything in this country is going wrong and has gone wrong.

## The First Step: Real Confession

How did they get out of the trouble they were in? This whole chapter deals with the first step: a real confession. Confession is not merely

mouthing words or simply saying, “I’m sorry.” It is not saying, “I wish I had not done this,” or, “I wish this had not happened.” Many people profess to confess their sins, but in reality never truly confess them.

The word confess, especially in 1 John 1:9 and as it is used in the New Testament, is homologeo. Homo means one and the same; lego, I say. According to God’s Word, real, genuine confession is when we say the same thing God says. It is when we see our sin as God sees it, agree with God about our sin, and take God’s side. We are the ones saying, “Lord, we are wrong and you are right.” We truly confess our sins only when we realize that we must agree with God and see things from His perspective, the perspective of Holy Scripture.

Interestingly, confession in this chapter involved many things. Beginning with verse 22 through verse 25 of Nehemiah 9, their confession involved acknowledgment of the goodness of the sovereign. Look at verse 22: “Moreover thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst divide them into corners: so they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan.”

## Elements of Confession in Nehemiah 9

"Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it. So the children went in and possessed the land, and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would. And they took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness."

One of the great failures, one of the great faults, and one of the great sins that we have is that we fail to acknowledge the goodness of God. When we fail to acknowledge God's goodness and fail to be grateful and thankful, it always leads to other sins.

It is an amazing thing to me that the same exact verse is given to us four times in Psalm 107. Verse 8 says, "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" The same declaration appears again in verses 15, 21, and 31: "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

Here, Nehemiah is confessing his sins, and he is confessing the absolute goodness of God. When we recognize God's goodness, it will lead us to be thankful, grateful, and appreciative. When we do not recognize God's goodness, it will lead us to assume that God owes us something, and that we are to expect it no matter how we live or no matter what we do.

I suppose that everyone in this room is familiar with the atrocious and awful sins mentioned in Romans chapter 1. Do you know how those sins begin?

In Romans chapter 1, verse 21, the Bible says: “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” Neither were they thankful. What leads a person to be thankful? It is perceiving the goodness, graciousness, and mercy of God. One of our greatest sins is our failure to thank God for His goodness. Every bit of food in your home was given to you by God. Every bit of your health was given to you by God. Every bit of your life is given to you by God. Every bit of your savings, funds, money—whatever you have—was given to you by God.

That is why I said, “Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men.” Nehemiah began by confessing the goodness of God, which, in one sense, enlarged their sins. He said, “You gave us this fat land, you gave us all of this. And then we turned our backs upon you.”

That leads me secondly to verse 26. Their confession not only acknowledged the goodness of the sovereign; it acknowledged the greatness of their sins. The verse says: “Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations.” After speaking

of the goodness of God and everything He had given them, Nehemiah says they were disobedient, rebelled against Him, and cast His law behind their backs. Disobedience and rebellion are understood in connection with the law of God. Their disobedience and rebellion were in relation to His law, which was an expression of His will for His people. They refused to abide by His law and refused to listen to the preachers or prophets God sent to turn them. When they refused to live by His law, they refused to turn from the preaching of the prophets.

That is when they caused great provocations against God. Now, let me remind you of a truth which I've told you in time past. God's law is nothing more than the expression of His will for His people. You remember that passage in Hosea chapter 4 and verse 6 where God said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." You see, God's law is an expression of His will. Our children are an expression of our will. We wanted them, we had them. God gave them to us. God says, so now you disregard the expression of my will, I'll disregard the expression of your will. In other words, it is the lex talionis. It is the law of retribution. It is where God makes the punishment fit the crime. In other words, God says, you pay no attention to the expression of my will, I'll forget the expression of your will.

You wonder why our young people are in such trouble today? Yeah, well, we've forgotten God, and so God says, yes, I'll forget you as well.

Now, let me explain this another way. I've just stated the fact that God's law is the expression of His will for His people. Let me give you a verse in the New Testament. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and verse 3, you read this specifically: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication." Now think about that. This is the will of God. There's no doubt about it being the will of God. It is expressly stated, this is God's will. It is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.

So let's ask a question. If we know that it is God's will that we do not violate the seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." If we know it's God's will that we do not violate the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet." Do you not think it is God's will that we not violate the rest of his commandments as well? Well, of course it's God's will that we obey his law.

Here they are confessing their sins: “Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs.” In other words, they turned their backs upon God, upon His Word, upon His prophets, and upon His preachers. They refused to listen and refused to turn; therefore they wrought great provocations. Israel’s sin is basically our sin. It is not merely that we have sinned once against God. We have sinned over and over against God, just like Israel.

“Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them: and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies. But after they had rest, they did evil again before thee: therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them: yet when they returned, and cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies; And testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law: yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments.”

“Which if a man do, he shall live in them;) and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear. Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands.”

Another one of our great sins is very simply stated: We will not give ear. We will not listen, hear, heed, or obey. It does not matter how many preachers there are, how great they are, or how excellent the oratory may be; we will not hear. Every time God delivered Israel, they served Him for a brief period and then turned right back to their sins. Finally, God left them in the hands of their enemies.

The sins reached every class of people. No one escaped them. In Nehemiah 9:32, he says, “Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us.” He says that trouble had come upon them. Then he itemizes it: “on our kings, and on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day.” Every class of people and every individual was included—prophet, priest, king, prince, and ordinary people. They had all sinned and were all in trouble. They confessed their sins, including the sin that condemned them: “we will not hear.”

They not only confessed God’s goodness and the greatness of their sins; they also confessed the greatness of God’s mercies. In verse 31, he says, “Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.” Out of all the provocations, sin, and rebellion, God was still merciful. The Apostle Paul, in Romans 9:29, quoted Isaiah: “And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.” If God had not been merciful and spared some, none would be saved.

No one would be alive. We certainly do not thank God enough for His mercies. You remember that passage, which I have quoted frequently and try to quote every day, morning and night. Lamentations 3:22–23 says, “It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.” Learn to thank God every morning when He allows you to wake up and every night when you lie down; thank Him for protecting and preserving you through the day. It is only of His mercies that we are not consumed, that we have our lives, our health, and everything. Thus, even in their great sin, they are acknowledging the mercies of God.

Here is the fourth thing: their confession also involved the clearness of God's justice and judgment in chastising and punishing them. In verse 33 he said, “Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.”

Here is a clear, clean, and honest acknowledgement of this sentiment: We got what we deserved. God, You have done that which is just; we have done that which is wicked. You are righteous in bringing all of this judgment upon us because we are wicked. He is agreeing with God and siding with God, taking God's position: You are holy and we are unholy; You are right and we are wrong; You are just and we are unjust. You have done justly; we have done wickedly.

Psalm 103:10 gives us an amazing and astounding truth: “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.”

## Application: The Necessity of Confession for Revival

"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." I don't know about you, but I'm thankful God has not given me what I deserve. Even though God is absolutely just, He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

Here's another truth: even if God did give us exactly that which we deserved, we would have no cause to complain. In Lamentations 3:39, the Bible asks, "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Why are you going to complain for reaping what you've sown? Why are you going to complain for getting what you deserve?

It's kind of like that slogan law enforcement uses: "If you do the crime, you'll do the time." Although prisons, I do not believe, are biblically based, the truth of the matter is that there is punishment for sin, and there's punishment for wickedness. So if I want to go up to Gary's house, break in, and steal, and I get shot, or if I get caught and sent to prison for five years, well, that was my sin. I understand.

Why should I complain if I'm getting exactly that which is just and that which I deserve? The truth of the matter is this: if we did get what we deserved, we wouldn't be able to complain because we'd be dead. But the Bible asks, "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?"

As I pointed out, if God did give us what we deserve, we would really be dead. But in Psalm 89:14, the Bible says, "Justice and

judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face." I am so thankful that mercy and truth are still connected with justice and judgment.

There is a prayer each of us really needs to learn to pray. It is a very biblical prayer found in Habakkuk 3:2: "O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." In wrath, remember mercy.

## The First Step in Revival

But note what he asked Him: “Revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.” God, we’re going to get what we deserve. But Lord, please be merciful to us in Your wrath. One thing for sure, we need to learn to pray that God would revive His work and that God, in His wrath, would remember mercy.

Please remember this: the first step in revival, in renewal, in returning to God is a true and honest confession of our sins, our rebellion, and our wickedness. We will never return to Him, or we will never turn to Him, until and unless we are ready to fully confess our sins.

Do you remember what our Lord said to the Pharisees? He said, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.” They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. In other words, you’re not going to really cry for help until you realize how desperately sick you really are.

If I don’t know that I’m sick, I’m not seeking help. And if I think I’m just a little sick, I’m still not going to seek help. I’ll try to doctor myself. If that doesn’t work, I’ll ask for an old remedy and try that. If that doesn’t work, I’ll ask someone else to give me a remedy. If that doesn’t work, and I finally realize how helpless I really am, that’s when I’ll go to a doctor.

They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. Go ye and learn what that meaneth. In other words, you’re not going to

be seeking Christ. You're not going to be crying to Him for mercy and grace until you realize how desperate your situation really is.

In Jeremiah 31:18, he said: "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." What in the world was Ephraim bemoaning himself about? He was confessing and acknowledging his sin and the judgment that was brought upon him because of his sin. He said, "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." Why? It was my sin; it was my wickedness. Then he asked God, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God."

In other words, God must turn us. We may complain, confess, and acknowledge, but only God can turn us. You must come to the place in confession where you are willing to agree with God. You have to take His side against yourself, your sin, and your people. You have to say, "God is righteous and I'm unrighteous. God is just and I am unjust."

Psalm 32:5 gives us another truth. David said, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Confession brings us to the point of a willingness to submit and subject ourselves to our Creator, our Lord, and our Heavenly Father, and it places us in the position to be forgiven. Real, genuine confession places us in that position. That is why 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Now, here is what we do not want. We are in trouble, but what follows is not the way to get out of trouble; it is the way to get deeper into trouble. God sent Jeremiah to preach to these stiff-necked, recalcitrant people, and they refused to listen. Jeremiah 8:6 records what he heard: "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright.

No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.

When God pointed out their sins, they said, “I don't see anything wrong with it. What have I done? This is no big deal.”

When a charging steed runs headlong, as fast and furiously as it can into battle, God says that is exactly what people are doing: rushing headlong into their sins, wickedness, and rebellion.

When people do not give a full and honest confession, what they have done is consistently and constantly violated the law of God. They have turned their backs upon Him, upon His Word, and, as Nehemiah said, are in trouble. “Lord, let not this trouble seem small unto thee, because it is overwhelming us.”

The first step in revival, renewal, or return is a full and honest confession of our sins before God.

If you read Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel, you find that these three men confess their sins, but the sins of their nation, the sins of their people. If we spent enough time on our knees confessing the sins of this nation, we might need help rising because we would be there a mighty long time. But until we come to the point that we are willing to acknowledge and confess, we will never ever see revival, renewal, or return.

We will go further into wickedness and sin as a horse rushes into battle. It begins with an honest, genuine confession: Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow before thee. We thank you, Lord, for your word, for your truth, for your goodness and kindness. We ask you to help us to honestly confess and acknowledge our sins. Help us to side with thee against ourselves, to take thy perspective. Because when we confess, we repent. Give us repentance. Move upon our hearts. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

# The Trouble We're In And The Way Out

*Part Two of Two*

## The Trouble We Are In and the Way Out

**SCRIPTURE READING - Nehemiah 9:32-38 (KJV)**

## Introduction and Scripture Reading

Nehemiah 9:32-38:

"Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day. Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly: Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst

testify against them. For they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works. Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it: And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins. Also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress. And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests seal unto it."

In the first message, I pointed out how we have left the foundation upon which this country has been built. We have forsaken the Bible, biblical principles, truth, and righteousness that undergirded our nation. When our nation was founded, it was indeed founded as a Christian nation. That did not mean that everyone in the country was a Christian; it simply meant that it was built upon biblical principles.

## America's Departure from Biblical Foundations

One of the quotes I gave you last week was from the New Haven colony in 1639: "The laws of this colony shall be the laws of God as given through Moses." But we have left that foundation and gone into not only humanism, but now seemingly transhumanism and perversions of every form in rebelling against God and His Word.

When you look around at our civil government today, we understand, in one sense of the word, that our own government has basically destroyed the family, economics, education, health, and practically everything it has touched. The only thing our government has made better is the ease and ability to sin and violate the Word of God. I also quoted last week from Congressman Jerry Nadler, who, on February 25th of this year, said, "God has no authority in the House of Representatives." On February 27th, he said, "God's will is of no concern for this Congress."

He simply pointed out publicly what most politicians truly believe but are afraid to admit. Yet it is not simply the realm of civil

government that has become perverted in this country. It seems as if we have been turning treason against God within our own ranks, especially in professing Christendom.

## Compromise in Evangelical Institutions

Here is an illustration. The headline says, “Major evangelical adoption agency will now serve gay parents nationwide.” The article reported that Bethany Christian Services, one of the country’s largest adoption and foster-care agencies, would immediately begin providing services to LGBTQ parents nationwide. The Michigan-based evangelical organization made the announcement in an email to about 1,500 staff members, signed by its president and chief executive, Chris Palusky. The decision came as more cities and states required organizations to accept applications from LGBTQ couples or risk losing government contracts. Palusky said, “We will now offer services with the love and compassion of Jesus to the many types of families who exist in our world today.”

He also wrote, “We’re taking an all-hands-on-deck approach where all are welcome.” Really? Would you please show me somewhere in Scripture where God has expressed love and compassion upon those rebelling against Him, hating Him, despising Him, and wallowing in sin, wickedness, and disobedience? It seems to me there is a passage in the Bible, something like Psalm 5, verses 4 through 6: “For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.”

"The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." When the Bible says that the foolish shall not stand in His sight and that He hates all the workers of iniquity, obviously our Lord is not going to show love or compassion to those whom He hates in that sense of the word, because they are in open rebellion and defiance against Him.

Notice the phrase, "or risk losing government contracts." In reality, it is not the faith that matters to Bethany Christian Services. It is not obedience, nor is it really love or compassion; it is money. If they do not compromise, they will lose their government contracts. I do not know how anyone could believe that the love and compassion

of Jesus Christ is expressed by allowing a child to be raised, taught, and possibly abused by individuals who hate and despise the Lord Jesus Christ and are living contrary to His law.

The headline said, "Major evangelical adoption agency will now serve gay parents nationwide." Stop and think about this. There are no gay parents, at least not physically. It is physically impossible for two men or two women to produce a child. The only way such people can be parents is to have a legal or political line attached to them. Black's Law Dictionary defines parents as "the lawful father or mother of a person."

It also says, "One who procreates, begets, or brings forth offspring." Webster's 1828 dictionary defines parents as "he or she that produces young," and only through political and legal means could same-sex couples ever be considered parents. An online dictionary defines family as "a basic social unit consisting of parents and their children, considered as a group, whether dwelling together or not." Thus, the word "parents" refers to fathers and mothers.

Think of the terms we normally use in relation to a family. We talk about family values. When a wife is expecting, we normally say that she is in a family way. A family man is someone who loves his wife, loves his children, and takes care of them. We also speak of a family tree, a graph showing one's ancestors and descendants. But same-sex couples cannot continue a family tree, at least not physically. It is absolutely impossible. Black's Law Dictionary defines family this way: “Most commonly refers to groups of persons consisting of parents and children; father, mother, and their children.”

The point is that we have erred so far from the Word of God and from the foundation upon which this country was built that it is absolutely astounding. We have deviated so far. What amazes me is that when most professing Christians read that Bethany Christian Services is now going to allow LGBTQ people to adopt children, they support it and think it is wonderful, instead of saying, “That is outrageous; that is absolutely contrary to the Word of God.”

It was King Manasseh who got into trouble for allowing the sodomites not only in the temple but also to live by the temple. You will find that in 2 Kings chapter 21.

In the first message from Nehemiah chapter 9, I dealt with the context in which our verses occur. In this passage, he is making a confession. To confess means to agree with God, decide with God, say the same thing as God, or take the same attitude God takes. No one truly confesses sin until he views sin as God does.

In this passage, they confessed the goodness of God and all that He had given them, and then how they turned around and despised His goodness. They confessed their sins and acknowledged their rebellion and violation of God's law. They even confessed that God was just in punishing and chastising them: “God, you're right and we're wrong. You're just and we are unjust.” Biblical confession truly involves repentance—a turning from sin and a turning to obedience.

## The Nature of True Confession

It is like the passage in 1 Thessalonians 1:9, where the Apostle Paul said that the Thessalonians “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” There is a negative: you turn from idols, or you turn from sin. But there is also a positive: you turn to God to serve and obey Him.

The sin of Israel being dealt with in Nehemiah 9 is that, when these people came back from Babylon under Ezra and Nehemiah, they had intermarried with the heathen. They had also continually violated the Sabbath by buying and selling, violated the sabbatical year, when all debts were to be forgiven, and continued to exact those debts. They were enslaving their own people, using them as menservants and maidservants, and refusing to allow them to go free in the sabbatical year.

These were very grievous sins. One thing they would confess was that they had intermarried. Nehemiah uses the word “strangers,” from the Hebrew word “nekar,” meaning literally a foreigner, an alien, or a stranger. Turn back to Ezra 9, the book before Nehemiah, and look at whom they had intermarried with. Ezra 9:1 says:

"Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass."

The interesting thing is that these people with whom they had intermarried were the same ones against whom God put a sword in Israel's hand when they came out of Egypt and said, "Destroy all of them." Israel failed to destroy them. They disobeyed God and sinned against Him. Now they had sinned further by intermarrying with them.

Deuteronomy chapter 7 and Exodus chapter 34 specifically state that they were not to enter into any covenant with these people. They were not to give their sons unto them or take their daughters for their sons. They had sinned against God in failing to conquer the land, but now they had sinned against God by intermarrying with the heathen from whom He had said, "You shall not marry."

On top of that, there was the violation of the Sabbath and the sabbatical year. The very first step they took in getting themselves out of their trouble was a real, genuine confession. That is why he said in verse 32, "Let not this trouble seem little unto you." They were in trouble, but their first step was confession. They were siding with God. Therefore, in verse 33, he says, "Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly."

## Renewal of Covenantal Obedience

Once they made their confession, there had to be another step: they had to renew their covenantal obedience. In verse 38, he said, "And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests seal unto it." So what was the covenant? What were they covenanting together to do? You will find that in Nehemiah chapter 10, beginning with verse 28.

He is listing all the people in the first verses who signed and sealed this covenant, at least the leaders thereof. But notice verse 28: “And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims.” The Nethinims were servants to the Levites, “and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God.”

There you have the negative and the positive. They separated themselves from their sin—that is the negative—but they also separated themselves unto God—that is the positive. “Their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding; They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath.”

They entered into this oath “to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our God, and his judgments and his statutes; And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons: And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day.” They would also “leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt.”

They were entering into a covenant to obey the law of God as given by Moses. Simply stated, they had repented of their sins, and now they were renewing their covenantal obedience to God.

It is interesting that the Bible says they bound themselves with a curse and with an oath to walk in the law of God. You might think, “Wow, I don't think I'd ever bind myself with a curse to walk in the law of God.” The truth is, if you do not walk in the law of God, you are already under a curse. Read Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28, and Galatians chapter 3, where it says, “Cursed be he that doeth not all according to this law.” Everyone who is disobedient is already under a curse. The law of God has sanctions, both negative and positive. Curses always follow disobedience, and blessings always follow obedience.

Moreover, if you are a real, genuine, born-again Christian, a real child of God, read Hebrews chapter 12. It teaches very clearly that if we sin against God, He will chastise us. What did He say?

## The Necessity of Obedience and the Curse of Disobedience

"He scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. And if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." In other words, God is not going to allow us to get away with sin if we belong to Him. It is just that simple. He uses the illustration of an earthly father in Hebrews chapter 12. If my father had told me, "Son, I want you to do this," and I had looked at him and said, "Well, you are old enough now. You will not hurt me because I do not want to do this," I can see my dad smiling and saying, "Well, son, I have something that will help you and will make you want to do what I have asked you to do."

That is the way it is with God in that sense of the word. If we obey His Word, we do not need the rod. If we disobey His Word, He is going to use the rod to bring us back into obedience. So the truth of the matter is, when people say, "Well, I would not bind myself with a curse," you are already under a curse if you disobey.

Now, the point I am trying to make is this: These people came to a place in their lives where they had to become extremely serious with God and with His Word. There has to be a time in our lives when we become serious with God and His Word. Far too often, we think and act without God, without reference to Him, and without reference to His Word.

The truth is that most professing Christians ignore Him, forget Him, and, in essence, deny Him. They deny that He exists practically. They deny that He has spoken practically. So the truth of the matter is that many professing Christians are nothing more than what you and I would call practical atheists.

A theoretical atheist is someone who, in his mind, according to his own logic and reasoning, will say, "There is no God." But a practical atheist is someone who will confess that God does exist and that God has spoken, but says, "I am going to live my own life. I am going to

do my own thing." That is how most professing Christians are living: in total ignorance of God's Word and in complete violation of God's commands.

Here is an amazing truth, and here is where we are today. Look at Titus chapter 1, verse 16.

The Bible says, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Note carefully: They profess that they know God. They acknowledge Him and His Word. But in works—that is, in the way they live—they deny Him. Consequently, they become abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

That is exactly where we are today. We meet, greet, eat, repeat, but never obey. We have a good talk, but our walk reveals that our talk is nothing but hot air. Our walk reveals that our profession is useless and worthless. Most people want the blessings of the Lord, but they do not want to live the way He commands.

## Jesus as Lord and the Inseparability of His Person and Work

You cannot separate the person and work of Jesus Christ. His title is the Lord Jesus Christ. The word "Lord," Kurios, means boss, owner, master, and sovereign. "Jesus" is from the Hebrew word Joshua, which means Savior. "Christ" refers to the Anointed One, the Messiah. Many people want to take Jesus Christ as their Savior because they do not want to go to hell, be punished, or face the wrath of God, but they want to deny Him as Lord. You cannot do that. Some preachers have even told people, "Well, you're saved, but now what you need to do is to make Jesus Christ your Lord." You cannot make Jesus Christ Lord. He already is. God beat you to that.

In Acts chapter 2 and verse 36, the Bible says, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." God made Him Lord and gave Him all power and authority in heaven and earth. He is the boss, the owner, the master, and the sovereign. You cannot say, "I'll be saved by Him, but I don't want Him telling me how to live, what to do, or how to act." It does not work like that. He

is the Lord Jesus Christ. If He saves you, you bow to Him and acknowledge His Lordship.

## The Revival Under King Josiah

**SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Kings 23:1-4 (KJV)**

## Biblical Revivals: Confession and Covenant Renewal

I want you to think with me because every major revival, every major renewal in the Bible began with an honest and real and genuine confession of sin. And secondly, there was a real renewal of covenantal obedience. Look with me at the revival under King Josiah in 2 Kings chapter 23. I want you to see what is happening under Josiah.

"And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great.

"And he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord. And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord." Watch this covenant. What kind of covenant did he make? "To walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant. And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, that is Asherah, and for all the host of heaven."

**SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Kings 23:4-13 (KJV)**

And he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel. And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense

unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. And he brought out the grove from the house of the Lord, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people. And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the grove. And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city.

Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren. And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the Lord, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire. And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, did the king beat down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron. And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom, or Molech, or Malcham, sometimes in the Bible, the abomination

**SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Kings 23:15-20 (KJV)**

of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men. Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat,

> who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the Lord, which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel. And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria. And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the Lord to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel. And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem. And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the Lord your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant.

"Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the Lord in Jerusalem."

Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord.

"And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him."

Here is exactly what Josiah did: He cleaned house. Anything and everything that was contrary to God and contrary to His Word, he

got rid of. Obviously, we do not have the power or authority of an earthly king like Josiah. We are not earthly kings; therefore, we do not have the right or authority to destroy property, nor to execute people and simply put them to death. But just because we do not have Josiah's authority does not mean that we are helpless or can do absolutely nothing.

The truth is that we may change things in our personal lives, our family lives, our ecclesiastical lives, and our church lives. We may even change things in our communities because we can still preach, teach, witness, speak, help, direct, and give counsel. We can do all these things that most of the time we are not doing.

Moreover, we can do something else that Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel did: not only confess our personal sins, but confess the sins of the nation. There are plenty to confess and plenty to acknowledge. We can go even further and learn to pray the imprecatory prayers listed in the Bible. I love that one in Psalm 9.

"Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just." You know, I want to show you a verse. Turn in your Bibles to the book of Joel—Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos. Look in Joel chapter 2, at verse 17. In fact, let's read verse 16. We can start with verse 15. Joel 2, verse 15.

God says, "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet."

Now look what we're to do. "Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" Surely we can fast and we can pray, and we can pray, "Spare thy people, O God, and let not the heathen have dominion over your people." Surely we can do that. We can learn the imprecatory prayers and we can pray them. God says, in the time of trouble, this is exactly what we should be doing.

Now, let me show you one more very quickly. Turn to 2 Chronicles chapter 29. I want you to see the first 10 verses, because here we're

reading about godly King Hezekiah. Let's begin reading with verse 1. Look what Hezekiah says: "Hezekiah began to reign when he was five and twenty years old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem."

**SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Chronicles 29:1-11, 36 (KJV)**

"And his mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done. He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them. And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street, And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place. For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord, and turned their backs." That is, they gave God the back, not the face. "Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place unto the God of Israel."

"Wherefore the wrath of the Lord was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble," the trouble we're in, "to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes. For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this."

"Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us." And then he encourages them. God sent a wonderful revival, a tremendous revival. "And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly."

Every major revival, every major renewal in the nations of Judah and Jerusalem and Israel began with an honest and true confession of sin. And then next came an absolute renewal to covenantal obedience to the Word of God.

## The Everlasting Covenant and Our Obedience

Hebrews 13 speaks of the everlasting covenant: “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.” The everlasting covenant was made between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In this covenant, God the Father gave to God the Son a people. God the Son agreed to become their surety, their substitute, and their sacrifice. God the Holy Spirit agreed to convict them, convert them, and regenerate them, and bring them back to God the Father through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Look at verse 20 again: “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.”

What is the result, or what is the end, of this everlasting covenant? “Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

First, we cannot change this covenant. We cannot add to it, and we cannot take from it. Next, we do not want to change this covenant. It is absolutely perfect, and it is a covenant between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. What we should want and desire is greater obedience to this covenant, because, as verse 21 says, it is God's will that we be made perfect in every good work to do His will. It is His will that we be enabled for Him to work in us that which is well pleasing in His sight. It is His will that He do this through Jesus Christ, so that Jesus Christ should receive the honor and the glory forever and ever.

What we should want is a greater obedience, so that God would be pleased to work in us that which is well pleasing in His sight and make us fruitful unto every good work, so that we could abound in honor and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Love Defined as Obedience to God's Commandments

Our Lord Jesus Christ made some very simple statements which are exceedingly revealing, and they should really reach our hearts and

minds. In John 14:21, our Lord said, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” He continued, “and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” But notice what He said: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” In verse 24, He says, “He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings.” “He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.” If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. If you do not love Me, you will not keep My commandments.

Here is someone who professes to be a Christian, and yet his life is absolutely full of disaster: he is constantly and continually in violation of the Word of God, and yet he professes to be a Christian. Our Lord said, “No, if you love Me, you'll keep My commandments.”

Romans 13:8 says, “Owe no man any thing.” That is good economic advice: stay out of debt; do not go into debt. But let us finish it: “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” What is loving another? “For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Love is not emotion. Love is not sentimentality. Love is obedience. Love is keeping God's law.

In 1 John 2:3-4, we read, “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.” How do I know that I know God? Because He is enabling me by His grace and by His Spirit to be obedient.

This does not mean that I am perfect, or that you are perfect. It does mean that obedience characterizes our lives. “Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

Our Lord said, “If you love Me, you keep My commandments. If you don't love Me, you won't keep My commandments. If you want

to know whether or not you know Me, it's because I'm enabling you and empowering you to be obedient. If you say that you know Me and your life is characterized by sin, rebellion, wickedness, and disobedience, you're lying. You don't know Me." Once again, this does not mean that we are absolutely perfect.

David was a man after God's own heart, and yet David committed some very awful sins. But those sins were exceptions; they were not the general rule of his life.

In 1 John 5:3, the Bible says, "For this is the love of God." This is the love of God: "That we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." It does not grieve me that I cannot commit adultery, steal, or murder. I do not want to do those things anyhow. This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous.

In every major revival, not only in the Bible but also in history, there was always a real, genuine confession of sin.

Secondly, there was a renewal of covenantal obedience: We will obey.

## Practical Applications and Call to Action

Let me make a couple of applications. The first is this. I am not sure of the exact number; I think it was around 48,000. The people who came back with Ezra and Nehemiah were a very small number, around 48,000. This little group was in the midst of the heathen and pagans. Ezra was concerned with building the temple and the wall, removing the trash from Jerusalem, and rebuilding the city.

That small number of people could not control or dominate the entire area. There were simply not enough of them to do so. If each of us banded together, could we control Washington, D.C.? No. Could we control Tallahassee or Atlanta? No. If we cannot control Washington or the state capitals, obviously we cannot control a continent. But just because we cannot do those things does not mean there is absolutely nothing we can do. We can control ourselves, our families, and, in one sense, our churches. We can even influence a community. How? By speaking, teaching, reaching out, and helping.

Consider this: God was going to spare Sodom and Gomorrah if He had found ten righteous people. There are more than ten in this room. Can you imagine the effect on your churches and communities if ten families said, “We will dedicate ourselves to obey God in every area of our lives, every sphere and venue. We will make sure that we are walking obediently according to the law of God. Whatever His Word says, that is exactly what we are going to do”? Can you imagine the impact? If God was going to spare Sodom and Gomorrah with ten righteous, we need to start where we do have control, not where we do not. Here is the second application.

We must understand that our obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ is non-negotiable. Government contract or no government contract, multi-millionaires or no multi-millionaires, it is non-negotiable. We have to come to the place where we will obey.

We are living in a time when persecution is increasing, and it is going to get worse. Christians are being singled out—not only in Africa, India, or Pakistan, but here in America. Persecution is going to get worse, so we must make up our minds that it will not drive us into disobedience. Threats of death will not drive us into disobedience.

Have you ever stopped to think that everybody has to die? That is true, and everybody has to die in some manner. I will be honest: I do not want to die, but I would rather die a martyr than live as a traitor and treasonous to the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to quit playing church. Christians have given up, given in, and given out for so long.

It is now time that we come back and not only confess and acknowledge our sins, but renew our obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. The way out of the trouble we are in—as individuals, families, churches, and a nation—is through confession and renewed obedience to God.

So the question has to be asked: Will you confess and acknowledge your sins—the sins of your family, your churches, and your nation—and then give a renewed covenantal obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ by acknowledging Him as Lord, boss, owner, master, and sovereign? You need to come to the realization that, since He has all power in heaven and earth, He has the absolute right

to tell us how to live, what to do, and what not to do. Because God hath made that same Jesus, Peter said, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We thank You for Your Word and for Your truth. Lord, we acknowledge that we need to confess our sins and the sins of our nation. We need a covenantal renewal of obedience to Thee and Thy Word. Speak to our hearts, grip our minds, and turn us, O Lord. And we shall be turned; quicken us, and we shall call upon Thy name. We ask for Thy grace and Thy mercy in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

# Source Notes

Chapter 1: The Trouble We're In And The Way Out - Part 1 of 2
JW01610 | YouTube

Chapter 2: The Trouble We're In And The Way Out - Part 2 of 2
JW01611 | YouTube

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