

Nehemiah 9:38 *Now because of all this we are making an agreement in writing; And on the sealed document are the names of our leaders, our Levites, and our priests... Nehemiah 10:28-29* *Now the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants, and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, all those who had knowledge and understanding, are joining with their kinsmen, their nobles, and are taking on themselves a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law, which was given through Moses, God's servant, and to keep and to comply with all the commandments of God our Lord, and His ordinances and statutes.*

- We cannot have revival if we ignore sin.
- Covenant must begin with confronting and confessing sin otherwise we are not in need of what it has to offer.
- For true revival, ultimately our actions have to change. It starts in our heart but it will always result in our behavior.

Verse 29...*are taking on themselves a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law.* God's law referred to the Torah, the first 5 books of the Bible. It was the 10 commandments that God gave to Moses on the mountain and then 603 other laws were given to His people. God's law was designed to shape Israel into a contrasting community. A community that would live by generosity, care, and justice as they were made into a kingdom of priests becoming mediators of God to the nations. God promised that if they would keep the law, they would show others what God's will was and what He wanted His people to be. It was God's good, just, and holy Word to His people.

N.T. Wright said, "The purpose of the Torah was to lure sin onto God's people, Israel, so that in Christ it might be dealt with once and for all." **Romans 5:20-21** *The Law came in so that the offense would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, so also grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 7:7* *What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? Far from it! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law.* The law promised Israel that if they were faithful to it that they would be redeemed through it. God was providing an avenue to Him through the law. All through the Old Testament we see God's people being unfaithful to the law. Then they would turn back to God and He would redeem them. Then repeat over and over.

When we misunderstand the laws value then we often misrepresent the law's purpose. When we see the law as condemning, we assume we must either hold them to have satisfaction with God or that the law has no value. These 2 views are not separate. **Jeremiah 31:31-34** *"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. "For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord: "I will put My law within them and write it on their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their wrongdoing, and their sin I will no longer remember."* God's response to Israel's failures is not to give up on them and also that He moves toward them. We serve a God who is constantly moving toward us. God pursues us. Ask, seek, and knock and He will answer. **Matthew 7:7**

In this scripture, the Israelites are in exile because of their failures, and as they come out of exile, they read these laws and they commit. For us too - God not only plans to forgive but to also transform and cause us to become what He has created us to be. It is a beautiful image of restoration and God's constant work to draw His people to Him.

The life the Torah promised and could not give is fulfilled through Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection. The law could not fulfill the promise, so one had to come to fulfill. God sends His Son to be His redeeming solution. **Matthew 5:17** *“Do not presume that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. The law was intended to be fulfilled, to restore a people to God. We could not do it on our own, so Jesus came to bring that fulfillment. Jesus talks about what it looks like in **Matthew 5, 6, and 7**. Then in **Matthew 7:24-27** *Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts on them, will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and its collapse was great.**

True faith should always result in a transformed life. If you only hear His words and not do anything with them then the resulting life will be of destruction - not withstanding the difficulties of life. Jesus taught that practicing God's Word was proof of true faith in Him. **I John 2:3-4** *By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. **James 2:14-18** *What use is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? In the same way, faith also, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”**

This is not a salvation through works. This is a salvation that works and produces something. **Matthew 7:16** *You will know them by their fruits.* What would people know about each of us if could see all areas of our lives? **Jeremiah 31:33-34** *For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord: “I will put My law within them and write it on their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their wrongdoing, and their sin I will no longer remember.”*

Jesus is the fulfillment that all of Ezra and Nehemiah are pointing to. It is what God wants to do in His people. The gospel is not just about God's love for us but also about His desire to use us, both individually and corporately. The Gospel is about salvation and also God's desire for us to be a connection between Heaven and Earth so others encounter God through us. We are to be set apart in every aspect of our lives so others would know.

Nehemiah 10:28-29 God calls us personally. God calls us corporately. In community, we can encourage and build each other up to be what God called us to be. We cannot have revival if we ignore sin. Revival has to begin with me, with us. **James 5:16** *Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. A prayer of a righteous person, when it is brought about, can accomplish much.*

If someone followed you for a month, what would they discern about your priorities?
In what way, does our life show a true confession of Jesus Christ?
What does it mean to get stuck at salvation and miss the transformation?