

They Have Dominion over Our Bodies +++

Nehemiah 9:1 – 38

+++ +++

~ Our Spiritual Safari traveled the road to revival in painstaking detail when we considered the historical books of first and second Chronicles. The road to revival is always an uphill, rocky, unpaved, unmapped and dangerous road, as the Lord revealed definitely to those with the Mind of Christ in those studies. Well, Nehemiah is going to reiterate and expound upon why, when and how revival comes in this report; and what the results must be. I am sure revival is *MUCH* different than the common conception. I hope this lesson will be a true recovery of spiritual life and strength for all of us. There are certain great ninth chapters in the Bible, and they all have to do with revival; Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel are three of them – and each of those also contains extensive and awesome *prayers*.

Many people misunderstand what “*revival*” defines and incorporates. “*Revival*” is a technical term which means ‘*to recover life and vigor*,’ and the word is rarely used in the Scriptures. Revival also means ‘*to return to consciousness*.’ It refers to that which has had life but said life ebbed – sometimes even unto death – a state in which no vitality is found in that organism. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, spoken of in the fourteenth chapter of Romans at verse nine, is where Paul says, “... *He was revived*.” That might be the best available use of the term.

Now, the word “*revival*” is *ALWAYS* confined to believers; it means they were in a low state and virtually dead spiritual condition — and were later brought back to spiritual life and power. That is the way Nehemiah is going to use the terminology in this chapter. Many people use the term “*revival*” to describe when people come to Christ – and that’s okay – as long as we understand that using it that way *MUST* be done hand-in-hand with believers *also* being revived. They are inextricably intertwined; and there can never be any successful soul-winning without God’s people having first

been revived. When that genuinely happens, reformation will also occur. It simply cannot be otherwise.

As we saw in chapter eight of Nehemiah, many of the people at the time in which we are studying had never even heard the Word of God – the Law of Moses, as it were. They have been in captivity for seventy years at this point; and most would have simply had no access to Scriptures. If they did have access, there was no one there to read it and explain it properly, correctly and completely to them; until now when they are back in Jerusalem, the temple and the walls have been rebuilt, and Ezra has dedicated his life to learning the Word of God – as we have seen in previous reports. Initially, I believe those daily teachings likely went on for a prolonged period of time; and we examined the pulpit that was built at the water gate. We were introduced to men who taught the people what Ezra had just read. If you haven't read our last several reports, I suggest you go back and read at least the last four now. When the people heard the Word of God at this time in which we are studying, the people wept for joy, too, you will recall.

Frankly, my reason for getting the entire Word of God to the entire world is because, when I do it in the manner prescribed in the Bible, it elicits strong reactions and extreme emotions. I recognize emotions are fleeting – but the salvation that follows a correct Bible message is eternal. I receive lovely messages from all over the world from people who have been blessed by this so-called safari. Now, what I say isn't really important – but – what the Word of God says is essential in our life. Only the Holy Spirit can take the Word of God and make it real to our heart. As I have said many times before: I am not your teacher. I am just a guide who shows you some Biblical sights of which you can interpret and judge in your own leading by the Spirit of God. Or, as a telephone; I don't make the call, and I am not on the other end – but I am the device through which God can speak to a willing heart. That is the only method God uses to convey His Word and instill it in the hearts and lives of believers, by the way.

So, the reading of the Word of God by Ezra caused the returning captives of the children of Israel to recognize how far short they had come from reaching God's plan for them. It even had a deep effect on Ezra himself and caused him grievous concern. As we have so clearly learned on this expedition, there will *NEVER – NEVER* be any revival apart from the Word of God. You will more easily have math without numbers or music without notes as opposed to having revival without the Word of God being first, foremost and central.

It is absolutely essential that we learn, understand and recognize that fact. I wish the modern-day evangelist and missionary would pay a little more attention to this indispensable fact than they do; but – they don't – so, I can only do the best I can with what I have. And I do. There are too many sentimental and emotional appeals to greatness and bigness that are utterly meaningless in the long run to those who experience such shallow emotions; and that is not revival in any sense of an imagination. There simply *MUST* be a return to the Word of God. I cannot overemphasize this point....

¹ Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them.

² And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.

³ And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God.

~ The proper, correct and complete teaching Ezra performed from the Word of God caused these people to confess their sins. If you are going to confess the iniquities of your fathers, you had better make sure that *YOUR* sins are all confessed *FIRST*, friends. I see some very critical saints who can call out everyone else's sins, but they don't seem to recognize their own. Well, if the Word of God really means what it should to you, then you're

going to start confessing – you can just write that down. Let’s just be real: we’re *ALL* abject failures and we *ALL* come *far* short of the glory of God. We are in no position to confess the sins of others until we have been washed ourselves.

If you don’t feel as if you have any sins, then you either do not understand – or you don’t believe – the Word of God. These people read the Bible; but then they also did something about it – they confessed their sins. Most people are trying to bring God down to their level – or – they are trying to elevate themselves up to His level by claiming they have reached a state of sinless perfection; but both of those are simply non-sensical ways we deceive ourselves. That’s not my theology, either – that’s what John himself said through the Holy Spirit in his epistles. Anything short of accepting this truth is to say we do not agree with God or His Word. Rationalizing and making excuses is tantamount to calling God a liar. Well, God is no liar, but *ALL* men are liars. Only when we make these self-realizations can Christ be just and faithful to forgive us our sins. Without confession, there is *NO WAY* we will ever have fellowship with the Father – impossible.

We have *MANY* people attempting to serve God who have never walked in the light of the Word of God. They have never stepped out in faith by trusting Christ completely; because that requires denying self. *How* we walk is not of primary importance, but *WHERE* we walk is critical to the believer. When we walk in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are going to see we come woefully short of the glory of God. When that happens, we will confess; and, if we don’t, we have no part with Him. That’s why God’s chosen people in this passage spent a fourth of the day reading the Scriptures and another fourth of the day in prayer and confession.

Quite frankly, I’m absolutely sure your confession will take a *WHOLE* lot longer than a fourth of a day. I’m also very sure you don’t think so; and that’s why you are always wrong — and God is always correcting you, my friends. I’m sure all of this makes some of you hate me – well, guess what? – I don’t care. Your ugliness is my badge of honor. Your hatred of this ministry shows the Word of God is having an effect on you, too, by the way;

so, my mission is accomplished, either way. See how that works? We're on the road to revival now – and that demands *reformation*. There's no other road – Nehemiah's way is the Lord's way; and that's the *ONLY* way.

Now, let me add confession is a private matter. Don't tell me your sins — because I can't help you with them; and I assure you I'm not telling you mine because you, likewise, cannot help me. Simon Peter didn't bring revival by standing up on the Day of Pentecost and confessing his sin of how he denied the Lord Jesus to the crowd. Luke and Paul both tell us Peter had a private interview with Jesus when He appeared to Simon Peter — privately. That's when Peter's three denials were all straightened out, friends – confidentially.

All of this so-called “*testimony*” where people confess their sins to the world is but a wave of religious hysteria. That's *NOT* revival; and it will never bring revival, either. Further, revival is *NOT* a miracle. Any individual can meet the conditions when they have a proper, correct and complete understanding of the Word of God — and apply it to their lives. Well, the conditions for revival have been met at the time in which we are studying and, as a result, great blessings are going to come to Nehemiah and his people....

⁴ Then stood up upon the stairs, of the Levites, Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani, and cried with a loud voice unto the LORD their God.

⁵ Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, Stand up and bless the LORD your God for ever and ever: and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

⁶ Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

⁷ Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham;

⁸ And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous:

⁹ And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red sea;

¹⁰ And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day.

¹¹ And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters.

¹² Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go.

¹³ Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments:

¹⁴ And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant:

¹⁵ And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them

that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them.

¹⁶ But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments,

¹⁷ And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

¹⁸ Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations;

¹⁹ Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go.

²⁰ Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

²¹ Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.

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.

²³ 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.

24 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.

25 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.

26 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.

27 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.

28 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;

29 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.

30 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.

31 Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.

32 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, 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.

33 Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly:

34 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.

35 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.

36 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:

37 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.

38 And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it.

~ I trust you read this prayer carefully and completely. If you have, then go back and read it again! Then, read it one more time, just to be sure. Revival doesn't happen by us standing up and calling attention to ourself – it's not

going to happen that way – not ever. Telling people what a big sinner you are is foolish pride — nothing else. But confessing our sins to Christ in prayer will make us stand up and praise and exalt God – just like Nehemiah did at the time in which we are studying. We need a whole lot more exalting God and praising the Lord Jesus Christ in our services today; and a lot less selfie-stuff. We *SURE* need less pride in the church. Even with all the coldness and indifference we have going on in Christian circles, no one seems to be concerned with confessing their sins. And I can discern that because we have a multitude of completely spiritually dead “*saints.*”

Nehemiah praised God for the way He had led their fathers in the past. These men revisited how God preserved Abraham and brought Israel out of Egypt. They acknowledge God led them by miracles; and how He had taken care of the children of Israel throughout history – and they praised God *FOR THAT*, friends. Have you ever just thanked God for whatever meager possessions you have? Do you thank God for just bringing you to the place where you are today? Do you ever thank God for His Word and that someone cares enough to at least *ATTEMPT* to explain it to you in a Spirit-filled manner – even though I am an utter failure at doing so? What kind of covenant have you made with God – anything? What vow do you owe Him?

Most so-called Christians do not give one thin dime to His work – even those who faithfully “*tithe;*” that’s right – and it’s because they do not mean business with God. Their giving is sinful, God doesn’t use it for anything worthwhile — and they will be held accountable — as in the account of the rich man and Lazarus. This isn’t funny business. Do you realize how badly you have failed Him? Have you ever talked to Him about it? Well, you ought to thank Him right now because you and I are so filthy and retched that God would be just to abandon us and leave us in total and complete darkness today — right *NOW!* Have you ever thanked Him that He doesn’t do that? ~

+++ +++