

From the West Meadow
Pastor Wes Higgins

Great Britain recently voted to leave the European Union. The British have become disgusted with the changes the nation has undergone—they want to return to “the old ways”. The changes in our own nation have been so overwhelming that many Americans also want to turn back the clock and return to “the old ways”.

In Jeremiah 6, God talks about returning to “the old paths where the good way is” and how “there you will find rest”. But the people said, “We will not walk in it” (Jeremiah 6:16). We want the old paths, or ways, but we aren’t willing to do what it will take to return to them. Jeremiah continues: “I set watchmen over you, saying ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, ‘We will not listen’”. (verse 17) God says He will bring calamity on the people. The calamity? “The fruit of their thoughts (the consequences of their own ideas and actions), because they have not heeded My words nor My law, but rejected it.” (Verse 19)

God’s law is the moral foundation upon which all laws are based. If we—or any nation, Great Britain included—want to return to the “old paths where the good way is”, we must return to a just and moral foundation.

God’s laws are not only the basis for morality and justice, but also, as David found, “in keeping them there is great reward” (Psalm 19:11) God set up the ancient nation of Israel as an example for the nations surrounding it. In Deuteronomy 4:6-7 Moses warned, “...be careful to observe them (God’s commandments); for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us...?”

But Israel failed to live up to the covenant God had made with them, not because the covenant was bad, but because the people lacked the heart and the spirit to keep it—see Hebrews 8:7-8. God, of course, knew they lacked the heart to keep His covenant and law. “Oh that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!” (Deuteronomy 5:29) But He is making a new covenant, one made through Jesus Christ, in which He has given us His Spirit. He says, “I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” (Hebrews 8:10)

Paul tells us that “the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be.” (Romans 8:7-9) Conversely, then, the Spirit-lead mind is subject to God’s law and can please God, because He has put His Spirit in us.

What Israel could not do—set a right example, live according to God’s law (because of the weakness of the flesh, see Romans 8:3-4)—we as Christians can do.

We have been called to be Ambassadors for the Kingdom of God. As ambassadors we should be walking the old paths, heeding God’s word, living by His laws...showing the world “where the good way is.”

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