

## ***Nehemiah Chapter 9***

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- Jehovah God is the main subject of this chapter - who He is, what He does for His people, and what His people must do for Him.
  - This chapter is basically a prayer that reviews the history of the nation and reveals both the majesty of God, and the depravity of man.
  - This chapter and prayer can be broken down to three basic parts:  
V: 1-6 The greatness of God.  
V: 7-30 The goodness of God.  
V: 31-38 The grace of God.
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V: 1-3 The feast of Tabernacles had just ended, and their feasting had turned to fasting.

- The children of Israel assembled themselves again - likely at the same location in the square or public area near the water gate.
- They had been taking in a steady diet of God's word and it was impacting them.

**Matthew 4:4** "... it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

**1 Peter 2:2** "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

- Now that they've partaken of God's Word they are broken and grieved over their sin so they assemble in a manner that reflects what is happening on the inside.

**Romans 3:20** "... for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

- The Word of God revealed their sinfulness to them:

**Hebrews 4:12** "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

- Fasting from the things of the world and flesh; sackcloth - which was kind of a form of penance or self affliction (itchy burlap sack) and dirt upon their heads was / is a typical middle eastern demonstration of grief and sorrow.

V: 2 As a part of that process they separated themselves from the strangers or foreigners - they "sanctified" themselves, meaning they set themselves apart.

**Leviticus 20:26** “And ye shall be holy unto Me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.”

- They stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers - we have to be willing to confess our own sins before we can confess the sins of others.
- When we confess our sins, first it's an act of humility. Secondly it's an admission that God is and was right, that His Word is true and that what we did was wrong. Our confession gives Him glory.

**1 John 1:8-9** “<sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

- True confession simply means to agree with God's Word instead of offering excuses or some attempt to rationalize our actions.

V: 3 They continued reading the in the book of the Law for 1/4 part of the day. They divided their days into 4 parts, 4 six hour blocks of time. From 0600 to noon, noon to 1800, 1800 to midnight. Then midnight to 0600. So they're doing 6 hour bible studies in the hot sun.

- Their time in God's word brought them to the place of confession, and to worship. When we spend time in God's Word we come to recognize more and more who He is and how wonderful He is, we get a glimpse of His glory and righteousness which when we come to that we see ourselves for what we are - exposed in the light, revealed.
- We are brought once again to confession and the realization of who and what He is, and we are compelled to worship!

*“Worship involves the Word of God, for the Word of God reveals the God of the Word.”*

- They were spending 1/2 of their day either reading God's word, confessing their sins, and worshipping God!

V: 4-6 The passage before us from V:4-38 is actually the longest prayer recorded in the Bible.

- It is a good thing to think, to meditate, to reflect on the goodness of God and upon the great things He has done for us.
- Certain of the Levites who are named stood up and began to cry out to the Lord. Then some of the same group and a few others commanded the congregation to stand up and bless the Lord!

- Then we see this doxology of praise and worship: “**5Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.**”
- God’s name is Holy! Not to be profaned, but to be lifted up on high!

**V: 6 The greatness of God is declared 4 different ways:**

1. In the fact that He, “**the Lord alone is God.**” The nation was surrounded by plenty of false pagan gods, but the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the true and the living God, He alone is God.
2. God’s greatness is declared and demonstrated in the fact that He created the universe, and everything in it.
  - Giving God praise and glory for having made heaven and earth and all that is in them. Acknowledging Him as our creator, the vastness of God.
3. God’s greatness is seen in the fact that God takes care of his creation, He preserves us. He is involved in the affairs of His children.

God preserves all things:

**Colossians 1:16-17** “**16For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: 17And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.**” (Held together)

4. God’s greatness is seen in the fact that the “host of heaven worships Him.”

**V: 7-8 Acknowledging that God created the heaven’s and the earth - and that He made them a nation through His promise to Abraham, whom He called out of the Ur of the Chaldees.**

- God made promises to Abraham, which He has kept, because He is righteous.

**Psalms 145:17** “**The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.**”

**V: 9-11 The Lord cares for His people, he cares for you. He heard their cries in Egypt and responded, He took action.**

**Deuteronomy 26:8** “**And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders.**”

- God prevailed upon Egypt and upon Pharaoh and his great army. First through the 10 plagues upon Egypt, then finally as He parted the Red Sea to allow the

children of Israel to cross on dry ground - then closed the waters of the “deeps” upon them.

- Many stick to the false idea that the children of Israel crossed the “Reed Sea” which amounts to a marshy or swampy area North of the Red Sea.

Bible map / Exodus Route:

- There are several reasons why this isn’t true, but among them is this description in Nehemiah’s recounting of the event - at he mentions “the deeps” and “mighty waters” - swamps & marshes don’t qualify for these terms.

V: 12 The children of Israel were led by the Shekinah glory of God: a cloudy pillar by day, and a pillar of fire by night: just like God’s Word.

**Psalm 119:105** “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

V: 13-14 Still declaring the history of the nation: how God descended upon Sinai / Jabbal Al Lawz



- The children of Israel were given God’s Word; right judgments, true laws, good statutes, and commandments.

**Psalm 19:7-11** “<sup>7</sup>The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. <sup>8</sup>The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. <sup>9</sup>The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. <sup>10</sup>More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. <sup>11</sup>Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”

- Special mention is made of the Sabbath, the “Holy Sabbath” - God’s rest, which speaks of Jesus who is our Sabbath and our rest.

V: 15 Testimony, again giving glory to God for His faithful abundant provision during their wilderness wandering years, bread from Heaven, water from the rock, meeting all their needs.

- Of course these things speak of Jesus:

**John 6:33, 48** “<sup>33</sup>For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” - “<sup>48</sup>I am the bread of life.”

V: 16-21 God was and is always faithful; but His people, including us, sadly are not.

**Psalm 119:90** “Thy faithfulness is unto all generations...”

- God continued to sustain His people, even when they didn't deserve it; grace upon grace.
- How did God's children respond to His greatness and his goodness?
- Pridefully, they hardened their necks, they didn't listen / hearkened not, they refused to obey, neither were they mindful of his wonders.

V: 22-23 The Lord gave them kingdoms & nations, they went in and possessed the land that the Lord had promised them.

V: 24-25 God gave them victory and with it the spoil, and the land.

**Deuteronomy 28:1-2** “<sup>1</sup>And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: <sup>2</sup>And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.”

- Moving into the promised land they transitioned from a nomadic life, living in tents to a more stationary life moving into houses that were already built, vineyards that were already planted, etc.

V: 26-31 “*Nevertheless...*” an ominous word.

- The history of Israel is much like the history of the church. God is faithful, but so often his people are not.
- Our passage describes the different times and ways in which the children of Israel were disobedient to the Word of God. Casting His law behind their backs, turning their back upon God and His Word. Killing His messengers, those who brought the Word of God to the people.
- The back and forth nature of their history (Judges); yet in all of this God was not only faithful, He was merciful, and patient. He did not consume them but was in fact gracious towards them.

“<sup>31</sup> ... *for thou art a gracious and merciful God.*” (OT vs: NT)

V: 32-38 This is still all part of their prayer before the Lord.

*“32b ...let not all the trouble seem little before thee...”*

- This is all very big to us, don't underestimate the impact and suffering.

V: 33 People are so often prone to blaming God for the misfortunes in their lives, or even the repercussions of their own sin, but here they are declaring that God is “just”, that He has done rightly, and that they have done wickedly.

- That is an honest assessment of things.
- You are just and merciful, we've deserved all these things - we're in bondage because of it. Our lives, our substance, our strength are given over to and under control of the kings of Persia because of our sin.

**Galatians 6:7-8** *“<sup>7</sup>Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. <sup>8</sup>For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”*

- We would make a solemn oath, a covenant with you...

[This chapter leads into Chapter 10:](#)

**Nehemiah 10:29** *“They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an 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 Lord, and His judgments and His statutes.”*

- On the basis of God's grace, the children of Israel are asking Him for another chance, a new beginning...

**Ephesians 2:8-9** *“<sup>8</sup>For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: <sup>9</sup>Not of works, lest any man should boast.”*