

Radiant Church, October 24, 2021
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Nehemiah 9 What Repentance Looks and Feels Like

Nehemiah 9:1 *Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads.*

Physical/outward signs of mourning over sin in that time period

Nehemiah 9:2 *And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.*

Separated themselves in order to own their own personal and the nation's sin, without projecting the same on to others (foreigners)

Verse 2 is a summation of what follows...

Nehemiah 9:3 *And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made confession and worshiped the LORD their God.*

Not what they said about their sin, but what God said about their sin

Reading God's Word should result in confession of sin, and worship of our gracious God

Nehemiah 9:4-5 *On the stairs of the Levites stood Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani; and they cried with a loud voice to the LORD their God. Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, "Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.*

The leaders leading in confession of their own sin, and the sins of their people

Worship is response to our sin, and God's greatness

"exalted above blessing and praise" = no worship is enough. God deserves more

Nehemiah 9:6 *You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.*

There is only one God

God is the only Creator and Sustainer

Those without sin (those in heaven) worship God constantly

What follows is a review of OT history, the history of the relationship between God and His chosen people, Israel

Nehemiah 9:7-8 a review of Genesis 12ff, God's choosing and making covenant promises to Abraham, offspring and land, and God kept those covenant promises

Nehemiah 9:9-15 a review of Exodus through Moses to Joshua

Nehemiah 9:16-21 a review of how the people sinned against God, but God was gracious and forgiving, and continued to care for and lead them

Nehemiah 9:22-25 taken from the Book of Joshua, God gave them the land, as He promised He would

Nehemiah 9:26-30a a review of the history of Judges and the kingdoms of Saul, David and Solomon, and the history recounted in 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles

Nehemiah 9:30b a synopsis of the Assyrian/Babylonian/Persian exile

Nehemiah 9:31 *Nevertheless, in your great mercies you did not make an end of them of forsake them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.*

A conclusion statement of their most recent history, how God had allowed some of them (a "remnant") to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple and the city walls

God let them suffer for their sin, but did not abandon them, because God has remained true to His promises

Nehemiah 9:32 *Now, therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love, let not all the hardship seem little to you that has come upon us, upon our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all your people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day.*

Since You are the promise-keeping God, please continue to be so for us, for we are hurting because of the results of our own sin against you.

Nehemiah 9:33-35 *Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly. Our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept your law or paid attention to your commandments and your warnings that you gave them. Even in their own kingdom, and amid your great goodness that you gave them, and in the large and rich land that you set before them, they did not serve you or turn from their wicked ways.*

We have received what we deserved

You are faithful in Your judgments, and You are faithful in Your mercies
Holiness - Grace (God is both in equal measure)

Nehemiah 9:36-37 *Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that you gave to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves. And its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins. They rule over our bodies and over our livestock as they please, and we are in great distress.*

They are back home, but there are slaves in their own homes, still under the thumb of their captors. Freedom from captivity, but not really free at all.

Nehemiah 9:38 *Because of all this we make a firm covenant in writing; on the sealed document are the names of our princes, our Levites, and our priests.*

Not necessarily enacting a new covenant with God, but formerly agreeing to the original covenant God had made with them in the past.