

# Let's Worship God

12th-17th August 2019  
Nehemiah





## **Monday - Nehemiah 9:1, Matthew 6:1-18 - Fasting**

The wall was built, the people had heard the Word of the Lord and had sought to obey it, and now they all gather together to confess their sins. There are some very significant aspects to this assembly of the people:

It was an assembly of humble repentance - they assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads:

a. The people had experienced much of the blessing of God - they had been enabled to rebuild the wall, they had been protected from the attacks of opponents and they had experienced great joy in the presence of the Lord as the Word of God was read and proclaimed. Now it was time for the people publicly to confess their sins and to repent before the Lord.

b. The people assembled with fasting. Fasting was a visible representation of their poverty of spirit and their need of God; it also demonstrated that they were so concerned about their sin that eating did not seem to be that important. Fasting in itself is of little value unless it is a result of the awareness of sin and desire to seek God in repentance.

c. They put on sackcloth and put dust on their heads. This was another symbol of humility before God to demonstrate their lowly position before the almighty God of heaven.

All this was done publicly as a corporate act that affected the whole of the people and whilst public acts of humiliation and fasting may be important in certain circumstances, it must always be remembered that Jesus taught that our acts of fasting and humiliation must be done away from the public gaze of men, in secret. Mat. 5:16 - 18

### **Questions**

1. What is the purpose of fasting?
2. Why did they put sackcloth and dust on their heads?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that we be always seeking to put sin to death.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

“Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly.” Nehemiah 9:33

**Praise: Psalm 18 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



## **Tuesday - Nehemiah 9:2; Ezra 10:10-12 - Separation**

The second aspect of this great meeting of the people was that it was an assembly in which they were to separate themselves from all those who were not a part of the people of Israel. God's people are called to be holy and holiness is separation - separation from sin and separation to God.

The first step towards holiness is an awareness of the fact that we have 'missed the mark'. One way of looking at sin is by using an illustration from archery - it does not matter if the target is missed by an inch or by a mile, if the arrow does not hit the target, it has missed! That is how it is with sin. If God's commands are not met in their entirety we have missed the mark! So having separated themselves physically from all foreign elements, the people now seek to separate themselves from their sin.

Once aware of sin it is important that the sin is confessed. It is interesting to note here that they not only confessed their own sin but also the sins of their fathers. That is not to suggest that there was some kind of 'generational curse' upon them. The Bible makes it clear that God does not punish children for the sins of their fathers, (Ezekiel 18), but it was a recognition that they came from sinful ancestors. This was particularly important for the people of Israel where there was a tradition of glorifying their ancestors.

The people stood and confessed their sin. They had experienced great blessing both in the completion of the wall and the spiritual rejoicing in the feast of Tabernacles, and yet there was still the need for confession and repentance. As C.H. Spurgeon wrote, 'Repentance grows as faith grows. Do not make any mistake about it; repentance is not a thing of days and weeks, a temporary penance to be got over as fast as possible! No it is the grace of a lifetime, like faith itself. Repentance is the inseparable companion of faith.'

### **Questions**

1. Who were the people supposed to separate from? What is confession of sin?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that you would confess and repent of your sins.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

“Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly.” Nehemiah 9:33

**Praise: Psalm 19 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



### **Wednesday - Nehemiah 9:3; Psalm 119:9-16 - Hearing the Word**

Fasting and confession of sin were vital for the people, but there also had to be a hearing of the Word of the Lord. Every religious act that the people of God engage in must be directed and informed by the living Word of God. It was, of course important that the people should confess their sins, but confession must be followed by obedience and so it was necessary that the people should hear what it was that God required of them.

It would seem highly likely that the same pattern as seen in the previous chapter would have been followed: the public reading of the Word together with explanation or preaching. What is quite remarkable in this passage is the length of time that the people stood to hear the word of the Lord and in confession and worship.

We may safely assume that the time spent before the Lord was not spent in frivolous activity or in so-called worship that is designed to gratify the senses. What is in view here is a solemn gathering of people so keen to hear the Word of God that they were prepared to stand for hour after hour listening to its message - how different is today's professing Christian who can barely tolerate sitting in a comfortable seat for more than twenty minutes to hear the Word preached! Not only did they spend a long time listening to the Scriptures, they followed it up with a lengthy period of confession, prayer, and worship.

There was evidence of a brokenness of spirit before the Lord which led them to confession, eagerness to hear the Scriptures, and desire to worship the Lord in humility and reverence. This has been a mark of true revival throughout the centuries - when people are truly broken because of their sin it will inevitably lead to this seriousness and humility before God.

#### **Questions**

1. What were the people prepared to do to hear God's Word?
2. What desire did the people have?

#### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that you would grow in your desire for the Word of God.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

#### **Memory Verse**

"Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly." Nehemiah 9:33

**Praise: Psalm 20 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



## **Thursday - Nehemiah 9:4-15 - Praise**

The confession and worship of the people was led by the Levites. It is not clear if this very long prayer was prayed by the Levites, or if, as tradition says, it was prayed by Ezra. What is important is the content of the prayer:

a. Praise for the glory of God. The prayer begins with an acknowledgment that God is highly exalted above all things, and that is the place that all adoration must begin.

b. Praise for the creation of God. It is always good to remember that everything around us came into being by the creative work and will of the sovereign God, especially in these days when the skill and ingenuity of man is so highly praised. Looking at the glory of God's creation gives us a reason to praise Him, to humble ourselves before Him, and to trust Him.

c. Praise for God's electing love. The prayer looks back with thankfulness to the way that God chose Abraham, made a covenant with him, and made gracious promises to him. God's electing love should never be far from the prayers of God's people, for if He had not taken pity upon us and chosen us in Christ, we would be forever lost.

d. Praise for God's faithful deliverance and gracious provision. When the people were in distress, God delivered them from bondage, guided them through the wilderness, provided for them both spiritual and physical food. How much greater cause have we to praise God for deliverance from sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus, daily guidance by the Holy Spirit through the Word, and gracious provision for every need.

Praise is a very important element in our worship and in our prayers - it is when we are truly humbled before Him and recognise our total dependence upon Him that we really begin to appreciate and praise His unsurpassed goodness.

### **Questions**

1. What did the people praise God for?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Give thanks for all that God has done for you today.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

“Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly.” Nehemiah 9:33

**Praise: Psalm 21 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# NEHEMIAH

pray | plan | build

## Friday - Nehemiah 9:16-31 - Two Different Responses

Having praised God for all his great goodness and mercy, the prayer then acknowledged the terrible response of their forefathers. God had been so good to Israel, but they had reacted so badly to it: a. They acted proudly. God's goodness should have led them to repentance and humility, but it had the opposite effect. b. They refused to obey. It is astonishing that after the miraculous deliverance the people had experienced and the way that God had provided for them, they then refused to do what God required of them. c. They did not remember. It is so easy to receive benefits and quickly forget all about them.

Such ingratitude, pride, disobedience, and forgetfulness could have brought about severe punishment, but the response of God to such behaviour was quite different: a. In spite of their rebellion and disobedience God was always willing to forgive. What a great comfort that is for the saint of God to know that even when we sin and disobey, our God is always ready to pardon. b. Even when they sank into open idolatry God did not forsake His people - He still guided them and provided for them; such is the grace of a God towards His own chosen people. c. Alan Redpath comments; 'God's mercy with a sinner is only equalled and perhaps outmatched by His patience with the saints, with you and me'. In spite of constant rebellion, God's patience never failed.

One of the saddest aspects of the history of Israel is seen in the constant cycle of blessing followed by complacency and disobedience, followed by punishment, followed by repentance and a crying out to God for deliverance. The problem was that no sooner had God delivered them, than they rebelled again. The greatest wonder of all is the statement in v. 31 'Nevertheless, in your great compassion you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you are a gracious and compassionate God'.

### Questions

1. How does God respond to His people's rebellion?

### Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for God's patience and mercy.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

"Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly." Nehemiah 9:33

**Praise: Psalm 22 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



## **Saturday - Nehemiah 9:32-38 - Right and Wrong**

There finally came to the people an understanding of the situation. They had gone over the history of the people in their prayer and had rehearsed before God the sad cycle of blessing, rebellion, punishment and deliverance, now they finally came to the point where they were prepared to acknowledge that God was right, and they were wrong!

The statement that is made in verse 33 is the kind of confession that every child of God needs to make, especially when things have not gone well for him; 'You are just in all that has come upon us; for you have dealt faithfully, but we have acted wickedly'. Sadly Christian people often adopt the attitude of the world by blaming others or circumstances when things do not please them or when their personal situation becomes difficult. The cries of 'it's not fair' or 'I don't deserve this' should never be heard on the lips of professing Christians for that only demonstrates that we neither know God nor ourselves.

Things can only be seen in their proper perspective when the Christian recognises and acknowledges who God is v. 32, and that He always acts faithfully in relation to his people. At the same time, there must be recognition that because of our sinful nature, we so often act wickedly and deserve the discipline of the Lord in whatever form that might take.

When there is that recognition, the Christian is in a position, as were the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to set out before God the situation that is being faced and to cry out to Him for deliverance. This the people of the city did as they covenanted with God and made that commitment solemnly binding as they signed their names to a written document pledging themselves to obey the law and to serve God faithfully.

### **Questions**

1. What did the people realise about their situation?
2. What did they sign?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

"Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly." Nehemiah 9:33

**Praise: Psalm 23 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that  
Ezra read from  
the book of the Law  
day after day  
and that  
the people of God  
were filled with joy!**

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