

Nehemiah 9:26 - 11:36

Day 1

The Levites' Prayer Continues. Read Nehemiah 9:26-31

History of Israel's Rebellion

1. Even after all the blessings God gave them in the land (9:25), how did the people respond? 9:26 (See also Psalm 106:35-39)

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2. What cycle of responses ensued? 9:27-28 Trying drawing a circle or use arrows to show the path. (For an example see Judges 3:7-15.)

- What was God's deliverance "according to" (9:27,28)?

FYI: "After God had blessed His people and given them so much...they rebelled against Him. They turned their backs on His law. They turned to murder, religious perversion, and sexual perversion. So what choice did God have but to hand them over to the consequences of their sin - not out of anger or hate, but because He loves them too much to allow them to continue in their sin..."

With each cycle of apostasy...the sins and crimes of the people became worse and worse. God delivered Israel again and again and again. Here in this prayer we see a marvelous picture of the loving patience of God. He permits us the freedom to go our own way and to taste the results of our own sin. Sin itself is a punishment. It produces its own consequences...When we have inflicted enough suffering on ourselves and we call out to God for mercy, He stands ready to deliver us....The tough love of God will not willingly let us ruin our lives, but it will always see to warn us, lovingly confront our sin, and draw us back to Himself." - Ray Stedman (154)

3. Why did God warn/admonish the people? 9:29a

FYI: A man will live if he obeys them "The Law of Moses makes the path to righteousness through the law plain. If you want to live by the law (find life through the law), you must *do* the law – and do it completely and perfectly." [See Galatians 3:10-14] - David Guzik

"Salvation in any period is only by grace through faith (see Eph 2:8,9). Keeping the law was never a means of salvation, but a guide for living a life that pleases the Lord." - The Nelson Study Bible (802)

4. Underline reasons for why Israel was given the law.

- Joshua 1:7-8 "Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. 8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. NAS
- Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path. NAS
- Galatians 3:24 So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. NIV
- Romans 3:20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. NIV

5. List the phrases that describe the response the people had to the law. 9:29 (For a fuller description of this rebellion review 2 Kings 17:7-17.)

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6. How did the Lord deal with this rebellion? 9:30a

- What phrase describes the people's response in 9:30b? (Compare Matthew 11:15; 13:16)
- What did God finally have to do? 9:30c (See 2 Chronicles 36:15,16)
- What would you say this generation of returning exiles was acknowledging about their captivity?

FYI: "The Israelites had certainly endured many trials. They had been attacked by enemies from without and put into slavery by greedy nobles from within. Yet they had endured because of God's protection and provision for them. In the end, we find Ezra's public reading of the Word of God pricking the hearts of these weary wall-builders. They are reminded of God's greatness and their own failure to adequately live for His glory. ...The people asked the Lord to help them in their present distresses, yet they still recognized their distressed had befallen them because of their sin. They did not blame God, but also they did not refrain from asking for his mercy." - John MacArthur (123,124,128)

7. For what did the people praise God? 9:31 (Notice the phrase *did not forsake/abandon* is used three times: 9:17,19,31.)

- What other reason for not destroying the nation is given in 2 Kings 13:23?

Digging Deeper
Read through the prayer in 9:5-37 and mark all the adjectives describing God's character. In the face of all the sin, rebellion, and hatred that the nation of Israel showed toward the Lord, what would you say about God's heart for mankind?

Food for Thought: "The constant theme of the Levite's' praise was the graciousness of God. Ever since the first sin plunged all of humanity into sin, God has been graciously working to bring peace and reconciliation to the earth. After Adam sinned, God said that from Eve's 'seed' would come a Man who would crush Satan (see Genesis 3:15). From that point forward, history...has been leading up to that Person. In the meantime, the world continued to rebel, and God continued to respond to each rebellion with a mixture of...discipline and graciousness. He destroyed the world, yet started over with one family. He scattered the nations when He shattered the Tower of Babel, but He then chose one new nation from whom He would bless all the families of the earth. When that new nation, Israel, rebelled against Him in the wilderness, God disciplined them but also guided them through their wanderings by way of a cloud and supernatural light. God is still faithful and gracious to His people today. The difference is that now God has sent His Son in the ultimate act of His graciousness. Jesus came as a sacrifice for sin, and in the consummate act of kindness, He gave His life for people who hated Him and wanted Him dead. As a result, the news of the gospel is really the news that Gods' graciousness has conquered the hearts of presumptuous sinner. Jesus' grace is stronger than the hardest of sinners' hearts."

- John MacArthur (131)

Applying the Word: If you were reviewing your life, what would you highlight as a time when God's patience and compassion were amazingly extended to you?

Day 2

The Levites' Prayer Continues. Read Nehemiah 9:32 - 10:29

Confession, Praise and Supplication

8. As they began to address their own present condition (notice the change from "they/them" to "we/us"), what plea was made? 9:32 On what qualities of God did they base their request?

- Why would they think their troubles might seem "small/insignificant"?

FYI: "Verses 9:32-35 form the heart of this prayer. They concern the present generation and its repentance of its own failures. The contrast between the faithfulness of God and the disobedience of the people is emphasized. The prayer ends abruptly on a deep note of despair." - Africa Bible Commentary (554)

9. What adjectives did they use to describe God's dealings with them? 9:33

10. For what reasons were they facing difficulties? 9:34,35

FYI: "Genuine confession involves a humble and abject admission of sin, as we see here in this prayer. No excuses. No attempt to avoid responsibility or condemnation. The only sacrifice God wants from us is a broken spirit and a contrite heart." - Ray Stedman (158)

11. What circumstances did the people find themselves in? 9:36

- In what sense were they "slaves"? 9:37

FYI: "Israel, at this time, was not an independent nation – they were a province of the Empire of Persia and were under heavy Persian taxes and obligations. They ask God to deliver them once again from this oppression!" - David Guzik

12. What did they propose to do? 9:38

FYI: "The people had now taken note of the Scripture record of their merciful covenant-keeping God and His faithfulness in contrast to their unfaithfulness. In that recognition was the root of the revival of this people, which was brought about by a humble acceptance and obedience to God's Word. How important it is that this acceptance and obedience should go hand in hand, so that the believer's life in every aspect is centered on that Word and the God and Christ revealed in that Word. (Psalm 1:1-3; John 8:31-32)" - Roland Wickes (19)

13. What groups (84 total) signed the document? (see 10:38)

- 10:8b
- 10:9
- 10:14
- 10:28

FYI: "**Priests** who were heads of households signed the agreement in the name of the houses and families of their respective classes...(10:14) The **leaders**. In contrast to the religious leaders, these were the political leaders of the Jewish community (compare 7:4-63)." - The Nelson Study Bible (803)

14. To what did they agree? 10:29 (See Deuteronomy 28 for the example of the blessings and curses pronounced under Moses.)

FYI: "**Taking on themselves a curse:** The phrase points to the penalties for failure to comply with the covenant." - The Nelson Study Bible (804)

Applying the Word: What threats do you see America facing today? What threats do you see believers facing? What kind of prayers do you think we should be making for our nation and all believers?

Day 3

Obligations of the Document . Read Nehemiah 10:30-39

15. Give a brief summary of the terms of the covenant that the people made.

10:30	
10:31	(See Leviticus 25:1-6; 18-22 on crops; Deuteronomy 15:1-6 on debts)
10:32,33	
10:34	(See Leviticus 6:12,13)
10:35-37	(Numbers 18:21)
10:38,39	(Numbers 18:26)

FYI: We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons.

10:30 "In our melting-pot, multicultural society, this sounds like a bigoted statement. But there was an excellent reason for making that commitment. The idol-worshiping tribes that surrounded Israel engaged in outrageously degenerate religious and sexual practices, including human and infant sacrifice, and the worship of sexual organs, and other degrading practices. Their immorality had spread disease and death among their people...The issue is not race but religion. Any Canaanite, Hittite, Amorite (etc.) ...who converted to faith in the one true God and worshiped according to God's commandments was welcomed into the Israelite community without prejudice." - Ray Stedman (162,164) See Judges 3:6,7; Psalm 106:35-39

"The law [See Exodus 34:14-16] now applied to *the peoples around us* (10:30), those who were outside the Jewish community and who had been moved into the area by the Assyrians and Babylonians (2 Kings 17:24). Mixed marriages would be a threat to a people who were still searching for their identity in a multicultural empire. It is important to note that the goal of this law is the preservation of the faith, not the purity of any racial or ethnic group (Col. 3:11)." - Africa Bible Commentary

16. What had God promised about the giving of **firstfruits**? Proverbs 3:9-10

- Why and how did God require the redemption of the **firstborn**? Exodus 13:11-16

17. What blessing had been promised to Israel concerning **tithes**? Malachi 3:10

Applying the Word: If you were to recommit some part of your life to God, what would it be? (e.g. What habit needs to be submitted....what behavior needs to be changed...what action needs to be taken...what relationship needs forgiveness...)

Day 4

The People Settle in Jerusalem and Outside. Read Nehemiah 11

18. What other issue did the people address? 11:1 (See 7:4) What economic, social or other sacrifices might someone have to make by moving to Jerusalem?

FYI: "The last chapters record important aspects of Israel's life as they enter the phase of consolidation: the nation's size and distribution; the nation's defense; and the nation's purity." - Irving Jensen (75)

19. How were the people selected for settling Jerusalem? 11:1,2 How many moved to the city?

- How did the people regard the families that moved to Jerusalem? 11:2

20. What three tribes are mentioned in the setting of Jerusalem? 11:3,3

21. Summarize the following divisions in chapter 11.

- vv. 4-19
- vs. 20-21
- vv. 22-24
- vv. 25-36

22. Some interesting special positions and jobs are mentioned in 11:8-24? Why do you think some people or jobs were singled out?
- 23.** What do you see God communicating by the careful preservation of the names, numbers and descriptions of these people?

FYI: Work of the temple (11:12) - these were officiating priests. They offered sacrifices, presented offerings, and performed the rituals Moses had prescribed.

Able men/valiant warriors (11:14) "Clearly, Jerusalem was a city ringed with enemies and the city needed to be defended by warriors, including warriors of the priestly class. These priests were called upon from time to time to take up their swords and shields and defend their city in battle." - Ray Stedman (188)

"In charge of the outside work of the house (11:16)- refers to the maintenance of the temple, including repairs.

The **gatekeepers** (11:19) were also defenders of the city." - The Nelson Study Bible (805)

The king's agent/representative/deputy (11:24) "This individual may have received and forwarded petitions and complaints to the king." - The Nelson Study Bible (805)

Asaph and Jeduthun, appear frequently in the Psalms. Asaph was a psalmist (see Psalm 50,73-83) and Jeduthun was a director of music (see Psalm 39,62,77). They led the congregation of Israel in praise and worship in the time of King David." - Ray Stedman (190)

"The cities mentioned ranged from the Mediterranean coast to the Jordan Valley, from the tribe of Benjamin's ancestral lands north and west of Jerusalem to the tribe of Judah's ancestral lands to the south and west. These were all towns from which the capital city of Jerusalem could expect help in times of trouble."

- Ray Stedman (192)

Applying the Word:

"Putting all of it together, allow me to share some timeless truths. The first one is this: *Your gifts make you valuable although not necessarily famous.* If you are gifted in an area that will never each the spotlight, don't worry about it. You are as valuable as Mattaniah or Uzzi, and you will be just about as well-known. But relax, you are not anonymous to God.

The second truth: *Every labor done in love is remembered by God.* It's never forgotten. Put Hebrews 6:10 in the margin of your mind and every time you begin to feel sorry because you are not in the limelight, remember that God never overlooks one deed.

The third truth I see in Nehemiah 11 is: *Our final rewards will be determined on the basis of faithfulness - not public applause...*God never checks an applause meter to determine our rewards."

- Charles Swindoll (179,180)

What would you like the Lord to remember about your life?

What is the importance of genealogies in the Bible?

- Many family records, or genealogies, exist in the Bible. These records are mentioned frequently in Genesis, Numbers, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and concerning Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. While readers often skim or skip these parts of Scripture, the Bible's genealogies offer many important insights.
- First, the Bible's genealogies help confirm the historical reliability of the Bible. For example, the records from Abraham, to his son Isaac, to Jacob, to the descendants of Jacob up to the time of David and beyond reveal not only precision but that the events of the Bible involve actual people.
- Second, the Bible's genealogies reveal the importance of family to God and to the writers of the Bible. The family unit has served as the foundation of human society since Adam and Eve and their children. The importance of family is emphasized in each generation mentioned throughout the Bible.
- Third, the Bible's genealogies were also important in determining who could serve in certain roles. These included only Levites working in the tabernacle and temple, as well as descendants of Aaron who were to serve as high priest. In addition, many activities in the Mosaic Law were limited to those who could prove they were Jewish descendants.
- Fourth, the Bible's genealogies also prove many Bible prophecies. For example, Jesus would be a Jew from the tribe of Judah. He was also a descendent of both Abraham and David as Scripture predicted.
- Fifth, the Bible's genealogies also teach how God has used a wide diversity of individuals throughout history. For example, in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, four women were mentioned, emphasizing the importance of women (especially important in the original setting of the Gospel when women were often considered of less importance than men). In addition, unexpected people are included in this family list. Rahab the prostitute was mentioned as a direct ancestor of Jesus as was Ruth, a Moabite woman. Jews would not typically view positively. Further, many kings were listed whose lives varied in integrity, yet were still used by God in the lineage of Jesus.
- Though family lists may not seem as exciting as other parts of the Bible, each name and list represents important information that has significance in much of biblical history. Some of the genealogies even contain interesting information about the people's lives (for instance, the prayer of Jabez is found embedded in a genealogy in 1 Chronicles 4:9-10). Further, a study of these family records also offers many insights regarding application for today.

<https://www.compellingtruth.org/Bible-genealogies.html>