



World Christian Fellowship

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Nehemiah Session 11

Nation on its knees.

Nehemiah 9:1-38,

“A Nation on Its Knees: The Power of Confession and Covenant Renewal”

Genuine repentance leads to revival when God’s people remember His faithfulness and renew their covenant with Him.

I. The Posture of Repentance (V. 1–5)

Nehemiah 9:1-5, *Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads. ²Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners; and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. ³And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for one-fourth of the day; and for another fourth they confessed and worshiped*

the Lord their God. ⁴Then Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani stood on the stairs of the Levites and cried out with a loud voice to the Lord their God. ⁵And the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said: “Stand up and bless the Lord your God Forever and ever! “Blessed be Your glorious name, Which is exalted above all blessing and praise!

Revival begins with humility and confession.

- **Fasting, sackcloth, and separation (V 1)**
Show deep sorrow over sin.
Sackcloth and dust on their head.
- The people **confess sins and worship (V 3)**
A model of heartfelt repentance.
Spent ¼ day of reading the scriptures.
Spent ¼ day confessing and worship.
Conviction comes through the word of God.
- Leaders call the people to **stand and bless the Lord (V 5)** shifting from guilt to praise.

The people fasted, wore sackcloth, and separated themselves outward signs of inward sorrow.

They spent hours reading the Law and confessing sins.

Leaders led them in worship, moving from guilt to praise.

Biblical Example:

The People of Nineveh when Jonah preached, the entire city fasted, wore sackcloth, and repented. God relented from judgment.

Jonah 3:5–10,

Are we willing to humble ourselves publicly before God?

True repentance involves both sorrow for sin and reverence for God.

Ponder:

- What outward signs of repentance do you see in these verses?
- Why do you think the people spent so much time reading and confessing?
- How does public repentance affect a community?

Reflect:

- When was the last time you confessed sin with deep sincerity?
- What keeps us from humbling ourselves before God?

II. The Praise of God's Faithfulness (V 6–15)

Nehemiah 9:6-15, *You alone are the Lord; You have made heaven, The heaven of heavens, with all their host, The earth and everything on it, The seas and all that is in them, And You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You.*
⁷*“You are the Lord God, Who chose Abram, And brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans, And gave him the name Abraham;*
⁸*You found his heart faithful before You, And made a covenant with him To give the land of the Canaanites, The Hittites, the Amorites, The Perizzites, the Jebusites, And the Girgashites— To give it to his descendants. You have performed Your words, For You are righteous.* ⁹*“You saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, And heard their cry by the Red Sea. ¹⁰You showed signs and wonders against Pharaoh, Against all his servants, And against all the people of his land. For You knew that they acted proudly against them. So You made a name for Yourself, as it is this day. ¹¹And You divided the sea before them, So that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; And their persecutors You threw into the deep, As a stone into the mighty waters. ¹²Moreover You led them by day with a cloudy pillar, And by night with a pillar of fire, To give them light on the road Which they should travel. ¹³“You came down also on Mount Sinai, And spoke with them from heaven, And gave them just ordinances and true laws, Good statutes and commandments. ¹⁴You made known to them Your holy Sabbath, And commanded them precepts, statutes and laws,*

By the hand of Moses Your servant. ¹⁵You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger, And brought them water out of the rock for their thirst, And told them to go in to possess the land Which You had sworn to give them.

God's character and actions deserve worship.

- **Creator of all (V 6)**
God's sovereignty over creation.
 - **Covenant with Abraham (V 7–8)**
God's faithfulness to His promises.
 - **Deliverance from Egypt (V 9–11)**
God's power and compassion.
 - **Provision in the wilderness (V 12–15)**
God's care and sustenance.
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- ✓ God is Creator (V 6),
 - ✓ Covenant Keeper (V 7–8),
 - ✓ Deliverer (V 9–11), and
 - ✓ Provider (V 12–15).

Noah (Genesis 9:8–17)

God preserved Noah and made a covenant never to flood the earth again.

Abraham (Genesis 21:1–2)

God gave him a son in old age, fulfilling His promise.

Moses and Israel (Exodus 14:21–31)

God parted the Red Sea and delivered His people.

Remembering God's past faithfulness fuels present trust.

How often do we rehearse His goodness?

Ponder:

- What specific acts of God's faithfulness are mentioned?
- How does remembering God's character impact our worship?
- Why is it important to rehearse God's goodness regularly?

Reflect:

- List 3 ways God has been faithful in your life.
- How can you build a habit of remembering and sharing these stories?

III. The Pattern of Rebellion (V 16–31)

Nehemiah 9:16-31, *"But they and our fathers acted proudly, Hardened their necks, And did not heed Your commandments. ¹⁷They refused to obey, And they were not mindful of Your wonders That You did among them. But they hardened their necks, And in their rebellion They appointed a leader To return to their bondage. But You are God, Ready to pardon, Gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, Abundant in kindness, And did not forsake them. ¹⁸"Even when they made a moulded calf for themselves, And said, 'This is your god That brought you up out*

of Egypt,' And worked great provocations, ¹⁹Yet in Your manifold mercies You did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day, To lead them on the road; Nor the pillar of fire by night, To show them light, And the way they should go. ²⁰You also gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, And did not withhold Your manna from their mouth, And gave them water for their thirst. ²¹Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness; They lacked nothing; Their clothes did not wear out And their feet did not swell. ²²"Moreover You gave them kingdoms and nations, And divided them into districts. So they took possession of the land of Sihon, The land of the king of Heshbon, And the land of Og king of Bashan. ²³You also multiplied their children as the stars of heaven, And brought them into the land Which You had told their fathers To go in and possess. ²⁴So the people went in And possessed the land; You subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, The Canaanites, And gave them into their hands, With their kings And the people of the land, That they might do with them as they wished. ²⁵And they took strong cities and a rich land, And possessed houses full of all goods, Cisterns already dug, vineyards, olive groves, And fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled and grew fat, And delighted themselves in Your great goodness. ²⁶"Nevertheless they were disobedient And rebelled against You, Cast Your law behind their backs And killed Your prophets, who testified against them To turn them to Yourself; And they worked great provocations. ²⁷Therefore

You delivered them into the hand of their enemies, Who oppressed them; And in the time of their trouble, When they cried to You, You heard from heaven; And according to Your abundant mercies You gave them deliverers who saved them From the hand of their enemies. ²⁸“But after they had rest, They again did evil before You. Therefore You left them in the hand of their enemies, So that they had dominion over them; Yet when they returned and cried out to You, You heard from heaven; And many times You delivered them according to Your mercies, ²⁹And testified against them, That You might bring them back to Your law. Yet they acted proudly, And did not heed Your commandments, But sinned against Your judgments, ‘Which if a man does, he shall live by them.’ And they shrugged their shoulders, Stiffened their necks, And would not hear. ³⁰Yet for many years You had patience with them, And testified against them by Your Spirit in Your prophets. Yet they would not listen; Therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. ³¹Nevertheless in Your great mercy You did not utterly consume them nor forsake them; For You are God, gracious and merciful.

Despite God’s grace, Israel repeatedly turned away.

They were stubborn, made a golden calf, rejected prophets, and despised the land.

Yet God remained merciful, patient, and faithful.

- **Stubbornness and idolatry (V 16–18)**
Golden calf made and worshipped.
- **God’s mercy and patience (V 19–21)**
God did not forsake them.
God did not remove the cloud and Fire.
- **Cycles of rebellion and rescue (V 22–31)**
V 22-25 God led them to the Promised land.
V 26 Rebellion against God.
V 27 God gave them to enemies.
V 28-31 Gods mercy towards them in their rebellion.

Adam and Eve (Genesis 3)

Their disobedience introduced sin.

Tower of Babel (Genesis 11)

Humanity rebelled by seeking self-glory.

King Saul (1 Samuel 15)

Partial obedience led to rejection.

Korah’s Rebellion (Numbers 16)

Challenged God’s appointed leaders and faced judgment.

God’s mercy is greater than our failures.

Do we recognize the patterns of sin in our own lives and turn back quickly?

IV. The Plea for Mercy and Renewal (V 32–38)

Nehemiah 9:32-38, *“Now therefore, our God, The great, the mighty, and awesome God, Who keeps covenant and mercy: Do not let all the trouble seem small before You That has come upon us, Our kings and our princes, Our priests and our prophets, Our fathers and on all Your people, From the days of the kings of Assyria until this day. ³³However You are just in all that has befallen us; For You have dealt faithfully, But we have done wickedly. ³⁴Neither our kings nor our princes, Our priests nor our fathers, Have kept Your law, Nor heeded Your commandments and Your testimonies, With which You testified against them. ³⁵For they have not served You in their kingdom, Or in the many good things that You gave them, Or in the large and rich land which You set before them; Nor did they turn from their wicked works. ³⁶“Here we are, servants today! And the land that You gave to our fathers, To eat its fruit and its bounty, Here we are, servants in it! ³⁷And it yields much increase to the kings You have set over us, Because of our sins; Also they have dominion over our bodies and our cattle At their pleasure; And we are in great distress. ³⁸“And because of all this,*

We make a sure covenant and write it; Our leaders, our Levites, and our priests seal it.”

Confession leads to covenant renewal.

They acknowledged God’s justice and their guilt.

They recognized their suffering as a result of sin.

They wrote and sealed a covenant to recommit to obedience.

- Acknowledgment of **God’s justice** and **Israel’s guilt** (V 32–35)
- Recognition of **present suffering** due to past sin (V 36–37)
- A **written covenant** to recommit to obedience (V 38)

Joshua’s Covenant Renewal at Shechem (Joshua 24:14–27)

“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

King Josiah’s Reforms (2 Kings 22–23)

Upon discovering the Law, he led national repentance and covenant renewal.

Jesus and the New Covenant (Luke 22:20)

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood.”

Repentance isn’t just emotional but it’s actionable.

Are we willing to renew our commitment to God in tangible ways?

Ponder:

- What patterns of rebellion do you notice in Israel's history?
- How does God respond each time?
- What does this teach us about His character?

Reflect:

- Are there recurring struggles or sins in your life?
- What steps can you take to break those patterns?

Conclusion:

1. **Repentance is communal.**
Revival begins when God's people unite in humility.
2. **God's faithfulness is the foundation** for hope and renewal.
3. **Sin has consequences**, but mercy is always available.
4. **Covenant renewal is essential**—we must respond to grace with obedience.