

Ezra & Nehemiah; Lesson 7 Our Forgiving God

Neh 9:1-3; Dan 9:4-19; Neh 9:4-8; Col 1:16, 17; Neh 9:9-38; Rom 5:6-8.

Memory Verse

Proverbs 28:13 (NKJV) *“He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy”.*

Fasting and Worship (Sunday)

Nehemiah 8:2 *..on the first day of the seventh month...*

Nehemiah 8:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ *Now on the second day the heads of the fathers’ houses of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe, in order to understand the words of the Law. ¹⁴ And they found written in the Law, which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month,*

The Feast of Tabernacles Tishrei (September-October)

Nehemiah 8:18 (NKJV) *Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner.*

Nehemiah 9:1–3 *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. **Read Lincoln’s Proclamation***

Isaiah 58:5 *A day for a man to afflict his soul?*

Confessed

Nehemiah 9:2 *Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners; and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers... **Corporate Confession***

Daniel 9:20–21 (NKJV) *Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God, ²¹ yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.*

Isaiah 6:5 (NKJV) *So I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts.”*

Psalm 32:5 *Then I confessed my sins to you; I did not conceal my wrongdoings. I decided to confess them to you, and you forgave all my sins.*

Matthew 6:16–18 (NKJV) *“Moreover, **when you fast**, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ¹⁷ But you, **when you fast**, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*

Proverbs 28:13 (NKJV) *He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.*

Psalm 32:5 (NKJV) *I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah*

***1 John 1:9** (NKJV) *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Nehemiah 9:3 *And 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.*

Beginning of the Prayer (Monday)

Nehemiah 9:4–38

The first few phrases of the prayer focus on God as;

(1) Creator, (2) Preserver, and (3) Promise Keeper.

Nehemiah 9:6 (NKJV) *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.*

Colossians 1:16–17 (NKJV) *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.*

Lessons From the Past (Tuesday)

The call of God’s people and their deliverance.

Confession, along with repentance, is central to our own acknowledgment that we must be justified by Christ alone.

“When through repentance and faith we accept Christ as our Saviour, the Lord pardons our sins, and remits the penalty prescribed for the transgression of the law. The sinner then stands before God as a just person; he is taken into favor with Heaven, and through the Spirit has fellowship with the Father and the Son.”— SM, book 3, p. 191.

The Law and the Prophets (Wednesday)

Nehemiah 9:24, 25 (NKJV) *So 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. ²⁵ And 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.*

Deuteronomy 6:10–12 (NKJV) *“So it shall be, when the Lord your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, ¹¹ houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full—¹² then beware, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.*

Nehemiah 9:26 *“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. ²⁷ Therefore 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.*

They Cried Out To God

Psalms 106:44–45 (NKJV) *Nevertheless He regarded their affliction, When He heard their cry; And for their sake He remembered His covenant, And relented according to the multitude of His mercies.*

***Judges 6:6 (NKJV)** *6 So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord.*

Nehemiah 9:28 *“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, ²⁹ And 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. ³⁰ Yet 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. ³¹ Nevertheless in Your great mercy You did not utterly consume them nor forsake them; For You are God, gracious and merciful.*

***2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)** *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

Praise and Petition (Thursday)

Nehemiah 9:32–38 (NKJV) *“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. ³³ However You are just in all that has befallen us; For You have dealt faithfully, But we have done wickedly. ³⁴ Neither 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.*

Acts 7:53 (NKJV) *who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.”*

³⁵ *For 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! ³⁷ And 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.”*

Washington, D.C.
March 30, 1863

By the President of the United States of America.

A Proclamation.

Whereas, the Senate of the United States, devoutly recognizing the Supreme Authority and just Government of Almighty God, in all the affairs of men and of nations, has, by a resolution, requested the President to designate and set apart a day for National prayer and humiliation.

And whereas it is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.

And, insomuch as we know that, by His divine law, nations like individuals are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land, may be but a punishment, inflicted upon us, for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole People? We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.

Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!

It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

Now, therefore, in compliance with the request, and fully concurring in the views of the Senate, I do, by this my proclamation, designate and set apart Thursday, the 30th. day of April, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer. And I do hereby request all the People to abstain, on that day, from their ordinary secular pursuits, and to unite, at their several places of public worship and their respective homes, in keeping the day holy to the Lord, and devoted to the humble discharge of the religious duties proper to that solemn occasion.

All this being done, in sincerity and truth, let us then rest humbly in the hope authorized by the Divine teachings, that the united cry of the Nation will be heard on high, and answered with blessings, no less than the pardon of our national sins, and the restoration of our now divided and suffering Country, to its former happy condition of unity and peace.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this thirtieth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty seventh.

By the President: Abraham Lincoln
William H. Seward, Secretary of State.