THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH
"The Sinai Pact"
Nehemiah 9:13-15

Introduction

1. Both Levites and people have risen to their feet to give praise to God for His person and His works (vv. 4, 5). They have raised their voices toward heaven for Him Who is Creator (v. 6), Keeper of the Abrahamic Covenant (vv. 7, 8), and Deliverer from Egypt (vv. 9-12).

2. The psalm of praise unto God continues with some blessed comments about the Word of God (vv. 13-15). The facts provided are:-

1. It is INSPIRED.

There are two phrases which, when combined, connote exactly what the Bible really is: the Word of God. It is stated that God "came down" and "spoke from heaven" at Sinai (v. 13). This has always been the orthodox position that the record in the Bible is the word "of God." It is not a production of man. But God did use men, hence it is stated that what was given was "by the hand of Moses" (v. 14). There is no more clear example of the claim of the Bible than here. It is a divine (God-inspired) human (holy men of God speaking) production. Ample Scripture supports this (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21). Incidentally, this belief is correctly described as verbal, plenary, inerrant inspiration of the Bible. It is the only view of the Bible which truly honors the Scriptures.

2. It is DIRECTED.

Repeatedly the text uses the third plural personal pronoun to indicate "Israel" as the nation to whom the matters mentioned are designed (e.g. v. 13). This shows that all of Scripture is for us, but not to us. Certain passages belong to Israel, some to the Gentiles, and others to the church (cf. 1 Cor. 10:32). Interpretation is one; application is manifold. This is all a matter of hermeneutics or Bible interpretation.

3. It is DETAILED.

Some of the items in the Word of God are actually listed in the text. These include:-
a) Legal items. At least four different words are
used in the text to show this: "judgments" are in fact
"ordinances" or specific laws or a peculiar sort. "True
laws" are commonly known as "torah." This word's
root meaning to "throw." Hence, "torah" is that which
points the direction by throwing out the hand or guid-
ance from God in certain directions. It is a general
term. "Statues" are literally "laws engraven." They
are laws enacted by a lawgiver and form the basis of
"statuary" laws as opposed to "consuetudinary laws"
customary or habitual items). Finally, "commandments"
are charges laid upon men as expressions of God's will.
The variety of these terms shows that God sought to
cover all aspects of human and divine relationships in
His Word. He declared Himself to be God indeed by His
Word.

b. Sabbath observance. This has been a problem
with many, but the simple testimony of the Bible is clear.
The "sabbath" was given to Israel in the law addressed
to them (Ex. 20:8-11). It was never meant for the Gentiles nor the church! This is the reason that sabbath
is a sign between the Lord and Israel (Ex. 31:13-17;
Ezek. 20:12, 20). Let it be noted that grace-dispen-
sation believers have not changed the sabbath to Sunday,
but left that sabbath where it belongs — for Israel as
a nation. The sabbath will be re instituted in the tri-
bulation (Matt. 24:20, 21) and the millennium (Isa. 66:
23). Believers today worship on the first day of the
week, not the seventh, and do so to commemorate a finis-
hed and complete redemption through Christ. Whereas
the sabbath of the O.T. was a day for rest, the N.T.
counterpart was of ceaseless activity (the day of His
resurrection!). Let's not allow the legalists (e.g.
seventh day adventists) to confuse the Word of God!

c. Land possession. The land of Palestine was
given by God to the nation Israel (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:
18-21; 17:6-8). The ownership of this piece of real-
estate should never be questioned. What is a concern
is the actual possession of that land. The Palestinian
Covenant gives it to the nation Israel upon their re-
turn to the Lord (Deut. 30:2-6). It will be a glorious
day of fulfillment of the Word of God.

Conclusion Just as the nation joined in hearty appreci-
cation of the Word given to them, may it be your heart
expression to glorify Him for the entire Bible at your
disposal. Bless God continually for the truth provided!
Amen.