

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

"Possessing the Land"

Nehemiah 9:22-31

Introduction

1. History is a great teacher. It provides all kinds of lessons for future generations. How full is this chapter with things to learn from Israel's history.
2. The present text begins with their entrance into the land and how the occupation of the land took place. It stands out as another demonstration of God's great faithfulness to the nation, but Israel's dreadful stiff-neckedness. Three items teach the utter faithfulness of God in the face of concerted opposition from the very ones to whom He is faithful. Here they are:-

1. POSSESSION OF THE LAND. vv. 22-25.

- a. Presentation v. 22.

The land (Palestine) is clearly given to Israel as a nation. To listen to modern accusations of some is to deny this original gift from God (Gen. 15:18-24). The mention of "kingdoms and nations" shows His intent of displacement!

- b. Distribution v. 22.

The various tribes of Israel were given specific areas in the land. This is recorded (Joshua 13-22). Every corner of the land belonged to them!

- c. Multiplication v. 23.

Israel was not to be a small group, but one like unto the stars of heaven (Gen. 15:5, 6). The entire group He brought into the land which had been promised to them.

- d. Subjugation vv. 24, 25.

This can be summarized under three headings: 1) People (v. 24). 2) Cities (v. 25), and 3) Things: houses, cisterns, etc. Note: "all good" means "all good things." "Fruit trees" means "food trees." Results of this provision: they ate, were filled (satisfied), became fat, and delighted themselves (gave themselves up to softness, lived delicately, sumptuously). Fantastic provision from the Lord. They lived royally!

2. REBELLION OF THE NATION vv. 26-30.

Thirteen amazing combinations of words are used to describe the opposition of the nation to God's faithfulness.

- a. Disobedient v. 26.
- b. Rebelled v. 26.
- c. Cast law aside v. 26.
- d. Slew prophets, Committed homicide v. 26.
- e. Wrought provocations v. 26. Despised God and reproached Him.
- f. Did evil v. 28. Generic word for evil.
- g. Dealth proudly v. 29. Means to act insolently
Root: to boil over.
- h. Harkened not v. 29.
- i. Sinned against ordinances v. 29.
- j. Withdrew shoulder v. 29. Disrespect.
- k. Hardened neck v. 29.
- l. Would not hear v. 29.
- m. Would not listen v. 30. No ears for God.

As a consequence of the above, God responded and gave them over to their enemies (vv. 27, 28). When they complained about this, they were delivered (vv. 27, 28). In the midst of this, God witnessed against their sin (vv. 29, 30). It was an unbelievable situation!

3. COMPASSION OF THE LORD vv. 27-31.

- a. He heard vv. 27, 28.

Even in the extremity of Israel's sin, the Lord responded to their need. What a God!

- b. He spoke v. 30.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit in the prophets is pointedly marked here. Hebrew has "by the hand of the prophets."

- c. He expressed vv. 27, 28, 31.

Mercy and grace were extended to Israel. This is an expression of His communicable attributes. He is such a God!

- d. He tolerated vv. 30, 31.

This is a matter of forbearance and patience with God. It was for "many years." On this account, He did not forsake nor consume the rebellious nation.

Conclusion It would be wrong to misinterpret God. He is just and will punish sin. This section proves that. But, He is also faithful to His promises and forgives. This is a testimony of His grace. Do you truly know Him through Christ?