

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

"Now, Therefore"

Nehemiah 9:32-38

Introduction

1. The contents of this chapter are a record of the public testimony of Israel concerning the Lord, His works, and His people (vv. 3-5). The entire chapter bears testimony to God's faithfulness.
2. The opening words of this text can be translated "and now at this time. . . ." After all that has been recorded, the story has now brought the reader to the present time. It is as if Nehemiah calls upon God to do something right now for His people. This is the cry of His people today!
3. Three glorious truths echo their message here:

1. THE PERSON OF GOD v. 32.

He is:-

- a. Great. The thought here is that there is none like unto Him. This is not an admission of the existence of other gods! He is the only One!
- b. Mighty. This Hebrew term is often used of a hero. Such is the Lord. The same word is employed of the Messiah (Isa. 9:6).
- c. Terrible. Efforts have been made in various translations to dilute this word. It means "to fear." It is the Nifal form (passive) and therefore means: "to be feared." No need to lessen the force of the word. God is "to be feared!" Mark its use elsewhere: Deut. 7:21; 10:17.
- d. Keeps covenant. There is no word of God which is ever denied by Him. What He says, He does. The great unconditional covenants of God are probably indicated by this phrase.
- e. Keeps mercy. By this is indicated the fact of His attitude toward His own. God is always mercifull

2. THE PROBLEM OF PEOPLE v. 32.

- a. Noted. The word for "trouble" means "travail, toil, or distress." Admittedly, says Nehemiah, Israel was in serious difficulty. He pleads with God that this be acknowledged in heaven and a response given!
- b. Involved. No less than six specific persons are named as being subjected to the distress noted: kings, princes, priests, prophets, fathers,

people. Not one category within the nation was exempt. All suffered.

- c. Timed. The difficulties in the nation could be traced back to the Assyrian days. That was when the northern tribes were carried off (722 BC). Interestingly, this is an oblique, but definitive word that the northern tribes had now returned! The thoughtless views of the British-Israelites (now getting new impetus from the broadcasts of Armstrong) are clearly undercut. The northern tribes were never lost! In any case, for 300 years Israel had now been in turmoil (722-445 BC).

3. THE PATTERN OF PRACTICE vv. 33-38.

a. God. v. 33.

- 1) He is just. This marks Him as totally righteous.
- 2) He is right. This marks Him as totally true.
- 3) He is active. This marks Him as testifying.

b. People vv. 34, 35.

With the emphatic personal pronoun "we," it is declared that the people have done wickedly. The verb means: "to make noise, tumult, cause disturbance, strike up tumult." This is seen in that they:-

- 1) Kept not. They did not do (so Heb.) the law.
- 2) Hearkened not. The verb means "to sharpen," hence to point the ears. This dull attitude was towards the commandments and testimonies of God.
- 3) Served not. The verb is at the end of the clause for emphasis. Note: their kingdom and thy goodness.
- 4) Turned not. They continued in evil deeds.

Conclusion Three major items are recorded: 1. Israel is a servant in the land. 2. Israel is in distress under her leaders. 3. Israel is ready to make a covenant with God. The verb "make" is "to cut" and the word for "covenant" is only used here in the O.T. It's root means "amen." It comes from a word meaning to "prop, stay, support" and connotes something durable. What does all this mean for YOU? Just this: God is ever faithful despite our sins. He waits for us to cut a covenant with Him on His terms. Have you done this for eternal life? For a life of service? If so, rejoice. If not, do it.