THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH
"Thy Glorious Name"
Nehemiah 9:4-8

Introduction
1. As the people moved into Jerusalem for a new construction, they gathered "as one man" in front of the water gate (8:1). Scripture indicates there was a desire for the Word of God (8:1). Ezra declared it (8:2-6) and then defined it (8:7, 8). All of this was on the first day of the month (8:2).

2. It is evident that the people digested the Word (8:9, 12) read to them. They responded in two ways: emotionally (8:9-12) and obediently (8:13-18). Moreover, added responses included reading (9:3), humbling (9:1), worship (9:3, 4), and separation (9:2).

3. Now comes an extended rehearsal of God's goodness to the nation, but not before the Levites stood up (vv. 4, 5). The platform or stairs of the Levites may have been the same as previously (8:1ff) or another one near the temple area. One group of Levites apparently prayed (v. 4) and another group praised (v. 5).

4. Now there were eight Levites whose names are given. They cried out with a great voice (v. 5). The verb connotes they implored the Lord their God! The other group of eight Levites commanded the people to stand up and to bless the Lord their God forever and ever. The adoration expected related to God's Person (the Lord God) and God's Name (glorious Name). God's Name is "exalted above all blessing and praise." That's something for which to stand up!

5. With this focus upon the Lord, it is evident that specific activities of God are worthy of praise. Some of these are listed:

1. Praise to God for CREATION v. 6
Continuing the incredible matchlessness of God Himself, it is stated He is "alone" (cf. Gen. 2:18). No one else has done what is outlined here. He stands without a peer. As such, He has "made" all things. This verb is obviously synonymous to the one employed in Genesis (1:21, 25) and also used in Exodus (20:11). He is the Creator of:

a. The Heavens
Three phrases are used to state that God made 1) The heavens, 2) The heaven of heavens, 3) All hosts of the heavens. Hence everything celestial is attributed to God. It is all His handiwork (Ps. 8 cf. Ps 104).

b. The Earth
The word for "earth" connotes that the land mass and "all in it." Therefore, the zillions of creatures on the land are included. The expression used here far exceeds the common noun for "ground."

c. The Seas
Along with what is above (heavens), beneath (earth), there is what is under (seas). For the third time in this verse it is stated "all that is in it." This refers to all marine life.

Note: To comprehend the sudden and instantaneous creation of all things – up – down – under – by God surely is something worthy of the God whom we adore. Blessed be His glorious Name forever and ever.

2. Praise to God for PRESERVATION v. 6
The present tense verb "preserve" gathers the essence of "heavens, earth, and seas" to teach that God keeps the totality, the whole. Without God to "make" and "preserve" the universe just could not be. What a magnificent statement of His creative and sustaining power (cf. Col. 1:17).

Note: It is possible that the word "host" of heaven is a reference to angelic beings. Confronted with the creative and preserving activity of God, they "worship" Him. Consider, then, that angels bow down before Him. What an amazing response. So be it for us as believers.

3. Praise to God for SELECTION vv. 7-8
Review: This section highlights the Levites who pray (v. 4) and praise (v. 5). God is worthy because He created the universe and preserves it. Now the text shifts to the divine work of choice. This act of election altered forever the landscape of humanity. Study how he did it:

a. God Chose Abram
The name Abram means "high father" or "father of height." It is the name by which this man was uniformly called (cf. Gen. 11:27-29; 12:1, 4; 1 Chron. 1:17; here). The right of God to do this is surely set forth and supported by the words "Thou art the Lord God." As such a God, He has divine prerogatives. His perfection permit Him to choose without capriciousness (Mal. 1:2, 3; Ro. 9).

b. God Led Abram
The hifil form of the verb here notes that God "caused" Abram to go from Ur of the Chaldees (cf. Lot, Gen. 19:15ff). Archaeological evidence shows that Abram was chosen to leave a well developed society for an unknown land.

c. God Gave Abram
The reference is to the change in the patriarch's name. From Abram (father of height), he was given the name Abraham (father of a multitude, cf. Gen. 17:8). A cognate construction is used here to show that God "named his name Abraham." This was in fact the beginning of a new people. Henceforth there would be the seed of Abraham (Jewish, Hebrews, Israelites) and the Gentiles (non Abrahamic peoples). Latter on in the N.T., the formation of the church adds a third group (1 Cor. 10:32).

c. God Found Abraham
Here is a very precious personal note. Abraham is found with a heart of faithfulness before (in the face) of God. The passive verb combined with "heart" shows Abraham's heart was sure, durable, trustworthy. All of that was before the glorious Name -- God!

e. God Made Abraham
This is an incredible remark. God "cut" a covenant with Abraham. This was unilateral by God without expecting Abraham to negotiate. God gave the "land" of the nations listed. Here is a record of God displacing several nations for Abraham. He, in turn, was commanded "to give" the same land to his seed (cf. Gen. 17:6-8). Amazingly, the verb "perform" means to "raise up" or "establish" God's work. The reason is that God is "righteous" or just. Therefore, what God did with Abraham, the land of the nations, Abraham's seed, the covenant – all is absolutely acceptable with the holy righteous God of the Bible.

Conclusion So there you have it. The glorious Name of God is to be praised for His work of creation and His choice of Abraham. Surely, this is enough to provoke you and me to exalt Him forever and ever. Blessed be the Lord!