THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH
"Liberation From Egypt"
Nehemiah 9:9-12

Introduction
1. Nehemiah records the events following the feast of tabernacles (8:14-18). Included were reading of the law (9:3), humbling (9:1), worship (9:3, 4), and separation from foreigners (9:2).
2. Following these experiences of the people, two groups of Levites each stood upon a platform (cf. 8:4, 5). One group prayed (v. 4) and the other group praised (v. 5).
3. The Spirit of God gives the names of the 16 Levites (vv. 4, 5). The praying Levites actually implores the Lord their God with a loud voice (v. 4). The praising Levites extolled the Lord their God for His glorious Name which is exalted above all (v. 5).
4. Reasons for praising the Lord include His creation of the universe (v. 6) and His selection of Abram (vv. 7, 8). The next recorded praise item is His liberation of the Hebrew nation from Egypt. This liberation demonstrated:

1. GOD'S SEEING v. 9
   a. A Fact Stated
      The eyes of the Lord were open to view the fathers in Egypt. It might have appeared at times that God had forsaken His people, but the verb "see" affirms His accurate vision.
   b. A Problem Acknowledged
      The noun "affliction" has multiple meanings: persecution, extortion, abandonment, and harassment (cf. Gen. 16:11; 41:52; Ex. 3:7, 17; 4:31).

2. GOD'S HEARING v. 9
   a. The Fact Stated
      Not only did God's eyes see, but His ears heard the "cry" of His people. The verb is the same as earlier (v. 4) and again later (v. 28). It is a very strong verb implying crying out due to pain, by way of complaint, or for help. While the text does not say it, the call is obviously to God.
   b. The Occasion Identified
      The cry of Israel was at the Red Sea. The noun for "red" is actually "rush, reed, sedge." So the reference is to the sea abounding with sea weed (cf. Ex. 14-15:22; cf. Ps. 142:1, 5).

3. GOD'S SHOWING vv. 10, 11
   a. The Fact Stated
      The verb "showest" signifies to "give," but contextually, it means to "demonstrate" or "show."
   b. The Actions Shown
      Two nouns are listed in reference to ten events which God actually gave (Ex. 7-12). These generic nouns are: "Signs" has reference to signs of seasons (Gen. 1:14), but here the idea is to demonstrations of the power of God (Ex. 4:8, 9). "Wonders" is chiefly used of miracles exhibited by God and His messengers (cf. Ex. 4:21; 7:3, 9; 11:9; Ps. 78:43; 105:5, 27).
   c. The People Involved
      Those who were shown the "signs" and "wonders" are specifically listed as three: "Pharaoh," "all his servants," and "all the people of his land." Make no mistake, this was a nationwide showing. A careful reading of Exodus 5-12 will support the expressions here.

   d. The Purpose Observed
      God demonstrated His divine power with signs and wonders because He knew the Egyptians acted insolently, wickedly ("profoundly") against the Hebrews. This verb means to "boil over," to "be fervid." It is mostly used of those who knowingly and purposely violate the precepts of God and commit sin (cf. Deut. 1:43; 17:13).

   e. The Result Gained
      The very common verb "make" is used here to effect a "name" for the Lord. After all, He performed the signs and miracles. All associated with the event of this verse "made" Him a powerful and glorious Name (cf. v. 5). The Hebrew grammar notes the Lord made "to thyself this Name. Moreover it is a name as "this day" i.e. not only the events mentioned, but His Name is still the same! Hallelujah.

   f. The Miracle Explained v. 11
      The noun "sea" is in the emphatic position – right at the beginning of the verse. "Divide" expressed the might of an infinite God – He "rent" the sea. The same verb is used of ripping up a woman with a child (Amos 1:13), to break open by storm a city (2 Chron. 32:1), here it is to divide water (Ex. 14:16). Consequently, the Hebrews "crossed over" in the middle of the sea on dry ground. What a miracle! Furthermore, the Egyptian "persecutors" (pursuers) were thrown (cast) into the depths (deep places) of the sea (cf. Micah 7:19; Jonah 2:4). So great was the divine miracle that the throw was as a stone into powerful waters. Wow!

4. GOD'S LEADING v. 12
   Two significant verbs are used here. The one is "leddest" noting conduct and guidance. This the Lord did by means of a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The purpose of these two pillars of cloud is the message of the second significant verb. It was to "give light" for the people to know the path the nation was to tread. Think of that! This is detailed in Scripture (Ex. 13:21, 22; Num. 9:15-23).

Conclusion
These are major demonstrations of God's liberation of Israel from Egypt. They experienced His seeing, hearing, showing, and leading. Surely this is ample reason to praise the Lord. What Israel experienced is applicable to us all (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11). The Lord does indeed see us, hears us, shows His power in our behalf, and leads us. Like the Psalmist we can say that "this God is our God forever and ever. He will be our guide even unto death" (Ps. 48:14). We have a liberation from sin and degradation. But that is not all. He has given us light through His Word to know the path (behaviour) we are to walk (Eph. 4:1). Amen.