

Message Notes

God and History

Scripture Passages

(taken from the New International Version)

Introduction - What do you think about when you think about God?

God: His Being and Our History

The Setting

Nehemiah 9:1-5a

The Prayer

The Creator God - Nehemiah 9:5b-6

The Promise Keeping God - Nehemiah 9:7-8

The Deliverer God - Nehemiah 9:9-12

The Holy God - Nehemiah 9:13-14

The Provider God - Nehemiah 9:15

The Rejected God - Nehemiah 9:16-18

The Compassionate God - Nehemiah 9:19-21

The Generous God - Nehemiah 9:22-25

The Heartbroken God - Nehemiah 9:26

The Just God - Nehemiah 9:27-31

The Loving God - Nehemiah 9:32-35

The Ever-Present God - Nehemiah 9:36-37

The Rest of the Story - Nehemiah 9:38ff
Romans 8:3-4

Our Story...Your Story

Gospel Application - What's your view of God in Jesus Christ?

Nehemiah 9:1-37

¹On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and putting dust on their heads. ²Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors. ³They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the Lord their God. ⁴Standing on the stairs of the Levites were Jeshua, Bani, Kadrel, Shebania, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani and Kenani. They cried out with loud voices to the Lord their God. ⁵And the Levites — Jeshua, Kadrel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Shebania, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah — said: "Stand up and praise the Lord your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting."

⁶Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. ⁷You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

⁸You are the Lord God, who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and named him Abraham. ⁹You found his heart faithful to you, and you made a covenant with him to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites and Gergashites. You have kept your promise because you are righteous.

¹⁰You saw the suffering of our ancestors in Egypt; you heard their cry at the Red Sea. ¹¹You sent signs and wonders against Pharaoh, against all his officials and all the people of his land, for you knew how arrogantly the Egyptians treated them. You made a name for yourself, which remains to this day. ¹²You divided the sea before them, so that they passed through it on dry ground, but you hurled their pursuers into the depths, like a stone into mighty waters. ¹³By day you led them with a pillar of cloud, and by night with a pillar of fire to give them light on the way they were to take.

¹⁴You came down on Mount Sinai; you spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and laws that are just and right, and decrees and commands that are good.

¹⁵You made known to them your holy Sabbath and gave them commands, decrees and laws through your servant Moses. ¹⁶In their hunger you gave them bread from heaven and in their thirst you brought them water from the rock; you told them to go in and take possession of the land you had sworn with uplifted hand to give them.

¹⁷But they, our ancestors, became arrogant and stiff-necked, and they did not obey your commands. ¹⁸They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery. But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore you did not desert them, "even when they cast for themselves an image of a calf and said, 'This is your god, who brought you up out of Egypt,' or when they committed awful blasphemies."

¹⁹Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the wilderness. By day the pillar of cloud did not fail to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. ²⁰You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst. ²¹For forty years you sustained them in the wilderness; they lacked nothing, their clothes did not wear out nor did their feet become swollen.

²²You gave them kingdoms and nations, allotting to them even the remotest frontiers. They took over the country of Sihon king of Heshbon and the country of Og king of Bashan. ²³You made their children as numerous as the stars in the sky, and you brought them into the land that you told their parents to enter and possess. ²⁴Their children went in and took possession of the land. You subdued before them the Canaanites, who lived in the land; you gave the Canaanites into their hands, along with their kings and the peoples of the land, to deal with them as they pleased. ²⁵They captured fortified cities and fertile land; they took possession of houses filled with all kinds of good things, wells already dug, vineyards, olive groves and fruit trees in abundance. They ate to the full and were well-nourished; they reveled in your great goodness.

²⁶But they were disobedient and rebelled against you; they turned their backs on your law. They killed your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you; they committed awful blasphemies. ²⁷So you delivered them into the hands of their enemies, who oppressed them. But when they were oppressed they cried out to you. From heaven you heard them, and in your great compassion you gave them deliverers, who rescued them from the hand of their enemies.

²⁸But as soon as they were at rest, they again did what was evil in your sight. Then you abandoned them to the hand of their enemies so that they ruled over them. And when they cried out to you again, you heard from heaven, and in your compassion you delivered them time after time.

²⁹You warned them in order to turn them back to your law, but they became arrogant and disobeyed your commands. They sinned against your ordinances, of which you said, "The person who obeys them will live by them." Stubbornly they turned their backs on you, became stiff-necked and refused to listen. ³⁰For many years you were patient with them. By your Spirit you warned them through your prophets. Yet they paid no attention, so you gave them into the hands of the neighboring peoples. ³¹But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.

³²Now therefore, our God, the great God, mighty and awesome, who keeps his covenant of love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling in your eyes—the hardship that has come on us, on our kings and leaders, on our priests and prophets, on our ancestors and all your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until today.

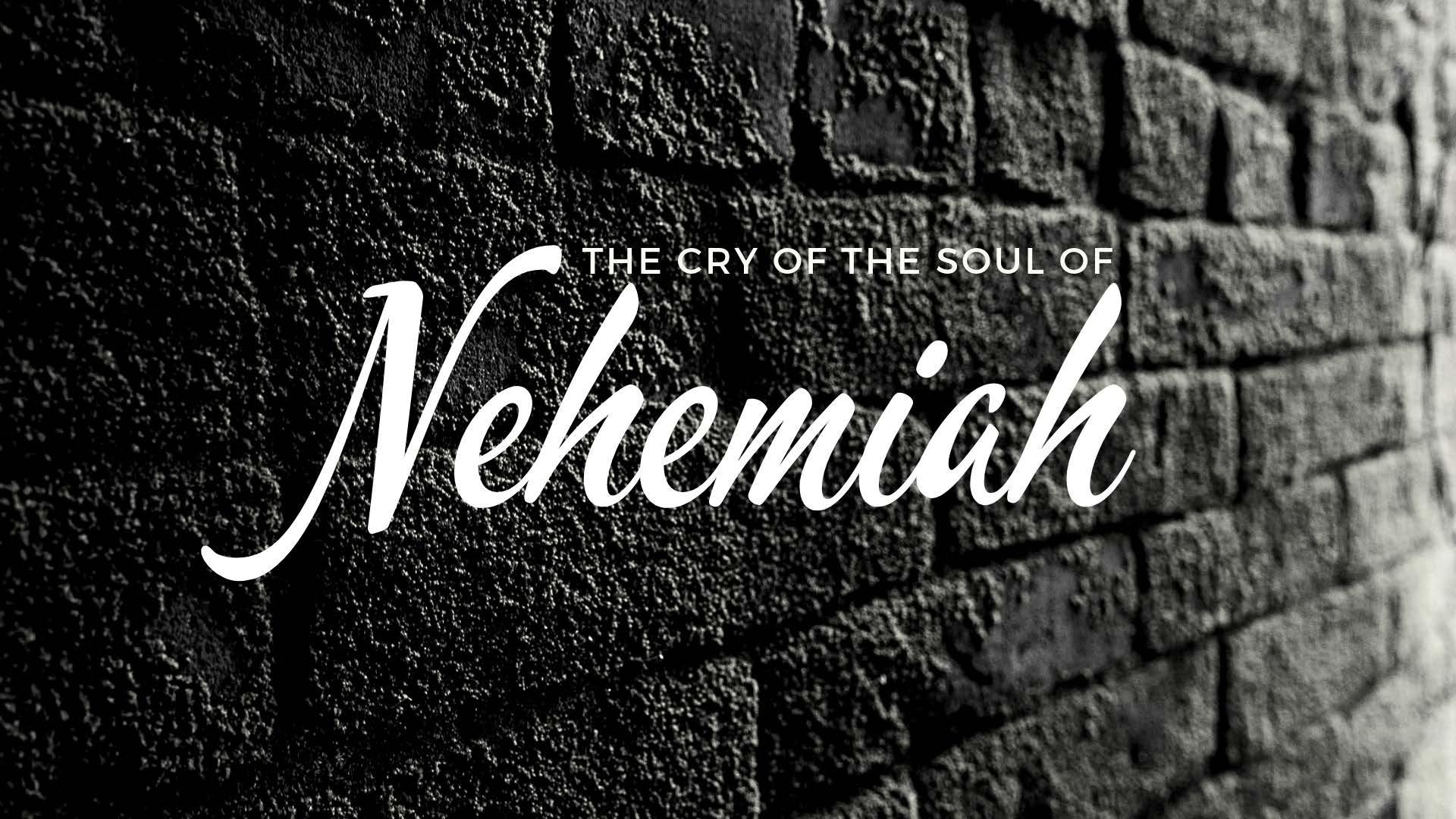
³³In all that has happened to us, you have remained righteous; you have acted faithfully, while we acted wickedly. ³⁴Our kings, our leaders, our priests and our ancestors did not follow your law; they did not pay attention to your commands or the statutes you warned them to keep. ³⁵Even while they were in their kingdom, enjoying your great goodness to them in the spacious and fertile land you gave them, they did not serve you or turn from their evil ways.

³⁶But see, we are slaves today, slaves in the land you gave our ancestors so they could eat its fruit and the other good things it produces. ³⁷Because of our sins, its abundant harvest goes to the kings you have placed over us. They rule over our bodies and our cattle as they please. We are in great distress.

A portrait of A.W. Tozer, an elderly man with glasses, a mustache, and a suit, looking slightly to the right.

“WHAT COMES INTO OUR MINDS
WHEN WE THINK ABOUT GOD
IS THE MOST IMPORTANT
THING ABOUT US. LOW VIEWS
OF GOD DESTROY THE GOSPEL
FOR ALL WHO HOLD THEM.”

~A.W. TOZER



THE CRY OF THE SOUL OF

Nehemiah

The proclamation of the Law of Moses

Nehemiah 8:2-3

²So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. ³He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

Today's Message:
God: His Being and Our History
Nehemiah 9:1-37

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God: His Being and our History

The setting

Nehemiah 9:1-5a

¹On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and putting dust on their heads. ²Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors. ³They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the LORD their God.

God: His Being and our History

The setting

Nehemiah 9:1-5a

⁴Standing on the stairs of the Levites were Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani and Kenani. They cried out with loud voices to the LORD their God. ⁵And the Levites – Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah – said: “Stand up and praise the LORD your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting.”

Prayer Meeting



God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Creator God

Nehemiah 9:5b-6

“Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. ⁶You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Promise Keeping God

Nehemiah 9:7-8

7“You are the LORD God, who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and named him Abraham. 8You found his heart faithful to you, and you made a covenant with him to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites and Gergashites. You have kept your promise because you are righteous.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Promise Keeping God

Nehemiah 9:9-12

⁹“You saw the suffering of our ancestors in Egypt; you heard their cry at the Red Sea. ¹⁰You sent signs and wonders against Pharaoh, against all his officials and all the people of his land, for you knew how arrogantly the Egyptians treated them. You made a name for yourself, which remains to this day. ¹¹You divided the sea before them, so that they passed through it on dry ground, but you hurled their pursuers into the depths, like a stone into mighty waters. ¹²By day you led them with a pillar of cloud, and by night with a pillar of fire to give them light on the way they were to take.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Holy God

Nehemiah 9:13-14

13“You came down on Mount Sinai; you spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and laws that are just and right, and decrees and commands that are good. 14You made known to them your holy Sabbath and gave them commands, decrees and laws through your servant Moses.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Provider God

Nehemiah 9:15

15“In their hunger you gave them bread from heaven and in their thirst you brought them water from the rock; you told them to go in and take possession of the land you had sworn with uplifted hand to give them.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Rejected God

Nehemiah 9:16-18

¹⁶“But they, our ancestors, became arrogant and stiff-necked, and they did not obey your commands. ¹⁷They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery. But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore you did not desert them, ¹⁸even when they cast for themselves an image of a calf and said, ‘This is your god, who brought you up out of Egypt,’ or when they committed awful blasphemies.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Compassionate God

Nehemiah 9:19-21

¹⁹“Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the wilderness. By day the pillar of cloud did not fail to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. ²⁰You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst. ²¹For forty years you sustained them in the wilderness; they lacked nothing, their clothes did not wear out nor did their feet become swollen.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Generous God

Nehemiah 9:22-25

²²You gave them kingdoms and nations, allotting to them even the remotest frontiers. They took over the country of Sihon king of Heshbon and the country of Og king of Bashan. ²³You made their children as numerous as the stars in the sky, and you brought them into the land that you told their parents to enter and possess. ²⁴Their children went in and took possession of the land. You subdued before them the Canaanites, who lived in the land; you gave the Canaanites into their hands, along with their kings and the peoples of the land, to deal with them as they pleased.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Generous God

Nehemiah 9:22-25

25“They captured fortified cities and fertile land; they took possession of houses filled with all kinds of good things, wells already dug, vineyards, olive groves and fruit trees in abundance. They ate to the full and were well-nourished; they reveled in your great goodness.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Heartbroken God

Nehemiah 9:26

26“But they were disobedient and rebelled against you; they turned their backs on your law. They killed your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you; they committed awful blasphemies.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Just God

Nehemiah 9:27-31

27“So you delivered them into the hands of their enemies, who oppressed them. But when they were oppressed they cried out to you. From heaven you heard them, and in your great compassion you gave them deliverers, who rescued them from the hand of their enemies.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Just God

Nehemiah 9:27-31

28“But as soon as they were at rest, they again did what was evil in your sight. Then you abandoned them to the hand of their enemies so that they ruled over them. And when they cried out to you again, you heard from heaven, and in your compassion you delivered them time after time.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Just God

Nehemiah 9:27-31

29“You warned them in order to turn them back to your law, but they became arrogant and disobeyed your commands. They sinned against your ordinances, of which you said, ‘The person who obeys them will live by them.’ Stubbornly they turned their backs on you, became stiff-necked and refused to listen.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Just God

Nehemiah 9:27-31

³⁰"For many years you were patient with them. By your Spirit you warned them through your prophets. Yet they paid no attention, so you gave them into the hands of the neighboring peoples.

³¹But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Loving God

Nehemiah 9:32-35

32“Now therefore, our God, the great God, mighty and awesome, who keeps his covenant of love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling in your eyes – the hardship that has come on us, on our kings and leaders, on our priests and prophets, on our ancestors and all your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until today. 33In all that has happened to us, you have remained righteous; you have acted faithfully, while we acted wickedly.



The kings of Assyria were the first of the successive world powers to menace and then subjugate Israel and Judah since the bondage in Egypt. From the middle of the 9th century BC to Nehemiah's day in the middle of the 5th century, first Assyria, intermittently, then Babylon and now Persia had dominated this small people. And Greece and Rome were to follow.

~ Derek Kidner, *Ezra and Nehemiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 12, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 123–124.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Loving God

Nehemiah 9:32-35

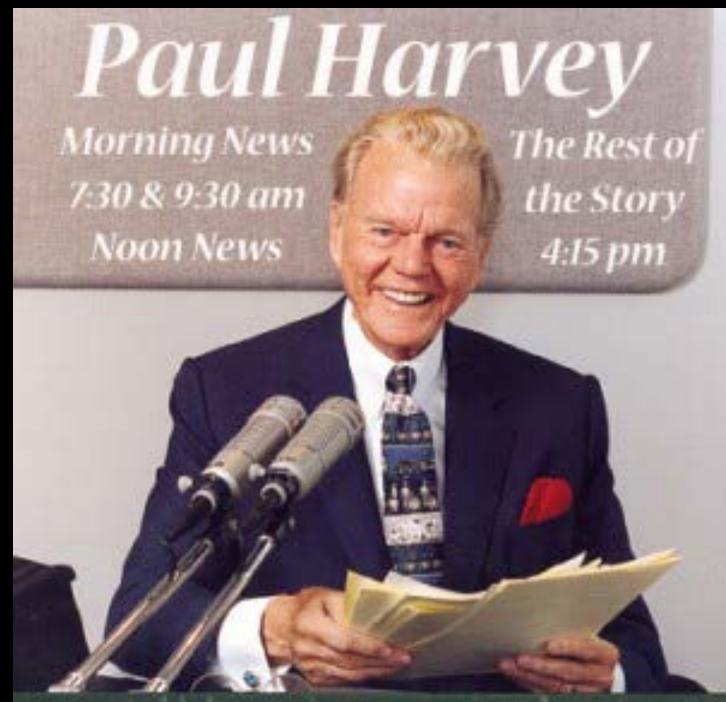
34“Our kings, our leaders, our priests and our ancestors did not follow your law; they did not pay attention to your commands or the statutes you warned them to keep. 35Even while they were in their kingdom, enjoying your great goodness to them in the spacious and fertile land you gave them, they did not serve you or turn from their evil ways.

God: His Being and our History

The prayer: The Ever-Present God

Nehemiah 9:36-37

36“But see, we are slaves today, slaves in the land you gave our ancestors so they could eat its fruit and the other good things it produces. 37Because of our sins, its abundant harvest goes to the kings you have placed over us. They rule over our bodies and our cattle as they please. We are in great distress.”



God: His Being and our History

The Rest of the Story

Nehemiah 9:38

³⁸“In view of all this, we are making a binding agreement, putting it in writing, and our leaders, our Levites and our priests are affixing their seals to it...”

God: His Being and our History

The Rest of the Story

Written some years after Nehemiah 9...

“Our great and awesome God, we are utter failures once again. We’ve tried all our strength and might could do, and we just simply rebel against you over and over again. We not only need you to forgive us of our sins, we need you to pay for our sins, as our sins weigh us down all the time. In addition, we need a new heart to overcome our sinful desires, so we need you to fundamentally change the very nature of who we are. On our own, Lord, we are at rock bottom, and need help – in every possible way.”

God: His Being and our History

The Rest of the Story

Romans 8:3-4

³For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

What's your story?



Gospel Application

Gospel Application

*What's your view of God in Jesus Christ,
pulled through your story?*