

Nehemiah 9:1-38 – Study Leader’s Questions

1. *List some of the ways God displayed His love for the people of Israel (Nehemiah 9:9-12).*
2. *Why did the Israelites break their covenant with God? What specific examples are mentioned (Nehemiah 9:17-18)?*
3. *After God blessed Israel (Nehemiah 9:8-15), how did Israel respond (Nehemiah 9:16)? What happens when we forget what God has done for us?*
4. *How did God respond (Nehemiah 9:27)?*
5. *What misconceptions do people have about the way God relates to us?*
6. *Which of God’s attributes did the Levites highlight in their prayer?*
7. *How do you respond to knowing that God will love you and remain faithful to you, no matter how often you fail him?*
8. *How did repeating their history help the people (Nehemiah 9:32)? What benefits are there for us to remember what God has done in the past?*
9. *Explain the connection between Nehemiah 9:22-25 and Nehemiah 9:7-8. In what ways does this passage encourage us to trust God?*
10. *What use is this prayer for us today?*

Nehemiah 9:1-38 – Answers to Questions

See Dr Ruckman's commentary *The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* pp 285-300 and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 706-707 for detailed comments.

1. *List some of the ways God displayed His love for the people of Israel (Nehemiah 9:9-12).*

God saw their affliction in Egypt and promised to deliver them, Nehemiah 9:9.

“And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites” Exodus 3:7-8.

God heard their cry at the Red Sea and made a way for them to go forward, Nehemiah 9:9.

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea” Exodus 14:15-16.

God brought judgement on the nation that had afflicted His people and their leaders, Nehemiah 9:10. Application: don't give the Jew a hard time, see *Love the Jewish People*.

See www.chick.com/reading/tracts/1000/1000_01.asp.

“And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance” Genesis 15:13-14.

That includes not stealing the promises to Israel and applying them to the Church.

“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” Romans 11:29.

God is ***“slow to anger”*** Nehemiah 9:17 but the downside is that when He does get angry, He can *really* get angry.

“So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction” Zechariah 1:14-15.

The saved person should remember that there are three things you don't do if you don't want God to get mad at you.

- Don't give the Jew a hard time.
See www.chick.com/reading/tracts/1000/1000_01.asp *Love the Jewish People*.
- Don't do the pope any favours.
See www.sdadefend.com/MINDEX-P-Q/PopesBlessing.pdf *Beware of the Pope's Blessing!*
- Don't mess with the Book.
See www.timefortruth.co.uk/why-av-only/ *The Great Bible Robbery*.

God made a way through the great waters, which He then used to drown His people's persecutors and honour Himself over them, Nehemiah 9:11.

“Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron” Psalm 77:19-20.

“He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap” Psalm 78:13.

“And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen” Exodus 14:17.

God led His people by night and day, Nehemiah 9:12.

“In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire” Psalm 78:14.

God is still in the business of enabling His people to press forward via His calling.

“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you” Philippians 3:12-15.

2. Why did the Israelites break their covenant with God? What specific examples are mentioned (Nehemiah 9:17-18)?

They suffered heart trouble.

“This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt” Acts 7:38-39.

Egypt is a type of the world in scripture. See *The Christian’s Handbook of Manuscript Evidence* by Dr Peter S. Ruckman pp 68, 199. The Christian is commanded to **“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world”** because love of the world will dislodge love of God in that **“If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him”** 1 John 2:15. Israel sought to backslide into bondage and lapsed into idolatry after the manner of the African ‘culture’ of Egypt, dancing around an idol in an ungodly worship service. The modern equivalent is the rock concert, set to African music with the idols performing live on stage. Note Deuteronomy 32:31.

“For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges” Pop Idol with judges is a popular British TV programme that is still going strong (for now) as *The X Factor* i.e. the AV1611 sets the pace and show biz media keeps up when it can.

See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pop_Idol, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_X_Factor_%28UK%29.

The molten, or golden, calf was an idol associated with Egypt. It effectively depicts worship of **“the world”** and **“the things that are in the world.”**

See Dr Ruckman’s commentary *The Book of Exodus* pp 575-607 and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 158-160. See also *The Golden Calf and Ra* by Allan Langer.

See jbq.jewishbible.org/assets/Uploads/311/311_CALF31-1.pdf.

Numbers 14:4 describes the leader that they wished to appoint.

“And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.”

They wanted a worldly leader who would take them back into the world. They will get one. This includes *The X-Factor* devotees.

“I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” John 5:43.

“And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?” Revelation 13:4.

Note Exodus 32:20.

“And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.”

“The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways...” Proverbs 14:14.

Finally, modern-day rockers should beware that the African performance in Exodus 32:19-25 ended in a river of blood. They should change sides while they can.

“Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men” Exodus 32:26-28. Note the following testimonies.

“Rock has always been the Devil’s music. You can’t convince me that it isn’t” – David Bowie, from *The Devil’s Disciples* by Jeff Godwin, p 7.

“In all my working with hundreds and hundreds of young people across the land, I have yet to meet one who is a dedicated, soul-winning, victorious Christian who listens to rock ’n roll” – Dr. Hugh Pyle, from *The Truth About Rock Music* by Dr. Hugh Pyle, p 35.

“Mick Jagger admitted, “There’s no such thing as a secure, family-oriented rock ’n roll song” – *ibid.*, p 36.

“In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” 2 Corinthians 13:1.

3. *After God blessed Israel (Nehemiah 9:8-15), how did Israel respond (Nehemiah 9:16)? What happens when we forget what God has done for us?*

In spite of getting water from the rock twice, Exodus 17:6, Numbers 20:8, 11, Israel remained ***“a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith”*** Deuteronomy 32:20, one of the only two occasions that faith is mentioned in the Old Testament, the other being Habakkuk 2:4.

“And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread” Numbers 21:5.



Adoration of the Golden Calf
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_calf

A Christian should devotionally apply Psalm 103:2.

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:”

In answer to the second question, God will remind you.

“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth...Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” Hebrews 12:5-6, 11.

God will implement a spiritual exercise referral programme for the forgetful soul.

4. *How did God respond (Nehemiah 9:27)?*

God did not forsake His people but continued His ***“manifold mercies”*** to them, Nehemiah 9:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, for a time. However, He did chastise them ***“unto repentance”*** Matthew 3:11, Hebrews 6:6.

“And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived” Numbers 21:6-9.

The brass serpent typified the Lord Jesus Christ.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” John 3:14-15.

Note that looking upon the brass serpent in order to live required the individual to exercise ***“his faith”*** Habakkuk 2:4. Today, ***“...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”*** Romans 10:17, so that ***“the just shall live by faith”*** Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38, according to Romans 1:17, which says in full ***“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”*** ***“The word of God”*** imparts ***“hearing”*** and in turn ***“faith”*** to the individual to ***“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”*** Acts 16:31, not by ***“his faith”*** but ***“the faith of the Son of God”*** Galatians 2:20, which is ***“the gift of God”*** Ephesians 2:8. That is the sense of the expression ***“from faith to faith”*** wherein ***“is the righteousness of God revealed.”*** See Dr Ruckman’s commentary *The Books of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians* p 238. Israel’s repentance, however, was temporary, given that they were ***“a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith”*** Deuteronomy 32:20. This led to the circumstances that Nehemiah 9:27 describes, a cycle of apostasy, repentance and deliverance followed by another outbreak of apostasy, as Judges 2:18-19 describe.

“And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.”

Romans 2:4-5 show that a similar warning applies for the unrepentant, unsaved individual today. **“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;”**

5. *What misconceptions do people have about the way God relates to us?*

See Romans 2:4-5 above and note Ecclesiastes 8:11 as a summary description of the world in that **“the whole world lieth in wickedness”** 1 John 5:19. **“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”**

Judgement will come, however, especially at the Second Advent. **“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”** Hebrews 9:27.

“...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

Note also the world’s view of Christian suffering. **“And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake”** Philippians 1:28-29.

6. *Which of God’s attributes did the Levites highlight in their prayer?*

See **Summary Table 1**. These may be thought of as offices that the Lord has fulfilled, especially for Israel at His Return as **“the shepherd, the stone of Israel”** Genesis 49:24.

**Summary Table 1
God’s Attributes as Offices in Nehemiah 9**

Attribute/Office	Reference	Attribute/Office	Reference
Creator	Nehemiah 9:6	Teacher	Nehemiah 9:20
Covenant-maker	Nehemiah 9:7, 8	Provider	Nehemiah 9:21
Judge	Nehemiah 9:10, 33	Benefactor	Nehemiah 9:22, 23
Avenger	Nehemiah 9:11	Protector	Nehemiah 9:24
Law-giver	Nehemiah 9:13, 14	Chastiser	Nehemiah 9:27, 28, 29, 30
Nourisher	Nehemiah 9:15, 20	Deliverer	Nehemiah 9:28, 30, 31
Guide	Nehemiah 9:19	Covenant-keeper	Nehemiah 9:32

All the above offices are fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ.

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” Colossians 2:9.

7. *How do you respond to knowing that God will love you and remain faithful to you, no matter how often you fail him?*

Respond **“in lowliness of mind”** Philippians 2:3 that applies even when *not* failing God:

“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do” Luke 17:10.

Resolve to apply James’s exhortation:

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” James 4:8.

Remember Samuel’s admonition to Israel, which should be memorised and applied individually:

“Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you” 1 Samuel 12:24.

In sum, resolve **“by the grace of God”** 1 Corinthians 15:10 *not* to fail God!

8. *How did repeating their history help the people (Nehemiah 9:32)? What benefits are there for us to remember what God has done in the past?*

It served as a basis for God to fulfil His promises to Israel as in Deuteronomy 30:1-6.

“And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”

These promises to Israel will not be completely fulfilled until the Second Advent but they will be fulfilled then, much to the dismay of the United Nations. See the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 331, 917-918, 951, 970.

“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation” Isaiah 25:9.

“For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us” Isaiah 33:22.

“And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me” Isaiah 49:23.

Practical, devotional application can be made of the above passages now but they will have specific fulfilment at the Second Advent, with respect to the restoration of the nation of Israel in the land of Israel, when Israel rules over all other nations with the Lord Jesus Christ at her head.

“The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” Isaiah 2:1-3.

Isaiah 2:1-3 does not apply to the Church and the passage should not be ‘spiritualised’ to force it to do so. The benefits are encapsulated in 2 Corinthians 1:8-10, a genuine *Back to the Future* passage, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Back_to_the_Future. Remembrance of God’s deliverance in the past is reassurance for God’s deliverance in the future **“For he that in these things serveth Christ..”** Romans 14:18.

“For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead; Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;”

9. Explain the connection between Nehemiah 9:22-25 and Nehemiah 9:7-8. In what ways does this passage encourage us to trust God?

Nehemiah 9:22-25 is an account of the historical fulfilment under Joshua of the explicit promises to Abraham summarised in Nehemiah 9:7-8 and set out explicitly in Genesis 15:5-7, 18-21.

“And he brought him forth abroad, and said, *Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it...In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.*”

Genesis 15:5-7, 18-21, Nehemiah 9:7-8, 22-25 encourage trust in God according to 2 Corinthians 1:8-10 above and, devotionally, by application of 2 Chronicles 6:4.

“...Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who hath with his hands fulfilled that which he spake with his mouth...”

Note also Romans 4:20-21, which applied historically to Abraham but can have present application to the Christian and should be memorised.

“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.”

10. What use is this prayer for us today?

Its use is for our admonition and hope. See Romans 15:4, 1 Corinthians 10:11.

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”