

Nehemiah 1:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

Analysis

O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

This verse within Nehemiah 1 addresses themes of prayer, burden, intercession, confession. Nehemiah's prayer demonstrates model intercession rooted in covenant theology, confessing corporate sin while claiming covenant promises. The Hebrew palal (פָּלַל) for prayer indicates intercession and petition, emphasizing dependence on God. This passage demonstrates biblical principles applicable across both testaments—God's sovereignty combined with human responsibility, faith expressed through obedient action, and the necessity of both individual and corporate commitment to covenant faithfulness. Nehemiah models leadership that combines vision, prayer, courage, integrity, and perseverance amid sustained opposition.

Historical Context

Nehemiah's account occurs during Persian imperial dominance (539-331 BC), specifically 445-433 BC under Artaxerxes I. The post-exilic community had returned to Judah but remained politically subject to Persia, living under imperial administration while attempting to rebuild covenant identity. Archaeological evidence confirms Persian-period occupation of Jerusalem and the wall's route. The Persian period was crucial transitional time when Jewish identity shifted from monarchical nationalism to Torah-centered covenantal community. Without political independence, the people's cohesion depended on shared scripture, temple worship, and covenant obedience. This established patterns persisting through the Second Temple period into New Testament times. Understanding this context illuminates Jesus's ministry among a people shaped by these reforms and challenges.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does this passage teach about prayer's role in discerning and accomplishing God's will?
2. How can you develop more sustained, biblically-grounded prayer practices in your daily routine?
3. How can the principles demonstrated in this passage inform your response to current challenges in your life or church?

Interlinear Text

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------|
| אֲנִי א | אֲדֹנָי י | תְּהִי י | נָ א | אֲזַנְךָ | קְ שָׁבֵת | אֶל |
| I beseech | O Lord | H1961 | H4994 | thee let now thine ear | be attentive | H413 |
| H577 | H136 | | | H241 | H7183 | |
| תְּפִלָּתְךָ | לְעַבְדְּךָ | וְאֶל | תְּפִלָּתְךָ | | | |
| and to the prayer | I pray thee thy servant | H413 | and to the prayer | | | |
| H8605 | H5650 | | H8605 | | | |
| לְעַבְדְּךָ | הַחֹפְצִים | לִירָאָה | אֶת | שְׁמִי | וְהִצְלִיחָהּ | נָ א |
| I pray thee thy servant | who desire | to fear | H853 | thy name | and prosper | H4994 |
| H5650 | H2655 | H3372 | | H8034 | H6743 | |
| לְעַבְדְּךָ | הַיּוֹם | וְתֵן הוּ | לְרַחֲמֵי י | לִפְנֵי י | הָאִישׁ | |
| I pray thee thy servant | this day | and grant | him mercy | in the sight | of this man | |
| H5650 | H3117 | H5414 | H7356 | H6440 | H376 | |
| הַיּוֹם | וְאֲנִי י | הַיּוֹם | מִשְׁקָהּ | לְמַלְכִּי | | |
| H2088 | H589 | H1961 | H4945 | For I was the king's | | |
| | | | | H4428 | | |

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 1:6 (Prayer): Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.

Nehemiah 2:8 (Kingdom): And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

Nehemiah 2:1 (Kingdom): And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the

wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.

Hebrews 13:18 (Prayer): Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

Proverbs 21:1 (Kingdom): The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Ezra 7:6 (Kingdom): This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him.

Psalms 130:2 (References Lord): Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

Psalms 86:6 (Prayer): Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.

Genesis 40:21 (Parallel theme): And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand:

Ezra 1:1 (Kingdom): Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,