

Nehemiah 1:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

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 (תְּפִלָּה) 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

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

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

פָּתֹחׁ	וְתִּ	וְעַיִּן	יְבָ	קְרַשׁ	בְּתִ	אָזַבְתָּ	בְּתָ	אָזַבְתָּ	תְּהָ	וְתִּ	פָּתֹחׁ		
H1961	H4994	Let	thine	ear	now	be	attentive	and	thine	eyes	open		
	H241				H7183				H5869		H6605		
אָנֹכִי	אָשָׁר	עֲבָדָךְ	יְבָ	תְּפִלָּתְךָ	אֵל	לְשָׁמֶן	עַ						
אֲנַכִּי	אָשָׁר	עֲבָדָךְ	יְבָ	תְּפִלָּתְךָ	אֵל	לְשָׁמֶן	עַ						
that	thou	mayest	hear		H413	the	prayer	of	thy	servant	H595		
					H8085		H8605		H5650				
בְּנִי	עַל	אֵל	לְלֹהֶה	יוֹמָם	בַּיּוֹם	לְפָנֶיךָ	יְבָ	מַתְפֵלָל	לְ				
בְּנִי	עַל	אֵל	לְלֹהֶה	יוֹמָם	בַּיּוֹם	לְפָנֶיךָ	יְבָ	מַתְפֵלָל	לְ				
which	I	pray	before	thee	now	day	and	night	H5921	for	the	children	
	H6419		H6440	H3117	H3119	H3915			H1121				
בְּנִי	מַטֵּת	אֹתֶת	עַל	וּמְתַעַדְתָּ	הָ	עֲבָדָךְ	יְבָ	יִשְׂרָאֵל					
בְּנִי	מַטֵּת	אֹתֶת	עַל	וּמְתַעַדְתָּ	הָ	עֲבָדָךְ	יְבָ	יִשְׂרָאֵל					
of	Israel		of	thy	servant	and	confess	H5921	the	sins	for	the	children
	H3478			H5650		H3034		H2403					H1121
בְּנִי	וּבְיִתְרֹתִי	לְךָ	חַטָּאתֵנוּ	אָשָׁר	רָ	יִשְׂרָאֵל							
of	Israel	H834	have	H2398	H0	H589	house						
	H3478						H1004						
אָבִינוּ	אָבִינוּ												
against	thee	both	I	and	my	father's	have	sinned					
							H1	H2398					

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 9:20 (Prayer): And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

Daniel 9:4 (Prayer): And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

Psalms 106:6 (Sin): We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.

Psalms 34:15 (Parallel theme): The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

2 Chronicles 6:40 (Prayer): Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

2 Chronicles 29:6 (Parallel theme): For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned their backs.

Isaiah 6:5 (Parallel theme): Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

1 John 1:9 (Sin): If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Luke 18:7 (Parallel theme): And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

Lamentations 5:7 (Sin): Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities.