

Nehemiah 9:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments,

Analysis

But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments,

This verse within Nehemiah 9 addresses themes of confession, God's faithfulness, corporate prayer, covenant history. Extended corporate prayer recounts God's faithfulness through Israel's history while honestly confessing persistent covenant violations. 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 spiritual reforms under Ezra and Nehemiah shaped Judaism for centuries, establishing Scripture's centrality and patterns of worship continuing into the intertestamental period and beyond. 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

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does regular engagement with Scripture transform understanding of God and His will for your life?
2. What specific commitments do you need to make (or renew) regarding Bible reading, worship, and obedience?
3. How can the principles demonstrated in this passage inform your response to current challenges in your life or church?

Interlinear Text

וְהַיְתָה כְּאָבֹתִים יְהוָה יְהִי יְהִי תְּקַשֵּׁר אֶת שְׁרַפְתִּים
H1992 But they and our fathers H1 dealt proudly H2102 and hardened H7185 H853 H6203 their necks

אַל שָׁמַע וְאַל מִצְוֹתָיךְ
H3808 and hearkened H413 not to thy commandments H4687

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 9:29 (Word): And testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law: yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, (which if a man do, he shall live in them;) and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear.

Hebrews 3:15 (Parallel theme): While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

Nehemiah 9:10 (Parallel theme): And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day.

Romans 2:5 (Parallel theme): 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;

Deuteronomy 31:27 (Parallel theme): For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death?

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