

Nehemiah 9:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

Analysis

And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

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. These 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

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

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

וַיִּמָּאֵן ו	לִשְׁמֹעַ	וְלֹא	זָכַר ו	נִפְלְאוֹת יְיָ	אֲשֶׁר
And refused	to obey	H3808	neither were mindful	of thy wonders	H834
H3985	H8085		H2142	H6381	
עָשָׂה יְיָ	עִמָּהֶם	וּקְשׁוּ	אֶת	עַרְפֵּם	וַיִּתֵּן
that thou didst	H5973	among them but hardened	H853	their necks	appointed
H6213		H7185		H6203	H5414
אֲשֶׁר	לָשׁוּב	לְעִבְדָּתָם	בְּמִרְיָם	וְאַתָּה	
a captain	to return	to their bondage	and in their rebellion	H859	
H7218	H7725	H5659	H4805		
אֵל וְ	סָלִיחַ	חַנּוּן	וְרַחֲמִים	אֶרְךָ	אֵפֶס
but thou art a God	ready to pardon	gracious	and merciful	slow	to anger
H433	H5547	H2587	H7349	H750	H639
וְרַב	וְחֶסֶד	וְלֹא	עֲזָבָתָם:		
and of great	kindness	H3808	and forsookest		
H7227	H2617		H5800		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 86:5 (Grace): For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Joel 2:13 (Grace): And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

Psalms 86:15 (Grace): But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

Psalms 78:38 (Parallel theme): But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

Romans 9:15 (Grace): For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

1 Kings 6:13 (Parallel theme): And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.

Psalms 106:7 (Parallel theme): Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea.

Psalms 78:11 (Parallel theme): And forgat his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.

1 Kings 8:57 (References God): The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us:

Psalms 106:13 (Parallel theme): They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel: