

Nehemiah 9:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

Analysis

Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

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

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

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

רוּחְךָ spirit H7307	טוֹב הִנְּךָ also thy good H2896	נָתַתָּה Thou gavest H5414	לְהַשְׁפִּילָם to instruct H7919	וּמַנָּה not thy manna H4478	לֹא H3808
מֵעַתָּה them and withheldest H4513	מִפִּיהֶם from their mouth H6310	וּמַיִם them water H4325	נָתַתָּה Thou gavest H5414	לָהֶם H0	
לְצַמְצָמָם: for their thirst H6772					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 143:10 (Spirit): Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

Numbers 11:17 (Spirit): And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.

John 4:10 (Parallel theme): Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

Isaiah 48:21 (Parallel theme): And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.

2 Peter 1:21 (Spirit): For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Psalms 105:41 (Parallel theme): He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river.

Ephesians 5:9 (Spirit): (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

Exodus 17:6 (Parallel theme): Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Exodus 16:15 (Parallel theme): And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.

John 4:14 (Parallel theme): But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.