

They Mercy of God  
Nehemiah 9:1-15  
Wednesday, July 24, 2019

There often appears to be a difference between God in the Old and New Testament. If God is the same, how can this be? It is usually explained that God is much more merciful in the Old Testament than it appears. A study of God's mercy as recited by Nehemiah can show us some important truths for our lives.

- I. **The Children of Israel Hold Up a Mirror for Us.**
  - a. They were favored but specifically ungrateful
    - i. Transgressed against light and love – instruction and illumination, wooing and warning, entreaty and rebuke
    - ii. Refused to see the Lord with Him before their eyes
    - iii. Refused to believe Him with wonders in front of them
    - iv. Given so much of God, we continue to sin
  - b. They were dependent on God for everything but proud of their own abilities
    - i. If any people in the world ought to have been humble, they should have been
    - ii. They were on God's welfare yet proudly claimed things for themselves
    - iii. All we have is of God, yet we take credit for it and hold it as if it were something, we produced
  - c. They enjoyed a kind fatherhood but were deliberately rebellious
    - i. It was not mistakes or errors but deliberate disobedience – vv. 16-17
    - ii. They would listen to everyone but God
    - iii. Most of our sin is not mistake or inadvertent error; it is deliberate rebellion against God

- iii. He continued to provide for them while they were asserting their own rebellious independence – verse 20, and without His provision we would have nothing
  - iv. He sustained them until the end and brought them to the promised land – verses 21, 24-25 – and He will do the same for us regardless
  - b. He even shows His mercy to the unconverted
    - i. He extends love to people yet in their sins
    - ii. He makes no conditions on His love
    - iii. He actually provides Himself the things He demands of man – sinlessness, righteousness
- III. **His Mercy Calls Forth a Response From Us**
- a. Note the instructive conduct of the children of Israel
    - i. In the wilderness they simply responded by piling provocation upon provocation – mercy was answered with more offenses
      - 1. In the return they framed a covenant of commitment – 10:28-39 with verse 29 summarizing the heart of it
  - b. Note the response it calls forth from us
    - i. Some theologians fear teaching the mercy of God; they are afraid we will act as the Israelites did
    - ii. Remember that there was another band of Israelites which acted properly, and we should follow their lead – show gratitude, display humility, exemplify submission, develop memory, cleave to the new ways of the Spirit, tear down our idols.

God's mercy is part of His character. He can't do otherwise. Our response ought to be like that of the people in Nehemiah's day. We should covenant to walk in the ways of the Lord and to refuse every attempt to wean us away from it.