

Sunday School Lesson

August 13, 2023

Community of Confession

Nehemiah 9:2, 6-7, 9-10, 30-36

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Questions for Us Today

August 13, 2023

Even though in our Protestant faith tradition we don't (necessarily) go to a priest, should we confess our sins?

If so, why and how?

If not, why not?

Sunday School Lesson Objective

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To understand why and how the people were led to confession in these passages from the Book of Nehemiah.

Sunday School Lesson Segments – 1

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1. Bibliography

2. Points of Information: Nehemiah

Sunday School Lesson Segments - 2

August 13, 2023

3. Lesson Context

4. Lesson Text

5. Remember These Things

Points of Information – Nehemiah

Nehemiah likely wrote most (if not all) of the Book named after him, possibly with editing help from Ezra, the priest and scribe.

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God used Nehemiah, who became the Governor of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 10:1), to lead spiritual awakenings among His people and to refortify the Holy City of Jerusalem.

Points of Information – Nehemiah

Although he was born in Babylonian exile, Nehemiah wanted to go to Jerusalem and to be with his own people.

Points of Information – Nehemiah

Nehemiah was deeply saddened to find that although some of his people – the remnant – had returned from exile to Jerusalem, the walls (of protection) and gates of the Holy City had not yet been repaired and rebuilt. He then offered a fervent prayer to the Lord, on behalf of his people.
Nehemiah 1:5-11.

Points of Information – Nehemiah

As a cupbearer for the Persian king, Nehemiah's job had been to taste the king's wine and food first, to ensure that they were safe for the king to consume.

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Nehemiah took a great risk by appearing with a sad face in front of the king. Nehemiah 2:1-3. By tradition, this could have been punishable by death. However, Nehemiah prayed first; then, he requested that King Artaxerxes allow him to go to Jerusalem and help his own people. Verses 4-8.

Points of Information – Nehemiah

In this Book of the Bible, Nehemiah documents a lot about the people: Nehemiah 7:6-73 (those who left captivity); 10:1-27 (those who were sealed); 11:4-19 (those who dwelled in the Holy City); 11:20-36 ("the rest of the people" or "the residue"); 12:1-26 (a listing of priests and Levites); 12:31-36, 41,42 (princes, priests and others).

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Lesson Context - 1

In the previous Chapter (8) of the Book of Nehemiah, the people gathered for readings of the Law (by Ezra) and they once again (after a long lapse) celebrated the Festival of Booths.

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Lesson Context - 2

In the early segment of this 9th Chapter of the Book of Nehemiah, the people, having gathered for another reading of the Law, were led to confess their sins, to set themselves apart from unbelievers and to praise the Lord.

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Text – UMI Outline #1

13

Nehemiah 9:2

The People Confess Their Sins

Nehemiah 9:2 (NLT)

Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners as they confessed their own sins and the sins of their ancestors.

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Text – UMI Outline #2

15

Nehemiah 9:6-7, 9-10, 30-36

**The People Numerate Their Sins in Their
Confession**

Nehemiah 9:6

“You alone are the LORD. You made the skies and the heavens and all the stars. You made the earth and the seas and everything in them. You preserve them all, and the angels of Heaven worship you.

Nehemiah 9:7

You are the LORD God, who chose Abram and brought him from Ur of the Chaldeans and renamed him Abraham.

Nehemiah 9:9-10

You saw the misery of our ancestors in Egypt, and You heard their cries from beside the Red Sea.

You displayed miraculous signs and wonders against Pharaoh, his officials, and all his people, for You knew how arrogantly they were treating our ancestors. You have a glorious reputation that has never been forgotten.

Nehemiah 9:30-31

In Your love, You were patient with them for many years. You sent Your Spirit, who warned them through the prophets. But still they wouldn't listen! So once again You allowed the peoples of the land to conquer them.

But in Your great mercy, You did not destroy them completely or abandon them forever. What a gracious and merciful God You are!

Nehemiah 9:32

And now, our God, the great and mighty and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of unfailing love, do not let all the hardships we have suffered seem insignificant to You. Great trouble has come upon us and upon our kings and leaders and priests and prophets and ancestors – all of Your people –from the days when the kings of Assyria first triumphed over us until now.

Nehemiah 9:33-34

Every time You punished us You were being just. We have sinned greatly, and You gave us only what we deserved.

Our kings, leaders, priests, and ancestors did not obey Your Law or listen to the warnings in Your commands and laws.

Nehemiah 9:35-36

Even while they had their own kingdom, they did not serve You, though You showered Your goodness upon them. You gave them a large, fertile land, but they refused to turn from their wickedness.

So now today we are slaves in the land of plenty that You gave our ancestors for their enjoyment! We are slaves here in this good land!

Remember these things:

Let us be honest with ourselves and (most importantly) with the Lord and acknowledge what we have done wrong.

Then, we can pledge and proceed to not repeat the wrongdoing.

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