

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – June 7, 2020

Theme: Nehemiah: A Vessel of Restoration

Topic: The Path to Restoration

Main Text: Nehemiah 9: 1-38

Key verse: Nehemiah 9:3 *“And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for one-fourth of the day; and for another fourth they confessed and worshipped the Lord their God.” (NKJV)*

INTRODUCTION: In the last study we saw that it was not only the city walls which need restoration. The people’s lives also needed restoration. That restoration started when all the people assembled in front of the water gate to listen to the word of God (Nehemiah 8:1). That revival continued as the people returned, a few days after completing the festival of booths, to spend time in the presence of God. *“... and this time they fasted and dressed in burlap and sprinkled dust on their heads. Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners as they confessed their own sins and the sins of their ancestors”* (Nehemiah 9:1-2 NLT). These outward expressions of fasting, wearing sackcloth and putting dust on their heads were demonstrations of repentance and humility before God. So, the Israelites kick-started their restoration by repentance.

1. **(a) Apart from fasting, and wearing of sackcloth, in what other ways did the Israelites demonstrate their repentance? See Nehemiah 9:2-3; (b) What is this ‘separation from foreigners’ and why do you think this separation and confession were necessary in pursuit of restoration? See 1 John 1:8-10; 2 Corinthians 6:17. (c) The people gathered as one to repent. What is the place of corporate repentance in bringing about revival to a Church or nation?**

Part of the people’s return to God was in worshipping God. In their worship, they compared their lives with God and His word. They acknowledged Him for who He is; for what He does and has done *“... You alone are the LORD, You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts, the earth and everything in It... the host of heaven worships You. You are the Lord God ...”* (Nehemiah 9: 6-7 NKJV). Then they acknowledged their sinfulness and God’s goodness notwithstanding their rebellion (Neh. 9: 16-31). They also looked around at their current situation, that they were servants in their own land, with the enemy dominating and riding roughshod over them. Finally, they acknowledged God’s justice in all that had befallen them (Nehemiah 9:33,37).

2. **(a) Why do you think it was important for the people to remind themselves who God is and what HE does and has done as part of their return to God? See Isaiah 6:1-7 (b) Let some participants share instances when a glimpse at the Glory of God and His mighty power had helped their worship and repentance. (c) What can we, as members of VFC, learn from this action taken by the Israelites?**

Having recounted the past, they confessed their sin and that of their ancestors of abandoning God’s instruction. Reading God’s word, the eyes of their hearts were enlightened to see the extent of their deviation from God’s standard. As they saw their depravity and inclination to sin, they realized that the only hope for restoration was by God’s mercy. So, they pleaded for mercy (Nehemiah 9:30-32). And to demonstrate their seriousness, they made a written sure covenant which their leaders signed (Nehemiah 9:38). Essentially, they were making a pledge to live in obedience to God, as stated later: *“And the Israelites now make a public promise to live in obedience to God and they sign a binding agreement to follow God’s word”* (Nehemiah 10:29).

3. **(a) What do participants think was the significance of the written pledge? (b) What would it take and what would it look like for us as VFC to make such a binding agreement? (c) Given our inclination to sin, how can we leverage on the grace of God through Christ, to commit to a life of obedience to God?**

Prayer: *Dear Heavenly Father we thank you that you have provided forgiveness and restoration for all those who come to you through the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*