

Nehemiah 9:16-23 – Praise God, He Pulled You out of Pits

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Armstrong, Gaebelein, Handfuls, Gill, Barnes, Delitzsch, JFB, Henry, Poole, Barnes, Trapp, Clarke, Geneva, Expositor, Brothers and Sisters in the Lord: The **Jews were renewed in their faith** and they showed it.

The most important way in which they **showed their faith was in worship.**

And the **most important thing about worship is praise of God!**

And the **most important way of praising if God is for who is and what he has done.**

And one of the **most important things he does for his children is to rescue them when they fall into pits!**

He rescued them from hell for sure...and that is ground for praise, **but he also rescues them when they fall into temporary pits.** Hear about this today.

Our headings are:

Pulled out of the *pit of rebellion*

Pulled out of the *pit of idolatry*

Pulled out of the pit and *established*

Our goals are: **That you will be thankful when God pulls you out of pits you dig for yourself and fall into.**

Pulled out of the Pit of Rebellion

16 "But they and our fathers acted proudly, **Hardened their necks,**
And did **not heed Your commandments.** 17 They refused to obey,
And they **were not mindful of Your wonders** That You did among
them. But they hardened their necks, And in their rebellion They
appointed a leader To return to their bondage. But You are God, Ready
to pardon, Gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, Abundant in kindness,
And did not forsake them.

1. While God had gloriously rescued Israel from Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, they soon started to make trouble for themselves, the first one being the hardening of their necks.

What does hardening of the neck mean?

It means to rebel against the order God established for his glory and man's good! It means they treated God with contempt – treated him presumptuously!

Exodus 32:9 And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people!

So this **rebellion was against man's own self-interest**. They went against what they promised God they would do.

Exodus 24:7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient."

And what wonderful laws they had – laws guaranteed to give peace. And the national laws...to preserve life, liberty, and property! And the ceremonial laws...pointing to the work of Christ. But they rebelled!

2. With hardened - stiffened necks the Jews threw off the yoke of God's law like an untamed bull shakes off a yoke.

3. With hardened necks the Jews ignored the wonders of God; to them God's wonders were no big deal.

God did some remarkable wonders: The Red Sea opening, smoke and fire from the mountains, water from the rock, sun standing still, food from the air every day, opening of the Jordan river at flood stage, sending an abundance of quail...

The Jews wanted the blessing of God without the submission to God. **It is like these wonders became stale!**

4. With their hardened necks they provoked God. Look at one example.

2 Chronicles 28:25 And in every single city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods, and **provoked to anger the LORD** God of his fathers.

5. With hardened necks they appointed a leader to return to the slavery of Egypt, the place from which they cried for freedom.

They sacrificed freedom for some extra food!

Numbers 14:4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."

They liked to listen to Lucifer's whistle, not the Lord's Words.

6. Yet God pulled them out of that filthy pit – showing great grace to those who spat at his kindness.

Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "**The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, 7 "keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...**

Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; **Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him;** And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

7. Lessons:

a. When you are praising God, take time to remember the difficulties you had in the past from which he pulled you out – especially for those difficulties you created for yourself.

Go into the details because that will show the understanding and depth of your praise. There will be a richness to your praise if you do.

b. Provoking God hurts him and makes him angry, but it does not prevent God from protecting you and providing for you.

c. Take the time to reflect on God's goodness regularly. Think of his love to you through Christ Jesus.

This will help to prevent you from falling into these pits in the future.

d. The depth of your sins makes the height of God's forgiveness more memorable.

Exodus 34:9 Then he said, "If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though **we are a stiff-necked people;** and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance."

Pulled out of the Pit of Idolatry

18 "Even when they made a molded calf for themselves, And said, '**This is your god** That brought you up out of Egypt,' And worked great provocations, 19 **Yet in Your manifold mercies You did not forsake them in the wilderness.** The pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day, To lead them on the road; Nor the pillar of fire by night, To show them light, And the way they should go.

1. The Jewish rebellion against God through the stiffening of their necks was bad, but it didn't end there; they proceeded to bend their necks to idols, idols they made themselves – a deeper pit.

2. First, they made a golden calf-an imitation of the Apis, or ox -Egyptian gods, the ones whose god was unable to protect them from Yahweh!

In other words, **they took and made a loser god!** They wanted the support of God and worshipped other gods right in front of his face!

These were similar **words the Serpent spoke to Adam and Eve.**

3. They then declared the golden calf was their true God that had brought them up out of Egypt.

They said they wanted to go back to Egypt...and yet they were worshipping the "god who brought them out of Egypt!"

Exodus 32:4 And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, "This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

4. They then provoked God in other ways: Complaining, Sabbath-breaking, intermarriage with non-believers, among other things.

5. Yet, in his great love, God continued to keep them, and more, to provide for them.

He kept the cloud over them in the day to give them shade from the desert heat.

He kept the pillar of fire by night to give them light and heat and guide their travels.

6. Lessons:

a. When you think about it, the Israelites wanted to make God in their image.
They wanted to serve God in their own way! They did what many people do today.

They changed worship because they have changed who God is in their minds.

b. There are those who hold on to money, jobs, health, and other such things even though they know those things are from the true God. They hold those things as their gods!

These are clear violations of the 1st and 2nd command. God hates this.

c. Praise God for his mercy. (The main point here.) He is always ready to pull men out of the pit into which they jump of their own free will.

God is always ready to forgive and restore!

d. Live better lives, having been rescued. Forgiveness is never the end; it is the ground for obedience. That is true repentance.

Psalms 130:4 But there is forgiveness with You, **That You may be feared.**

Pulled out of the Pit and Established

20 You also gave **Your good Spirit to instruct them**, And did not withhold **Your manna from their** mouth, And gave them **water for their thirst**. 21 Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness, They lacked nothing; Their clothes did not wear out And their feet did not swell.

1. God pulled them out of those pits and established them, teaching them by his Holy Spirit.

Numbers 11:25 Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and **took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied**, although they never did so again.

How gracious was this! God didn't just pull the Jews out...he confirmed them as his children and established them.

2. God continued to provide food and water to them for 40 years.

Numbers 20:11 Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

The manna and the water came before the law!

3. God sustained them in such a way that they lacked nothing.

God even sustained their clothes and their feet. He sustained their body and their health.

Deuteronomy 8:4 "**Your garments did not wear out on you**, nor did your foot swell these forty years.

Psalms 84:11 For the **LORD God is a sun and shield**; The LORD will give grace and glory; **No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.**

22 "Moreover You gave them **kingdoms and nations**, And **divided them into districts**. So they took possession of the land of Sihon, The land of the king of Heshbon, And the land of Og king of Bashan. 23 **You also multiplied their children as the stars of heaven**, And brought them into the land Which You had told their fathers To go in and possess.

4. God pulled them out of those pits and gave them kingdoms and nations as their inheritance: Og, Sihon, and Canaan.

God said literally he gave them to “every corner” of the land...or “on all sides.”

5. God pulled them out of those pits and grew their numbers, ushering in great strength, so they could occupy Canaan and set the stage for the coming of Messiah.

Deuteronomy 1:10 ‘The LORD your God has multiplied you, and here you are today, as the stars of heaven in multitude.

They went in and fought, and yet it was God who was fighting for them.

6. Lessons:

a. Praise God for instructing his people by instructing those whom he called to himself. He gave teachers, elders, pastors!

Ephesians 5:9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, **and truth**),

b. It should be your prayer too to be instructed by God’s Word and Spirit.

Psalms 143:10 Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.

c. All of Israel’s transition of being enriched in Egypt, the miraculous departure, their travelling to Canaan, their conquering it, and their settling in it was part of the plan to send Messiah to die for the sins of the world.

It was literally the center of the inhabited earth! All you can say is, “Great is your faithfulness!”

d. You have the same promise of inhabiting the world. This is the millennial promise of God. Jesus said, “Go into all the world and make disciples of (not in) all the nations!”

Conclusion:

God pulled the Israelites out of their **pit of rebellion**. God pulled the Israelites out of their **pit of idolatry**. God not only pulled them out, he also **established them again as his children** and blessed them with the things they needed to do the work he called them to do.

No wonder Nehemiah and his friends praised God so deeply.

Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

1. God gave you every good thing you have. Be thankful. Show you are thankful. Teach your children to be thankful.

2. God pulls you out of every pit into which you dive into or which you were tricked by the Devil to jump into. Be thankful for God’s grace.

Show you are thankful by your worship and by your work.

3. God shows his fatherly love for you because you are his children through his Son!

There is no other reason for God to be kind to you. Knowing this, really, really praise him!

Finally: Christians fall into pits daily, but God brings us out. If you are not a Christian, you are in a pit and will descend into it deeper-to the pit of hell.

The way out is if the death of the Passover Lamb of God is counted as your death.

So run to God and ask for Christ, the Passover Lamb of God, to be counted as yours.