

Nehemiah, part 11:
“God’s People Confess Their Sins”
Nehemiah 9:1-3

God’s work of revival continues – and deepens!

1. The Gathering for Confession of Sin

*“Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month
the children of Israel were assembled with fasting,
in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads.”*

(1) 24th day of Tishri

- Two days after the celebration of the Feast of Booths

(2) This gathering has all the markings of Yom Kippur – the Day of Atonement

- But Yom Kippur was to be held on the 10th day of Tishri!

- What to make of this?

- There was apparently a spontaneity about it.
- This is a time of revival – and this (confession of sin) is one of the marks of true revival.

- It comes immediately on the heels of a time of great joy – great rejoicing!
So resting and rejoicing in God’s mercy prepares the heart for deeper confession!

2. The Features of Confession of Sin

(1) A Sorrowing

*“the children of Israel were assembled with fasting,
in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads.”*

- A sorrowing over sin – personal and of the nation

- The accoutrements of sorrow in that day:

Fasting – the setting aside of bodily needs and pleasure for the sake of focus upon needs spiritual

Sackcloth – clothing of rough texture, of plain color, and untailored cut – a debasing oneself

Dust on the head – expression of humbling, debasing oneself because of sin

(2) Separation from the World

*“Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves
from all foreigners; and they stood and confessed
their sins and the sins of their fathers.”*

- Only those of the covenant nation!

- Emblematic of this:

- The world does not, cannot share in this!
- It is holy; it is sacred

(3) Personal and Corporate Sin Confessed

- cf. the prayer which follows – vv. 4-37

*“they stood and confessed
their sins and the sins of their fathers.”*

(4) Unhurried!

- A real indicator of revival!

*“And they stood 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 worshiped the LORD their God.”*

(5) Prompted, Directed by the Word of God

(6) Joined with True Worship

Further Application: