

'Building Blocks of Faith Series'

Sermons in the Book of Nehemiah



Message 16 - 'The God of All Grace - God's Covenant of Grace'

Nehemiah 9: 31, 32 (Other Selected Scriptures)

The God of this great awakening in the days of Nehemiah was a covenant keeping God, the great and mighty God, the good God, and the God of all grace. In the verses here (as well as others from the Scriptures) we are able to see that the covenant that was referred to in the prayer of the Levites was the covenant of grace as God had established with Abraham in Genesis 12. We considered some of the key factors about that covenant:

God's Covenant of Grace - In the Scriptures, covenants are very serious and solemn agreements. These agreements would either be agreed, or sometimes they would be imposed by one side, unilateral in that sense. The type of Covenant that God makes is a unilateral covenant, in other words he is the initiator, He alone will establish its terms. The Lord's covenant with Israel was a preparation for the coming of God Himself, that being in the person of His Son, to fulfil all His promises, and also to realise the types and shadows of the law, all would be manifested in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament covenant was only ever a forerunner of the marvel to come, and when Christ came, the Old Testament means and arrangements became redundant, obsolete as it says in Hebrews, ready to vanish away, when all that they pointed to and anticipated was fully and gloriously realised.

If you were to read Hebrews 7-10, you would see that it very clearly explains, that through Christ, God has initiated and inaugurated a superior and better version of His one eternal covenant with sinners. Christ fulfilling the demands of the old covenant has opened the way of faith to gentiles too. Here we need to see that the 'offspring of Abraham', the community with which the covenant was made, was completely redefined in Christ. Galatians 3:16, '*Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed,"²¹ who is Christ.*' What is the verse saying? It is saying that those who are united to Christ by faith, effectively become Abraham's offspring in Christ. So, what is the purpose, the aim of God's covenantal dealings? There is one purpose, it has ever been the same. That is, to save, redeem, to gather, to sanctify, a covenant people, and as it says in Revelation 7:9, 'from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages'. This people will one day inhabit the new Jerusalem in a new world order. From the first to the last, God has been a God of grace who is redeeming people to Himself. God is a God of great grace, and it is wonderful! Towards this end of fulfilling His sovereign purposes and His covenant of grace, the great God of heaven is still working and shaping the events of this world. He is still moving, and in the time of Nehemiah, He granted a great outpouring of His grace upon the people. It was marvellous because they realised again the awesomeness of God, and His grace, and it humbled them. This framework that is laid in this covenant is such that it encompasses and embraces the entire purposes and economy of God's sovereign grace.

I wonder if you have ever thought of your relationship with God through the gift of grace in the terms of a 'covenant'? What this should do is give us an added degree of certainty and assurance for all those who are in Christ. It should give us great confidence in the God who keeps covenant, it should give us a sense of assuring, warm, strong security as we realise that our position with God in Christ, is secure. Why? God is the God of grace, and as He has bestowed that grace upon you, entirely based upon His unmerited favour towards you, and that He governs this by a set of unchanging promises. Once you have been saved by Him, you are safe in His hand, and nothing can pluck you from it. He has promised it to be so. His grace is marvellous, it is unmerited, it is sufficient, it is sustaining. We should worship Him for His grace, grace so large, so free, so undeserved. It is all of Him, the great God, the good God, and the God of grace!



Penzance Baptist Church

'Upholding the Ordinary Means of Grace'

Pastor Jonathan Stobbs