

Nehemiah 9

Read Nehemiah 9:1-5a: The Jews re-read the scriptures publicly 24 days after Ezra had. Upon hearing the word of God; they realized how far they were off the path. The history of the Hebrews described in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy is one of rebellion towards a merciful God. We tend to be proud of our family history; until we read through an impartial family tree and genealogy. We all believe that we come from *noble stock* until we read about it outside our family gathering. For some reason we just tend to keep hearing the highlights. Moses previously laid out the road ahead to safety as well as the road to destruction.

The Jews responded by specifically confessing their own sins, and their embarrassing family legacies against God. Then they took action; and disconnected from their new-found foreign idol-worshipping wives.

Read Nehemiah 9:5b-17: The priests made a psalm as they rehearsed some of the historical major points in the history of God's people on earth. God has always been good and gracious and liberal with blessings. Man has always messed up the blessings. Here are some of the main talking points of what has transpired between God and his people

God is glorious and beyond description. He is the only God, and creator of the entire universe; and all that is in it. This includes all of the angels (and demons) and all things in earth.

- God called Abram from an idolatrous and lost place. He made promises to Abraham and his descendants. He explicitly gave the land of Canaan to the children of Israel forever. *Any peace deal that involves giving away Israel's land is destined to fail badly.*
- God unveiled himself to the godless Gentile world when he responded to the prayers of his people who had been enslaved in Egypt. God humbled the pride of the powerful Pharaoh and the proud Egyptians. God then destroyed their enemies of Israel in the Red Sea.
- God set forth a set of Laws and legal requirements on Mount Sinai. God miraculously provided food and water for millions of people in the desert for

40 years. After God graciously gave the land of Canaan to his people, they became callous towards God.

Read Nehemiah 9:18- 28: The psalm continues: A good prayer includes a specific confession of failure. The history of God's goodness towards men; and men's rebellion was laid out in public and before God. We always need to start with the truth. We have read about the miracles in the desert so many times. This is a good reminder of what God has done:

- The people made a calf of gold and worshipped it, right after being miraculously-delivered from 400 years of slavery. God did not destroy them for this ridiculous act of betrayal.
- God provided a supernatural column to the sky and an overhead cloud by day (to direct their movements and protect them from the desert sun); and also a fiery column of fire by night (for warmth and light).
- God gave 2.6 million wandering Jews water and food in the middle of the desert for 40 years!
- Shoes normally wear out in a year. Their clothes and shoes did not wear out over the 40 years.
- God miraculously-displaced nations who were in their path to Canaan. God then provided Joshua with 27 victorious battles (without starting with any weapons or military training).
- Upon destroying the Canaanites; the children of Israel took over fully-functional farms, vineyards, olive groves, fruit trees and homes and water cisterns and flocks.
- After all of that, the children of Israel came upon easy times; and they forgot God. They pushed God aside for pleasures; and killed the prophets who attempted to humble them.
- After 490 years squandering, idolatry and forgetting the past; God had to send oppressors to disinfect the holy land. The book of Judges is all about God sending an enemy army to invade and abuse the children of Israel. Then God would raise up a deliverer to respond to the cries of repentance. Once the people of God were delivered; they fell back into the same pattern; and God had to send yet another oppressor.

Read Nehemiah 9:29-37: The priest accurately summed up the relationship between God and his people: “You have dealt faithfully, but we have acted wickedly”. He recognized that their predicament of being captives abroad is a result of their own foolish and wicked behavior. This is a reminder that our problems are not the Coronavirus, The USSR, China, the economy, or anything else. These are only symptoms of the underlying problem. Our problems all stem from turning our backs on God.

If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. ²All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God:... However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you: (Deuteronomy 28 - various verses)

One sure sign about the hearts of the people are how they make corrections upon being confronted with the truth. Do they make logical adjustments; or do they harden their hearts and double their resolve to continue in their own ways?

Clearly, *the god of this age* has blinded the inhabitants of the earth.

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," ^{7a}made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:4-6)

How does Satan gain increased control over the world population? We are all born with sinful inclinations. Our desires are partially suppressed by our commitment to live our lives according to a higher code of conduct.

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." ²⁰Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. (1 Corinthians 1:18-21)

For some; there is no distinguishable code of conduct. They are just like animals.

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. (James 1:13-15)

Our basic desires include good and evil things. Our evil desires fall into 3 categories.

For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷ The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:16-17)

We who believe; have an escape from our sinful nature:

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! ¹³ No temptation ^[is] has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted ^[to] beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, ^[is] he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:12-13)

There are no people who live in both worlds. We are either slaves to sin or voluntary slaves to God. We deceive ourselves by thinking that there is a middle ground. I have heard that the satanic bible is not about worshipping Satan, as much as it is about doing whatever you feel like doing.

When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. ²¹ What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. (Romans 6:20-22)

The history of the world is a history of mankind ruining his life (collectively). God has had to intervene to stop man short of making his own life unsustainable; and making the world uninhabitable.

There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful,

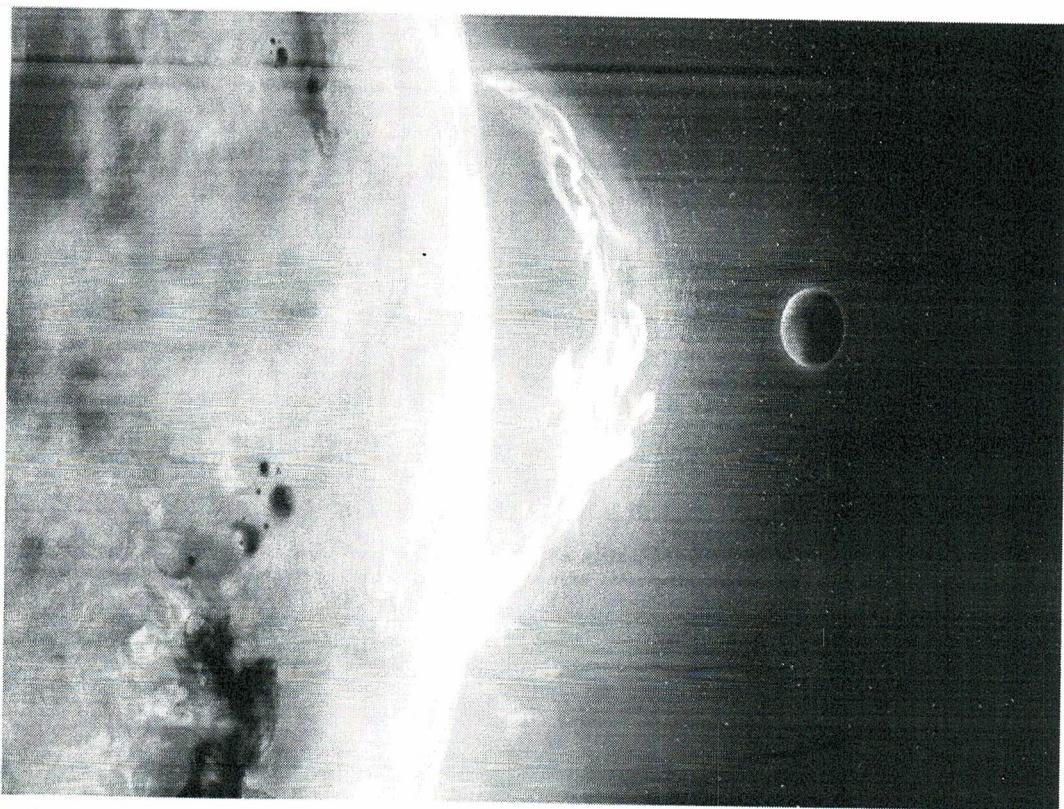
unholy, ³without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people. (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

The returning Jews made a binding agreement with God. They had lost everything; and had nothing else to depend on. How does this Coronavirus fit into the scheme of things spiritually?

1. We can see more-clearly how vulnerable we are to our supply chain
2. We are more in touch with the concept of death, disease and lost conveniences.
3. We are making efforts against a common cause. Our continual personal attacks and opposing arguments have decreased.
4. People are joining forces with their neighbors, and acting more in each other's interests
5. We are unable to solve our own predicaments; and are asking God for help and protection.
6. We are forced to curtail our level of busyness.
7. Virtual on-line and family-sized church units have gained in popularity

I believe that the level of desperation is still being buffered by savings accounts, national financial assistance, debt forgiveness and postponement plans, and common expectations of returning normalcy.

The 7-year tribulation is marked by cataclysmic world events. This virus may be an isolated lesser event; or this may be the first birth pain. There are some very simple things that could change our lives in a much bigger way that could come on



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Solar flare!

Surely the most dramatic of all the potential internet doomsday scenarios, the possibility of a massive solar flare has kept experts up nights for several decades. Solar flare concerns predate the internet, actually. Science has long known that a major solar flare could produce an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) that could, theoretically, fry all electronics on the planet.

"A sufficiently powerful solar flare could produce an electromagnetic pulse that would shut down most of the computers in the world," Juola says. "While some systems are protected against EMPs, any human-built protection is only so strong, and the sun can be a lot more powerful."

Levinson concurs, and adds that other threats might descend from the heavenly firmament as well. "With all of our technological prowess, we still have not in any way mastered or even uncovered all the forces at work in the universe," he says. "We don't know all the things that can go wrong."

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According to NASA a massive solar flare would be one of the largest natural disasters which could happen to a first world country.

It would cause the failure of electric power grids, leading to power blackouts, possibly lasting for up to 10 years!

All electrical equipment would be either badly damaged or rendered useless. Petrol would be very scarce due to the inability to refine oil and the breakdown of pumps.

This would cause the collapse of the economy with millions of people dying due to a lack of medicines or food.

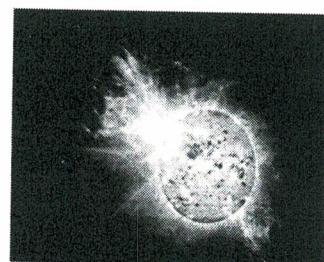
A solar flare prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ is possibly described in the Bible, in Revelation chapter 16. This same chapter includes the battle of Armageddon, which is presumed to be a literal event, which takes place at the time of Jesus Christ's return.

Revelation 16 verse 8: And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

verse 9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

verse 10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

verse 11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.



OVER THE PAST few years, speculation has risen around whether North Korea or any other nation could detonate a nuclear weapon over the United States that would create an electromagnetic pulse and knock out all electricity for weeks or months. This doomsday hypothesis has been promoted by a former CIA director, a commission set up by Congress, and a book by newsman Ted Koppel. But a sober new engineering study by industry experts finds that key equipment on the grid can be protected from any such EMP. Even if it could happen, the resulting blackouts would affect a few states but wouldn't turn the US into a backdrop for *The Walking Dead*.