

# ***Every Nation Is Accountable to God***

***International Bible Lesson***

**Nehemiah 9:1-3, 6-10, 29-36**

**Sunday, August 11, 2013**

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*“Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly: Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them”* (Nehemiah 9:33, 34—KJV).

*“You, O Lord, have been just in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly; our kings, our officials, our priests, and our ancestors have not kept your law or heeded the commandments and the warnings that you gave them”* (Nehemiah 9:33, 34—NRSV).

God holds every nation accountable to Him for their actions and beliefs. When God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, God punished the Egyptians for their immorality and idolatry. When God led the Israelites into the Promised Land, God punished all the kingdoms in the land for their evil deeds and pagan beliefs. Years later, after the political and religious leaders of the Israelites led their people into the pagan practices of their neighbors, and after they refused to repent in spite of God’s commands and warnings, God punished them by destroying the Kingdom of Israel in 722 BC and by sending the Kingdom of Judah into exile in 586 BC. After they returned from captivity in Babylon, Ezra led the people in prayer and confessed that they, their leaders, and their ancestors had acted wickedly toward God and God had acted faithfully to punish them. As the Supreme King over all, God still acts on the same moral principles. Yet, too many political and religious leaders lead their people into immorality, paganism, and the worship of the creation instead of the Creator. Some legalize abortion in every possible way, while making prayer and the posting of the Ten Commandments illegal in the places they choose. When leaders call wrong right and right wrong, they can mislead those who remain ignorant of the Bible’s teachings. Nations that follow immoral and godless leaders will not escape God’s just and faithful punishment.

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## **Thinking Further**

1. What kind of foreigner were the Israelites forbidden to marry?
2. Why did God forbid them from marrying unbelievers?
3. What did the Israelites do for a fourth part of the day followed by another fourth part of a day? What example might that give believers today?
4. What did Ezra pray about the heart of Abraham? What did he mean?
5. What reason did Ezra give for God fulfilling His promises to Abraham and his descendants?