

Wednesday Devotional

July 09, 2025

Scripture: Nehemiah 1: 1-11

Is This God or Is This Satan?

Sometimes when we are in trouble we are not sure whether the trouble is the opposition of our enemy Satan or a punishment from God. It may be both, and in any case the thing to do is pray – first, confession of sin which is known; second, asking to be shown sin which has not been acknowledged; third, prayer for deliverance in God's way and in God's time.

When the people of Israel were in great trouble and disgrace and the wall of Jerusalem had been broken down, Nehemiah sat down and wept. Then he mourned and fasted and prayed "for some days" (v. 4) before the God of heaven. The exile of the people and the destruction of the wall were surely the work of evil men, but they were also the means employed by a sovereign God to punish the people. "If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations" (v. 8). Nehemiah reminded God in his prayer of this threat, but he also reminded him of his promise: "if you return to me and obey....I will gather them" (v. 9). Nehemiah became the intercessor and the means in the hand of God for their restoration, just as their enemies had, under his sovereignty, been the means of their punishment.

It is not required that we sort out all the possibilities – "Is this God?" or "Is this Satan?" It is required that we confess our sins and put our whole trust in the God who is in charge.

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