



New Beginnings, Volume 17, 2008  
Pastor Jim Verkest, Mosinee UMC

*Nehemiah 9:6*

*“You alone are the Lord. You made the skies and the heavens and all the stars. You made the earth and the seas and everything in them. You preserve and give life to everything, and all the angels of heaven worship you.”*

The passage above comes from a passage relating how the people of Jerusalem, many of them former exiles in Babylonia, worshipped God. These people had returned to the once proud City of Jerusalem to rebuild its wall and the Temple. For many years the city had laid in ruins destroyed by conquering armies. These people realized that it had been their broken relationship with God that had led to the destruction of Jerusalem. They and their ancestors had sinned against God and He, who had once protected and empowered them, let them fall to the godless hordes from Syria. God did not destroy them, they destroyed themselves by turning away from God. They reaped the reward of their own pride and disobedience. Now they repented and turned once again to God.

It seems that it is only in our times of greatest struggle and challenge that we call on God to bless us. When things are going OK we are content to rely upon ourselves and our own strengths. It's only when we discover that we can't do it on our own that we fall to our knees and seek God's intervention. Or perhaps, when we can't do it on our own we just rail at God for not doing it for us or perhaps for doing it to us. In the end it all becomes what our beliefs are about the nature of God. Is God a loving God that only desires what is best for us or is God a vengeful God seeking to punish us at every turn? Perhaps in your frustration and

hopelessness you have stopped believing in God altogether because you don't experience His presence in your life. You've shut God out.

It is clear from the words of Nehemiah that the people of Israel believed in God. Their belief was in a God who was the creator of all things. God was the very author of life. In their shame and guilt for sinning against God, they realized that it was their failures not God's that had led to their misery.

In our culture today we exhibit many of the characteristics of the fallen humanity who witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem, their temple, and their homes. We have become led and often educated by people who deny God's role in creation as well as salvation. We have rejected God's law and call it "old fashioned" and meant for another time and place. We have worshiped at the alters of money, sex and power instead of the Alter of God. Is it any wonder that despite our technological geniuses we live in an over indulged, violent, and self-centered world Hell bent on destruction. We are destroying life and love, not God.

It's not too late to have a new beginning. God is ever faithful, loving and forgiving. Come and seek the face of the author of life, Seek the God who would die so you could live.