

Sermons on Nehemiah-Lowell Johnson

Sermons on Nehemiah - Lowell Johnson

1. [Turning Vision into Reality - Step 1: Praying to God Nehemiah 1:1-11](#)
2. [Turning Vision into Reality -Step 2: Announcing the Goal Nehemiah 2:1-10](#)
3. [Step 3 & 4: Visualize the Project - Motivate the People Nehemiah 2:11-20](#)
4. [Step 5: Delegating the Work Nehemiah 3:1-32](#)
5. [Step 6: Overcoming the Opposition Nehemiah 4:1-6](#)
6. [Step 7: Removing the Obstacles Nehemiah 4:7-23](#)
7. [Step 8:Dealing with Internal Strife Nehemiah 5:1-19](#)
8. [Steps 9-10: How to Overcome Subtle Attacks Nehemiah 6:1-19](#)
9. [Getting Back to the Bible Nehemiah 8:1-12](#)
10. [Getting Concerned About Sin Nehemiah 9-10](#)
11. [Dealing with Broken Vows Nehemiah 13](#)

From Gotquestions:

- [Book of Nehemiah - Bible Survey](#)
- [Who was Ezra in the Bible?](#)
- [Who was Nehemiah in the Bible?](#)
- [What is a cupbearer?](#)
- [Why was it important to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem?](#)
- [What was/is the importance of the gates of Jerusalem](#)
- [What was the significance of gatekeepers in the Bible](#)
- [Who were Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem?](#)
- [What is the joy of the Lord?](#) Nehemiah 8:10
- [Why did the Israelites have to abandon their foreign wives](#)
- [Should we stand when the Bible is read?](#)
- [Why are the numbers in Ezra so different from Nehemiah?](#)

Dictionary Articles on Nehemiah

- American Tract Society [Nehemiah](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Nehemiah](#)
- Baker's Evangelical Dictionary [Nehemiah, Theology of](#)
- Chabad Knowledge Base [Nehemiah](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Nehemiah, Book of Nehemiah](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Nehemiah, the Book of Nehemiah](#)
- Hitchcock Bible Names [Nehemiah](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Nehemiah, Book of Nehemiah](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [Nehemiah, Book of Nehemiah](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Nehemiah](#)
- People's Dictionary of the Bible [Nehemiah](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Nehemiah](#) [Nehemiah The Book of](#)
- Whyte's Bible Characters [Nehemiah](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Nehemiah](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Nehemiah Grew](#) [Nehemiah Books of Ezra and Nehemiah](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Nehemiah, Book of Nehemiah](#) [Ezra-Nehemiah](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Nehemiah Book of Nehemiah](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Nehemiah](#); [Nehemiah, Book](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Nehemiah](#)
- The 1901 Jewish Encyclopedia [Nehemiah](#) [Nehemiah, Book](#)

Nehemiah 1:1-11

Turning Vision Into Reality - Step One: Praying To God

Before Reading The Passage:

The Book of Nehemiah has been called “ The Building Book”.

The walls that had once stood around Jerusalem for protection had been torn down when Babylon captured Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

Walls around the city may not sound like a big deal for us today, but it was in that day, for it was their main means of protection...of keeping the enemy out.

We don't have walls today for protection, not in a literal sense, but we do have walls, they are just more sophisticated.

We have the wall of radar as our national wall.

In our houses we put up fences; have locks on our doors and windows; put in alarm systems... all for protection.

But the walls had been torn down around Jerusalem and God put it in the heart of Nehemiah to rebuild the wall.

Read the Passage

The wall had been destroyed.

In David's time and Solomon's time the walls stood, but God warned His people that if they disobeyed Him and go after strange gods, he would allow other nations to destroy them.

Deut 28:63-67

The Northern Kingdom fell to Assyria in 722 B.C. because of their idolatry.

You would think the Southern Kingdom, which included Judah and Jerusalem, would have learned from the Northern Kingdom, but they did not. They went after strange gods, too.

Babylon attacked Jerusalem- three times and on the third attack, they destroyed the walls around Jerusalem. 2 Chron 36:17-20

Persia then destroys Babylon... 140 years have passed since the walls had been torn down.

Cyrus, King of Persia, lets 50,000 Jews return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and the city under Zerubbabel and Joshua. They laid the foundation of the temple and the work stopped because they started building their own houses.

Sixteen years later, Haggai and Zech went to Jerusalem and the temple was completed along with Ezra.

But the walls were not built. They were started under Ezra but opposition came and even what they had started was torn down.

Nehemiah comes on the scene in 446 B.C.

I. Nehemiah's Position Nehemiah 1:1-3,11b

The cupbearer was a trusted servant; more so than the Kings family, for often the family member would try to kill the King. He would taste the wine and food to make sure it was not poisoned.

He was with the King, Artaxerxes, in Shushan.... a “camp David” for the King. Shushan is where Daniel and Queen Esther were. It was 600 miles from Jerusalem.

It was in the month of Chislev- last of November or first of December. That's important because we are told in 2:1 that Nehemiah went before the King in the month of Nisan- four months later.

Note- Nehemiah was not a Prophet, Priest, or Preacher- he was a layman.

II. Nehemiah's Pursuit Nehemiah 1:2-4

Nehemiah wanted to know about two things: the people and the place. He was told of burdened people and broken walls... Reproach and Ruin.

When Nehemiah heard that, something happened in his heart- Neh 7:5 "Then my God put it in my heart" God stirred his heart!

We don't know why it took Nehemiah this long to get the burden- He had been the cupbearer for years, but now he was burdened- God put it on his heart to do something.

I've known we needed to do more...But God put it on my heart

The Book of Nehemiah is divided into two parts:

- Neh 1-6- Rebuilding the wall

- Neh 7-13- Revival of the people

Here's the heart of Nehemiah 1-6: God gave Nehemiah a burden and Nehemiah shared the burden with the people and lead them to transform his vision (burden) into Reality.

Neh 6:15 The wall was finished in 52 days- The God of the Bible builds and rebuilds.

he critics say that it couldn't have been rebuilt in 52 days- not a wall that big. Let me describe the wall to you: It was over two miles long around the city; it was about 35 feet high, there were at least 12 gates and 4 towers.

They had no heavy equipment... in fact, much of the time they had a trial in one hand and a weapon in the other. How could they have build that wall in 52 days?

1. They had many volunteers... The people built the section near their house. That was their main responsibility.
2. The stones were already there.
3. The people had a mind to work
4. God was in it... most important of all, while they worked, God worked through them. Note Nehemiah 6:15-16.

We are going to learn that there are 10 steps to transform vision into reality:

-Step 1- Praying to God

-Step 2- Announcing the goal

-Step 3- Visualizing the project

-Step 4- Motivating the people

-Step 5- Delegating the work

-Step 6- Overcoming the opposition

-Step 7- Removing the obstacle

-Step 8- Handling Discouragement

-Step 9- Staying on Course

-Step 10- Finishing strong

III. Nehemiah's Prayer Nehemiah 1:4-11

Every miracle was born out of a problem; so it is with a burden

When you begin to pray, God often puts you in the middle as part of the answer to your own prayer.

This book of Nehemiah begins and ends in prayer. Eleven times in 13 chapters, Nehemiah prays. This is the longest prayer in the book.

When Nehemiah heard about the problem, he did four things: wept, mourned, fasted, and prayed (v.4)...for 4 months!

James says we have not because we ask not.

What is the key to answered prayer? When Nehemiah prayed, his heart was burdened; therefore he prayed for his heart.

- Three times Nehemiah said, "I beseech thee" We can divide the prayer into three parts. Note: 1:5,8,11.

A. Confession of sins Nehemiah 1:5-7

In v-5 he address the God who keeps his covenant...keeps his promises.

In verse 6, he confesses sin...didn't ignore sin- that must came first: cleansing

Not just one time, but day and night- for 4 months

He identifies with the people, he doesn't indict them

Sinned against THEE- didn't just break the laws of God- we disobeyed you...dishonored you- 1:6-7.
Defilement (corruptly) Dishonor (against thee) Disobedience.

? God has made provisions for cleansing 1John 1:9

B. Cited Scripture Nehemiah 1:8-10

He is holding God to His covenant promises

Matt. 28:19-20

Acts. 1:8

Mark. 11:24 What so things you desire, when you pray, believe... you shall receive them.

Luke. 11:9

Heb. 13:5

C. Cited Specifics Nehemiah 1:11

Lord, we want to be a part of what you are going to do... we want to be in on it when you keep your promise.

I'm just a cupbearer, Remove any obstacles and let the King give me freedom to be a part of your plan.

Nehemiah 2:1-10

Transforming Vision Into Reality- Step two: Announcing The Goal

Before Reading the Passage

Nehemiah was a Jew who was living in Persia because Jerusalem had been captured and destroyed.

Nehemiah's brother had visited Jerusalem and returned to Persia.

Nehemiah, who was the King's cupbearer and lived in Shushan the palace, asked his brother how things were in Jerusalem. He received the sad report, "The people are in great Reproach and the walls of the city are in Ruins.

It was then that God put a burden and a vision on Nehemiah's heart to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall. Neh 7:5 says, " God put it in my heart" to rebuild the walls.

Neh 1:11 and the walls were rebuilt in 52 days.

Read the Passage

Nehemiah 1:11- Nehemiah prayed, "Lord, I ask you to grant me mercy in the sight of Artaxerxes. Change the heart of the King.. alter his attitude so I may do your will with his pleasure."

Some 16 years earlier, Artaxerxes had given a decree to Ezra who had started building the temple and the walls, to stop the building.

The adversaries had sent this letter to Artaxerxes- Ezra 4:11-16. The King answered the letter- Ezra 4:23

The King had made his decree!

There's an old saying, "Don't try to change it. It's like the law of the Medes and Persians," meaning that something is impossible to change.

- But Nehemiah prayed that the King's heart would be changed by God and that the King would allow him to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls.

- What happened after Nehemiah prayed to the Lord? Nothing.... for 4 months

- Prov 21:1 The King's heart is turned by God... the King's heart is in God's hands- Whether he is a believer or not, God causes the heart of the King to be bent wherever it pleases Him.

I. The Burden Nehemiah Carried Nehemiah 2:1-3

Notice the time given Nehemiah 2:1- month of Nisan- That's April

1:1- month of Chislev- that's Dec...4 months..maybe a little longer.

What do you do after you pray and God has not answered? You continue to pray!

Remember: God had put this on his heart.

He prayed again! What did he pray? Neh 1:11- "God, move in the heart of the King.

When you pray and God doesn't answer immediately, what do you do? Two things:

1. In Nehemiah 1:4 Nehemiah wept and prayed; in Nehemiah 2:1 he learned to wait and pray. Both are important.

When we are tempted to rush ahead of the Lord, three verses teach us to wait:

A. Ex. 14:3 "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord"

B. Ruth 3:18 "Sit still and see what the man will do"

C. Ps.46:10 "Be still and know that I am God" Don't rush ahead of God...wait on His timing!

2. Pray and Plan

The delayed answer from God was not a bad thing; it was profitable. It gave him time to pray and plan.

When God delays His answer, be patient and use that time to prepare for the answer. That not only shows wisdom; it also shows faith.

- How often Nehemiah must have sought the Lord alone, asking Him either to remove the burden altogether from his heart, or to so deepen it that it would make it impossible for him to do other than respond.

- When he awoke his first thoughts were of Jerusalem; before he fell asleep, his evening prayer was for the ruined walls of Jerusalem.

- "I had never been sad in the King's presence" Nehemiah 2:1b-2

Being sad in the King's presence could mean demotion or death.

If Nehemiah looked sad, it could mean he had gotten poison meat for the King.

The King thought everyone should be happy just to be in the presence of the King; to be sad in his presence was thought to be a reflection against the King.

No wonder Nehemiah was afraid.

But Nehemiah's inward sorrow and burden was too great to conceal or hide; it showed on his face.

In man's eyes sadness before the King was viewed as a negative thing; not a positive thing. But remember, the King's heart is in God's hand

- When the King asked Nehemiah why he was sad, he did what the Jews were known to do- He answered his question with a question- 2:3.

- Again, for 4 months Nehemiah was planning for this day. What would he tell the King?

- Very wisely he mentioned his father's tombs. The King would not think much about Ruins, but the Persians, like the Jews, had great respect for the tombs of their loved-ones and regarded the violation of a tomb with horror.

II. The Blessing Nehemiah Coveted Nehemiah 2:4-9

2:4 What do you request... what do you want? That's the opportunity Nehemiah has been praying for and waiting for.

What is your request? The King's heart was in God's hands. God had adjusted his thinking so that he was receptive to Nehemiah's request.

Nehemiah was standing before the most powerful man on earth in that day; yet, he took time out to talk to the King of Kings first.

Scripture doesn't tell us what Nehemiah prayed, but it doesn't have to for us to know the contents of his prayer. He prayed for help, courage and wisdom as he made his request to the King of Persia.

- Notice Nehemiah 2:6 This is the only time the queen is mentioned in the book.. and the timing is perfect!

- The King is more likely to listen and to be merciful with a woman sitting next to him.

It's like a teenager who wants something. They know they are more likely to get their request if they ask dad in front of mother.

God arranged for the queen to be there to encourage the King's attitude to be more favorable towards Nehemiah.

God can put the right people on the scene at the right time.

The queen might have given him the nudge he needed to say "yes" to Nehemiah.

Nehemiah didn't pray out loud.

If he had prayed out loud or hit the floor or prayed a long prayer with his eye closed, it might have been misinterpreted by the King.

It was a short.. telegraphed...arrow prayer.

Prayers don't have to be long to be effective, especially if you've been praying for four months and are on praying grounds with God.

Matt 14:29-31 "Lord, save me!

When the King asked him what he wanted, he knew. He had already done his homework when he was praying and planning for these four months.

He needed the Approval of the King- to leave his post

He needed the Authority of the King.

A. He asked for Permission 2:5 "Send Me"

B. He asked for Passage- Nehemiah 2:7 letters

Nehemiah 2:7-9 he says "Give me"

He need official letters from the King that would transfer a portion of the King's authority to him as he passed through the lands of Judah's enemies who could harm him...or stop him from rebuilding the walls.

Think what would have happened if he had gotten to Jerusalem and was asked to show proof of the King's authority to do the work. He would have had to go back to Persia to get the letters and that was a 2 month trip one way.

C. He asked for Provisions Nehemiah 2:8

He needed timber to make gates for the house (a fort to protect the temple), for the walls of the city, and timber to build his own governor's palace.

Again, he had done his homework. He knew the name of the keeper of the King's forest.

D. He asked for Protection 2:9 an armed escort

He was sent...safe...supplied

Nehemiah told the King everything he wanted because he may not be able to stand before the King again.

But Nehemiah knew the real reason he was able to go to Jerusalem. 2:8 "The good hand of my God was

upon me.”

One other thing the King wanted to know- 2:6 How long are you going to be gone. Again, he did his homework.. “and I set him a time” -5:14- 12 years.

III. The Battle Nehemiah Caused Nehemiah 2:10

Any time someone says, “Let’s arise and build for the Lord,” Someone is going to say, “Let’s arise and break.”

Many folks live by the principle of Murphy’s Law... It won’t work. Always Negative.

They have a critical spirit that smothers whatever challenge that comes. Their ready reply is, “It can’t be done.”
(I heard that with our outreach)

There were plenty of Jews already in Jerusalem and they had been there a long time, But they were perfectly satisfied with things just as they were.

The difference was, Nehemiah had a burden.

Experiencing critical opposition doesn’t necessarily mean you are out of God’s will. It may mean you are right in the center of God’s will.

Nehemiah knew this is what God wanted him to do and he wasn’t going to let the “nay-sayers” and the opposition stop him.

How do you turn vision into reality? Step one- Pray, Step two- Announce the goal and don’t let the opposition stop you.

Nehemiah 2:11-20

Step Three & four: Visualize the Project & Motivate the People

Turning Vision Into Reality-

Before Reading the Passage

The main theme of Nehemiah is leadership

There are counterparts such as praying, planning, opposition and government, but the basic theme is leadership.

Nehemiah wears three hats in the book. He is seen as:

1. Cupbearer Nehemiah 1:1, 2:10
2. Builder- Nehemiah 2:11- 6:19
3. Governor- Nehemiah 7:13

We have seen him as cupbearer; now we come to the second stage- that of Builder.

- As cupbearer, he heard of the reproach of the people of Jerusalem and the ruin of the walls. He has prayed and planned and gotten permission from the King to go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall.

Read the Passage

Nehemiah had been sent and supplied by the King. Now he leaves Persia with the armed guard and it takes him about three months to get to Jerusalem by camel and horseback.

With the letters in hand, Nehemiah left Shushan and headed to Jerusalem.

These letters from the King would compare to our passport or visas. They were essential to allow Nehemiah to pass through the land.

When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem (2:11), he rested for three days before he did anything.

It had been a long, hard trip of about 1,000 miles.

This rest was not a waste of time. It was needful.

Someone had said, "Fatigue makes cowards of all of us."

Stopping to sharpen the axe is not a waste of time when it increases productivity.

Three things are seen in these verses: Investigation- cooperation- determination

I. Investigation Nehemiah 2:12-16

Up till now Nehemiah's information had been only hearsay. He needed firsthand knowledge of the walls.

Nehemiah used three tools in his investigation:

1. Silence Nehemiah 2:12

- What was Nehemiah doing? He was viewing the walls, taking notes on the situation, listening to God, Coming up with a strategic plan. Here's what we need

to get the job done. Here's what we are going to do. Here's how we are going to do it.

- Why didn't he announce to all what he was doing

A It delayed the enemy from hindering the work and learning his strategy.

B It deterred the Jews from leaking information to the enemies.

- In the middle of the night, while others were sleeping, Nehemiah, with a burdened heart, viewed the ruins. Can you imagine the grief that moonlit night as he saw the devastation to his beloved Jerusalem.

- No big announcements or press conference, or banners. It was all hands on research, done quietly.

2. Secrecy Nehemiah 2:13-15

- Notice Nehemiah 2:13 "went through the valley gate...Nehemiah 2:15 returned through the valley gate." he went counter- clockwise around the broken walls.

- It was so bad that at one point he had to dismount (Nehemiah 2:14) and lead his beast around the rubbish.

- He did his homework. He evaluated available resources of time, money, and leadership needed at each part of the wall.

- Nehemiah saw more at night than the residents saw in the day light, for he saw

the potential as well as the problems. That's what makes a leader.

- Note Nehemiah 2:13,15 Twice he says "I viewed the wall" or "examined the wall"... Like a surgeon probing a wound to see the extent of the damage. Then carefully cataloged the extent of the damage.

3. Solitude Nehemiah 2:16

- He got alone with God and let God direct him clearly and specifically.

II. Cooperation Nehemiah 2:17-18

- The first thing Nehemiah did after his investigation was to present the people with the need to rebuild Nehemiah 2:17
- Wait a minute! Couldn't they see the walls were down? Yes, but sometimes when you live in poor conditions long enough, you get use to living with things as they are.
- By the way, that's one of Satan's tactics. Take what is going on in our nation. Satan knows if he can make us believe that homosexuality, abortion, divorce, adultery is common place, we'll just live in it and do nothing about it and finally just get use to the conditions.
- Then Nehemiah identifies with the people and the problem- Nehemiah 2:17- Circle the words "we", "us".
- What kind of response would Nehemiah have gotten if he had said, " You folks have gotten yourself in a fine mess. You know what you need to do. Rebuild the wall. Get to it. If you need me, I'll be in my office. After all, I wasn't part of the problem. You've got to get to it."
- When you cast blame and criticism, you destroy motivation. When you identify with the problem, you encourage motivation.
- He didn't plead or threaten. He said, "We've got to do something. The broken walls are not only a reproach to God; they are a reproach to us as Jews. Let's build the wall!"
- He gave the people an invitation to rebuild... then he gave the people a reason: That we may no longer be a reproach."

He gave them three reasons to start to work:

1. - You see the need
2. - That we no longer be a reproach
3. - God is in this, Nehemiah 2:18

Nehemiah was able to motivate them by scratching where they itched

Deep inside, their loyalty and love for God,... their pride for themselves as Jews and for their homeland, motivated them.

And he didn't say, "I will build the wall" or "you must build the wall" or "you do the work and I'll oversee the work."

He used intrinsic motivation that reached to the deeper, internal part of their person.

Winston Churchill employed the same kind of motivation. Listen to his words: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat." Victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival.We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight in the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air; we shall defend our Island whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender;... He said to our president on February 9, 1941, during a radio broadcast: "Give us the tools, and we will finish the job."

And I will never forget the amazing speech he gave to a very fearful people in Britain when he addressed the House of Commons on December 30, 1941. It included these words:

When I warned (The French) that Britain would fight on alone whatever they did, their generals told their Prime Minister and his divided Cabinet, "In three weeks England will have her neck wrung like a chicken." Some chicken; some neck.

The Nazis never wrung England's neck. Somehow Churchill, stubby little creature that he was, could stand in front of a microphone and strengthen by the thousands with intrinsic motivation. He appealed to their zeal.

Listen to their response Nehemiah 2:18.

Their verbal response encouraged one another to accept the project.

"They set their hands to the work" means they were energetic in doing the work. They were more than words; they were deeds in great energy!

They didn't say, "we're content with the way things are"... "we've tried that before and before and it didn't work."

Anyone can go through life as a destroyer; God has called His people to be builders. What an example Nehemiah is to us! Trace his "so" statements and see how God used him (Nehemiah 2:4,11,18,4:6,21,6:15)

III. Determination Nehemiah 2:19-20

- When someone says, "Let's arise and build" Someone says, "Let's arise and break."
- Sanballat and Tobiah attacked in two ways:

1. Scorn- They laughed at us... only stupid, unintelligent people follow God's way.

2. Slander- They accused them of rebelling against the King. Actually they were submitting to the King.

* They accused them of having wrong motives

(why is the preacher wanting this outreach program- wrong motives... or because of a burden from the Lord.)

Nehemiah took a strong stand against the enemy- for two reasons:

1. He wanted them to know that the only one who was going to stop the work was God.
2. It's God's work and I've got letters from the King to prove how He moved the King's heart.

3. You will have no part in what we are doing

Hudson Taylor once said, "Attempt great things for God; Expect great things from God!"

Nehemiah 3:1-32

Step Five: Delegating The Work

Nehemiah is one of the great leaders in the Bible. In fact, in the first three chapters of Nehemiah, I listed 21 principles of an effective leader found in Nehemiah:

1. He established a reasonable and attainable goal
2. He had a sense of mission
3. He was willing to get involved
4. He rearranged his priorities in order to accomplish his goal
5. He patiently waited for God's timing
6. He showed respect to his superior
7. He prayed at crucial times
8. He made his request with tact and graciousness
9. He was well prepared and thought of his needs in advance
10. He went through proper channels
11. He took time (three days) to rest, pray, and plan
12. He investigated the situation firsthand
13. He informed others only after he knew the size of the problem
14. He identified himself as one with the people
15. He set before them a reasonable and attainable goal
16. He assured them God was in the project
17. He displayed self-confidence in facing obstacles
18. He displayed God's confidence in facing obstacles
19. He did not argue with opponents
20. He was not discouraged by opposition
21. He courageously used the authority of his position

I am not going to read Neh 3, for it is a long list of over 50 strange and difficult to pronounce names of unknown people.

In typical Hebrew literary practice, Nehemiah summarizes the entire work of the wall, then follows with selected and significant details.

I was interested to see how different men of God dealt with Neh 3.

- Some skipped it all together
- Some looked at the chapter from a geographic standpoint, looking at the wall and the 10 gates mentioned.
- Others, like Ironside, spiritualized the 10 gates and made an allegory of the whole chapter

- [Does the Bible contain allegory? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Rise of Allegorical Interpretation](#)

-
- The sheep gate represented the cross

- The fish gate represented fishers of men
- The old gate speaks of submission to the will of God
- The valley gate speaks of humility
- The dung gate speaks of cleansing from defilement
- The fountain gate speaks of sanctification by the Word and Holy Spirit
- The water gate needed no repair and speaks of the Word of God.
- The horse gate represents war during the tribulation
- The east gate speaks of the second coming
- The miphkad gate represents the judgment seat of Christ

* I believe the chapter deals with one thing: WORK. They built the wall!

- Nehemiah was a leader who planned his work and worked his plan and the way he did it is an example for us to follow

- A universal trait of leadership is the ability to cut the problems down to size, and Nehemiah did precisely that.

- No one person could do the whole job, but when everyone worked together, the most difficult task could be successfully completed.

Three principles stand out in this chapter:

I. The Principle of Cooperation

- Nehemiah knew that for the wall to be built there must be a personal commitment of all the people in working together... cooperation.

- The key was not just to start well, but to finish better!

- Commitment inspires, protects, and provides. It provides others and us with security and strength to reach the goal and accomplish things we never could have otherwise.

- The word commitment may get used frequently in our day, but kept commitments are much harder to find.

- Making a personal commitment means we sign up in advance and say, "I pledge by the grace of God to do this." Then when we have a weak moment, we go back to that commitment and say, "I've already made a decision. I knew when I made that decision there would be days like this. I'm not changing my mind based on how I feel at this moment."

- Notice that the commitment was not made to Nehemiah, but to God.

There are two types of Commitments:

1. Emotional Commitments start well, but are short-lived

2. Personal Commitments may include emotion, but involve a deeper level of decision making.. and is sustained by accountability to God and others.

Nehemiah learned something from Moses. When the people first came out of Egypt, Moses tried to do all the work himself. Jethro, Moses' father in-law, said, "Moses, what you are doing is not good. You will wear yourself out and wear the people out, too. Delegate the work"(Ex.18)

During WWII a commanding officer lined up a company of his men and asked for a volunteer to go on a dangerous mission. Anyone willing to serve was to take two paces forward as he turned around. When he turned back around he said in dismay, "What, not a single man?" Quickly, his aid explained. "You don't understand sir. The entire line stepped forward two paces."

- That's what happened in Nehemiah's day. All the people kept their promise to work.

- Note Nehemiah 2:18: This is the fulfillment of their pledge.

There were no expert builders among them, but all got involved. There are at least 7 different vocations listed:

1. Priest Nehemiah 3:1
2. Goldsmiths Nehemiah 3:8
3. Apothecaries (druggists) Nehemiah 3:8
4. Rulers Nehemiah 3:9

5. Nethinims (water carriers) Nehemiah 3:26

6. Gate Keepers Nehemiah 3:29

7. Merchants Nehemiah 3:32

- In our day we would say, farmers, factory workers, teachers, lawyers, mechanics, truck drivers, doctors, nurses, repairmen.
- God took note of who worked... and who didn't.
- Note Nehemiah 3:20 Beruch "earnestly" repaired- it means he went the extra mile and at a fast pace, like a fire truck going to a fire
- Note Nehemiah 3:5 nobles of the tekoites didn't work
- What do you do with dead wood? You build around them.
- When they built the wall, they built the whole wall at the same time.
- They didn't build from the sheep gate to the fish gate and then to the old gate. They didn't build by sections, but they built all of the wall at once, so that the whole wall was completed at the same time.
- Each person build near his own house
- The words " Next to him" is found 15 times in Nehemiah 3:2,4,5,7
- The words "after him" is found 16 times in Nehemiah 3:16,17,18,20,22,26
- Why would Nehemiah want each to build near his own house? Nehemiah 3:10,23,28,29
- Didn't waste time traveling to the work site
- Encouraged them to do a good job- they would do a better job where their house was.
- Prevented arguments over who was to work where.

II. The Principle of Coordination

- The value of the project to the worker will determine the value of the worker to the project.
- If the project means a lot to us, we will mean a lot to the project, even when there are obstacles and difficulties.
- Three words were used to describe their labor:

1. Built- Nehemiah 3:3, 13-15- used 7 times- means both built and rebuilt. Often easier to

build than to rebuild

2. Fortified- Nehemiah 3:8- The wall didn't need much repair...just a little strengthening

3. Repaired- 35 times- Means to make firm and strong. They didn't do a half-way job... cut corners or use cheap materials.

Gates:

1. The Sheep Gate- Nehemiah 3:12- located near the temple and sheep market
2. The Fish Gate- Nehemiah 3:3- brought fish through it to sell at the market
3. The Old Gate- Nehemiah 3:6- The entrance to the old city- druggiest and goldsmiths
4. The Valley Gate- Nehemiah 3:13
5. The Dung Gate- Nehemiah 3:14- The refuse of the town was carried out of this gate and burned
6. The Fountain Gate- Nehemiah 3:15- Water Supply
7. The Water Gate- Nehemiah 3:26- Water supply
8. The Horse Gate Nehemiah 3:28- The horse's entrance to the King's house
9. The East Gate- Nehemiah 3:29- Entrance into the temple area from the mount of olives.
10. The Inspection Gate- Nehemiah 3:31- Place where armed troops gathered.

III. The Principle of Motivation

- Nehemiah called for no spectators... only participants
- He called for the people to work
- The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary

Nehemiah 2:9-10,19-20; 4:1-6 **Step Six: Overcoming the Opposition**

Before Reading the Passage

You will remember that in Nehemiah 3, Nehemiah began by delegating the work.

- He remembered the good advice of Moses' father-in-law... don't try to do it all yourself!
- In typical Hebrew style, Neh 3 gives us the over- all picture of the wall being built and Nehemiah 4-6 gives us the selected details.
- The first things we notice is that there was opposition... There always is when you do something for the Lord.. Expect it- it's coming.
- We know Nehemiah can organize the work and the workers, but can he handle opposition?

Read the Passage

In 2 Cor 2:11 Paul says that we are not to be ignorant of Satan's devices.

- When God's people say, "Let's arise and build," Satan says, "Let's arise and stop them."
- What are Satan's devices anyway? In Nehemiah 4-6 you can find many of them:
 - Ridicule
 - Plots of war
 - Discouragement
 - Fear
 - Compromise
 - Slander
 - Threats

I. The Presence of Ridicule-Nehemiah 4:1-2

- Sanballet began to mock and ridicule God's work- note Nehemiah 2:19
- Ridicule is one of Satan's favorite tools (weapons) for several reasons.

A. Proof

- Ridicule doesn't require facts. You can scorn or laugh at a work even though it is not evil.
- Satan's crowd will laugh at, scorn or belittle God's work and his workers.
- Watch how many Christians retreat when they are laughed at or made fun of.
 1. Goliath ridiculed David when he met the giant with only a sling- 1 Sa, 17:41-47
 2. Jesus was mocked by the Priest, Herod, soldiers, those who gave him vinegar to drink.
 3. The young church- Acts 2:13 "These were full of new wine", they said in ridicule.

B. Pain

- Embarrassment causes many to quit.

- Physical pain is one thing, but embarrassment does more damage

- Notice how [Sanballat](#) criticizes the work and the workers. He criticizes them before the army and army joins in:

1. He criticizes the people Nehemiah 4:29

“These feeble Jews”

- Goldsmiths, druggists, priest- folks that know little about building

2. Criticized the Project

“Fortify” means “You’re not going to trust yourselves the this

project are you? Are you going to tackle this great project by yourself?”

3. Criticized Their Piety

He attacks their faith

4. Criticizes Their Perception

You’ve gone off the deep end. Your enthusiasm and dedication won’t last.

5. Criticizes Their Progress

- Limestone loses its strength by fire... thus, stones are unfit; they will not last.

- But only the gates were burned; walls were broken down (Nehemiah 1:3)

Sanballat’s “yes,man” or “me,too” man speaks- Nehemiah 4:3

* Scorn hurts... sticks and stones can break bones, but scorn can break the spirit.

II. The Prayer About The Ridicule Nehemiah 4:4-5

- This sounds like a strange, hard and harsh prayer.

- We are used to hearing prayers asking for forgiveness of our enemies and prayers of mercy and pardon.

- This prayer, similar to the imprecatory psalms, appeals to God to pour out His wrath. It was not a prayer for personal vengeance, but rather a prayer out of concern for God’s great name.

- The prayer begins with an expression of anguish over being despised as God’s people (v.4).

- “Turn their reproach upon their own head” is another way of saying, “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal 6:7). Judgment upon sin often comes in the same coin in which a person has sinned. If you have mocked sinfully, do not be surprised if the day comes when you will be unjustly mocked. If you have viciously lied about by others, don’t be surprised if someday you are viciously lied about by others.

- “Give them for a prey in the land of captivity” is a request that the wicked mockers will be captured and led away into captivity because of their evil. It is a picture of the criminal being arrested by society and incarcerated in prison.

- “Cover not their iniquity” May the sin of the mockers be revealed and not concealed. When God starts revealing our sins, there is nothing that cannot be uncovered and their sin will be revealed in due time. (see Num 32:23).

- “Let not their sins be blotted out from before thee” This request speaks of Divine Judgment. Divine judgment will be far worse than man’s judgment.

III. The Performance During the Ridicule-Nehemiah 4:6

Regardless of how the builders felt, they performed well under the scorning of their enemies.

A. Their Persistency in the work

- “So we built the wall” Too often when opposition comes, the resulting “so” is more like, “so we quit”

- The best way to defeat the enemy is to keep doing God's work, even if we don't feel like it.
- If you quit because someone makes fun of you, you will not last long at anything.

B. The Progress in the work

- "And all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof"
- Progress is possible during problems.
- Notice the wall was half built. When a project first begins, there is excitement; when it is half completed is the time that discouragement often comes and it's hard to keep the excitement level high.

C. Their Passion of the work

- "The people had a mind (heart) to work"
- Having a heart commitment to the work will keep you in the work, even when the going gets tough.

Nehemiah 4:7-23

Step Seven: Removing the Obstacles

2 Cor. 2:11 says that we are not to be ignorant of Satan's devices or methods of operation.

- In Nehemiah 3 the walls were being built and there was great success in the work of God.
- But any time there is great success in the work of God, Satan will do all he can to stop the work or at least to hinder it.
- Nehemiah 4-6 shows us the strategy of Satan of stopping the work of God.

Resistance Strategy of Satan His Goal His weapons

- Nehemiah 4- External Frontal attack Discourage the people Ridicule/ Fear
- Nehemiah 5- Internal Ambush Divide them Selfishness/Greed
- Nehemiah 6- Individual Gets subtle Destroy Deception/Intimidation

Read the Passage

You could hear the workman day and night splashing on that mortar, putting the stones into place.

- Nehemiah 4:6 said that the wall was halfway finished. They had been working hard for about 26 days.
- But notice Nehemiah 4:7-8 "When they heard... they were angry... all of them conspired together to attack Jerusalem and cause confusion

New enemies joined Sanballat and Tobiah Nehemiah 4:7

- Sanballat and his Samaritans were on the North of Jerusalem;
- The Ashdodite's (Philistia) were on the West of Jerusalem;
- The Arabians were on the South of Jerusalem;
- The Ammonites were on the East of Jerusalem

Jerusalem was surrounded by the enemy

During WWII a marine sergeant announced to his men, "Men, we're surrounded by the enemy. Don't let one of them escape!"

Notice how Nehemiah handled the situation- Nehemiah 4:9

I. Recognition of the Obstacles

Satan put four obstacles in their way:

Fatigue Nehemiah 4:10

- Two things are worth nothing here:

Nehemiah 4:6 points out that they were halfway in their building of the wall.

-The newness had worn off. They were getting tired.

-“Fatigue makes cowards of all of us.”

-In a POW camp, if the enemy can wear you down, you are more likely to tell them what they want to know.

-Halfway is the point of discouragement; when you tend to do less than your best. Their strength was gone
Nehemiah 4:10

-The word “decayed” (KJV) or “failing” means stumbling, tottering, and staggering.

-Fatigue doesn’t mean you’ve done something wrong; it may mean you’ve done a little too much
of what is right.

-Nehemiah is going to give them a rest for a day or two and send them back home to their families so the level
of morale will rise.

Frustration Nehemiah 4:10 “There is so much rubbish”

· Before they could build, they had to clear out the rubbish of the old wall that had been destroyed. All the dirt,
broken stones, and hard, dried chunks of mortar had to be cleared.

· In spite of all the work they had done, there was so much rubbish left to be cleared out.

· They had lost their perspective. Instead of seeing the finish, completed wall, they had their eyes focused on
the rubbish!

· They were beginning to lose their vision.

Failure Nehemiah 4:10

· They had lost their confidence and were discouraged...defeatism gripped the workers.

· Discouragement is a key weapon of Satan’s

· In Num. 13:31 at Kadesh- Barnea the spies said, “We are not able to go up... the people are stronger than
we are”

· When they said “we are not able” they were agreeing with the enemy who called them “feeble Jews”

Fear Nehemiah 4:11-12

· This was a scare tactic... a whisper campaign against the Jews....a rumor.

· They never intended to attack them, for the army of Persia would have destroyed them if they had.

· They said it “ten times’...we’ll get you when you least expect it.

· Their panic paralyzed them.

II. The Removal of the Obstacles Nehemiah 4:9, 15

-We prayed and God brought their plot to nothing.

-Nehemiah did four things:

A. He armed the workers and placed them strategically on the wall Nehemiah 4:13, 16-18a

-Here’s the principle: watch and pray

- Not watch without praying; that’s self-confidence; not Pray without watching; that’s presumption.

-Matt 26:41 In the Garden of Gethsemane...watch and pray.

-Watch and pray combines faith and works...work and warfare...building and battling.

-He set a watch in the high places and in the low places...where they could see the enemy. And the enemy could see them watching.

-They had a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other!

B. Trusted God Nehemiah 4:14

- "Remember the Lord... He is great and awesome..."

- It was their Battle cry...like remember the Alamo...Remember Pearl Harbor

C. An alarm system was instituted Nehemiah 4:18-20, 22

D. Nehemiah exercised constant vigilance Nehemiah 4:23

- As we try to win this community, Satan will use his weapons of fatigue, frustration, fear, and failure... our battle cry must always be, "Remember the Lord."

These Jews were successful because the people had a mind to work (v.6), a heart to pray (v.9), an eye to watch (v.9) and an ear to hear (v.20).

· They also had a godly leader with faith to stand ·

1 Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

Nehemiah 5:1-19

Step Eight - Dealing with Internal Strife

Handling Discouragement

The cartoon figure "Pogo" said, "We have met the enemy and he is us!"

· Nehemiah experiences the truth of this statement when he faced opposition from some on the inside.

· They had faced ridicule and the threat of attack from the outside; they had faced Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem, but now they are about to face an enemy from within their own ranks.

It has been said that in a church quarrel the devil remains neutral and supplies ammunition to both sides.

Internal strife often causes more problems than outside attacks.

· Before their captivity, the Jews were mostly an agricultural people, but, now, many were in merchandising.

· 50,000 Jews came back at one time... the land had not been worked for 70 years... add to that a famine and it made food hard to get.

· Three problems are seen in Nehemiah 5: Inflation- Debt- Taxes

· But at the heart of the problem was Greed!

Greed is such an ugly thing:

· It has no character. It is rooted in selfishness

· Greed will trample on anyone and anything to get gain.

· It reduces the goal of life to nothing more than early gain, which means that eternal matters are of little value to the greedy.

· The "common man" Jew was being unfairly treated or mistreated by the wealthier Jews and that led to problems.

· The whole project was in jeopardy

I. The Complaint of the Poor Nehemiah 5:1-5

-Nehemiah had been appointed governor at this time and three distinct groups pressed their cases with the governor.

- And the poor had a strong case against their rich brethren.

- Even the wives, who usually remained silent, were joining the protest.

- Note that the cry came during the building of the wall.

* Four different groups were involved in this crisis:

A. The laborers who owned no land, but had large families, and were in urgent need of food. (v.2)

- These people had no land against which to borrow money. Their meager resources were used up while they worked on the wall.

-The only thing they could do was appeal to Nehemiah, the governor.

B. Landowners who had to mortgage their land in order to buy food. (V.3)

C. Those that had to borrow money to pay their taxes Nehemiah 5:4-5

-They borrowed money to pay their taxes by pledging their crops and when they were unable to Repay their creditors, they lost their fields and were even forced to sell their children into slavery.

D.The fourth group were made up of wealthy Jews, who were exploiting their own brothers and sisters by loaning them money and taking their lands and their children for collateral.

- Jewish boys and girls had to choose between starvation and servitude!

-After the civil war, the South was visited by many carpetbaggers, usually from the North, who tried to get rich by taking advantage of the South's unsettled conditions.

But Israel had laws to prevent such things.

· It was not unlawful to borrow money as a Jew from one another, but the lenders could not charge Jews with interest. They could charge interest to those who were not Jews, but not their brethren.

· The reason: God said the Jews are my people and this is my land and he gave it to His people.

- · Ex 22:25-27
- · Lev. 25:35-43
- · Deut. 23:19-20

God has a special concern for the poor and will not hold those guiltless who take advantage of them.

II. The Condemnation of the Nobles Nehemiah 5:6-13

It's one thing to confront foreign enemies and quite something else to deal with your own people when they fight one another.

Nehemiah showed true leadership in his responses to the problem

-What do you do when there's conflict between brethren? You get Angry!

- Did you know we are commanded to get angry?

- Eph. 4:26 be ye angry and sin not

- Righteous anger... angry at greed v.6

- Moses Ex.32- broke tables of the Law

- John 2 Jesus cleaned house

-Restrained anger...I consulted with myself v.7

- Nehemiah met privately with the Nobles V.6-7a

- That didn't do the trick, so I met publically v.7b. And the public pressure worked.

A. The Rebuke Nehemiah 5:7-11

- The hundred part is 12% interest

B. Their Response Nehemiah 5:12-13

- Nehemiah made them promise to do so before the people and before God
- "I shook my lap" Nehemiah shook out the folds of his robe, a symbol of what God would do with the money lenders if they didn't fulfill their vow. They would be under God's condemnation.

III. The Conduct of Nehemiah Nehemiah 5:14-19

- Nehemiah set the example for the 12 years he was governor over the people, he took no salary.
- He continued to work on the wall himself.
- He fed 150 Jews out of his own pocket.
- In v.19, he did not desire the praise of men for what he was doing; only the smile and approval of God.

A young man once studied violin under a world-renowned master. Eventually, the time came for his first recital. Following each selection, despite the cheers of the crowd, the performer seemed dissatisfied. Even after the last number with the shouts louder than ever, the talented violinist stood watching an elderly man in the balcony. Finally, the elderly one smiled and nodded in approval. Immediately, the young man beamed with happiness. The applause of the crowd had meant nothing to him till he had first won the hearty approval of his famous teacher.

The Christian also must serve for God's approval, for in that he is rewarded.

Nehemiah 6:1-19

If you have followed us in the study of Nehemiah, you know that God had put it in the heart of Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem that were destroyed when the Jews were conquered and captured by the Babylonians.

In Nehemiah 1-3 we see Nehemiah praying... planning... and preparing to rebuild the walls.

In Nehemiah 4-6 the work is being done, but with much opposition from the enemies. There are two kinds of warfare:

- Open warfare with its frontal attacks
- Secret, Subtle attacks... a kind of behind the lines... underground attack.
- Satan uses both methods. He is a roaring lion, but he is also an angel of light.
- In Nehemiah 4, there is opposition from without;
- In Nehemiah 5, there is opposition from within
- Now in Nehemiah 6 the opposition is from without again.
- But in Nehemiah 4 the opposition from without is Open; in Nehemiah 6 the opposition from without is Subtle!

The enemy turns from FORCE TO FRAUD... They launch a war of nerves on Nehemiah for they see that he is the key to the entire project. Remove him from the scene and the work would immediately cease.

What were the subtle attacks and how did Nehemiah handle them? It's important to see, for Satan uses the same tactics on us today.

I. First, They Try to Sidetrack Nehemiah 6:1-4

- The main work was done and the work had proceeded so far by now that it was hopeless for the enemy to attempt to hinder it by violence.
- Word reached Sanballat and his fellow conspirators (from spies inside Jerusalem) that final repairs to the wall had been completed, but that the doors had not yet been set in their sockets.
- Then came the invitation by Sanballat and Geshan in Nehemiah 6:2

-On the face of it, the invitation of the enemy appeared to be a friendly gesture to attend a conference to make a plan for a peaceful co-existence, to resolve their differences so that all parties involved could live together in mutual understanding.

- But there was a hidden agenda. The real purpose of the proposal conference was to lure Nehemiah away from Jerusalem to where his assassination would be easier.

- And, if not Destruction; at least Distraction

- But, Nehemiah picked up on what they wanted to do. He was a man of great discernment (6:2).

- The plain of Ono was about 20-25 miles from Jerusalem and about that same distance from Samaria. Ono would have been on neutral ground. He said, "Come down to Ono,"-

Nehemiah said, "OH, No!"

- Nehemiah's response: Nehemiah 6:3

- Note the persistence Nehemiah 6:4

Nehemiah 6:1-19

Steps 9-10: How To Overcome Subtle Attacks

Nehemiah Again Puts Off 'Big 4' Meeting at Ono
Handling Discouragement

Special to CHRONICLES

Sheckhem, 25 Tishri.

From Samaritan sources it is learned that Governor Nehemiah of Judah has again turned down the invitation of Sanballat, head of the district of Samaria, to come to the village of Ono, on the Judah-Samaria border, for a conference of the "Big Four" of the area: Gashmu, leader of the Edomites, Tobiah, and leader of the Ammonites, Sanballat, and Nehemiah.

Sanballat issued an announcement today in which he sharply criticized Nehemiah for his repeated refusal to appear at such a meeting- the purpose of which, according to Sanballat, is "simply to adjust the relations among these rulers and bring about peace in the area."

Fourth Call

The Samaritan leader claims that this is the fourth time that Nehemiah has asked for a postponement of the conference on the grounds that he is too busy. This despite the fact that Ono, the place designated as the site of the meetings, is no more than four and one-half hours' ride from Jerusalem.

"The responsibility for anything that may happen and for the blood that may be shed rests solely upon Nehemiah," the announcement concludes. (Chronicles' News of the Past. Jerusalem the Reuboni Foundation)

Pressure was put upon Nehemiah to go, but after four times, he still said, "No"!

II. Second, They Tried Slander Nehemiah 6:5-9

-This was an open letter. The enemy was trying to discredit Nehemiah by creating a scandal to incriminate him.

- The letter contained three charges: Nehemiah 6:6-7

1. That Nehemiah and the Jews were plotting treason in that the work to fortify the city was carried on with the goal of rebelling against the Persian government.

2. That Nehemiah's real motive in the building program was to become King in Jerusalem.

3. That Nehemiah bribed some prophets to support him in his quest for Kingship.

- Letters in those days were usually placed in silken bags which were then tied up and carefully sealed. The sender of an open letter wanted others to snoop on the letter and spread the rumor about Nehemiah wanting to be King and his rebellion against the King of

Persia. The letter carriers in those days did not hesitate to snoop in the open letters when they were on their long and boring trip delivering them.

-Nehemiah 6:7b-This was blackmail

- Nehemiah's response: Nehemiah 6:8-9-The whole story was a fabrication, invented by evil minds for the purpose of demoralizing the Jews so that the work on the walls and gates would stop short of completion.

- Notice v.9-This did concern Nehemiah. They hoped "their hands would be weakened" by fear...Nehemiah's prayer? "God, strengthen my hands."

How should we respond to slander? Ps. 31:13-14, 18

III. They Tried to Get Nehemiah to Sin Nehemiah 6:10-14

-Shemiah told Nehemiah there was a contract out on his life. Come to the temple, hide and be safe.

- Numb. 18:7 Only the Priest could go into the Holy Place. Outsiders would be put to death if they went in. It would be Sin to enter the Holy Place.

- Nehemiah's response- Nehemiah 6:11-14

Note Nehemiah 6:15 -The project is finished and God was Glorified (v.16), Enemies are terrified (v.16), Nehemiah is justified, People are unified. Four good things that happened when the project is finished

· Winston Churchill was asked to give a speech at his alma mater. The students were told to listen carefully and take notes, for this was the best known of all their grads. Churchill said, "Never give up. Never give up. Never! Never! Never!"

-1 Cor. 16:9 Many adversaries and Adversities- But an open door!

Nehemiah 8:1-12

Getting Back To the Bible

Before Reading the Passage

The Book of Nehemiah is divided into two parts: The building of the wall and the revival of the people.

- They completed the wall in 52 days; now, just a week after its completion, there is the call for revival.
- Often after a building project there is need for revival.

-For the next three chapters, Nehemiah fades into the background and Ezra comes to the forefront. Not because Nehemiah is not interested in spiritual things, but God had called Ezra to be a Priest/Scribe.

- Rom 12:10 "In honor preferring one another"

Read the Passage

Three things I want you to see as we focus on this revival:

I. The Preacher Nehemiah 8:1-4a

-It was the people who called for Ezra to come and lead them in public worship.

- We ought to worship publicly on a regular basis

- Heb. 10:25 Forsake Not...-"Well, I can worship in the woods just as good as I can at Church" .

- A dad announced to his family that the family was going to the beach instead of to church. As the dad was packing the picnic lunch, his little girl said, "Daddy, we ought to go to church and worship God." The dad said, "Oh, honey, we can worship God on the beach as good as we can in the church." To which the girl replied, "But we won't, will we, daddy?"

-This man, Ezra, was the right man to lead them in revival. Ezra 7:10. He had the qualifications.

1. He Loved the word Ezra 7:10 (commentary)

- "Prepared his heart"- Heart preparation is the most important preparation of all.

- It's one thing to prepare our Head; another to prepare our Heart!

2. He Learned the Word

- "To seek the Law of the Lord"- Before Ezra could teach he had to be taught...Before he could proclaim the Word; he needed to know the Word himself.

-If God has called you to preach or teach, the one book you need to concentrate on more than any other is the Bible.

3. He Lived the Word

- He studied it "to do it"

- He who would teach the Word to others ought to live according to the Word himself.

4. He Lectured the Word

- To teach in Israel statutes and judgments

- A black preacher was once asked the secret of his preaching power. He thought for a moment and then he said, "I reads myself full; I thinks myself clear; I prays myself hot; and I let's go."

-Notice what he preached: Six times the emphasis is on The Book- Nehemiah 8:1, 2,3,5,8.

· One man said, "I don't even take my Bible to Church anymore. They don't use it."

· Someone said, "Liberalism takes the Word of God from us and humanism takes us from the Word of God." see- Amos 8:11-12

-Moses declared that the entire Book of the Law was to be read publicly every seven years- Deut. 31:10-13.

-Moses had 13 assistants to help him in the reading- 6 on the right side; 7 on the left side. Nehemiah 8:4

-Read for 6 hours- Nehemiah 8:3

-“The ears of all the people were attentive” Pictures a dog as he perks up his ears when his name is called.

II. The People Nehemiah 8:1

-“All the people gathered as one man”. Men, Women, and Children.

- No Children's church- Noted Nehemiah 8:2 All who could hear with understanding

- Nehemiah 8:5 all stood- No Sleeping!!

III. The Pattern Nehemiah 8:4 Split Pulpits

Get as far away from the Bible as they can

Six things characterized the spiritual revival:

1 Reverence for the scripture Nehemiah 8:5

· They stood to their feet in reverence for the Word of God that was to be read.

2 They worshiped God Nehemiah 8:6

3 They explained the Word Nehemiah 8:7-8

· Lady said, "Well, I don't think he's such a great preacher. Why, all he did was explain the Bible."

· "O, what a smart preacher! I did understand anything he said!"

4 Remorse for Sin Nehemiah 8:9

· They wept because of Conviction of sin

5 Rejoice in God's Fellowship Nehemiah 8:10-12

6 Obedience to The Word of God Nehemiah 8:13

How we need to get back to the pattern.

Nehemiah 9-10

Getting Concerned About Sin

When we come to Nehemiah 10, the building of the wall around Jerusalem had been completed for about a month.

- One of the first things they did was to call for Ezra, the Priest/scribe, to bring the Books of the Law and read it aloud for all the people in the city.
- They built a platform for him to stand on so he could be seen and heard. He had 6 on his right side and 7 on his left to assist him, and he read aloud the Word of God for 6 hours.
- As it always does, the Word of God did its job. It showed them their Sin and convicted them of their sin.
- Revival was about to take place!
- Now, they are going to confess their sin before the Lord...then, they would make a covenant with their God.

I. The Assembly for the Confession Nehemiah 9:1-3

- The conviction that came upon them from hearing the Word of God read leads them to deal with their sin before God.
- They saw their sin as great evil in their lives and they did not treat their sin lightly.
- They came before the Lord fasting and wearing Sackcloth- a sign of sorrow and repentance.
- Then they put dirt upon their head- a sign of mourning and repentance.
- As they worshiped the Lord, they did two things: They read the Word of God and they repented.
- One fourth of the day (3 hours), they read; one fourth of the day they repented.
- They gave as much time confessing as they did reading!

II. The Adoration in the Confession

- You can't worship a God you do not know well and they needed to learn more about God.
- Ezra led them to learn and confess 10 things about God:

1. His name Nehemiah 9:5

- God's name needs to be honored- not profaned- above all names
- Phil. 2:9

2. His Uniqueness Nehemiah 9:6

- Jehovah God is the only God- Deut. 6:4.... The Great I Am That I Am

3. His Power

- His creation work v.6 made and maintained the world
- His conquering work 10-11

4. His Grace

- The Picking of Abraham- Nehemiah 7:8
- The Pardoning of Sin 17,19,27,28
- The Providing of Blessings- 12, 15, 20

5. His Faithfulness Nehemiah 9:8
6. His Compassion Nehemiah 9:9
7. His Guidance Nehemiah 9:12
8. His Word 9:13-14
9. His Promises Nehemiah 9:15
10. His Holiness Nehemiah 9:8 Thou are righteous

III. The Acknowledgements in the Confession

Ten things about their sin, Israel's sin was:

Inexcusable Nehemiah 9:26

- The mark of true repentance is not to try excuse sin. True repentance sees total guilt. It does not blame others.

Willful Nehemiah 9:17 "Israel refused to obey"

- They sinned intentionally. They sinned because they wanted to

Progressive Nehemiah 9:16 "hardened their necks"

- If you don't confess and forsake your sin, it will get worse.
- **Sin that is not stopped will grow and grow and grow.**
- We must nip sin in the bud if we are going to conquer it.
- The longer you delay dealing with sins in your life, the harder it will be to overcome them because they grow in size and strength continually.

Organized Nehemiah 9:17- They appointed a Captain to return

- After the twelve spies gave their report, the people appointed a Captain to replace Moses to return back to Egypt.

Persistent Nehemiah 9:28- "After they had rest, they did evil again"

- The particular situation referred to here is the time of the judges- Again and again the Israelites returned to sinning after God had graciously delivered them by providing a judge to deliver them.

Ungrateful Nehemiah 9:21,23,25

Profane Nehemiah 9:18

- The molten calf profaned God and His character in that it represented God to be a beast.
- The molten calf belittled God for it said man could make God rather than the other way around.

Bloody Nehemiah 9:26

Proud Nehemiah 9:16

- Sin is an arrogant lifting up of self against the ways of God. The sinner exalts himself above God in going his own way instead of God's way. The sinner's rebellion says he thinks he knows more than God does and he, not God, will decide how he is going to act.

Judges 9:17,28,33

-Two things sin does to the sinner:

- a. It Rules the Sinner Nehemiah 9:28, 37
- b. It Robs the Sinner Nehemiah 9:37
 - Sin robs us of health, of family, of character, of possessions, and a loss of other good things.

The Covenant the People made with God

- Usually we see God making Covenant with the people. Here it is the People who make a Covenant with God.

- Nehemiah · 10:29- To walk in God's Law
- Nehemiah 10:30- No intermarriage
- Nehemiah 10:31- To keep the Sabbath holy; No work or business
- Nehemiah 10:32,25-27 Tithe

Nehemiah 13

Dealing with Broken Vows

As we come to the end of the Book of Nehemiah, we have learned several things:

- Nehemiah, the King's cupbearer, learned that his home city, Jerusalem was still in ruins. The wall of protection around the city was down.
- God put a vision in his heart...He says, "God put it in my heart to rebuild the wall.
- He gets permission and provisions from the King to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall...with the understanding that when the wall is completed, he will come back to the King to serve him again.
- In 52 days the wall is complete. That's in Nehemiah 6

In Nehemiah 12 Nehemiah dedicated the wall

- What goes on between Nehemiah 6 and Nehemiah 12? Two things Re-population of the city and Revival in the city.

Now it is time to dedicate the wall. Notice Nehemiah 12:27

- The word "dedication" has two meanings in scripture: (1) you celebrate because of the completion of something; (2). you celebrate because of the beginning of a new thing- that's the meaning here.
- Notice how they celebrated at this dedication:
- In all, they did they did it with singing- playing instruments- Thanksgiving.

A. Purification Nehemiah 12:30

- They purified the Priest- the people- the place
- We are not told how they purified these, but if they followed the usual pattern there was ceremonial washing and sacrifice
- But there was purification before celebration .

B. Procession Nehemiah 12:31, 38

- Note: They were "On the wall" in two groups- one lead by Ezra; the other by Nehemiah.
- Each had with them a choir- the Priest and the lay people. You can almost see them as they hold hands (as we do in holding hands and praying) and give thanks to God for the wall and for His allowing them to be a part of the building of the wall.

C. Proclamation Nehemiah 12:43-44

- They proclaimed Joy! Six times in these two verses the words joy, rejoiced or rejoice are found.
- Read these verses and you will find singing, playing instruments, giving of Peace offering, which was most likely a meal offering or fellowship meal for all the people, and giving!
- Notice an interesting phrase at the end of v.43- "So that the Joy of Jerusalem was HEARD afar off"
- Not the singing was heard afar off; the joy was heard afar off.
- How do you hear Joy?
- Sometimes we hear singing and don't hear joy. Sometimes the choir looks so sad. No one smiling. They act like they don't really

enjoy singing.

- A man from another country came to the U.S.A. to study Christianity. He concluded, "These Christians will have to look more redeemed before I can ever become a believer."
- How do you get Joy- Jesus and you with nothing between!
- With their Thanksgiving came their Thanks-living.

After this celebration Nehemiah went back to Persia to serve the King

- Twelve years later Nehemiah comes back to Jerusalem...And while the Cat was away, did the mice ever play.
- You will remember that in Nehemiah 10 the people made a covenant with God and said that they would keep their vow forever- In writing!
- Now, just 12 years later they had broken every vow they made to God.

Listen to Ecc. 5:4-5

- We are like them. How often we have made vows to God- only to break them.

I. They Forgot Their Vow of Separation Nehemiah 13:1-7

- In order to accommodate Tobiah, they had moved the articles of the house of God from their rightful place and put idols in the temple courts.
- Notice: 13:8-9 reminds you of when Jesus cleaned the temple.

II. They Forgot Their Vow of Support Nehemiah 13:10-12

- They failed to tithe so the Levites had to abandon their responsibilities in the house of God and perform field labor in order to survive.

III. They Forgot Their Vow about the Sabbath Nehemiah 13:15-21

- V. 21- Lay hands on them....was not ordaining them!!

IV. They Forgot Their Vow about Their Spouses Nehemiah 13:23-28

Nehemiah put things right again, but he took a lot of heat.

- Four times he prayed in this Chapter- after he made each thing right again- Nehemiah 13:14,22,29,31C

Notice Nehemiah 13:30-31

- Each time Nehemiah had to get rid of some things so they could experience the blessings of God.

A man and his wife were starting a Bible-study group in their home. Their neighbor was a Catholic and they tried to get her to attend. She would not. After the first meeting the neighbor asked how things went. The man said, "It was wonderful. We had a full house the first week, we had 32 people. God blessed so I can't wait until next week." The next week the neighbor did not attend, but asked the next day how it went. It was great...full house- had 45 here and God's blessing was so real." Next week the same- man said, "WE had a full house 52 here" Neighbor said, "You said you had a full house with 32- then 45 now 52" The man said, "We put our furniture in the yard to make room." In order to get more of God's blessings in, you must throw some things away.