

NEHEMIAH

Returning to Rebuild the Wall

Zerubbabel had led the first group from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem. Ezra led the second group years later and restored the Temple but not the wall around Jerusalem. Some 10 to 15 years later Nehemiah wanted to go to Jerusalem because of a report he received. "In the month of Chisleu, in the twentieth year, while I was at the citadel of Shushan, Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men ... They said to me, those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates have been burned with fire. When I heard those things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven." (Nehemiah 1:1, 3, 4)

The king noticed Nehemiah's sad countenance as he was being served wine and asked what was troubling him. As a result, Nehemiah was authorized to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall which the Lord had put into his heart to do. After inspecting the condition of the wall, he told all who were to do the work "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision." And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build. (Nehemiah 2:17-18)

Key Point from Returning to Rebuild the Wall

- One must recognize of the problem and the situation surrounding it.
- Have a willing heart that allows God to use you.
- Pray for guidance.
- Communicate God's will to others.

Rebuilding the Wall

The king of Persia gave leave to his cupbearer to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. Nehemiah first surveyed the torn-down walls and gates destroyed by the Babylonian fire that burned Jerusalem. He called the people together telling them now is the time to "Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision."

So, they started rebuilding the wall. The non-Jews living in the area were angry, greatly enraged, jeered and said in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that?" But the rebuilding continued as "the people had a mind."

Since ridicule did not work, they plotted to wage war. Neither did this work for one group stood guard while another laid the wall. Their faith was strong knowing "Our God will fight for us." So, the wall was rebuilt.

All was not well as the nobles and officials took advantage of their brethren causing them to exist in poverty. Nehemiah became angry and brought charges against them stating we have bought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations. But you treat them as your slaves. Therefore, abandon this exacting of

interest, and return to them what has been wrongly exacting. The nobles and officials said “We will restore these and require nothing from them.” (Nehemiah 3 – 7)

Key Points from Rebuilding the Wall

- Do we really believe “Our God will fight for us?”
- God’s people, both Old and New Covenant people, will be mocked, ridiculed, and threatened when they set their hearts to do His will.

Rebuilding Spiritual Lives

The wall of Jerusalem had been rebuilt with much opposition. Oppression by their nobles and officials ceased and property was restored. Spiritual awareness began to enter the hearts of the people.

The people gathered together in the square at the Water Gate. Ezra, a descendant of Aaron, began to read the Book of the Law of Moses. Then Nehemiah, Ezra and Levites taught the people. They wept as they heard God’s Word. They declared it to be a holy day and sent away to eat and rejoice for they had heard and understood the words declared to them.

The next day the heads of fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the Law. All the people began to confess their and their father’s sins and to keep the commandments of the Law of Moses. They made a firm covenant in writing and entered into a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law that was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord and his rules and his statutes. (Nehemiah 8 – 13)

Key Points from Rebuilding Spiritual Lives

- Respect God and His word - whether given by God through Moses or through Christ and His apostles.
- They confessed their sins recognizing the faithfulness of God who is from everlasting to everlasting.
- Change your life by removing sin – repent.
- Begin doing His will.
- Plead for mercy.