

Nehemiah

Isaiah 62:1-4 — Zion is the place where men worship God on His terms, under His conditions, according to His righteousness, His standard (Mt 16:24).

Rom 15:4-6; Neh 1:3 — Nehemiah knew the Holy City of God was in ruins and he grieved. The same conditions as prevailed in the day of Nehemiah prevail in the world today. The church, as Jerusalem, is in ruins. The walls of salvation are broken down, the gates of praise burned with fire (Is 60:18). There is no one standing in the gate holding up a standard showing who loves God and who doesn't (Mal 1:10). But those who mourn over Zion are the very ones God can use to restore all things (Is 61:3-4).

Neh 1:8-9 — This is talking about apostolic ministry — the gathering of true Israel together to live in places where His name shall dwell.

Neh 1:11-2:6 — Nehemiah was the cup bearer of the King of Persia. It was a position of utmost trust and integrity (he tasted the King's wine to see if it was poisoned). Nehemiah was a man of unimpeachable honesty. Even though he could lose his life for entering the King's presence with a fallen countenance, he was still the same on the outside as he was on the inside. He might have had his head cut off, but YHWH heard his prayer and granted him compassion before the king. He was anointed and appointed to rebuild the walls (he had both gifts and graces). The hand of God was on Nehemiah to establish order and bring discipline and discipleship to the people. The people were in sad shape. They were God's people, but they weren't being His people. Nehemiah set out and made the 700 mile journey to Jerusalem. At night, while others slept, he rode out and surveyed the damage. He knew the cost. He had a concern for the cause of God on earth.

Neh 2:10 — Satan hates a man with motives like Nehemiah (to build the Kingdom of God, not seek his own glory and recognition, Jn 7:18). Opposition came mainly through those who made some claim to knowing God (Gal 4:29). The sons of the flesh always persecute the sons of the promise.

Enemies of God include:

Apostates who have departed from God (Ps 83:1-8) — Arabs, Ishmaelites, Hagarites — descended from Abraham, Ammonites, Moabites — descended from Lot, Edomites, Amalekites — descended from Esau

Pretenders who presume to know Him (Ps 81:15) — Horites, Samaritans — of mixed blood, worshipping God and their collection of idols as well.

Neh 2:17-20 — It was a big undertaking to rebuild the wall — opposition from within and opposition without. It would take total unity among God's people. He got together with the rulers and elders of the day to bring about government among God's people. Without the

government of God, there is no care, no authority. As soon as the people began to rally around Nehemiah and the vision he was bringing, Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem opposed them. They tried to weasel in with them and take part in what God was doing. But Nehemiah stood in the gate and said, "You have no portion, right, or memorial in Jerusalem." If a guardian is true, he will give my word out according to my mind and my purpose, says the Sovereign.

Whenever God says, "rise and build," Satan says, "rise and oppose." We overcome Satan by the word of our testimony, the blood of the Lamb and not loving our lives even unto death. Satan is defeated, but he still has his fangs. He hasn't been de-fanged yet. The enemy of God used fear tactics to discourage God's people, but when they saw what the work was that was before them, they started laboring together with one common purpose.

Neh 3:1-32 — Every person had a part of the wall to guard and build. That's what we must do. We pour our life and energies into building up our part of the wall. It's a body effort to build the wall. It won't be built by a few overcomers.

Neh 5:14-19 — Aaron's rod that budded gave life. The rod was a symbol of God's authority. That is the kind of authority Nehemiah had. Nehemiah was only seeking the welfare of the sons of Israel. He was one who served, not one who lorded over the people. He was leading by example, not by word. We was right there with the people building the wall, putting his hand to the work (verse 16).

Nehemiah is a parallel to God's work in our time and gives us understanding of what we are going to come against. Apostolic ministry is all about building a wall and caring about our brothers. There is a wall now being built to separate the true worshippers of YHWH from those who pretend obedience.

THERE ARE TWO NATURES:

sheep — always ready for self-sacrifice, follows readily, lets the Shepherd have his heart, and surrenders his will to be slain (Jn 10:4-5).

ravenous wolves — thieves and robbers (Jn 10:1) — a thief of your time and a robber of your strength, like an incurable wound that never gets better. They don't do anything but drain those around them. They come over the wall to kill and destroy. They haven't truly given up their own selves. They're still hanging on and haven't come through the cross of our Master. They always think of self first. They are always lacking and never giving.

A person who comes over the wall is one who doesn't come through the gate, the narrow gate. Without the apostolic ministry to raise up the age old foundations and establish a standard, all you can expect is a mixed multitude (sincere and insincere) incapable of doing God's will on earth. This is the state of Christianity today. Ask any Christian.

OPPOSITION:

"No opposition, no importance."

There is no triumph without trouble, No victory without vigilance. There is a cross in the way of every crown worth wearing. There is no winning without first warring. No opportunity without opposition. No open door set before us without many adversaries to obstruct our entering.

When the saints say let us arise and build (Neh 2:18), the enemy says let us arise and oppose (Neh 4:6-8). The people had a heart and mind to work. The enemy had a mind to fight. Battles must never be allowed to take precedence over building.

Nehemiah stands out as a man of prayer, a man of faith, a man of courage, a man of action.

TAKE NOTE OF THE MANNER IN WHICH NEHEMIAH WAS ATTACKED. When ridicule fails, threats, force, and violence follow. If Satan can't get you to compromise, he will try to intimidate you. If he can't intimidate you, he will try to destroy you.

Opposition from without — Scorn, force, craft:

Scorn = open, unqualified contempt or disrespect, disdain, mockery or derision (Neh 2:18-20; 4:1-6). What were the real reasons for the scorn of the enemy?

a) Hatred and anger against God and His people (Rom 1:28-31; 8:7). Sanballat was "wrath." His scorn was simply a covering for his hatred. The first real reason why the world scorns and opposes us is that Satan is behind it and because the natural mind hates the gospel which must expose sin before it can save his soul.

b) Ignorance and unbelief (Eph 4:17-18; 1 Pt 4:4-5). They did not know the true God nor His purposes for His people. The second real reason the world scorns is ignorance and unbelief and very often when the ignorance is removed the unbelief is removed.

c) Sanballat's scorn was simply a trick to hide the fact that he had no genuine ground at all for opposing Nehemiah. It's the same today. The third the world's scorn is its inability to find any genuine argument against the gospel. How did Nehemiah meet the scorn of Sanballat and Tobiah (v 4-6)? He just kept on building (that's the way to meet scorn, not by counter-scorn). The scorn of Sanballat soon began to look stupid as the walls of Jerusalem rose higher and higher. It's always a big victory for the devil if he can laugh us out of accomplishing some worthy work because we're ashamed to be God's people.

Force = Strength or power exerted on an object, coercion, violence, intellectual vigor or persuasiveness (as of a simple statement loaded with venom). Neh 4:7-20 — When

the enemy comes to cause a disturbance in the Protection of Peace, Jerusalem (v 8), the only solution is to pray and be on guard day and night. (No victory without vigilance.)

Craft = Skill in evasion or deception, shrewdness, cunning, guile (Neh 6:1-9).

Opposition from within — Debris, fear, greed

Debris = scattered remains of something broken or destroyed (Neh 4:10-11). Before the building up can take place the rubble has to be torn down and cleared away. But beware lest the burden bearers become overburdened. If we become preoccupied with the weight of all the rubble, we will be unable to build the wall and we will not know or see until our enemies come among us and kill us and put a stop to the work.

Don't let Satan build back the rubbish or debris already destroyed in our life.

That's the old — we are the new building. Debris gets in our way and entangles us: previous foundations, besetting sins, familiar spirits, and all the excess baggage of the flesh — pride, unbelief, anger, self-importance, etc. — anything that hinders, impairs, or slows down our being built on the solid foundation of our Master Yahshua as living stones tightly cemented together by entire submissiveness (Heb 12:1-3).

Fear = feeling of alarm caused by awareness of danger, a state of dread, apprehension, (for example, anxiety about the future or fear of being wrong).

Neh 4:14 — Nehemiah combated fear by getting their eyes off of themselves — encouraging them to fight for the sake of others.

Greed = avarice, excessive desire for more than one needs. Neh 5:1-13 — An enemy from within the wall was greed. The people of YHWH have always had the principle that there would be no poor in the land. Nehemiah exposed the worldly gentile way they were living. Our industries are potentially the most dangerous things we have ever been given. We could easily fall into making a living and not remember our Master.

We have to continually be on guard against greed — every form of it, according to our Master (Lk 12:15). In Christianity people don't even see what the true enemy is. True opposition comes when we see the true enemy.

Nehemiah could have failed if he had given in to compromise, to laxity, or intrigue. Each is a lesson of what we are up against today.

Compromise = to settle differences by mutual concessions. For what good or advantage do we compromise? What compromise is possible between good and evil — or food and poison? (1 Cor 10:21; 2 Cor 6:14 - 7:1; Neh 13:4-28)

Laxity = negligence, slackness, looseness, lack of strictness. Neh 2:18; 4:6, 9, 13, 16-23; 7:3 — Nehemiah passed on to the people his own sleep-denying concern for the Kingdom of God.

A picnic is a time for personal relaxation and pleasure. A crusade calls for work, dedication, and sacrifice. Many approach service to God as if it were a picnic: home life, business life, everything is self-centered. They are always looking for what they can get, not what they can give.

True experience of Messiah in the Body of Messiah changes life from a picnic to a crusade.

The cross is not a part of the daily life to such as these. It is more secure to keep your options open, to keep your suitcase packed under your bed, not to put your eggs all in one basket. Get the most out of life and the world system just in case. The work that Nehemiah undertook could only be done through the cross.

It takes total commitment to rebuild the wall. No matter how great Nehemiah's burden, if the people had not responded to him in total commitment (because of the anointing he had received from God) and chosen to love one another, then the wall could never have been built. Even though he was governor, the people had to recognize his God-given authority.

Intrigue = underhanded scheme — the use of such schemes to arouse the interest or curiosity of (as Eve in Eden, Rev 12:9; 2 Cor 11:3; Neh 6:10-16). Because Nehemiah did not give in to compromise, laxity, or intrigue, the wall was built in 52 days and the enemies of God lost their confidence.

A MAN OF FAITH:

The touch stone of spiritual life is how much one's volition is united with God's — good or bad sensations, happy or sad feelings do not serve as an indicator. Is one willing, however bad he may feel, to be faithful to God even to death? Spirituality is measured by our volition because it unfolds our undisguised condition. Self stands in opposition to spiritual life. With self broken down, that life grows up. Should self remain strong, that life will suffer. We can judge one's spirituality by looking into his will.

Don't let those who sincerely strive for spiritual life and growth be deceived into thinking that feelings are their life principle because this will entice them to always be mindful of tingling sensations. Just be certain that the will be utterly offered to God . . . Happy or sad feelings are not to be considered. God wants us to live by faith. You don't know what it means to live by faith until you serve God without good feelings!

We're getting to know God. He takes away our sensation of His presence so that our motivation toward Him will be totally pure. He tries our motives and strengthens us and purifies us. Before He comes back to reign on earth, the sons of Levi will have to be purified.

Nehemiah is an example of one who has entered God's rest. Nothing external can stimulate him. His joy and his delight come from seeing God's will accomplished. Though he appears to be deserted by God and forgotten by man, he still mans his battle station (as a prayer warrior) and overcomes Satan by his faith. (An empty prayer closet is forever a memorial to a dead heart and dead church.)

How much we owe to the difficulties, the obstructions and oppositions which have been permitted to try us. The things we thought were breaking us were in reality making us (Rom 8:28). It is always such men as Nehemiah who become the inspirers and encouragers of others, overcoming Satan's opposition and "worldly" scoffers.

APOSTOLIC MINISTRY:

The hardest thing God has ever had to do is redeeming mankind from the fall. (Romans 12:1,2). The principle of the cross is denying your own selves, living by faith every day, believing in our master, having true communion with Him. God wants to produce people who will endure with Him, having that vital communion which His Holy Spirit put in us (Rom 15:4). These things happened for our instruction.

The prophets spoke about a people who would bring about God's purpose (Dan 2:44; Joel 2:1-11; etc.). who is that people going to be? A disciplined people. You can't teach a disobedient rebellious child. First you'll have to train him through much discipline. One disciple is worth a thousand converts. A disciple is one who receives the discipline of the Sovereign. Yahshua didn't teach His disciples from the scrolls all day long. He trained them and plowed up their hearts, pouring everything in them about the Kingdom that they were going to set up and establish. He was always exposing them and encouraging them.

In the last days people are going to be more perverted than they've ever been. It's going to take magnanimous grace from God to be His people. The opposition will be so great that there continual need for vision and encouragement about who we are and what we are doing (Pr 29:18). No warrior can resign or go AWOL. We must keep the armor on until God calls off the war.

Without Apostolic ministry the "Church" isn't the Church, no matter how loudly it claims to be God's people, It was on the foundation of love — laying down our lives for our brothers — that we have been built, and only on that foundation is our Master able to give us more revelation. In the last days many will come in our Master's name, saying He is the Christ (Mt 24:5). Many will be deceived. Only those who are in the pillar and support of the truth — and who love the truth — will be saved (1 Tim 3:15; 2 Thes 2:10). If you love your brother with all

your heart your doctrine will be correct. We won't have to worry about being in doctrinal error. We may go from glory to glory, but the age old foundation will always be the same (Mt 16:24).