

NEHEMIAH

Godly Leadership in Difficult Times

Introduction

- 1) **Nehemiah** lived and worked in the time of the remnant of Israel which had returned from captivity and resettled in the land of Israel (books of Ezra-Nehemiah)
 - a) Story begins with him as the cupbearer to Persian king Artaxerxes (445 BC; Neh. 1:11)
 - b) He is distressed after hearing of the bad condition of Jerusalem's walls (Neh. 1:3-4)
- 2) Jewish people had faced difficult tasks of rebuilding the temple and the walls of Jerusalem, as well as restoring the teaching and practice of the Law of God
- 3) **Zerubbabel** and **Joshua** directed the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 2-6), and **Ezra** taught the people (Ezra 7-10; Neh. 8)
- 4) **Nehemiah** arose as a godly leader to help build the walls of Jerusalem and restore the people back to the way of the Lord

I) **Continued God's Work in the Face of Opposition**

- A) After Nehemiah received King Artaxerxes' permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild its walls, opposition soon arose from neighboring individuals (Neh. 2:10)
 - 1) **Sanballat** the Horonite, **Tobiah** the Ammonite, and **Geshem** the Arab
- B) Their opposition was designed to frustrate and stop God's people from doing God's work
 - 1) Laughing, mocking, and scorn (2:19; 4:1-3)
 - 2) Threats, confusion, and discouragement (4:7-8)
 - 3) Distraction, compromise, and lies (6:1-2, 5-7, 10, 19)
- C) Nehemiah encourages the people to continue working and overcome opposition
 - 1) Faith (2:20), prayer (4:4-5), work (4:6), prayer and watchfulness (4:9), courage (4:14), refusal to be intimidated by man (6:3, 8-9, 11) (see Matt. 10:28; 1 Pet. 5:8-9; 1 Cor. 15:58)

II) **Maintained a Humble and Honorable Reputation before All**

- A) Nehemiah was appointed governor of Judah for twelve years (Neh. 5:14a; 445-433 BC)
- B) During this time, he was careful not to take advantage of his position (5:14b-18)
 - 1) Not eat the governor's provisions, not lay hard burdens on the people, not buy any land, and invited many to his table from the Jews and surrounding nations
 - 2) Did this because of his fear of God and desire to do good (vv. 15, 19)
- C) Our fear of God should be manifested in humble actions and keeping our reputation spotless before the world (1 Pet. 2:11-12)

III) **Contended with those who Acted Sinfully**

- A) Contended with Jews who were taking advantage of their fellow brethren who were suffering because of a famine (Neh. 5:1-6)
- B) Misuse of temple storerooms to house Tobiah the Ammonite (13:4-9)
- C) Levites not given the portions that were due them (13:10-14; cf. Mal. 3:8-12)
- D) The Sabbath profaned by work and commerce (13:15-22)
- E) Intermarriage with pagan idolaters (13:23-27)

Conclusion

The remnant of Israel faced many problems and challenges as they resettled in the land and rebuilt the city of Jerusalem. Nehemiah demonstrated strong and godly leadership in facing opposition, correcting problems, and being a personal example in his own life. May more **Nehemiahs** rise up among God's people today to provide godly leadership in difficult times.