

Re-Build

Joining God on Mission.

Nehemiah 1:1–4 (NLT)

¹ These are the memoirs of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah. In late autumn, in the month of Kislev, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was at the fortress of Susa. ² Hanani, one of my brothers, came to visit me with some other men who had just arrived from Judah. I asked them about the Jews who had returned there from captivity and about how things were going in Jerusalem. ³ They said to me, "Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire." ⁴ When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven.

Nehemiah Intro:

- Nehemiah is the last History book in the Old Testament; most scholars believe Ezra and Nehemiah were written together and later separated.
- God had promised Israel that if they obeyed Him, He would bless them as a nation and if they did not, He would judge them and cause them to be taken in to captivity and scattered. **Deuteronomy 28**
- As happens to so many, Israel's Kings start out well then fall in to sin. King Solomon sins against God by marrying foreign wives and worshiping their false gods. As a result, the kingdom of Israel was split in 931 B.C.
- The Northern Tribes were initially ruled by Jeroboam, and the Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) were first ruled by Rehoboam.
- After the split the people continued their rebellion against God choosing to continue to worship false gods, so God's judgement fell on them and the Northern Kingdom people were taken in to captivity by Assyria in 722 B.C. and the Southern Kingdom was taken in to captivity in 586 B.C.
- The Northern Kingdom people were absorbed in to the Assyrian and other cultures but the Southern Kingdom stayed relatively intact. In 539 B.C. many Jews returned to their homeland.
- In 538 B.C. a group of Jews returned to Judah led by Zerubbabel and ended up rebuilding the Temple in 515 B.C.
- A second group led by Ezra returned in 458 B.C. and found the Jews living in Israel in a state of moral degradation. They intermarried with unbelieving people from surrounding nations, and joined in their pagan practices. However, as a result of Ezra's faithful teaching about God, many of the people repented and returned to God and followed His will for their lives.
- In 444 B.C. Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem.

God Gave Nehemiah a Mission:

- The Mission God gave Nehemiah aligned with how God built Him.
- The Mission God gave Nehemiah didn't cancel out the bigger Mission of being God's man.

Ephesians 2:8–10 (NLT)

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

John 15:5 (NLT)

⁵ "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

The 7 Principles of “*Experiencing God*”; by Henry Blackaby

1. God is always at work around you.
2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
3. God invites you to become involved in His work.
4. God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.
5. God’s invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
6. You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.
7. You come to know God by experience as you obey Him, and He accomplishes His work through you.

Nehemiah’s Hope in God provided the Motivation for the Mission.

- Nehemiah knew God’s heart for His people. He knew the promises He had made to them.
- Nehemiah knew that God often worked through people and He aimed to be that man.

Isaiah 40:31 (NLT)

³¹ But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

“The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to Him. By God’s help, I aim to be that man.” D.L. Moody

A Mission Often Begins as a God Given Concern

Nehemiah 1:3 (NLT)

³ They said to me, “Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire.”

Not Everyone Will Share your Concern

- Nehemiah seems to be the only one weeping, mourning and fasting because the walls are in ruin.
- Everyone knew the safety & protection the walls provided, but no one was in the process of rebuilding them.
- Maybe God has given you a concern but you haven’t acted on it because no one else seems to care.
- God doesn’t give everyone the same concern... but He gives it to you to act on it.

Some People Will Share Your Concern But Not Do Anything About It.

- Surely people had tried to rebuild the walls before and given up. Why?
- Maybe it was a lack of leadership skills or resources, or maybe they became discouraged by the opposition and criticism. The result is that the walls have been in ruins for 140 years.

Esther 4:14 (NLT)

¹⁴ If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?”

Often A Concern is Given to Us as an Invitation to Join in God’s Work.

- What is bothering you? What has God placed on your heart?
- What do you see that troubles you and you know it can be different?
- What work do you see God doing that He is calling you to join Him in?
- Next week we’ll see that Joining God in His work starts with prayer.