

September 27, 2020 - Nehemiah 1: 1-11 - “The Return” Back to God”

### Introduction:

Jedidiah Morse one of our founding fathers once said, “Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present republican form of government, and all the blessings that flow from them, will fall with them.” Those pillars are cracked and broken and we are a sick nation. We have gone adrift. We have slaughtered our unborn in the millions. We have sold out godly values and morals upon which our nation was founded in exchange for prosperity and economics. Americans have turned toward religious pluralism and various forms of Eastern Worship. We have stood by and watch injustice take place in our justice system and cater to the liberal few who hate God and all that His Son stands for.

We have watched our schools disintegrate because of the lack of prayer and Bible. Liberal professors and college administrators have poisoned the minds of our young people to where they hate America. We have witnessed the evil that has replaced it: violence, drugs and guns used to murder by slaughters. The bitter consequences of this disorder have resulted in the lack of moral truth. We are witnessing a very divided nation and cities burning in violent protest and civil unrest. We have redefined the family and fostered broken homes. We have been unfaithful to God’s Word. Dr. Charles Stanley once said, “The catalyst for change in America is Christians who are committed to personal holiness that is reflected in a godly lifestyle”. We must turn to repentance and pray as Nehemiah did in this very first chapter of his book. **Proverbs 14: [34] Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.**

### I Nehemiah Beseech God in Prayer vv.1-3

1. After seventy years of captivity in Babylon, the Jews were given the opportunity to return to their homeland. Only 50,000 decided to return to the Promised Land about 2% of the two or three million Jews deported from the land. But they did return, and in the days of Ezra, they rebuilt the temple and laid a spiritual foundation for Israel once again but the walls of the great city of Jerusalem lay in ruins and so by that day’s standard it was less than great... We too have a small percentage of Christians who sincerely want to return to God and the light of His word.

2. In the ancient world, a city without walls was a city completely open and vulnerable to its enemies. They had no defense, no protection at all. They were but a backwater town. This information of Nehemiah’s beloved homeland being improvised crushed him. This message came by means of some natives in the 9th month Chisleu of the Jewish calendar corresponding to our Nov-Dec. The normal path at this point is to be angry, place blame and be frantic. Nehemiah took his pain and stress to God in prayer. **NE 1:4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.** We need to be broken and mourn for the ills of America. One half of all abortions that are performed today are performed by professing Christians.

3. We note in chapter 2:1 Nisan four months later his prayer begins to be answered. Nehemiah resists the temptation to jump right into the challenge and orchestrate the wall’s repair himself.

Instead, he goes to his knees. Folks, prayer will relieve your stress and anguish.

4. Nehemiah was called to build the walls, but first he had to weep over the ruins.” We note in verse four that he is deeply sadden, moved and burden. Folks, if we are to have any sort of return to God we need the burden for souls and to pray. We need to be broken over the waywardness of America. Alan Redpath wrote: “Let us learn this lesson from Nehemiah: you never lighten the load unless you first have felt the pressure in your own soul. You are never used by God to bring blessing until God has opened your eyes and made you see things as they are. There is no other preparation for revival than that. Nehemiah allows compassion to well up inside of him and move him to fervent prayers.

## II Nehemiah Prays in Conviction vv.1:5

1. Nehemiah called God "great." He recognized that not only was God's position above all others, but that his attributes and character were above all others. Nehemiah called God "awesome." He recognized that God deserved to be honored, revered and feared by all. Nehemiah described God as the one who keeps his promises. He recognized that God was truthful, faithful and could be trusted. He confessed sin that would be an obstacle. 1:6-7

Notice the words “we” and “I.” This further identified Nehemiah with this challenge. He could have brushed it off as a deficiency in the lives of “those” people in Jerusalem. Instead, he saw the whole problem and his place in the problem. What about you are you?

2. We have to go to God with an attitude of humility noting where we have sinned and asking God to point out our failings so that we might not have to carry them around with us any longer. If we are to get things done we must go to God first and get rid of any weight that is hindering us. Nehemiah is very open about the sins of his people. There's no use in trying to hide your sin from God

**Is. 59: [2] But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear. HEB 12:1**

3. Nehemiah not only confesses the sin of the Israelites, he includes himself as one of the guilty. Now, remember, Nehemiah had never been to Israel. He was born in captivity. He might be tempted to think that none of this trouble is my fault. But he is very careful to say, "I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you." As Nehemiah confesses his sin he is also aware that God is a God of grace. In verse 5 he mentioned that God keeps his promises with those who "obey his commands," and yet now he openly confesses that they have acted wickedly and have not obeyed God's commands. How can Nehemiah expect God to answer his prayer? He is aware of God's grace which has been expressed in the promises God has given to his people.

## III Nehemiah Prays in Confidence vv. 8-11

1. So, the next part of the prayer is a prayer of confidence in what God has promised. The

promise had two aspects; first in vv. 8-10: If Israel disobeyed, they would go into a foreign land. This had come to pass. The second part was that when that time of captivity was ended, God would bring the Jews back to Jerusalem and protect them. It appears that Nehemiah prayed for four months before he did anything. Later, when the work of rebuilding the walls actually begins, it only takes 52 days to finish the job. But that 52-day project had a four-month foundation of prayer.

2. Prayer activates my faith. After praying, I am more prone to trust God and with this trust come an attitude of hope and peace that replaces the petty and critical attitudes that come when we haven't prayed. As God's people we must learn to pray in the midst of problems, following God's Word. The devil is going to attack you, your family and your church, you can be sure of that. Praise God: **"Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."**

**(For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds- II Co.10:4**

We often make our requests quietly and confidently, but there are times when we cannot help but cry out to God in heartbreak and anguish. When we ask, souls are saved. Look with me at Psalm 126:6. --- **The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer. —Psalm 6:9**

#### Illustration:

President Abraham Lincoln once said, "We have forgotten the gracious hand, which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us," he wrote, "And have vainly imagined that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us."

The way to victory begins with prayer and pureness of our hearts. May we commit ourselves to this today making a renew commitment that my place in this war is to come and pray with the saints. We must use the weapons God gave us to aid our soldiers and government to win.

**1Ti 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.**

Prayers are the main weapons that every believer can use against the enemy. Faith is an important factor that is significant in the usage of the weapons for without faith one cannot please God according to Hebrews 11:6.

#### Conclusion:

Jesus began His ministry after His preparations in the wilderness with these words, "saying, **The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. (Mark 1:15).** Saints of God repent, reverse direction. Instead of running to places that entrap us, or being ruled by fears, addictions, worry and grief, Jesus says we can be ruled by God Himself, who lovingly leads us to new life and freedom. May God grant us this as a people and as a nation?

**II Chr. 7:14 - If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land**