

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT NEHEMIAH?

Nehemiah: A Return to Faithfulness

Godly Concern: The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month of Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the citadel, [2] that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem. [3] And they said to me, “The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire.” (Nehemiah 1:1-3)

Faithful Prayer: As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. [5] And I said, “O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, [6] let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned. [7] We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses. (Nehemiah 1:4-7)

Humble Resolve: Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, [9] but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.’ [10] They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. [11] O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.” Now I was cupbearer to the king. (Nehemiah 1:8-11)

Takes Action: In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. [2] And the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart.” Then I was very much afraid. [3] I said to the king, “Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?” [4] Then the king said to me, “What are you requesting?” So I prayed to the God of heaven. [5] And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it.” ...And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me. (Nehemiah 2:1-5)

Recruits Trustworthy Men: Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. And I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. [16] And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, and I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest who were to do the work.(Nehemiah 2:12-16)

Courageously Communicates the Need: Then I said to them, “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.” [18] 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.” So they strengthened their hands for the good work. (Nehemiah 2:17-18)

Endures Despite Opposition: Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he jeered at the Jews. (Nehemiah 4:1)

- But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they jeered at us and despised us and said, “What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?” [20] Then I replied to them, “The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem.”(Nehemiah 2:19-20)
- So we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.(Nehemiah 4:6)

Wise Planning, Godly Dependence: So in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in open places, I stationed the people by their clans, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. [14] And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.”(Nehemiah 4:13-14)

Diligent Worker: From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah, (Nehemiah 4:16)

Brave Warrior: So neither I nor my brothers nor my servants nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us took off our clothes; each kept his weapon at his right hand.(Nehemiah 4:23)

Discerns Truth from Error: But I said, “Should such a man as I run away? And what man such as I could go into the temple and live? I will not go in.” [12] And I understood and saw that God had not sent him, but he had pronounced the prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. [13] For this purpose he was hired, that I should be afraid and act in this way and sin, and so they could give me a bad name in order to taunt me. (Nehemiah 6:11-13)

Never Gives Up, Glorifies God: So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. [16] And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God. (Nehemiah 6:15-16 ESV)

Corporate Confession and Seeking of God: Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads. [2] And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. [3] And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made confession and worshiped the LORD their God. (Nehemiah 9:1-3)

Thankful Worship: And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, harps, and lyres.(Nehemiah 12:27 ESV)

Ongoing Rebuke: In those days also I saw the Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab... [25] And I confronted them and cursed them and beat some of them and pulled out their hair. And I made them take an oath in the name of God, saying, “You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. [26] Did not Solomon king of Israel sin on account of such women? Among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless, foreign women made even him to sin. [27] Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil and act treacherously against our God by marrying foreign women?” (Nehemiah 13:23-27)