

Nehemiah 1-2 –2 February 2023

“Heart Led By Head”

Introduction

*Nehemiah begins in 445 BC, 15 years after Ezra came

*Entire book takes place in just a 12-year span

*Zerubbabel rebuilt temple (worship); Ezra rebuilt people (teaching) & Nehemiah now rebuild city (flourishing)

*Nehemiah’s desire to rebuild city speaks of his heart

*What is heart? – Webster’s calls it the “the inner or chief part of a thing” – It’s that drive or passion

*Many kinds of hearts in Bible including – heavy, hard, willing, wisdom of heart, hearts that fear God, faint heart, evil & good, proud & pure hearts

*So you see, heart can also speak of wisdom

*You can be ‘wise of heart’ or ‘slow of heart’

***Today let’s look at 4 aspects of Nehemiah’s heart**

1st aspect is that he has a heart for worthy valuable things (Chap 1:1-4)

Read Chap 1:1

1. Chisleu is the 9th month – this is Nov 446 BC
2. 20th year is the 20th year of Artaxerxes reign
3. Shushan was palace Esther also reigned from 36 years earlier – known as kings' winter palace

Read Vs 2

1. Seems Hanani was an actual brother (chap 7:2)
2. Nehemiah has heart for home & God's people

Read Vs 3

1. A wall for a city was its main defense
2. Temple, People & Wall
 - a. They've built back their worship (temple)
 - b. They're building back the people thru teaching but they need a wall to flourish
3. A wall speaks of the ability to have safety, discipline & prosperity

- a. Read Prov 25:28
- b. Self-control & discipline will produce fruit & blessing in their city and life

Read Vs 4

1. Nehemiah mourned that Jerusalem still didn't have defense & safety
2. It's only when you have defense (discipline) that you can add valuable things & protect them
3. As we're disciplined in Christ, we add the fruit of a great family and valuable missions to our lives

2nd aspect is that he has a heart for the Lord (Chap 1:5-11)

Read Chap 1:5

1. "I beg Thee O God..." – Right place to go!!
2. God is faithful, merciful & loving

Read Vs 6a

1. Hear this prayer from Your servant

Read Vs 6b-7

1. WE have sinned in that we disobeyed You

Read Vs 8-10

1. He is pleading w/ God based on God's promises – great way to pray effectively w/ power

Read Vs 11

1. He asks God to bless & help him with his interaction with King Artaxerxes

3rd aspect is that he has a heart for action (Chap 2:1-10)

Read Chap 2:1-2

1. The cupbearer was a very loyal servant to the king – high position
2. As with Esther, bringing anything but joy before the Persian king could cost you your life
 - a. Nehemiah couldn't hide it – can't just sit by
 - b. Nehemiah prayed for 4 months & God provided this for the timing

Read Vs 3-4

1. Nehemiah states the problem & his 4-month prayer was answered by a kind word from the king
2. Nevertheless, Nehemiah still shot up a quick prayer before giving the following details

Read Vs 5-6

1. Nehemiah's specific request is to build the city, this means to build the wall as fortification first
2. Queen attending means this was formal banquet
3. Notice, the king didn't want to permanently lose Nehemiah b/c he sees him as valuable

Read Vs 7-9

1. He further asks for this to be a certified mission from the king w/ allowance, which the king grants
2. These letters would be a formal record to make the prophecy of Dan 9:25 possible to discern
 - a. Order was given on Mar 14, 445BC
 - b. Dan 9:25 – 69 wks of years is 173,880 days
 - c. Read Luke 19:42 – Apr 6, 32 AD

Read Vs 10

1. Sanballat seems to be driven by politics even more than religion
 - a. Called Horonite which is a former Jewish city on the road from Jerusalem to the Med Sea
 - b. Elephantine Papyri says he's Gov of Samaria
 - c. He wasn't opposed to all things Jewish
 - i. Daughter married grandson of High Priest
 - d. His lust to keep political power clouds any good view of promoting true religion
2. Tobiah (& we'll meet Geshem) are from cities around - So opposition come to Nehemiah
3. Doesn't matter if you live a mediocre life or press hard after good things for God like Nehemiah, opposition will come anyway

4th aspect is that he has a heart led by the head (Chap 2:11-20)

Read Chap 2:11-12

1. Why conduct this covert surveillance of the state of the wall of Jerusalem?
 - a. There's humility in it – He's not riding into Jerusalem to brag 'I'm coming to save the day'
 - b. There's patience in it – He's not led by his passion but under control of the Spirit of God
 - c. There's wisdom in it – He wants to gather firsthand info before bringing up the issue
2. It'll take a disciplined heart, like Nehemiah has, to lead project of bringing discipline to the city

Read Vs 13-16

1. There was so much rubble from the former walls that at one point Nehemiah had to dismount to make it thru the area

Read Vs 17

1. *Reproach* – To disgrace or to expose in jeopardy
2. Nehemiah's call to them is, "let's secure ourselves with something we can be proud of"

Read Vs 18

1. Now Nehemiah details his plan, not just his desire but his plan

Read Vs 19-20

1. There will ALWAYS be mockers
2. They know they're fighting for God's will so they can speak great words of faith here – God will do it!
3. None of these surrounding nations or Samaritans have any right to Jerusalem anyway
 - a. Muslims claim Jerusalem as their 3rd holiest site – yet no historical tie for them to Jerusalem
 - b. Unbelievers have no right to make decisions for how the church should function & operate

Conclusion

Nehemiah has it in his heart to build wall of Jerusalem allowing it to flourish into all that God has for them

Thus building the wall for Israel epitomizes disciplining ourself in our walk with Christ

1. **Let's have a heart set on valuable things**
 - a. What things of this world are we overvaluing?
 - b. What's things of God are we undervaluing?
2. **Let's have a heart for the Lord & His glory**
 - a. Do we turn to Him FIRST in times of need?
 - b. Do we trust Him as both strong & kind?
3. **Let's have a heart for action, not just words**
 - a. Are we willing to wait for the right time
 - b. Are we willing to speak God's will?
4. **Let's have a heart led by the head, not just the rush of emotions**
 - a. Are we ready w/ a plan when time comes?
 - b. Read Eph 4:15 - Heart led by Head isn't just our brain, but the Head is Christ
 - c. Those led of the Head (Jesus) can endure mockers when they come