

An aerial, black and white photograph of a city, likely Berkeley, California. The image shows a dense urban landscape with various buildings, including a prominent white building with a large dome and a clock tower. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds, suggesting a dawn or dusk setting. The overall tone is serene and historical.

n e h e m i a h

the formation of a builder

Nehemiah 1

¹ The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, ² Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

Nehemiah was deeply interested in his world

Nehemiah 1

³ They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

**Nehemiah was deeply interested in his world
Nehemiah was confronted by the broken-down
walls among the people of God.**

Nehemiah 1

⁴ When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

Nehemiah was deeply interested in his world

Nehemiah was confronted by the broken-down walls among the people of God.

Nehemiah takes his broken heart to God in prayer


Nehemiah 1

⁵ Then I said: "Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, ⁶ let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel.

Nehemiah was deeply interested in his world

Nehemiah was confronted by the broken-down walls among the people of God.

Nehemiah takes his broken heart to God in prayer



**Nehemiah sees
his personal
identity as part of
the identity of the
people of God**

**We
not
me**

**Us
not
them**

Nehemiah ties his destiny with God's people

Nehemiah 1

¹¹ Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man. "I was cupbearer to the king.

- the importance of sustaining prayer

Nehemiah puts his life on the line

Nehemiah 2

¹In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before, ²so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart."

I was very much afraid, ³but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

⁴The king said to me, "What is it you want?"

Nehemiah puts his life on the line

- Nehemiah has a high position in the government
- He “risks it all”
- But in reality, it’s not a “leap of faith”. True safety comes in God’s will.
- Nehemiah understands his current role in light of the call of God on his life
- Nehemiah’s identity as a member of the people of God eclipses his personal identity

We
not
me

Us
not
them

The favor of God follows Nehemiah's obedience

Nehemiah 2

Then I prayed to the God of heaven,⁵ and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it."

⁶Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

The favor of God follows Nehemiah's obedience

Nehemiah 2

⁷ I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah?" ⁸ And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the royal park, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests. ⁹ So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me.

Nehemiah inspects the walls

Nehemiah 2

¹¹ I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days ¹² I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on.

¹³ By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. ¹⁴ Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through;

Nehemiah inspects the walls

Nehemiah 2

¹⁵ so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate. ¹⁶ The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.

¹⁷ Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." ¹⁸ I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me.

They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.

Nehemiah inspects the walls

- Nehemiah already has a vision
- But he studies intently before issuing a call to action

For us “rebuild the wall” = “enlarge the tent”

Isaiah 54

2 “Enlarge the place of your tent,
stretch your tent curtains wide,
do not hold back; lengthen your cords,
strengthen your stakes.

3 For you will spread out to the right and to
the left;
your descendants will dispossess nations
and settle in their desolate cities.

For us “rebuild the wall” = “enlarge the tent”

**We
not
me**

**Us
not
Them**

have you been hurt
by the church and
distanced yourself?

have you been
looking at your life in
a too "me-focused"
manner?

who is your "they"?

is there a place of
"risk" God is calling
you into?

Response

We
not
me

Us
not
them