

Operation: REBUILD



Scripture: [Nehemiah 2: 18-20](#)

18 Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.

19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?

20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

Introduction:

Nehemiah was a Jew born and raised in Persia as a result of years of captivity of the Jewish people. He was commissioned by the Persian King, Artaxerxes to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

His War Hero status is awarded him because of his Vision, his Stand against the enemies of God, as well as for his Accomplishment.

Nehemiah's Vision:

NEHEMIAH LIVED IN THE RIGHT TIME IN HISTORY AND AT THE RIGHT LOCATION GEOGRAPHICALLY TO ACCOMPLISH THE TASK GOD HAD PLANNED FOR HIM.

Throughout the Word of God, and yes, even today, we can see God's positioning of people, including YOU, where you can be of the best service to Him; to be all that He has planned for you. And just like Nehemiah you will make choices. If you are walking in the light of God's Word, then you will be able to see His plan. If you are not, then you will miss the very best God has for you.

Nehemiah is working in the palace at Shushan for the King as his cupbearer. He most likely has never seen Jerusalem as he was born a Jew in captivity in Persia [modern day Iran]. One of his fellow Jews has news from Jerusalem, their capital back in Israel.

The news is not good. The people are discouraged in Jerusalem. The city wall is broken down and the gates have been burned. It must have looked like a war scene after a heavy shelling.

Nehemiah began to pray and fast about the situation back in Jerusalem. In fact, he is so burdened over the news of the desolation that he confesses the sins of himself and of his nation in his prayers. He is repentant of a situation that he literally had nothing to do with and no control over. [\[See Nehemiah 1: 4-11\]](#)

NEHEMIAH BEGINS WITH BAD NEWS; A BURDEN; EXTENSIVE PRAYER; & THEN A VISION AND FINALLY A PLAN.

As a side note: Nehemiah is serving as cupbearer to Artaxerxes in Shushan the palace, the same palace where Esther has sat as Queen when Ahasuerus was King of Persia just about 30 years prior.

Because of Queen Esther we can logically conclude that Jews have reached a higher standard of acceptance in Persian society by Nehemiah's time, thus enabling his influence and goodwill standing in the court.

The unsaved, non-Christian King saw how distressed Nehemiah was over his homeland's war ravaged condition.

This heathen king opened the treasury of his kingdom to pay for the rebuilding of this Jewish city, Jerusalem. This was a direct result of intense prayer and fasting.

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE GOD'S POWER! Additionally the king made Nehemiah the governor of the province giving him the authority to rebuild the city.

Do you want God to bless your life? Do you want God to bless your ministry or the job God has given you to do?

THEN BEFORE YOU PICK UP YOUR SWORD, YOU BETTER GET ON YOUR KNEES.

Nehemiah knew that the Persians were world leaders and they controlled the money and power. But he did not go write a letter to the king.

Instead, he got on his knees and talked to the King of Kings! God's plan unfolds as a result of seeking His Plan instead of his own plan getting in the way of God.

As a result he gets the authority, the supplies, the funding, and an escort back to Jerusalem to begin Operation Rebuild.

Nehemiah's Stand:

Back in 1 Kings 9:3-7 before the captivity ever happened; before the Jews had been overrun by the Medes and Persians a couple of hundred years earlier, the Lord explained to King Solomon while he sat on the throne in Jerusalem, that the blessing that He had placed on Solomon's reign as King of Israel had some responsibilities.

God said that you must put Him first, not wealth or power.

God says that we are to worship Him only. He is first in our lives. If we can really get a hold of this, then God can give us all kinds of blessings. Thing was, the Jews had turned away from God in those few short years after King Solomon's reign and before long they had been overtaken by the Persians.

But you would think that all will go perfectly now. That was all in the past. After all that was a previous generation and the newer generation of Nehemiah was ready to rebuild. God had already answered prayer with funding and permission to rebuild.

BUT AS IS MORE OFTEN THE CASE THAN NOT, THERE WILL BE AN ENEMY WAITING TO STEAL YOUR JOY AND DEFEAT YOUR PURPOSE.

As soon as Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem, Sanballat the Horonite [probably a Moabite from Samaria] and Tobiah an Ammonite who have been relishing in the demise of the Jew's country, their "religion", and their downfall, show up to mock, undermine, and cause lots of trouble.

Even as Nehemiah organizes the people in Jerusalem to rebuild the walls, trouble begins. These enemies show up to hinder the work.

At first they came to harass Nehemiah. They laughed at him and the workers; told them that a little fox could knock over the wall they were building.

Nehemiah 4:1-3

1 But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.

2 And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?

3 Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.

They sought to verbally undermine their efforts. When that didn't work they stepped up the pressure.

Nehemiah 4:17 They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, everyone with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.

NOW NEHEMIAH AND HIS CREW MUST WORK WITH A SHOVEL IN ONE HAND AND A SWORD IN THE OTHER.

[I illustrate here with a big sword in one hand and a shovel in the other.]

This is not an easy thing to do.

SOME OF THE PROBLEMS THAT YOU CAUSE WHILE IN SIN WILL NOT JUST GO AWAY BECAUSE YOU REPENTED AND WANT TO SERVE GOD NOW.

As Nehemiah and the people of Jerusalem learned, their sins, and even their father's sins were going to cause them a lot of grief.

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO BUILD AND BATTLE AT THE SAME TIME.

But build they did!

As soon as the Enemy got word that this wall building was about finished; that it really did happen in spite of all the enemy efforts; then the Enemy had to try a **NEW** approach.

Sanballat had made fun of the builders and the building of the wall. He and his cohorts had mocked the builders saying a fox could knock it over. But none of this had worked so as the old west saying goes: If you can't beat them join them.

Be careful Nehemiah; the Enemy is trying to sneak into the camp. Sanballat is going to try ecumenicalism now; let's all hold hands and sing *Kum ba Yah*. Sanballat invites Nehemiah to lunch at a place called "Ono" of all places. But Nehemiah sees this as the Valley of Ono; and he sends word back to Sanballat that he is too busy doing a great work to bother with him.

Nehemiah 6:3 And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?

SANBALLAT IS RELENTLESS INVITING HIM DOWN FOUR TIMES. EACH TIME NEHEMIAH REFUSES TO BE DETERRED FROM GOD'S WORK FOR A SOCIAL EXPERIENCE WITH THIS MOCKER OF GOD.

Sanballat didn't deter Nehemiah by intimidation, nor by social obligation, so he then resorted to an outright lie. He said he had heard that Nehemiah was about to take his appointment as governor and turn it into King of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 6:5-8

5 Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand;

6 Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words.

7 And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together.

8 Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart.

There is nothing new here under the sun. If a person wants your job, your position, your property, or even your reputation then he is going to try several different approaches to get it.

If Nehemiah had come down to Sanballat's level; that is, down off of that wall because of social pressure, he'd be sitting at the table with the enemy. Not helping Sanballat to do better or become a believer, but rather aiding Sanballat in slowing down the progress of the wall.

Sanballat was not interested in helping build the wall at all; he was interested in slowing it down and stopping it all together.

Be careful who you count as worthy of your time. **GET GOD'S MIND ON IT EVERY TIME!**

Nehemiah's Accomplishment:

For the next several chapters it is one harassment and one lie after another thrown at Nehemiah. You can just imagine what a challenge he faced rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem, keeping the people that were working safe as well as encouraged.

There were protests. There were materials disappearing in the night from the job site. There were folks finding their personal property raided in the night.

Lies were being spread about Nehemiah. He was accused by Sanballat of trying to become King of Jerusalem instead of just the Governor of the Province as appointed by the King of Persia. This would have been treason and punishable by death.

All of this mean spirited undermining was going on but Nehemiah stuck to the task at hand. You see it was not about Nehemiah at all; but rather about restoring the City of Jerusalem, God's city for His chosen people.

THIS REBUILD HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH PERSONAL POWER. THAT WAS SANBALLAT'S MISTAKE IN HIS STRATEGY TO DEFEAT NEHEMIAH. THAT IS ALSO THE MISTAKE OF THE ENEMY TODAY.

Whenever you are harassed for leading folks to Jesus; whenever you are accused of trying to build your own kingdom; whenever and whatever the enemy [Satan] is trying to say about you, he is mistaken and is already defeated. You see the battle and the victory and the whole purpose of a work or a task, if it is obedience to God thing, then personal attacks won't deter you.

Nehemiah 4:6 So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

Conclusion:

Nehemiah got the job done. He persevered. In the end the City of Jerusalem was restored and again became the center of worship

God has a job for everyone. Will you be able to see the vision? Will you be able to stand? Will you be able to Accomplish?

If you have Jesus as your personal Savior, then you can. Do you know Him?

Trail Markers to Discuss:

Take each highlighted sentence and use as a discussion point asking some of these questions:

- Can you think of where this can apply to you today? Right now at this point in your life?
- What did Nehemiah do "right" that made this a noteworthy event for God to record for all time for our benefit?

Activity:

Refer to: War Heroes 2-Adult Wranglers Workbook Three