**NEHEMIAH**

**THE GREAT WALL BUILDER (Part I)**

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**THE CHURCH – GOD’S HOUSE**

 Before reading this Newsletter, first take your Bible and familiarize yourself with the story of Nehemiah by reading the first 6 chapters of his book. I want to ask – how important is the Church to you? Do you not know that it is the Lord’s Sanctuary on earth called God’s House? It is a refuge for the weary and oppressed, a shelter in time of storm. It’s the place we come and find comfort when we’re hurting. God’s House is where the saints gather in the unity of the Spirit to worship the Lord, a Sacred Place where Love rules and Mercy dwells. God’s House is where you find guidance, strength and Grace in your times of need. Church is your Fortress dear reader where your spirit is renewed – the Blessed Habitation where God dwells and ministers to His children. No wonder the devil fights so hard!

**IN SATAN’S CROSSHAIRS**

**HE COMES TO HINDER**

 I want you to know that the devil hates God – he hates God’s people – he despises the work of God and will do anything and everything to discourage, dishearten and hinder. We as ministers, singers, musicians and lay members are in satan’s crosshairs. We are his target in this closing hour of time before Jesus comes for His Church. Our enemy never gives up! He will use every tactic, device and circumstance to dishearten and weaken you to the point that he wears you down and causes you to give up and quit. He will use government, leaders, stress, troubles, finances, problems and people around you to cause God’s work to cease.

 Always remember, if the devil is not bothering you, it might be that he’s got you where he wants you. Satan does not hinder and bother his own – if he did, Jesus said his kingdom could not stand, it would be divided and fall. Don’t forget, satan also has a church. Just look all around you in our world today – the mega churches are prospering and growing without resistance. The money pours in and there are no hindrances, do you know why? It is a false church where deceiving spirits are operating. Remember, satan is in the building program also. He promises people liberty and freedom but it is full

of this world’s sinful and lustful entertainments and he leaves them alone. So guess where he comes? He

visits God’s little Holiness Churches that believe in separation and preach against sin.

 Remember children, God’s work will never go unchallenged. It will never be without conflict. When precious souls are the focus – when their spiritual, physical and mental welfare is the aim – Hell will fight! You must settle it – the devil does not want you happy! He doesn’t want you having victory in the Lord.

 I’ve got news for the devil, he may fight but he can’t win! Jesus said – “Upon this Rock (Christ) I will build my Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.” As soon as we realize who our enemy really is, how he operates and what he is doing, we will be more apt and determined to go on in the service of the Lord. He is a liar, a deceiver, and an instigator who goes about stirring up trouble to hinder God’s work. Don’t listen to him children.

**NEHEMIAH – A MAN WITH A VISION**

 In this Newsletter, we are going to travel back in time and visit a 20 year old man named Nehemiah. In him we will see a man with a Vision! We will see his burden and his battles. We’ll follow him closely in his work and success. His very name – Nehemiah, in Hebrew means “In whose eyes Jehovah enlivens and consoles.” This blessed young man was Governor of the Jews. O what a leader who would not give up or give in to the enemy in order to build a safe haven for his beloved people! He was a man of integrity, a man of prayer that fasted and sought God for his hurting people. This God called man wore no crown, never commanded an army, never conquered any country, was never famed in philosophy and worldly learning, but he knew how to pray, how to combat evil and work for God!

 Nehemiah was touched by the needs and suffering of others. By the study of this man, we will see an example of what we must be. We need his commitment and determination. You talk about love for his country and people – he was truly patriotic. He walked before God with singleness of heart. If anyone had boldness and courage to fight the enemy and stand in the gap for his people – it was Nehemiah. Not only did he see the natural stone walls of his beloved city torn down, but he saw the spiritual walls of his chosen people broken down in their lives. He beheld their suffering. There were breaches and gaps that were allowing the enemy to come in and walk all over them.

 In this story, you will see the importance of Walls and how to build them because when the wall comes down, the enemy comes in. This Divine Spiritual Wall that we will deal with in this writing, goes well beyond brick and mortar. It is a strong and solid Spiritual Hedge that must be continually watched and monitored at all times, for if there’s one little gap, one breach or hole, the enemy will enter! And if he gets in he will harm, hurt, defeat and destroy.

**BAD NEWS COMES TO NEHEMIAH**

 Before we start, God wants you to know that you are very important to Him. **Deut. 32:9** – The Lord’s portion is His people, the lot of His inheritance. (God will never ever forget His children no matter where they are or what kind of condition they’re in. Their physical and Spiritual welfare are His concern day and night.)

 To understand the story, let’s get a view of the picture and historical setting: Some 586 Years before Christ was born, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon sent his invading army against Jerusalem. They held it under siege for 2 long years. They ransacked and destroyed Solomon’s Glorious Temple, broke down the walls surrounding the beloved city and burnt the gates with fire. Everything lay in a heap of rubble and a pile of ashes. On the way out, the invaders took God’s people captive and moved them 350 miles away to Babylon. (A mighty long way away from home, wouldn’t you say?) There were a few Jews left behind, a small remnant that did not go but remained with the destroyed mess. In the last part of chapter 1, Nehemiah writes – it all happened because God’s people transgressed. Sin is a reproach to any people and in this case, it allowed the enemy to come in, tear down and destroy.

**NEHEMIAH’S POSITION AND CALL**

 At this time the Persian Empire had taken over the Babylonian Empire. Artaxerxes is now king. This king is sympathetic toward the Jewish people. Isn’t it amazing how God moves for His Chosen? He sets people in key places, puts them in a right position to bring help and deliverance to others.

 We have in this story a full blooded young Jewish man who has worked his way up to the highest place of honor under a foreign heathen king. Nehemiah in telling his story to us, says – “I was the king’s cupbearer. It was me who brought the wine to the mighty king Artaxerxes on his throne.”

 The place Nehemiah occupied was the highest place of sacred trust. For the wine that was made for the king had to pass through his hands before he drank it. Cupbearers would always taste the wine before handing it to the king in case someone tried to poison the monarch. You talk about trust and confidence! I don’t know how long Nehemiah held this position, but it was long enough that his faithfulness gains Artaxerxes’ full confidence. Eventually Nehemiah will petition the king with a heartfelt request for his beloved people who are suffering back home in Jerusalem and because of his Faithfulness the King will grant it.

 In studying this touching story, I see in King Artaxerxes a type and figure of our Heavenly Father who is touched by the burdens and needs of His Children.

 I want you to know that God always works on a time table. You see, it was God who brought Nehemiah to this elevated position. It was he who promoted him to a place of honor and it was for a reason. God had His Beloved City Jerusalem in view which is a type of the Church. He saw her Walls of Defense broken down and His Chosen people suffering. His children who are suffering and in need are on His mind.

**NEHEMIAH’S BROTHER PAYS**

**HIM A VISIT**

 Isn’t it amazing that it is now that Nehemiah’s brother Hanani shows up in the kings court – not a minute too soon and not an hour too late. It was perfect timing, for Nehemiah couldn’t have done a thing for his people before now. Hanani travels 350 miles to see Nehemiah. The very first thing on Nehemiah’s mind, he asks Hanani – “How are the remnant of Jews doing that escaped and what’s it like in Jerusalem, Hanani?” He answers – “Nehemiah, there’s just a few of us left and the people are suffering great affliction. The enemy has torn down our walls and set fire to the gates. Everything is a mess.”

 Nehemiah said – “when I heard this, I sat down and wept, mourned and fasted before God.” It is then that Nehemiah pleads for God’s mercy for His people. “Please O God, forgive us, we have broken your laws and have not kept your commandments. You have scattered us because of our transgressions, but you said – if your people would repent and turn back to you, you would forgive, restore, and bring them back. I beseech thee O God, hear my prayer for your children!”

**WALLS COME DOWN BECAUSE OF**

**DISOBEDIENCE**

 Children, you will see in the second half of this first chapter, the result of disobeying God. Listen close, troubles come to us all. It is trials that we didn’t ask for. It is not because we have sinned, it is just part of life. We pass through things that try our Faith, but they make us stronger. You see, in trials is when God loves to reveal His power, supply our needs and show us His Glory. God loves for His Children to come to Him with their needs. Our God loves for us to depend upon Him as our Heavenly Father. It pleases Him to be that merciful, caring Father that says – “just give it to me child, I’ll help you, I’ll fix it.”

 **BUT:** In this chapter, it is a different story. Nehemiah says that it all happened because of Sin and Disobedience. Listen close for the next few minutes! Children, God has promised to keep and preserve His children when they serve Him. He has a Spiritual hedge around them so the enemy cannot come in and destroy. But God’s people down through the ages and more so in these modern times are living too loose and letting things in their life that is bringing the hedge down. Their sins and carnal living is letting the enemy (devil) in their minds, hearts and homes.

**O AMERICA – YOUR WALLS ARE DOWN**

 America, you have sowed to the wind and you are now reaping the whirlwind. Mr. President, Judge and Lawmaker – when you took prayer out of our schools and when you removed the 10 Commandments from the school room walls, you removed God’s Divine Protective Hedge!

 When a person sins and breaks God’s Laws and Commandments – The Protection is Gone! Do you know why our Nation is in turmoil and disarray? Do you now understand the reason there’s guns, violence and bloodshed in our schools and colleges? Do you wonder why mothers and fathers are standing on the sidewalks in front of our schools screaming and crying – My baby, my baby, my child, when a cold blooded devil possessed maniac came in with a gun and murdered the children? Then people cry out – why did this happen? Why did God allow this? Why didn’t He do something and stop it? **He couldn’t because He’s not allowed in the Schools!** When our mighty, Holy and Righteous God was removed by the atheists, liberals and evolutionists – The Walls came down and every evil is allowed to come in and do its work.

**POEM**

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

Mary had a little Lamb, His fleece was white as snow; and everywhere that Mary went, the Lamb was sure to go.

He followed her to school each day, when it wasn’t against the rules; He made the children laugh and play to have the Lamb at school.

Then the rules changed one day, against the law it became; To bring the Lamb of God to school or even speak His Name.

Every day got worse and worse, and days turned to years; Instead of hearing children laugh and play, you heard them crying tears!

What must we do to stop the crime, that’s in our schools today? Please let the Lamb come back to school and teach our kids to Pray! (Author Unknown)

**RESTRAINING POWER IS GONE**

 It’s a sad time in America when children are not allowed to bring a Bible to school. A teacher told a little girl to take her Bible home and not bring it back and to hide it until it was time to go home. But yet the Muslims in the class rooms can bring a Koran and leave it on the desk for everyone to see. Our nation and its leaders teach tolerance and acceptance to every religion and belief except ours. Ours is banned. The door and arms are now opened wide to sodomy, same sex marriage, abortionists and legalized Marijuana! America, your Walls are down and more and more destruction and judgment is on your doorstep!

 Listen, the restraining power is gone because there’s no more Prayer and no Word of God. When they removed it, they did away with the Power of Jesus’ Blood and the Hedge is gone. America has traded the only One, True and Holy God of Heaven for the gods of other nations. And when you removed our Righteous Lord, you removed the Wall of defense that protects from evil and destruction. What happens to a nation that forgets and rejects God is what is happening in our Churches, in our Homes and it is happening in peoples’ individual lives. They are letting things of this corrupt world in their life and it is producing havoc, trouble, turmoil and bondage! Please, take heed that you don’t let the Hedge come down in your life!

**A PRAYER**

 O God, would you fill my heart with your Holy Word? Lead me by your Precepts – Guide me – direct my footsteps in your Commandments – wash me in the Blood of the Lamb that nothing clings. Cleanse my heart – purge me –Sanctify my mind from this polluted world. Remove far from me vanity and pride. Take away this worlds fads, styles and lustful passions. Make me Holy, Lord, just like you. Fill me with your Spirit and let the Holy Ghost be my Hedge, my Shield and Defense. I want to be saved and safe till Jesus comes. Put a Wall around me and Keep me, is my Prayer!

**BACK TO NEHEMIAH**

 In the first Chapter, you find that after Nehemiah found out the condition back in his beloved homeland, he couldn’t sleep. No doubt, he wallows his bed. He’s burdened for his people. He thus prays – Lord, I beseech thee (I beg you) please show me favor with the king. Grant me mercy in his (Artaxerxes’) sight. Nehemiah is getting ready to go before the mighty king whom he serves to ask him a special favor in behalf of his beloved people back home.

**QUEEN ESTHER**

 I want you to know that God has special people in the right places, at the right time. He brings them there for a purpose to bring help and deliverance to others. Just like Esther – Mordecia, her uncle sent her word – “Esther, you’ve come to the Kingdom for such a time as this. Our people will be destroyed unless you go before the king with your petition to save them.” Just think, a Jewish woman was chosen and made Queen under a heathen king. She had access to the throne to obtain mercy for her poor persecuted nation. She approaches the throne of the Monarch Ahasuerus in order to save her people from annihilation. As this burdened humbled Jewish woman cautiously steps before the king’s throne, he stretches out his golden scepter and says – Esther, what is your petition? What do you desire for me to do? Her petition was granted, prayer answered and it saved all God’s children!

**PROMOTION COMES FROM GOD**

 I want you to know, if you have a heart for God to serve Him, He will bring you to key places! Settle it child, you have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this. God will promote you and set you in certain positions in order to help others. You are His vessel, an instrument to be used. You can make a difference, an impact on the people around you who are hurting and in need.

 Just like Nehemiah, if you will be Faithful where you’re at, God will take you higher. If the Lord can trust you in the low, humble and menial services and you prove trustworthy, then He can put in your hands a greater work and calling.

 Nehemiah is getting ready to approach this powerful king for a special favor. It’s interesting to note, after Nehemiah hears the bad news back home of his suffering people, he waits 4 long months before going before the king. (A time of preparation, fasting and praying). The request is going to be a mighty big one, but Nehemiah has paid his dues. He’s remained faithful in his room of service. His burden is beginning to show – he can no longer hide his sadness and broken heart over his people any longer, so here he goes before the king. One man can make a difference!

 Lord, I’m right where you want me. It’s in my heart to help your children and you can use my position to do it. You must remember, no one was ever allowed to come before the king with sadness in those days – they could be put to death. But I see an earthly king lean forward on his throne and say to Nehemiah, a young man whom he loves, who has touched his heart with his faithfulness - “Nehemiah, I know you’re not sick, but what is this sorrow of heart and sadness you have, it shows in your countenance?” No doubt in that four months of fasting and praying, he’s lost weight – you can see it in his eyes and face. I can now see a young man choking back the tears, he looks the king in the eyes and – **TO BE CONTINUED. May God Bless!**