IT’S TIME TO RISE – BUILD AND RESTORE

WHAT THE ENEMY HAS TORN DOWN

**Neh. 1:1** ¶ The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

 **2** That **Hanani**, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

 **3** And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in **great** **affliction** and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

 **4** And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and **wept**, and **mourned** certain days, and **fasted**, and **prayed** before the God of heaven,

 **5** ¶ And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

 **6** Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.

 **7** We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments.

 In this story, Nehemiah himself wrote his experience, of his burden and vision for his beloved homeland and people. It is in our Bible for a reason! He tells about his brother Hanani coming from Judah to visit him with bad news about his people who were poor and suffering back home in Jerusalem. Wicked king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had sent his army who had come and conquered and destroyed Jerusalem. They destroyed Solomon’s beautiful temple and now God’s children had no place to worship. On their way out, they broke and tore down the Walls surrounding the city and burnt all the gates with fire and now everything lay in a pile of ashes. Jerusalem had a population of around 10,000 people and when Nebuchadnezzar left, he took most of the people captive back to Babylon which was 350 miles away. He took with him those who were wise in trades, gifted and smart and he left behind a small remnant of people who were weak, unlearned and unskilled and Hanani told Nehemiah that they were in great affliction. (We’ve lost everything back home Nehemiah and we desperately need help and we sure need God’s mercy!)

This is a sad picture of what sin will do to a person, to a family and a nation if they disobey God and break His commandments, when you do, the wall will come down in your life and the enemy will come in and he will vex, tear down, destroy and take you captive. I have witnessed walls that came down in families and in churches. Obedience to God will keep the Wall of protection up around you in your life – it will keep the devil and his evil forces out!!

 My message in this Newsletter is – stay with the Lord; obey the call of God and do His Divine Will! Be obedient to Him in everything He tells you to do. If you put Him first and seek Him with your whole heart, He will be with you, bless and preserve you from evil. Many of God’s dear people are suffering unnecessary hardships because they’re not doing His Will, they have backed up and let things of this world come in their life and take them away from fully serving the Lord and as a result the hedge is down and this is definitely worrisome and frightful. Many souls end up being lost and the sheep scattered when the enemy comes in.

IF YOU COULD TALK TO NEHEMIAH TODAY

 Nehemiah, what can you warn and tell us today? He would answer: “I can tell you this one thing for sure - you never realize how good you had it, what you enjoyed and possessed until you lose it and it’s all gone and taken away!! You must never take God and His Word for granted and let up in serving Him! What happened to my people will surely happen to you if you don’t fully serve God and watch and pray!”

 I want to say to us reading this letter – It was a literal army of flesh and blood that came against Jerusalem, ransacking, pillaging and taking captive back then, but today it is Satan’s demonic forces of Hell and spiritual darkness that we are fighting that’s coming against the Church and the children of God and if there was ever a time that we need to keep a hedge and spiritual wall of defense built up around us, it is now! Fasting, prayer, daily reading God’s Holy Word and being obedient to the Lord will KEEP YOU stedfast and safe from evil. What happened to God’s people back then, will surely happen to us spiritually, mentally and physically if we don’t stay on guard.

 I want to ask you – how determined is the devil to tear you down and take away your worship and praise? Dear reader, he wants to take away your joy and victory in serving God. He doesn’t want you happy. Satan is a robber, a thief and destroyer. Just how determined is the devil may I ask? Wicked king Nebuchadnezzar and his army from Babylon came against God’s very holy city Jerusalem and His chosen people. The Walls around Jerusalem were 2 ½ miles long, 39 feet high, and 8 feet thick. They were well fortified and safe, wouldn’t you think? The Jews had the mentality to think – “Hey, the enemy can’t get to us, we’re safe, we’re God’s redeemed”. Do you not realize that the devil and the powers of darkness have a vision to hinder the work of God, to stop and destroy it? He hates every minister, preacher, teacher, singer, musician, prayer warrior, helper, worshipper, testifier and witness for Jesus. How much does the devil mean business to attack God’s people? The army surrounded the walls and laid siege to the city and cut off all their goods, food and supplies for 2 years until they weakened them and starved them out. This is what the enemy will do to you if you let up on serving God. He will seek avenues to get to you. Your adversary wants you bound and afflicted. He wants your home and marriage split up. He wants families divided and your children on drugs. He wants to strip you of your morals and pull you out into the world, into its vice and mold. He wants to take away the Church’s praise and worship. O the deceitfulness of sin and its many lusts! O the danger of this world’s pleasure and entertainments!

BEWARE OF THE LITTLE FOXES

**Song of Solomon 2:15** – Take us the Foxes, the Little Foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes. The word **take** in the Hebrew means to catch. Catch us the little foxes that spoil the vines. Stop them before they get in and enter the vineyard.

 Listen close: In order to protect their grape vineyards in bible days, the farmers would build and erect walls of stone and thorn bushes to make a hedge to keep the foxes out. But little foxes would come and they would go back and forth looking for small openings, little gaps in the hedge to get in. Young foxes would teethe just like babies do when they chew on something. They would chew on the vines until they would bleed – the sap would run out and they would die and there’d be no fruit.

 That’s exactly what the devil will do if we let our guard down and we don’t watch and keep a Spiritual wall up around us in prayer. The spirit of the enemy will seek its way to enter in and when it does you will fall victim to it. It will eat the very life of God out of you. Whatever kind of spirit eats on you, that’s what you will become and there are many different kinds – Discouragement, depression, oppression, covetousness, many lusts and wrong desires of this ungodly world. When the enemy comes in, the Spirit of the Lord will drain out of you and you will die just like that grapevine.

BEWARE YOU ARE IN SATAN’S CROSSHAIRS

 I want you to know that the Devil hates God – he hates God’s children – he hates the work of God and will do anything he can to discourage, dishearten and hinder the work of the Lord. All of God’s people in these closing moments before Jesus comes are facing many onslaughts of the enemy. We as ministers and lay members have an Adversary that wants to oppose and pull down. He never gives up. He will use every tactic, device and circumstance to weary, dishearten and weaken you to the point that he wears you down and causes you to let up or quit. He will use stress, troubles, finances, problems, family, jobs, bosses and people around you to hinder and cause God’s work to cease. Remember dear brother and sister, the Lord’s work will never go unchallenged, it’ll never be without conflict!!! When Salvation of precious souls are the focus, when you seek to win and help others and when their spiritual, physical and mental welfare is your aim – Hell will fight!

THE BURDEN AND VISION OF NEHEMIAH

 O God, give us some Nehemiah’s in this hour! Stir our hearts as you did his. Souls are suffering and perishing. The Bible said clearly – **Prov. 2918** – Where there is no Vision, the people perish.

Can you pray this prayer: “Lord, let me be your eyes and ears, your hands and feet and your mouth piece to my generation and the people around me who are lost, hurting and perishing under the hand of the devil! Let me be an encourager. Let me be a repairer and restorer.”

**Isa 58:10** - And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

 **11** And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

 **12** And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt **raise up** the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The **repairer** of the breach, The **restorer** of paths to dwell in.

There are a lot of breaches and crumbling foundations, wouldn’t you say? God brings certain people into key positions and places them where they can help His people! Nehemiah was a 20 year old young man in this story who had a heart for God and cared about others. He loved his people. When his mother had him at birth, she held him in her arms and named him – Nehemiah! We see in his name God’s very purpose and calling for his life and what he was meant to be! His name in Hebrew means: “**In whose eyes Jehovah Consoles and Comforts**!”

Dear Lord Jesus, what do you see in me? What is my purpose for being here? How can I be a blessing? What can I do for you? How can I serve you to help others?

 Nehemiah walked with God. He not only saw the natural walls of his beloved city torn down, but he saw the spiritual walls of his Chosen people broken down in their lives.

PERMISSION TO GO BUILD AND RESTORE

Nehemiah was cupbearer to the Persian king Artaxerxes. He held a very high trusted position in serving the king his wine! The king asked him one day – “why are you so sad”? Nehemiah told him how his people were suffering back home and everything was lying in waste. He asked the king for permission to go BUILD BACK what Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed. The king was moved by Nehemiah’s burden and love for his people. “Please send me, O king, to the city of my fathers’ sepulchers that I may build it!” Artaxerxes is a type of our Heavenly Father in this story who is moved with compassion for the burdens we carry and answers our earnest prayers. Nehemiah said – “And the king granted me according to the good hand of my God upon me. The king sent his captains of the army and his horsemen with me!” If you truly have a heart to serve, God will move for you and open doors to make a way.

THE DEVIL GETS MAD

Nehemiah said – when the enemy’s of the Jews - Sanballat and Tobiah heard about my Vision to seek the welfare of my people and to build and restore them, it grieved them exceedingly.

I’m going to tell you now – if you go about to help others and build the kingdom of God, you’re going to face much opposition. The devil will surely fight you tooth and nail at every angle to throw every road block he can to hinder and stop you. If you let him, he will discourage and put out your Vision! Your enemy is evilly smart. He’ll show you a dozen things and tell you that you can’t succeed, you can’t do it, it’s too hard, it won’t work, your prayers won’t be answered and you will fail. He’ll tell you it’s too much! He’ll cause you to doubt God’s grace and call! There will be many mind battles that will weigh on your spirit in serving the Lord! There will be strongholds and imaginations of the enemy you will have to pull and cast down. Remember, you are up against spiritual wickedness in high places and the rulers of the darkness of this world. You will battle Principalities and powers. The only way you will stand and overcome is by fasting and prayer and the Truth of God’s Holy Word! You’ve got to make up your mind in this hour that you will not let up on what God has called you to do.

NEHEMIAH PULLS THE PEOPLE TOGETHER

 Nehemiah made the 350-mile journey back home, called together the remnant of his poor beaten down beloved Jews and told them his Burden and Vision to build and restore Jerusalem and bring back the glory and worship of God! “You see the distress we’re in, how Jerusalem lieth waste and the gates are burned with fire – **Let us build up the Wall** that we be no more a reproach. The hand of my God is upon me!!” And When the people heard that, they said back to Nehemiah – “Let us rise and build!” So they strengthened their hands for this good work. Their hope resurrected in them from a God sent man who loved them and had a vision. Did you know that your Vision can stir others? Your burden and zeal and love for God and His work can motivate those around you and help them to rise up and be renewed in their spirit! PRAISE GOD!!

 If we ever desperately needed UNITY in the work of God and serving Him, it is now! You will never go anywhere and accomplish anything for the Lord to help and be a blessing to others unless you are stirred deep in your heart. How many reading this can see the sad shape that people, families and churches are in? So many of God’s people are beaten down, they’re battle weary, physically and mentally tired and afflicted and we need the Lord to renew our Vision and strength to get back up and build and fight.

THE REAL OPPOSITION BEGINS

 Whenever you make up your mind to do something for the Lord and help others and see people saved and healed, your real battle begins. The devil does not want unity, he’ll break it if he can. Nehemiah said that when the enemy’s Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite and Gershem the Arabian heard it, they laughed us to scorn and despised us. Sanballat and Tobiah were of the cursed Canaanites that God drove out of the promise land. Tobiah was wroth and took great indignation to mock the Jews when they began to work to rebuild back and restore the Walls of their beloved city. The Ashdodites joined their enemies and said - “You’ll not fortify yourselves, you’ll not revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish that are burned, you’ll not bring back the Sacrifices of your God!” (O is that so thou enemies of God?) And when they saw that the Walls were going up and the breaches began to be mended and sealed, they were very wroth and began all of them to Conspire to fight against Jerusalem and to hinder it!! Nehemiah said – “We made our prayer unto God and I cried to the Lord – “Hear O God for we are despised”! We set a watch against them day and night – the people had a mind to work! I want you to know that your chief adversary the devil and his evil spirits & minions have voices, they’ll ride on your shoulders and speak in your ears if you let them. They’ll fill you with doubts and fears. They’ll use unspiritual carnal minded people to judge you and your work and say things that will hurt. You might as well buckle up and go against the grain for you will always have people who will find fault!

IS ANYONE GETTING TIRED?

 Judah came to Nehemiah and said – “The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed because there is so much rubbish. Nehemiah, we’re not able to build the Wall.” (I’m telling you, if you constantly look at all the mess around you and if you concentrate on all the bad and wrong, it will drain every bit of the life out of you. Mental fatigue will definitely affect the body that you’ll want to just sit down and quit.) There are many of God’s good people right now who are struggling! Don’t ever forget, your brothers and sisters are very important to you and the Lord and if you let up, they’ll let up and you can’t do that! United we stand, divided we fall. There is strength in prayer and Unity.

A DIFFERENT AVENUE AND APPROACH

 If your enemy, the devil, cannot get you to give up through intimidation, lies, slander, mockery, threats and fear, he’ll try a different approach. He’ll use the temptation of COMPROMISE! Nehemiah said – Sanballat who was a leader and an official and Gershem sent unto me saying – “Come down, let us meet together,” Nehemiah sent messengers right back saying – “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work cease and I leave it and come down to you? Dear reader, your enemy will not let up or quit in his efforts to hinder God’s work! Five different times Nehemiah’s enemies tried to get him and the Jews to stop their work for God and come down from the Wall, but every time Nehemiah answered them right back and said **NO!** This is Holy resolve, determination.

 Don’t you think your Pastor needs prayer? Do you not realize that he too gets tired and weary? He as a leader of the flock, battles in warfare for the people! If the devil gets the leaders and ministers discouraged and worn down mentally and physically, it’ll affect them spiritually to the point of being tempted to give up the work of God and say – what’s the use?!

IT'S NOW OR NEVER!

 Either we’ll go all the way or we’ll go down in defeat! It’s going to take a made up mind from here on out in these closing days before Jesus returns for His Church. It got to the point that the conflict escalated and became all out war. (Ain’t that where we are now in this present time?) Nehemiah and all his workers worked on the Wall with a tool in one hand and a weapon in the other. Their adversaries said – “We will come in the midst among them and slay them and cause the Work to cease!” Dear reader, we must look after one another! We cannot afford to lose one soul to the devil. The welfare of our families and precious brothers and sisters is our responsibility! As the workers labored on the top of the walls, Nehemiah set the people and the families behind the walls with their swords, spears and bows, and he said to the nobles, rulers and the rest of the people – Be ye not afraid of them: Remember the Lord which is GREAT and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives and your houses!! He cautioned his workers – Don’t let gaps form between you and the other workers and you become separated too far apart on the Wall! If one of you gets in trouble and the enemy comes at you – call out by blowing the trumpet and we’ll run to you and help you fight.

 In ending this Newsletter, I cry out to all my readers – KEEP WORKING! Love and help each other. Stand your ground and fight for your family and your Church. Don’t let the enemy in. Don’t let your guard down. If you’ll do your part, God will do His! He will fight for you. I like what Nehemiah said – “God brought all the counsel of the enemy to nought!” God’s people refused to quit or give up until they got back what the devil had taken away. They revived the stones out of the heaps of rubbish. The gates of God’s city were built back and the Worship of God was restored! Joy had returned. God bless you Nehemiah for your burden that drove you on for God’s hurting Children and the people you loved. You have left us an example of what a true God given VISION will do!! Praise God it’s time to Unite and come together and build the Kingdom of God because our Lord is coming soon. May God Bless, Strengthen & Encourage all my readers!!