

WHO HATH DESPISED THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS?

Class 3:
Let Us Arise
and Build

THIS STUDY

The process employed by Ezra for resolving ecclesial issues.

The challenges faced by Nehemiah for the rebuilding work.



**THE BUILDING COMPLETE — EZRA
PREPARES HEARTS FOR WORSHIP** |

ROLE OF THE SCRIBES

“The Scribes were also called *“lawyers”* and the *“doctors of the law”*. They were all highly educated from a young age, and at an appropriate time (some say by the age of 30) they were elected to office. They were not only copyists of the law, but they were also the preservers of the oral tradition, which included the commentaries and additions to the law. This oral tradition accumulated over the course of time into a great mass, and was regarded by most to be equal or even greater than the law itself.

They were so careful in their copying that they counted every letter, and then compared the total number of the document with that which they were copying from. If the numbers did not match the copy was burned. They were meticulous in making sure that no words were left out that belonged to the text, nor any words admitted improperly. These Scribes would read the Torah in the synagogues, give commentary, and lecture their disciples.”

The Scribes - Jewish Leaders in the New Testament, Bible History Online

EZRA'S LINEAGE

“Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of **Seraiah**, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, ² The son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, ³ The son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, ⁴ The son of Zerariah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, ⁵ The son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest:”

Ezra 7:1-5

LAST CHIEF PRIEST IN JERUSALEM WAS HIS FATHER

“And the captain of the guard took **Seraiah the chief priest**, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door: of the guard took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah:”

“And when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and **Seraiah** the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. ²⁴ And Gedaliah sware to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon; and it shall be well with you.”

2 Kings 25:18, 23-24

EZRA'S PREPARATION FOR WORK

“This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a **ready** (*mahiyr* – quick, prompt, skilled, ready) **scribe in the law of Moses**, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. **For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.**”

Ezra 7:6,10

This had been his life-long pursuit. He was skilled and able to rapidly respond. But it all started with “preparing his heart.”

EZRA 7:6 (NIV)

“This Ezra came up from Babylon. He was a teacher **well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given.** The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him.”



THE BEST TIME TO PLANT A TREE
WAS 20 YEARS AGO
THE SECOND BEST TIME
IS NOW



PREPARATION

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

END OF ARTAXERXES' DECREE

“Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? Also we certify you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them. And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.”

Ezra 7:23-26

EZRA'S REACTION TO THIS OVERWHELMING NEWS

“Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, **which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart**, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem: And hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. **And I was strengthened as the hand of the LORD my God was upon me**, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me.”

Ezra 7:27-28

FIRST PROBLEM CONFRONTED IN JERUSALEM

“Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, **and the priests, and the Levites**, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. ² For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.”

Ezra 9:1-2

EZRA'S REACTION

“And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and **plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard**, and sat down astonished. ⁴ Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.”

Ezra 9:3-4

Later, in Nehemiah 13:25, Nehemiah “plucks off” the hair from the heads of those who had again intermarried with the women of Ashdod, Ammon and Moab.

A SOLUTION FROM THE ECCLESIA

“Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore. And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. **Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.** Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it. Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word. And they sware.”

Ezra 10:1-5

In Ezra 10:26, we learn that there were six named as having foreign wives in his own family!

PUTTING AWAY STRANGE WIVES - POSTPONEMENT

“And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do. **But the people are many, and it is a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without, neither is this a work of one day or two: for we are many that have transgressed in this thing.**”

Ezra 10:10-13

EVEN THE SONS OF THE HIGH PRIEST!

“And among the sons of the priests that were found that had taken strange wives, namely, of the **sons of Jeshua...**

And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass.”

Ezra 10:18,19

Scripture does not whitewash this. Even the top spiritual family in the land had sinned in this manner and not previously repented.

THE 37 ON WOODEN PLATFORM WITH EZRA

Mattithiah

Shema

Anaiah

Urijah

Hilkiah

Maaseiah

Pedaiah

Mishael

Malchiah

Hashum

Hashbadana

Zechariah

Meshullam

Jeshua

Bani

Sherebiah

Jamin

Akkub

Jozabad

Hanan

Peliah

Eliezer

Ariel

Shemiah

Elnathan

Nathan

Meshullam

Hashabiah

Jeshaiah

Hodijah

Kelita

Azariah

Shabbethai

Joiarib

Iddo

Mahli

Sherebiah

EZRA'S READING OF THE LAW (NEHEMIAH 8:8)

“And they read in the book, in the law of God, explaining – so as **to give understanding to the conviction.**” Young’s Literal Translation

“...making it clear and giving the meaning **so that the people understood what was being read.**” New International Version

“...translating to give the sense **so that they understood the reading.**”
New American Standard Bible

“...And they read from the book, from the law of God, clearly; and they gave the sense, **so that the people understood the reading.**”
Revised Standard Version, footnote: “or, with interpretation”

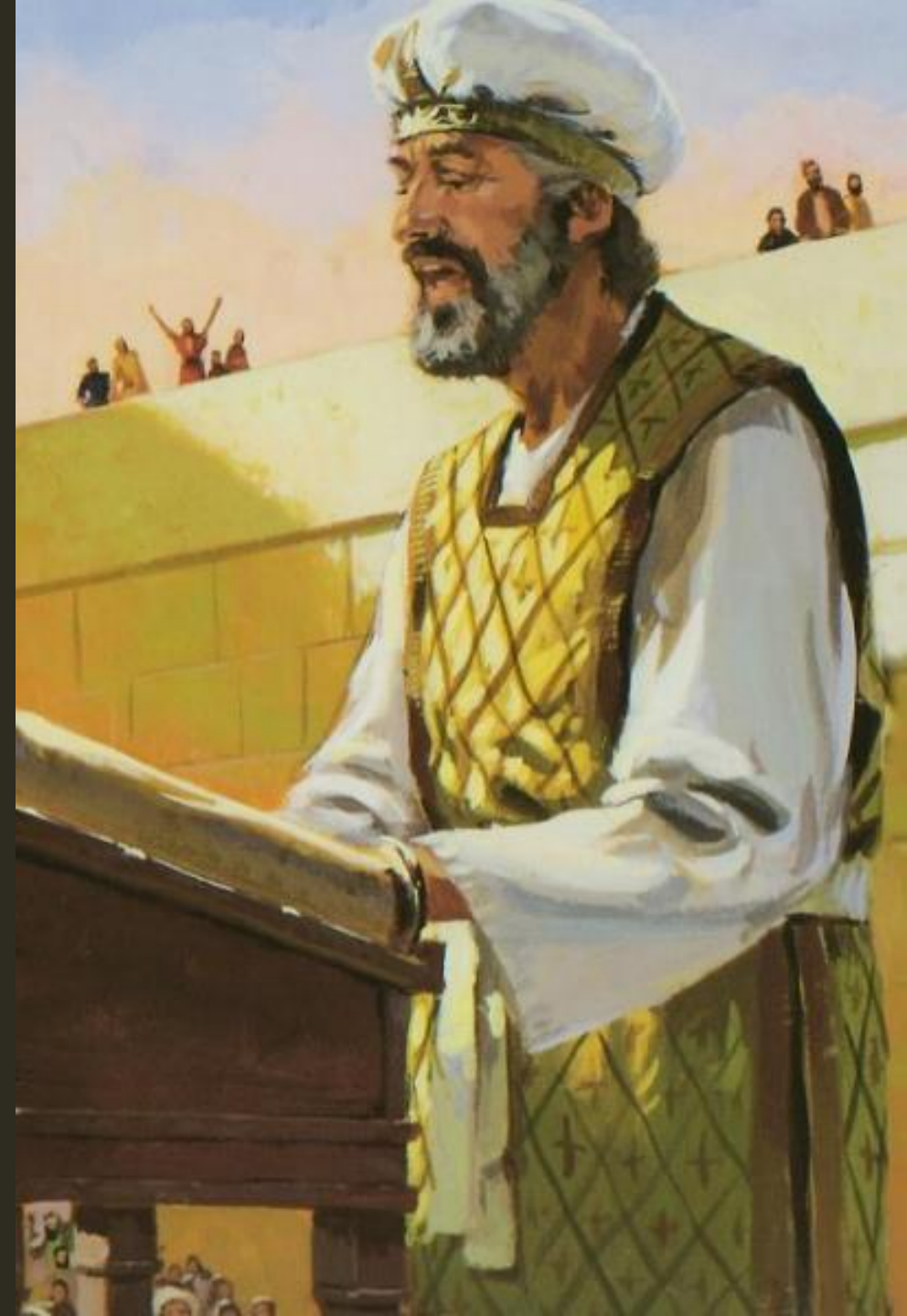
OBSERVATIONS

The “princes” knew the sin, had tolerated it, and immediately brought it to Ezra’s attention.

The people, once confronted with their sin, generally complied with a very difficult repentance.

Ezra allowed time for repentance.

Some who had sinned, once repentant, were engaged in teaching the Law to all the people.



FOR US TO PONDER...

Do elders and spiritual leaders today understand and embrace the role to set appropriate examples of the application of God's laws?

Does the ecclesia have a voice in processes and how to remedy?

Do we allow sufficient time for change and repentance?

Once repentance is realized, how do we re-deploy brethren?

Would we have put those who married strange wives up on the wooden platform to teach what they had themselves violated?

LET US RISE UP AND BUILD



The Work of Nehemiah

STATE OF THE CITY

Nehemiah 2:13-15 – walls broken, gates burned, streets unpassable at King's Pool due to rubble.

Nehemiah 7:4 – few city inhabitants and very few homes built.

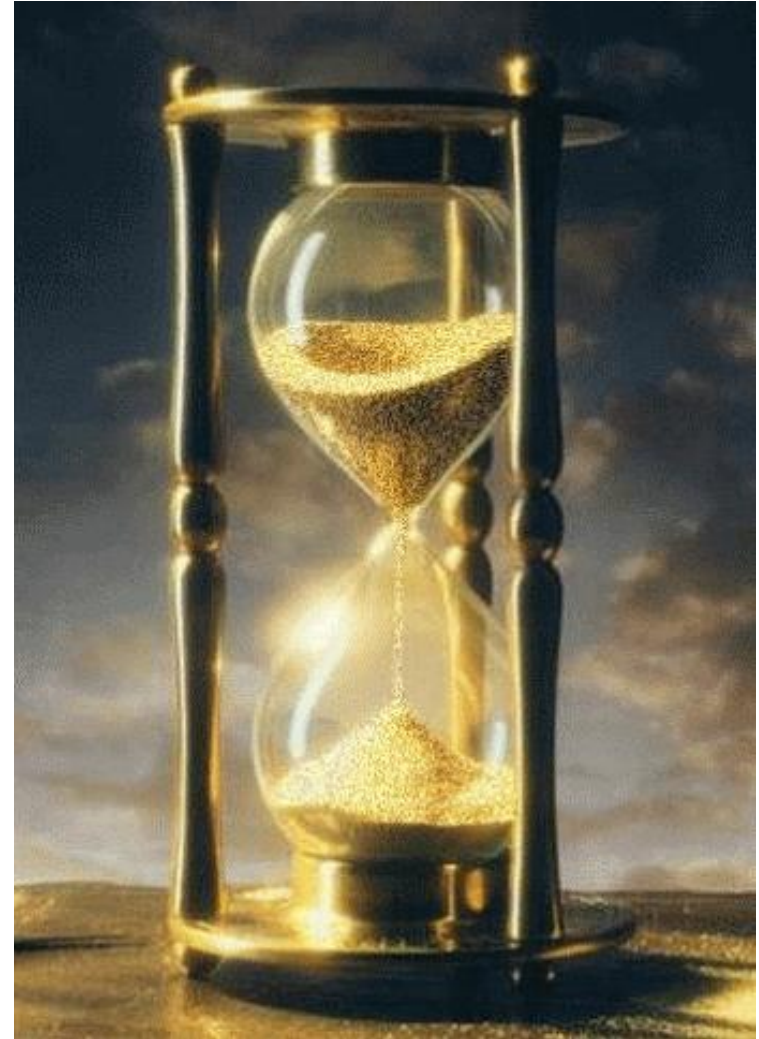
Nehemiah 11:1 – lots taken to “seed” inhabitants for the city from neighboring cities.



CONTEXT OF THE CONCERN

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to **restore and to build Jerusalem** unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: **the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.**”

Daniel 9:25



TEMPLE BUILT BUT CITY IN DESOLATION

Those remaining in the province were under great duress and affliction, trying to live up to vision.

Others had returned to their personal inheritance outside the area.

The walls and gates were still broken and burned!

There was no protection from enemies.

The city was a reproach – “Is this the City of God?”

HEARS OF THE PLIGHT IN JERUSALEM

“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, 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. 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.**”

Nehemiah 1:1-3



WHAT CAN ONE MAN DO?

“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,** 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: 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.”

Nehemiah 1:4-6

WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR TRANSFORMATION?

Daniel 9 Petition	Nehemiah 1 Petition
Emotionally engaged and knew need for God's help.	Sat down and wept, mourned for days.
Prepared himself by fasting, sackcloth and ashes.	Prepared by fasting.
Began his prayer by confessing sins of the people.	Began his prayer by confessing sins of the people.
Acknowledged that their woes were self inflicted by turning back on God	Acknowledgement that it was their sins that brought scattering and captivity
Appeal to God's righteousness and mercy	Appeal to God's righteousness and mercy
Request that the sanctuary's desolation be reversed to declare His righteousness	Request that his work be prospered to rebuild the neglected fallen walls and gates

EXHORTATION ABOUT PRAYER

Must truly care.

A sincere dedication to Holy service. (Fasting is a topic worthy of discussion!)

Prayer.

Acknowledgement and confession of sin.

Appeal for God's mercy.

Well articulated petition for work to be done.

AGAINST ALL ODDS

A cupbearer in Shushan who is going to oversee a building project!

No one engaged him – he took it as his own mission.

He risked a high visibility, high profile position in Persia.

Elevated for work by the King and appointed to governor.

Surely, there must have been better more qualified and available people to take on this work!

THIS IS CRITICAL FOR ALL MODERN PURSUITS

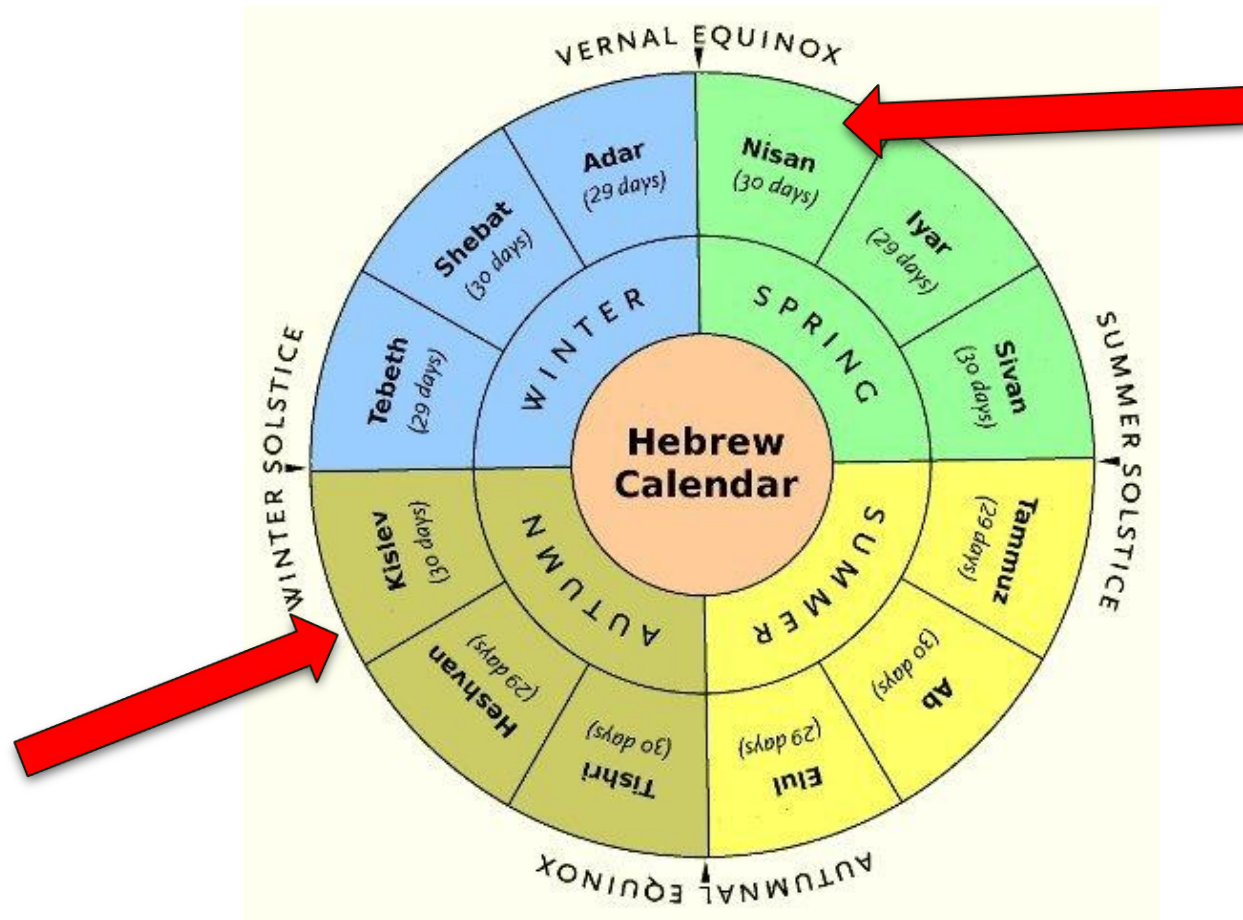
Work engaged that does not have exaltation of God's name at its core, is suspect and potentially vulnerable to domination by the flesh.

It must involve humility, confession of sin and acknowledgement of the need for God.

If our pursuits do not have the right focus, we would be better off to stop and reassess. Does this pursuit have the declaration of God's Name at its core?

WAITING FOR ANSWER TO PRAYER – 4-5 MONTHS

Prayer Made



Opportunity
Presents Itself

CONSTANT IN PRAYER

“Pray without ceasing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:17

“Never stop praying.” NLT

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, ***always labouring fervently for you in prayers***, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” Colossians 4:12

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, ***and keep on praying.***” Romans 12:12 NLT



NEHEMIAH'S PREPARATION WHEN WINDOW OPENS

“And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.”

Nehemiah 2:1-4



NOTICE THE PREPARED MIND

“And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, **that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.** And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, **let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into.** And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.”

Nehemiah 2:5-8

LESSONS FOR US?

Reject the notion that change can only be done through committees and formal efforts.

If you see work to be done – whether great or small – accept it as your mission.

Plan for success! Nehemiah carefully calculated what was required for the job.

We must genuinely care! There's no change without passion.

All change must begin by acknowledging only God can prosper us.

ECCLESIAL OBSTACLE “PICK-LIST”

External persecution (2:19)

Half-hearted brethren (3:5)

Contempt (4:1-3)

Open opposition (4:8)

Discouragement (4:10)

Sabotage (4:11)

Internal strife (5:7)

False friendship (6:2)

Scandal (6:5)

Fear (6:13)

Alien marriages (6:18-19;
13:23-29)

TOOK ACTION IN FACE OF FEAR

“So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass. Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned. And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.”

Nehemiah 2:11-16

LET US RISE UP AND BUILD!

“Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, **and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.** 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.**”

Nehemiah 2:17-18



WHO PUT “THEIR NECKS TO THE WORK”? (CHAPTER 3)

High priest, Eliashib

Priests

Levites

Men of Jericho (345 men)

Meshullam, a “friend”

Tekoites

Nobles

Nethinims

Proselytes

Goldsmiths

Apothecaries

Rulers

Family groups

Rechabites

Merchants

SOME DISAPPOINTING FAILURES

Nobles (3:5)

- Saw the problems, but were unwilling to bend their backs when a noteworthy opportunity to serve arises
- “Armchair” believers

MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY

“The work was divided, so that every one might know what he had to do, and mind it, with a desire to excel; yet without contention, or separate interests. No strife appears among them, but which should do most for the public good. Every Israelite should lend a hand toward the building up of Jerusalem. Let not nobles think any thing below them, by which they may advance the good of their country. Even some females helped forward the work. Some repaired over against their houses, and one repaired over against his chamber. When a general good work is to be done, each should apply himself to that part which is within his reach. If every one will sweep before his own door, the street will be clean; if every one will mend one, we shall all be mended. Some that had first done helped their fellows. Every one must begin at home.”

THE WALL ITSELF

“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.”

Nehemiah 4:3





GOOD WORK UNDER TRIAL

Sanballat, **Tobiah the Amorite**, Arabians, Ammonites, Ashdodites.

Conspiracy to “hinder” (margin – make an error to it).

Nehemiah instructs some to work on the wall, while others hold spears, shields, bows, habergeons (coats of mail).

Sword was girded on side as they did the work under constant threat.



BLOSSOM WHERE WE ARE PLANTED!

NEHEMIAH'S ELDERSHIP ROLES

Prayer (4:4,5,9)

Exhortation (4:14,20)

Action (4:5,21-23)

Vigilance (4:9,16-20)



NOBLES AND RULERS TAKING ADVANTAGE

“And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words. Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, **Ye exact usury, every one of his brother.** And I set a great assembly against them. And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer. Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies? I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury. **Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them.** Then said they, **We will restore them, and will require nothing of them;** so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise.”

FILLING THE CITY

“That I gave my brother **Hanani**, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: **for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many.** And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar them: and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one to be over against his house. Now the city was large and great: but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded. **And my God put into mine heart** to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, and found written therein,”

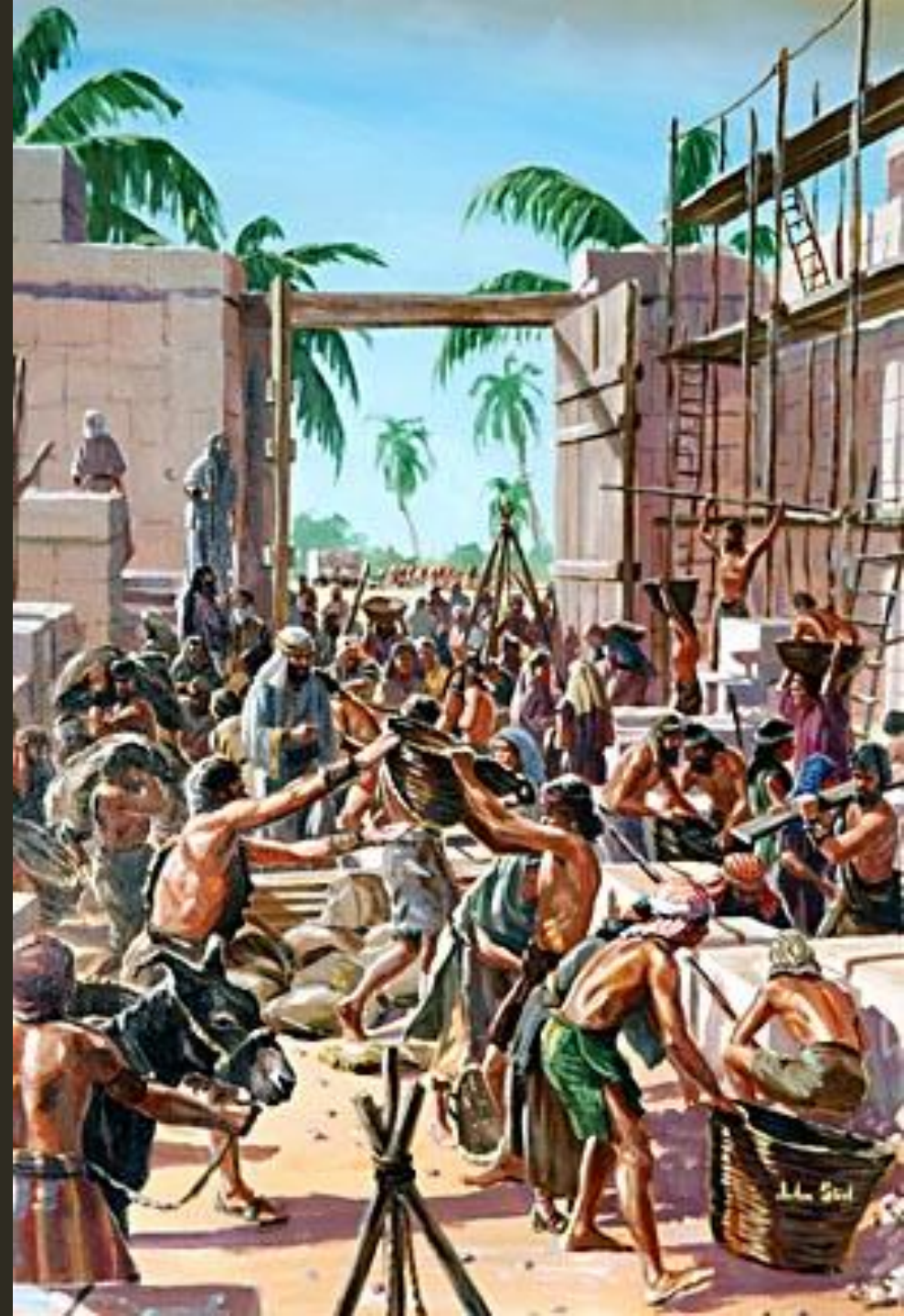
Nehemiah 7:2-5

This same Hanani, Nehemiah’s kinsman (and described as “faithful above many” in 7:2) is on the list of those who took strange wives in Ezra 10:18.

FILLING THE CITY BY LOT

“And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities. And the people blessed all the men, that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.”

Nehemiah 11:1-2



OFFICES RESTORED

“And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited. And both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and the ward of the purification, according to the commandment of David, and of Solomon his son. For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God. And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters, every day his portion: and they sanctified holy things unto the Levites; and the Levites sanctified them unto the children of Aaron.”

Nehemiah 12:44-47

LATER, REPEATED PROBLEMS

“On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever; Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing. Now it came to pass, **when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude**”

Nehemiah 13:1-3

HIGH PRIEST HARBORING AN AMORITE

“And before this, **Eliashib the priest**, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, was allied unto **Tobiah**: And he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests. But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king: And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the **evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff to Tobiah out of the chamber.** Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense.”

Nehemiah 13:4-9

ELIASHIB'S GRANDSON

“And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was **son in law to Sanballat the Horonite**: therefore I chased him from me. Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites. Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business;”

Nehemiah 13:28-30

A great example of how marriage out of the Truth can compromise and lead to alliances one would never have expected.

INIQUITY OF THE AMORITES

“And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.”

Genesis 15:15-16

PROFANING OF THE SABBATH

“In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.”

Nehemiah 13:15-19

RIGHT UNDER THEIR NOSES!

How is it possible that Israel did not see this obvious, ongoing violations of the Sabbath?

Had they so soon forgotten the Law of God that had been taught to them?

The value of repetition of God's commands – lest we forget.

The real question is whether we have any areas where we too have become blind to the violation of God's commands right under our own noses – and what we will do when we identify them?

MARRIAGES TO THE HEATHEN

“In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?”

Nehemiah 13:23-27

A FEW LESSONS FOR OUR ECCLESIAS

Spiritual soundness requires constant perseverance and watchfulness.

We do not consistently make the connections between our profession and what personal changes are required of us.

The close attention to the Word is required to fulfill our transformation.

God is still working with us to build cities and walls – not of stone and wood, but of faithful hearts.

Let us arise and build!

TOMORROW

The Priesthood and Malachi and Living in the Day
of Small Things