

# Nehemiah's Return

Nehemiah has one of the most inspiring stories in the Bible. After learning about the walls of Jerusalem being in ruin, Nehemiah took the initiative to journey to the city and lead the rebuilding effort. He organized Israel and was able to get the job done in a mere 52 days.

Nehemiah also took part in leading a great spiritual revival in Israel. He and Ezra got God's people excited about God's word again (Nehemiah 8:1-8). They started reobserving the Feast of Booths (Nehemiah 8:13-18). They confessed their sins and promised to do better (Nehemiah 9-10).

After spending twelve years laboring among God's people, Nehemiah then returned to his job as cupbearer to the king of Persia. He eventually returned to Jerusalem and discovered that the people had broken their promises to God.

## Nehemiah's Return

- The temple and the priests were being neglected. The priests had to work in the fields to provide for themselves (Nehemiah 13:10).
- The Sabbath was not being kept. There were business transactions with foreigners being conducted (Nehemiah 13:15-16).
- The people were intermarrying with Gentiles (Nehemiah 13:23-24). This put their identity as God's distinct holy nation at risk!
- The high priest's house was involved in intermarriage with gentiles (Nehemiah 13:4, 28).
- The high priest had prepared a room for Tobiah in the temple (Nehemiah 13:4-5). Tobiah tried to hinder Nehemiah's efforts to rebuild the city's walls.

## Nehemiah's Response

- Nehemiah expressed concern (Nehemiah 13:8). He was concerned about this situation just like he was concerned about the walls being in ruin. Are we also concerned about the spiritual problems we see plaguing God's people? Are we concerned when a Christian falls away or when we notice the need for more leaders in the church?
- Nehemiah prayed (Nehemiah 13:14, 29, 31). Nehemiah always cared enough to pray about God's work and people (Nehemiah 1:4; 2:4; 4:9; 6:14). Do we pray for the same things? Do we pray for the weak, elders, deacons, preachers, prodigals, and lost people who need to obey the gospel?
- Nehemiah took action. He evicted Tobiah (Nehemiah 13:8-9). He reprimanded the officials for neglecting the priests (Nehemiah 13:11-13). He commanded the gates of Jerusalem to be closed and servants stationed in front of them so that merchants were kept out on the Sabbath (Nehemiah 13:17-22). He rebuked the people for intermarrying with foreigners and reminded them of Solomon (Nehemiah 13:25-27). He drove away Sanballat (Nehemiah 13:28). Do we also take action when we notice spiritual messes among God's people?

## Conclusion:

God had more restoration work for Nehemiah to do upon his return to Jerusalem. Do you also need spiritual restoration?

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