

The Watchmen On The Walls

Part 2

Introduction

In the first part of this study, we learned the importance of well-constructed walls and the duty of the watchmen who patrolled them. In Part 2 we will learn how to repair and rebuild our spiritual walls and gates.

Many years before the prophet Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of that holy city, an important event preceded him.

Our Study

The Scripture: Ezra 1:1-3

"In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus to make a proclamation throughout his realm. This is what [he] says: 'The lord, the God of heaven, has appointed me to build a temple for him in Jerusalem in Judah—Any one of his people among you let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the Lord.'"

1. What had God commanded the King of Persia to do? _____

The Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:16

"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?"

2. What is the temple of God today? _____

3. Who dwells there? _____

The Scripture: Romans 12:1

"I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship."

4. What does Paul tell us to do with our bodies? _____

The Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5

"Learn to control [your] own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen who do not know God."

5. What does he tell us to do in this scripture? _____

Today, God has chosen the hearts and bodies of believers as His temple and dwelling place rather than any man-made structure. Doing this is a prerequisite to any rebuilding that is done.

Personal Questions:

- Do you have the confidence and peace that come from having given both your heart and your body to God as a holy sacrifice?
- Are you caring for your body in a way that allows Satan no entrance?

Finally, we are ready to look at the process that goes on in the rebuilding and restoration of God's walls around the believer.

Restoring our Walls

During the Diaspora, the scattering of the Jews, Nehemiah was the royal cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia.

The Scripture: Nehemiah Chapter 1

“ The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. They said to me, ‘Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.’ When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Then I said:

‘O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.’

‘Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.’

‘They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.’

I was cupbearer to the king.”

6. What news did Nehemiah receive about Jerusalem? _____

7. Summarize Nehemiah's prayer. _____

8. How does Nehemiah describe Israel's sins? _____

Nehemiah reminded God that He had said if His people returned to Him and obeyed His commandments, He would return them to their home. When the king asked him why he was so sad, Nehemiah asked him to send him back to Jerusalem so he could rebuild the city. The king granted his request.

Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, not telling anyone what he hoped to do. He examined the walls and gates, then he asked the priests nobles and officials to help him do the work. They agreed. Two powerful men, Sanballat, the Horonite, Tobiah, an Ammonite official, and Gesham, an Arab challenged him and what he was doing.

The background of these two men is interesting. Sanballat, the apparent ringleader, whose name means, "The moon god, Sin has given life" was an influential Samaritan. His partner, Tobiah, was a member of a family whose relatives came back to Jerusalem after the captivity but failed to prove his descent.

Let us look at the sequence of events so far.

9. What did Nehemiah do? _____

Many can identify with the condition of Jerusalem. For one reason or other, through our own fault or ignorance, Satan has ravaged our lives. Our walls of protection have been torn down, our gates burned with fire. Our very condition is a reproach to God's work in us.

If we only have the ears to hear, we can hear God telling us, "Come, let us rebuild." The response of the people to whom Nehemiah spoke was, "Let us arise and build." May our response be the same!

The Scripture: Nehemiah 3:1

"The high priest and his fellow priest went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place, building as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and as far as the Tower of Hananel."

First Nehemiah rebuilt the Sheep Gate. Before we can rebuild our walls, we must offer praise to the Lord. You will remember that Isaiah called the gates "praise."

10. What was built first? _____

11. How do we do this? _____

Personal Question:

- What relationship do you see, between praise and the "gates" of your wall of protection?

When we make a habit of praising, the Lord, it is difficult for Satan to find an entrance into our lives.

The Scripture: Nehemiah 3:12

"Shallum son of Hallohesh...repaired the next section with the help of his daughters."

12. Who is mentioned, along with Shallum, in this verse? _____

Being a women does not disqualify us from this important work. Whenever we do the Lord's work in restoring or rebuilding, we can expect trouble from the enemy. Sanballot and Tobiah harassed Nehemiah and his workmen at every step of the rebuilding.

Nehemiah knew how to turn an attack into a triumph and his response to their harassment was prayer. Rather than overtly seeking revenge he turned to the Lord in prayer and God brought good out of the situation.

The work continued with half of the men serving as armed guards and the other half as workmen.

Next the Jews who had remained behind complained of the way they were being treated, the usury they had to pay, and the conditions under which they had to live. Nehemiah called a meeting and the conditions were remedied.

Crisis after crisis developed, but each time Nehemiah and the people successfully completed the job before them. Finally the wall was finished. Even Nehemiah's enemies perceived that the work was done by God and they were disheartened.

We cannot expect Satan to give up his attack until the very last moment. But in the end, when we have rebuilt and completely restored God's protective walls, he is forced to admit defeat.

The Answers

1. To build a temple for Him in Jerusalem
2. We are.
3. The Spirit of God
4. Offer them as living sacrifices to God
5. Learn to control up bodies in a way that is holy and honorable
6. Those who survived and returned to Jerusalem were in great trouble and disgrace. The walls surrounding the city were broken down and its gates had been burned.
7. Your summary
8. They have acted wickedly toward God; they had not obeyed the commands, decrees, and laws God had given Moses
9. He learned the condition of Jerusalem and then prayed and acknowledged Israel's sins. Next he asked the king to send him back to Jerusalem to repair the problem. Finally, he returned to Jerusalem secretly and surveyed the damage.
10. The Sheep Gate
11. With our praise
12. The daughters of Callum

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