

NEHEMIAH

SEEING THE NEED - A MAN UNDER AUTHORITY

INTRODUCTION

- A. Series on Leadership from the Book of Nehemiah
1. Lesson 1: Seeing the Need - a man under authority - focus on chapters 1 and 9
 2. Lesson 2: Setting Priorities - building up people - chapters 8 and 12
 3. Lesson 3: Taming the Task - building up the wall - chapters 2, 3 and 7
 4. Lesson 4: Facing Opposition - avoiding ambushes - chapters 4, 5 and 6
 5. Lesson 5: Staying Alert - same problems but different time - chapter 13
- B. Times were hard for the Jewish remnant in Jerusalem in the 5th century BC, Nehemiah 1:3, *They replied, "The survivors there in the province who escaped captivity are in great trouble and shame; the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been destroyed by fire."*
1. They were in great distress.
 2. They were disgraced.
 - a. The wall of Jerusalem was broken down.
 - b. The gates were burned with fire.
- C. They were a covenant people.
1. God made an agreement with them, Deuteronomy 7:6-11, *For you are a people holy to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession. It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the LORD set his heart on you and chose you—for you were the fewest of all peoples. It was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath that he swore to your ancestors, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, and who repays in their own person those who reject him. He does not delay but repays in their own person those who reject him. Therefore, observe diligently the commandment—the statutes and the ordinances—that I am commanding you today.*
 2. They were unfaithful.
 3. God remains faithful.
- D. God demonstrated His faithfulness.
1. Nehemiah was the right man at the right time.
 2. Nehemiah was God's man who reminded the remnant that they were covenant people.
 3. Nehemiah saw the need because he had a clear view of God, he was under authority.

UNDER COVENANT AUTHORITY

- A. A View of God from the Book of Nehemiah
1. He is sovereign - transcendent (9:6), *And Ezra said: "You are the LORD, you alone; you have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. To all of them you give life, and the host of heaven worships you."*
 - a. God is in control of world events.
 - b. He called Nehemiah, a month's journey from Jerusalem, to turn the people back to the covenant.
 2. He is near - immanent (2:12), *Then I got up during the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. The only animal I took was the animal I rode.*
 3. He is forgiving, gracious and compassionate (9:17), *they refused to obey, and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them; but they stiffened their necks and determined to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and you did not forsake them.*

4. He is faithful - keeps covenant (9:32), *Now therefore, our God—the great and mighty and awesome God, keeping covenant and steadfast love—do not treat lightly all the hardship that has come upon us, upon our kings, our officials, our priests, our prophets, our ancestors, and all your people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until today.*

B. A View of Nehemiah - a man of the Covenant

1. He was committed to prayer.
 - a. Attitude (1:4), *When I heard these words I sat down and wept, and mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven.*
 - 1) Genuine (wept and mourned)
 - 2) Persistent (for days)
 - 3) Confident (God of Heaven)
 - b. Types of prayer
 - 1) Intercession (1:6), *let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Both I and my family have sinned.*
 - 2) Confession (1:7), *We have offended you deeply, failing to keep the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances that you commanded your servant Moses.*
 - 3) Petition - success/compassion (1:11), *O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man!" At the time, I was cupbearer to the king.*
2. He was committed to Scripture.
 - a. He knew the Word of God - history of God's covenant people (9:7-31).
 - b. He obeyed the Word of God (1:8-9), *Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples; but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are under the farthest skies, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place at which I have chosen to establish my name.*
3. He was committed to service
 - a. He had vision (2:12, 17), *Then I got up during the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. The only animal I took was the animal I rode...Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, so that we may no longer suffer disgrace.*
 - b. He inspired others (2:20), *Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven is the one who will give us success, and we his servants are going to start building; but you have no share or claim or historic right in Jerusalem."*
 - c. He persevered (13:7-27)
4. He was committed to God.
 - a. Nehemiah was one of a number of people called by God to restore covenant relationship (1:4-7), *When I heard these words I sat down and wept, and mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven. I said, "O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments; let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Both I and my family have sinned. We have offended you deeply, failing to keep the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances that you commanded your servant Moses.*
 - b. The Mosaic Covenant was designed to reveal man's personal need (Galatians 3:19), *For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed.*

C. A View of Jesus - the Man for the New Covenant

1. His ministry is the New Covenant, Jeremiah 31:31-34, *The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.*

2. He initiated it, 1 Corinthians 11:25, *In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."*
3. He is the Mediator of it, Hebrews 9:11-15, *But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God! For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant.*
4. He is faithful to all who enter it, 2 Timothy 2:11-13, *The saying is sure: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.*
 - a. Death gives life
 - 1) A picture of baptism, Romans 6:3-4, *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*
 - 2) When a person places his trust in Christ, he dies to self and receives a new life in Christ.
 - b. Endurance brings responsibility
 - 1) Believers are to remain true despite the circumstances.
 - 2) Faithfulness here will bring responsibility in the Kingdom of God, 1 Corinthians 3:14, *If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward.*
 - c. Disbelief is the only cause for rejection
 - 1) Paul is speaking of disbelief not disloyalty.
 - 2) Jesus rejects those who reject His person and work, John 11:25-26, *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*
 - d. Disloyalty does not abolish relationship
 - 1) Family relationship is not dependent on the faithfulness of the child.
 - 2) Unfaithfulness is not condoned - it will bring loss of reward, 1 Corinthians 3:15, *If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.*

CONCLUSION

- A. Nehemiah was the right man at the right time for the Jewish people - a faithful man serving a faithful God.
- B. Jesus is the right Man for all Time through the New Covenant, Galatians 4:4-6, *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"*
- C. He is faithful to all who place their trust in Him
 1. Are you a member of the New Covenant?
 - a. It is received by faith.
 - b. It is placing one's trust in the person and work of Jesus Christ, alone.
 2. If so, do you choose to pursue faithfulness?
 - a. Commune with God in prayer fervently.
 - b. Obey the Word of God carefully.
 - c. Guard your life diligently.
 - d. Count your blessings regularly.