Radiant Church, September 19, 2021 Mike Rydman

Nehemiah 1-2 Courageous Prayer and Thoughtful Preparation

Introduction:

Israel surrounded by four empires that each wanted to be dominant

Egypt (SW) Assyria (N) Babylon (SE Media (E)

The land of Israel was always strategic, as a buffer, and as a trade route

726bc 10 northern tribes deported to Assyria. Only Judah left behind

605bc Babylon defeats Assyria/Egypt (Assyria ends, Egypt retreats)

586bc Judah deported to Babylon (joining other tribes after Assyrian downfall)

539bc Cyrus (Media/Persia) invades Babylon

538bc return of some of the captive Jews to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel

458bc return of some more Jews to Jerusalem under Ezra to rebuild the Temple

444bc return of some more Jews to Jerusalem under Nehemiah to repair the walls and gates

Ezra and Nehemiah originally one single Book?

Author of Ezra and Nehemiah the same as that of First and Second Chronicles?

Ezra a priest, a preacher Nehemiah a civil servant, a pray-er

Outline of Nehemiah: Chapters 1-6: restoration of the walls

Chapters 7-13 restoration of worship and holy living

Prayer (Chapter 1)

Leviticus 26:3,6 "If you walk in my statutes...I will give you peace in the land" Leviticus 26:14,17 "But if you will not listen to me..." "I will set my face against you. Those who hate you will rule over you." "And I will scatter you among the nations."

Lord, You are great, and the covenant keeper: hear my prayer (1:5-6a)

We have been unfaithful (1:6b-7)

You are faithful (1:8-10)

Lord, You are sovereign: grant mercy

Nehemiah 1:11 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.

Luke 18:1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

Philippians 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Sometimes we pray for things we want to see happen, even some very good things, even some God-honoring things, but are we also willing to be involved?

Prayer is not an excuse for lack of action on our part

The reason the temple rebuilding was delayed over 18 years and why the walls were still in disrepair was because Artaxerses had made that decision

Nehemiah is now willing to do 2 very hard things

Ask for permission to leave and build

Go to Jerusalem, have a plan, and ask the people to join him in the work

Nehemiah is now asking Artaxerxes to reverse his previous decree

Plan (Chapter 2)

Nehemiah 2:17-18 Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace". I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.

John 6:5-6 When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

GOD IS A PLANNER

Proverbs 21:1

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

IF GOD IS LEADING AND MOTIVATING OUR PLANS WE WILL SUCCEED. GOD CONTROLS THE RESULTS

The King (2:1-8) The ruins (2:9-16)

The Jews (2:17-20)

NEHEMIAH DIDN'T GO INTO THIS PROJECT BLIND:

Timeline (2:6) NEHEMIAH WAS ACCOUNTABLE IN HIS PLANNING
List of materials (2:7-8) NEHEMIAH PLANNED FOR WHAT HE WOULD NEED
Trust in God's hand (2:8) NEHEMIAH EVEN ASKED FOR SAFE TRAVEL
Ezra did not ask for safe travel, because he had faith
Nehemiah asked for safe travel, because he had wisdom

God is Great God is Good God is Gracious God is Glorious

What was ultimately Nehemiah's motivation? God's honor

The city of God, where He had chosen to represent His presence

The people of God, who had forgotten how to represent God's choosing them