

Rebuilding the walls.

Main Passage: Nehemiah 1: 4-11

Other passages: Matthew 24:15-18, Nehemiah 1:3, Nehemiah 1: 4-6, Acts 8: 36-29, Nehemiah 2: 11-14, 1 John 4:4, Nehemiah 3, Revelation 3:20.

We are going to meditate today about a book that I recommend you to read, try to read it this week. Nehemiah is chronologically the last book in the Old Testament, physically in the old testament is not placed the last one but chronologically it is. After Nehemiah nothing else is told in the bible until the New Testament, there is a silence of 400 long years, there are no prophets, no visions. When we read Matthew in the New testament 400 years had gone by.

We will divide the book of Nehemiah in various parts. From chapter 1 to 7. Reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem. They were destroyed again later on by the romans in the first century, they destroyed the temple. The walls that we see today in Jerusalem were built on the 16th century.

From chapter 8 to 10. Talks about the religious life that the people of Israel had at the time.

From Chapter 11-12:1-26. Census of how many men are there in the country in order to know where the priests and levites were, they that had to minister in the temple that also was rebuilt.

The book of Nehemiah talks mainly about the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, the book of Ezra talks about the rebuilding temple.

From Chapter 12: 27 to chapter 13. It talks about spiritual reformations.

After the reconstruction of the walls there is a spiritual work to be done. But what happened before? Why are the country and the walls destroyed? Seventy years before Nabucodonosor conquered the city this was prophesied by Jeremiah, He was telling the inhabitants of Jerusalem to repent from having two lives and praising lots of Gods. They thought that the temple was never going to be destroyed and lots of people lost their life.

The book of Daniel talks about the abomination of desolation, the desecration of the most Holy Place in the temple where the ark of the covenant was. When the most Holy Place was desecrated the ark of the covenant was never placed again the most Holy Place, it was hidden.

Jesus asked His disciples. What do people say about me? The disciples gave Him many answers. Some thought that he was John the Baptist talking through Jesus, others that He was Elijah because it was prophesied that the prophet would come again before the Messiah but they thought the prophecy referred to Elijah of the Old Testament. Jesus explained that Elijah had already come and that he was John the Baptist. Others replied that He was Jeremiah because he was the prophet that hid the ark before the destruction of Nabucodonosor, since then has never been found nor placed in its place.

Jesus said, Do you see all of this?. History will repeat himself again because you have not learnt from the past, the temple will be destroyed.

Till this day the temple has not been rebuilt again and there are there mosques under the supervision of Jordan although it belongs to Israel.

In Matthew 24:15-18 Jesus said: When you see the abomination of desolation, the one that Daniel talked about, don't go into the city.

In the Bible it does not talk about the greek empire. The Kingdom of Alexander the Great was divided in four empires. Now you can understand Daniel prophecies when he says that he sees an animal with four heads. Heads are empires, the horns are nations. When Alexander the Great died, because he did not have descendants, his kingdom passed on to his generals and got divided in four empires. The part that corresponded to Israel was ruled by a terrible king. They desecrated the most Holy Place, they didn't destroy the temple but they desecrated it.

The devil uses very different strategies to destroy the people of God.

Nehemiah sees that there is no temple nor walls, there is no protection but there a remnant remains, the same word that is used by Paul when he talks about it in Romans, a little group that has been faithful to the Lord besides all the evil. There was a remnant and Nehemiah realized that the walls needed to be rebuilt. Today in Jerusalem you can still see the rest of the walls that were built by the people of Israel in the times of Nehemias. In 52 days they were able to do this and protect the people.

We don't only see a natural construction of a wall but also a spiritual reconstruction. We can take lots of external measures but if you don't protect yourself internally you can go back to that that has been bad for you during years. The protection is not in the natural but in the spiritual. How many times we get surrounded by things believing that those things will give you a false security? But your truth security is not in what you have but in what you are. You have to reestablish worship to the Lord, go back to His Word, an internal cleansing was necessary at the times of Nehemiah and also today.

Nehemias left everything, he had a very good job, a privileged position, but he left everything. Nehemiah 1: 3 tells us that he was in Babylon, he was the man of trust of the king but people came from Jerusalem to visit him and told him, " the remnant", this word appears again, the faithful ones.

During those 70 years the land rested, in the past they should have left the land to rest every 7 years but they did not do that. Careful with not obeying what you think is not important. During 490 years they never followed this law of resting the land, that is why the Lord took them captive to Babylon for 70 years, so the land rested and the spirit of idolatry got taken out from the hearts. Never again Israel went back to idolatry after the period of being captive in Babylon. They always had problem with idolatry but after the period of captivity in Babylon historically is demonstrated that they never ever went back to this sin of idolatry.

Nehemiah 1: 4-6. "When I heard this, I cried". Nehemiah was not indifferent when confronted with a reality. There is so much indifference in christians these days. So many people don't know about Jesus but there is indifference in so many christians about this. Nehemiah had everything, had a privileged work with the king but he felt touched with this reality and is willing to leave everything to go to a country in ruins where he has nothing to serve God. Acts 8: 36-29 tells us how Phillip goes to Samaria. At that time many people believed in Jesus and were healed. Being in the middle of this revival the Lord called him and says to him go to the dessert. Who lives in the dessert? Nobody but suddenly, in the middle of the desert Phillip finds a ethiopian eunuch that was reading Isaiah 53 in a loud voice and Phillip gets close to him and ask him if he understands what he is reading. Felipe gets into the chariot and explains to him all the revelation about the Messiah that is described in that chapter of Isaiah till they get to an oasis and the ethiophe wants to get baptised. Phillip says to him, if you believe with all your heart you can get baptized, and then Phillip disappears "the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip". You can say, "Lord you took Philip to the dessert for just one person?" Yes. That

is the way the Lord acted, He took people away from his prosperity and offered them a new adventure of faith.

Nehemias wanted to do this, he hears that his people is having a hard time, that the city is destroyed, he can not be indifferent to this, a man of God that has the spirit of God when a need exists can not stay with the arms crossed. Would you?.

How can I be here living well when the remnant in Jerusalem does not have anything to eat?. And he prays. Nehemiah goes back to Jerusalem and while all are sleeping he goes and see how all is destroyed, after few days he gets together with the elderly.

(Lamentations is the book that express the pain of Jeremiah when he sees the city destroyed, the most beautiful city in the word, he see that what he prophesied ended up happening because they did not obey).

Nehemiah said "Let's stop crying and lets start working so this city is again a praise in the earth". Nehemiah started to work and passed from living very well to work very hard during 52 days, working and building the walls, he did his part for Jerusalem to be again the city of the King. The reality touched him, he had to do something, Nehemiah 2: 11-14

Nehemiah had the support of the king, enough resources, the desire and God's confirmation but opposition and enemies from the inside and from the outside. We can have the support of our King, the almighty God, the desire to do something, people that will help us, but it does not mean that you are not going to have wars and opposition and fight from the outside and the inside. The enemy wanted to stop the work, among those were the arabs, they wanted to discourage him. They tried four times, his answer was the same, I am so busy with the work of God that I am not going to stop it to pay attention to you. One of the favourite strategies that the devil has is to discourage you. Why so much effort? It is not worth it, go back home were so conformable. The enemy will try all that is possible to stop you from rebuilding your life, he will discourage you and remind you things from your past, you failures, but the bible says that greater is He that is with us than the one that is with the world (1 John 4:4)

Nehemiah tell us that the ones that could help the most did not want to help. In Nehemiah 3 he is saying that the work had to be divided, everyone knew what their place was and what they had to do and not. The fact that some people that could help did not did not stop Nehemiah on the contrary, if this people don't want to help dont worry that the help will come from another way, the Lord will always surprise us. But those walls were going to be of no use if the people was not clean spiritually. People is trying to rebuild their life, they come to church and read the bible but fall again in the same things. Why? Nehemiah gives us very interesting clues to not do wrong again. Nehemiah 9:38 we see that the spiritual problems do not get solved by lifting up walls.

In Nehemiah 13: 23 Jews were getting married with philistines from Ashdod, moabites and ammonites. Moabites and ammonites were what we know as Jordans today, one of the worst enemies of Israel that has dared to attack Israel in several occasions. Today there is a tale about the palestinians made up by them. These palestinians that lived there had always been jordanians that is why they never got emancipated, that is why a palestinian state has never existed, because they were not palestinians they were jordanians. The jordanians said to them that lived in Israel but that were jordanians, as you can live in Japan and be spanish, they said to them, go out of the country wherever you want, go to Egypt, go to Syria, because in a week we are going to destroy the jews and throw them into the see and they will drown. They tried but they lost the war, as they will always loose all the wars because who that goes against the people of God, goes against the God of the people, and who that goes against the God of the people, goes against the people of God, and this goes together, you

can not separate that. So all this people that left the country found that Jordan now did not wanted to take them back, they found themselves left out so they decided to invent a country that has never existed, they took the jordanian flag, the same flag, the same colours, and they put a star in it and they started to talk about the palestinian people but in reality never existed. If they existed in the past, how come they did not get emancipated earlier? Why didn't they look for the independence before? They had hundreds of years to do that, why didn't they do it ? Because they could not, because they were jordanians, they were not palestinians, this is history and the reality.

Nehemiah 13:24-27. Don't do the same things all over again. In 52 days the work was done, the wall was built, but you have no changed, you keep being a rebel. Nehemiah tells them, you need to learn hebrew and speak hebrew to read the scriptures, you are talking as a foreigner as the world is talking. We see this also today, how the world is changing even the way Christians talk, spending hours in front of the tv, shaping your personality, your tastes.

Nehemias said, this can not be like this, you have to be radical, you can not get together with the same people again as you will do the same bad things again, you have to do a cleansing inside. Things that bring memories or bad things to you, throw them away, things that an old boyfriend gave to you, for example, through it in the garbage. We have to cut with the past if not when you are feeling down memories will come and you will end up doing the same things.

You have to be radical. The enemies of the soul are worse than the enemies of the world, the hardest fight is the one you have with yourself so be careful, don't keep anything that will make you go again or have the old desires and take you to the same errors, throw things away that can give you pain or make you fall in the same errors. .

Nehemiah 13:28-31. He drove away someone that was not of blessing for him. Nehemiah could have said: the walls are up so I go, but He knew the ruin was not because of not having walls, but because internally they had disconnected from the presence of God and unless they connected with the presence of God again the rest had no value.

From the twelve tribes of Israel only two came back to the land, the ones from the south, the tribes from the north is not known where they are until God brings them back to Israel

The only safe protection is to live as close to the heart of God as possible. The ruin of Jerusalem is the ruin of the world today. Nehemiah came, he left all and went to Jerusalem to restore the city. Jesus came from the throne, He left the glory to come to this world to restore our hearts and our lives. Jesus came to restore and, the same as Jerusalem was restored, the same will happen to us if we allow Him to restore us. All He touches gets transformed for good, nothing remains the same with the power of God's intervention, the darkness pass to light. We are the temple of God and He wants to transform and restore us. Jesus knows how you are and where you are, if you let Jesus restore you regardless of how destroyed your life is, if you let him do His work your life can be completely restored from the inside out. When we give our life to Him He takes that that nobody wants and transforms it into something pretty for the glory and the honour of the Lord. He said He would rebuilt the church. Who since eternity is determined in rebuilding your life? In restoring you? Our loved Jesus Christ. The Lord is asking you to be with Him, He is knocking at the door, not only of sinners but also at the door of the church, at the door of her loved one, and He says that if you open He will go in and have dinner with you. Revelation 3:20.

Praise God Jerusalem had her second opportunity. She has been attacked 44 times, the temple destroyed two times, but still you can visit Jerusalem because the Lord rebuilt her naturally and spiritually is also doing it.

Take seriously your spiritual restoration. Cut with all that ties you the the past, with all the negative.
God have mercy on me. God keep working in my heart, strengthening me.