

August 14th, 2022AM – Pastor Kevin Olivier
Nehemiah 6:15 - 7:1-4 - “Fear God & Stand Guard”

- A. The Jews living in Jerusalem during the days of Nehemiah had a great deal to be thankful for.
 - 1. God’s good hand was upon Nehemiah to grant him favor before King Artaxerxes.
 - 2. God granted the Jews success in repairing the wall despite gentile opposition within & without the city walls.
- B. We are told in **Neh 6:15** that the walls were rebuilt in 52 days! → Look also at **v16**.
 - 1. The wall wasn’t completely torn-down; they had severe damage or breaches/gaps.
 - 2. **Neh 7:1** says that new doors were set up or hung in place.

God commands you to fear Him & stand guard.	I. <u>JERUSALEM’S NEEDS</u> II. <u>THE CHARGE TO GUARD</u>
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I. **JERUSALEM’S NEEDS** → **v4**: “**Now the city was large & spacious, but the people in it were few & the houses were not built.**”

- A. The rebuilt walls & gates were no doubt a source of great rejoicing & for praising God.
 - 1. Just as the surrounding enemies were aware that the repairs were done by the help of God (**Neh 6:16**), the believers among the covenant people were likewise aware of God’s help.
 - 2. The temptation among some would be to sit back & take it easy because the defenses were complete. Nehemiah knew better.
- B. Nehemiah was concerned that there was a whole lot of wall to defend yet not enough defenders to stand guard upon it.
 - 1. Members & leaders of small churches can relate to being spread too thin.
 - 2. Each of our hearts’ desire should be to see our church grow.
 - a. Ultimately, we should want more members because we want others in our community to know the eternal peace that can only be found through Jesus Christ.
 - b. True Christians should desire for others to join them in the eternal dwelling God has in store for those who love Him & embrace His Son by saving faith. Tell them how they can join you in that glorious future & how they can be spared an eternity of torment.

B. Yes, many surrounding enemies of the Jews lost confidence, yet some persisted to utter threats against God’s people. In **Neh 6:18**, even after the walls were built, some continued to utter threats. One such man was Tobiah the Ammonite who married the Jewish daughter of Shecaniah the son of Arah.

- 1. Intermarriage with surrounding pagan nations was forbidden. → Turn to **Deut 7:1-4**.
 - a. Some treasonous nobles of Judah were bound by oath (covenant) & showed favor toward Tobiah rather than toward their upright governor given to them by God.
 - b. In **v19** they even acted as spies!
- 2. To support & say good about Tobiah proves they were pathetic judges of character in the least; they were really guilty of compromise & treason.
 - a. Wicked Tobiah & Sanballat hired false prophets to try to trip-up Nehemiah (**6:12**).
 - b. Tobiah sent threatening letters to Nehemiah to frighten him (end of **6:19**).

II. THE CHARGE TO GUARD –

A. Look at the nature of a charge.

1. To be given a charge is to be assigned to duty. Usually, it requires a solemn oath to uphold one's office or duty (i.e. military or government offices).
2. Pastors have a charge just like Paul charged young Timothy in **2 Tim 4:1-2**: **"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God & of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living & the dead, & by His appearing & His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season & out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience & instruction."**

B. Nehemiah assigned or charged 2 men over all of the defenses of Jerusalem. In **Neh 7:2**, he wrote: **"I put Hanani my brother, & Hananiah the commander of the fortress, in charge of Jerusalem"** The end of **v2** gives us the answer why Nehemiah chose him: **"...he was a faithful man & feared God more than many."**

1. Hananiah was chosen as commander over all of Jerusalem because he was a faithful man.
 - a. This Hebrew wd can also be translated as "trustworthy."
 - b. Hananiah was a man who had God's Holy Spirit because faithfulness or trustworthiness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (**Gal 5:22**).
2. Hananiah was chosen as commander over all of Jerusalem because he feared God.
 - a. When the time comes for this church to choose men for future elders & deacons, look for faithful men who fear God.
 - b. Try hiring Christian employees who fear God.

C. Standing guard wasn't just for those in full-time military service. Nehemiah had ordinary citizens involved. → Look at the **2nd ½ of v3**: **"Also appoint guards from the inhabitants of Jerusalem, each at his post, & each in front of his own house."**

1. This can be compared to the notion of a citizens' militia.
2. This situation in Nehemiah's day was closer to the citizen-organized militias in colonial America rather than the National Guard of today.

D. Why all this talk of guarding a wall in Jerusalem so long ago? Ukraine is a current example of ordinary citizens been called to defend their home land. We have spiritual war to fight that has eternal consequences. We have to guard against the world, the flesh, & the devil.

1. → Turn to **1 Jn 2:15-17** to see how to be on guard against the world.
2. **Rom 13:14**: **"put on the Lord Jesus Christ, & make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.**
3. **1 Pet 5:8-9** **"Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, [be] firm in *your faith*"**

Review, further application, & conclusion: