

Neh. 2:11-20 “Rebuild the Walls!”

For the Children: Parents usually like to have fences around their property to help protect young children. A fence makes us feel a bit safer, and it makes us feel that there is a place that belongs to us, that no one else has a right to. When I was a boy, I felt quite safe being cheeky to other neighbourhood boys – so long as I was safe behind our fence! God also put a wall around Jerusalem to keep His people safe. It reminded His people that it was God Who kept them safe. But the Lord also expected them to live the way He wanted them to in the place He'd given them. Rebuilding the ruined walls would remind the Jews of these truths.

Questions: What was so bad about having ruined walls? How did Nehemiah know God wanted the walls rebuilt? How should we answer people who try to stop us from serving the Lord?

Introduction:

First Point: Nehemiah Makes His Preparations

- 1) The Research Phase: Nehemiah spent some time learning about the state of the city walls, so he could put forward a realistic, affordable plan. The result was a city less glorious than in Solomon's days
- 2) A Moonlight Survey: The survey was carried out in secrecy, with only a few men “in the know,” under the cover of darkness. This way the plans could be finished and delivered before opposition could be mounted
- 3) Sovereignty and Responsibility: These measures once again show that trusting the Lord for protection – the walls symbolize this protection - does not preclude human research, planning and taking of precautions. It does not preclude concealment, either. Nor do we always know exactly what the Lord will do to protect us (Dan. 3:17-18). We do know there is ultimate protection

Second Point: Nehemiah Reveals His Plans

- 1) A Bad Situation: To win support from God's people, Nehemiah points out the bad situation they are in. God's holy city is ruined, the lack of walls puts them in grave danger, and they are a reproach to the peoples around. The concern is about God's Name and His church's welfare
- 2) A Good Exhortation: Nehemiah therefore exhorts the people to rebuild (v. 17) – to which the people responded by exhorting each other, and by committing to the rebuilding plan. Mutual exhortation by God's people is another means He uses to work out His purposes
- 3) A Good Testimony: Nehemiah further encourages the people with evidence God is with them, by grace. He tells of God's help to make King Artaxerxes favourable. We, too, should encourage each other for Kingdom-work with the truth of God's protection and grace in Christ

Third Point: Nehemiah Faces Opposition

- 1) Mocked and Despised: Opponents blasphemously derided these plans and accused the Jews of rebellion against the king. This amounted to mocking Christ, His Kingdom, and His protection of His people. Very often it is those who claim to be believers who bring the strongest opposition to believers. We can expect this because of our connection to Christ (Heb. 11; Lk. 22:63-64, 23:11, 31f)
- 2) An Answer to Derision: By way of answer, Nehemiah simply testified to God's grace as the basis for certainty of ultimate success (v. 20). He also drew attention to the fact that they were exercising the “rights” that God gave them – Jerusalem was *His* gift to the Jews. He then warned them of their spiritual state – as those who had no right or future in the Kingdom of God. The bad situation and lack of protection actually belongs to those who oppose God

Conclusion: