



VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

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Study 2: DANGER OF THE BROKEN WALLS

Nehemiah 1:1-4

The book of Nehemiah offers a fascinating account of God's faithfulness in His dealings with men. It centers on the rebuilding of a nation previously destroyed by a Babylonian kingdom. Today we shall consider the cause of the destruction, the condition of the devastation and the confidence for deliverance.

1. CAUSE OF THE DESTRUCTION

Nehemiah 1:1-3; Jeremiah 34:1-3; 37:6-10; 38:2,3; 39:1-10; 44:2-6; 2 Chronicles 7:19-22; Jeremiah 25:11-13; 29:10-14; Daniel 5:24-31

Behind the scenes of History (e.g. the collapse of communism in Russia and eastern Europe) are the invisible hands of God. For nearly 490 years Israel had continued in disobedience and sin, and even killed the prophets God sent to help them. Eventually, the consequences of their sin caught up with them as God delivered them into 70 years of captivity in Babylon. Jeremiah's prophecy about the destruction found fulfillment in a series of wars the last of which took place around 590-587 BC, during the reign of Zedekiah, at which time the Babylonian army under the leadership of Captain Nebuzaradan invaded and conquered Jerusalem and Judah. The city was burnt with fire and captives taken but the poor were left behind. What a solemn reminder that sin is a destroyer. Truly, ***"righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people"*** (Proverbs 14:34). The sinner may hide in sin for a while, but the sins will surely find him out (Numbers 32:23) except he obtains mercy and pardon through repentance and faith in Christ. God's mill may grind slowly but it grinds surely. ***"Be not deceived God is not mocked, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap"*** (Galatians 6:7). Before the captivity, God had also promised the return of the Jews after the judgment of her captors – a judgment that took place during the reign of Belshazzar. Babylon fell to the Persians, and Cyrus reversed the Babylonian policy by granting freedom for the Jews to return to Jerusalem in 538 B.C. Rebuilding of the temple and altar took off, and was expedited about 520 BC during the reign of Darius; following which more Jews returned to Jerusalem (Ezra 1-6).

Historically and naturally speaking, it could be claimed that the Babylonian captivity was responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem along with the walls and gates. However, the real reason behind the Babylonian captivity was the prolonged and persistent disobedience of Israel. When the destruction eventually came it was very devastating and without the prospect of immediate remedy – a solemn reminder that ***"He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy"*** (Proverbs 29:1).

Your Spiritual Welfare Is Our Concern

2. CONDITION OF THE DEVASTATION: *Nehemiah 1:1-3*

In response to enquiry from visitors, Nehemiah (now a cupbearer to the king at Shusan) learnt of the condition of the devastation – the walls of Jerusalem broken down, the gates burnt down with fire and the remnant Jews in great affliction. Walls were of great importance in those days as a refuge in battle and protection against invaders and intruders (e.g. the walls of Jericho – Joshua 6). With broken walls the Jews were highly vulnerable to attack at any time of the day or night.

Spiritually, the believer is hedged around by invisible walls of protection (Job 1:8-10; Isaiah 59:19), against every attack and the wiles of the devil as well as evil plots of enemies. It is sin that can ruin this wall. “He that diggeth a pit **shall** fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a **serpent shall bite** him” (Ecclesiastes 10:8). When sin is allowed and error propagated in churches, when believers are not fed the entire word of God, when the devil that should be outside the church and Christian homes is right in them, when believers start fighting one another rather than the devil, when ‘Christian’ marriages are broken and children wayward, when answered prayer and victorious Christian living are no longer the believers’ daily experience, when compromise and worldliness are the norm among ‘believers’, when “strangers and pilgrims” become strangers to real pilgrims, and when Christ is no longer the Lord of the life and the home: there is only one inference to draw from these – **the walls are broken down!** The Christian world today is full of broken walls. Broken walls spell doom and danger. Therefore, when walls are broken down it is not a time for self-deception, sentiments and frenzied activity, but a time to repent and humbly seek the face of God for the restoration of divine favour as exemplified by Job and Nehemiah.

3. CONFIDENCE FOR THE DELIVERANCE

Nehemiah 1:4; Daniel 9:2,3,23,25; Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10-13

Nehemiah prayed because he believed to “**see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living**”. AND HE DID! Jesus taught us that “Men ought always to pray and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). In 538 BC Daniel, one of the captives in Babylon having understood “by the Book” that the Jews were to spend 70 years in captivity, prayed and God answered. God gave him a telescopic vision that went beyond the immediate return of the exiles in 538 BC to the times of the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s walls around 445 BC and further into future. God assured him concerning Jerusalem that “the streets shall be built again and the walls, even in troublous times” (**Daniel 9:25**). His confidence for deliverance was based on the unchanging promises in the bible. God is still on the throne no matter your circumstances. “**If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land**” (2 Chronicles 7:14).