

Prophetic Fall Feasts of The LORD

Feb. 27, 2019 Lesson #8 Nehemiah

King David had captured Jerusalem [Jebus] from the Jebusites. God chose Jerusalem as His symbol for eternal truth, a symbol of the city of God, and it was to be God's dwelling place and the center of life for the world.

When Jerusalem fell into enemy hands, the Israelites were taken captive to Babylon 70 years. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah take us back to a wonderful time of spiritual revival. A remnant of God's people had returned from the Babylonian captivity to the land which God had promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

End of the 70 years: God begins to work to fulfill His promise announced by His prophets:

1. To restore His people from Babylon
2. To rebuild the temple at Jerusalem
3. To renew their hope that the Davidic kingdom would be restored

The order in which this was undertaken is contrary to man's logic. From man's point of view, it would have been logical to start from the outside with the city wall and then proceed with the restoration of the temple. But they started from within with the center of worship and rebuilt the altar on its foundations. Then they laid the foundation of the temple, which, thanks to the actions of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, was completed after a long interruption and much opposition. Nehemiah saw the success of his efforts when Jerusalem's walls and gates were consecrated with music and singing [Neh. 12].

The book of Nehemiah represents, in typology, 2 events of the last days.

1. The restoration of civil government to the Jews
2. Israel's national supremacy in the millennial age

The remnant had been in Jerusalem ~94 years. Fourteen years after Ezra [2nd group] led his group back to Jerusalem, Nehemiah, servant to the king of Persia, heard sad and devastating news about the holy city. Nehemiah confesses that the nation had forsaken God and acknowledges the justice of God's dealing with them. He wept, prayed and fasted.

The walls of Jerusalem stood for more than just protection. They stood for the glory of God. The enemy looked at the broken-down walls and mocked the Jews.

The ruins of the walls became a reproach upon the name of God.

God raised up Nehemiah, began to stir his heart to journey to Jerusalem [444 BC] and lead the people in rebuilding the walls and gates of God's dwelling place.

Neh. 1:11 Commitment: O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and give success to Your servant today, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man."

Nehemiah knows God's faithfulness in preserving a remnant and restoring them to Jerusalem according to His promises. [Ezra 1:1-11]. Nehemiah asked King Artaxerxes to send him to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. The king responded affirmatively.

The Jews, under Nehemiah's leadership, returned to the devastated ruins of Jerusalem with a hope, placed in their hearts by God, to rebuild the walls and gates of the city.

In many ways, the life of Nehemiah mirrors that of Jesus, both in His first and second comings.

A. The Cupbearer to the King

Neh 1:11b-2:1a 'I was cupbearer to the king. And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine and gave it unto the king.

- Nehemiah, the cupbearer to the King. This position allowed him to sit at the right hand of the King, as he had to drink the King's cup to test it for poison. He therefore had to be willing to die for the King if necessary.
- Like Nehemiah, Jesus dwelt at the right hand of the Father, and was willing to drink the cup the Father had for him, even though it meant his death.

Matt 26:39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

B. Willing To Give Up Exalted Position

Neh 2:2-5 '...Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?' The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him SEND ME to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it."

- Nehemiah was willing to give up this exalted position at the right hand of the King, when He saw the condition of God's people, Israel and their beloved city Jerusalem.
- The king's cupbearer would have to sacrifice the comfort and security of the palace for the rigors and dangers of life in a ruined city trampled down by the Gentiles.
- Luxury would be replaced by ruins, and prestige by ridicule and slander. Instead of sharing the king's bounties, Nehemiah would personally pay for the upkeep for scores of people who would eat at his table. He would leave behind the ease of the palace and take up the toils of encouraging a beaten people and finishing an almost impossible task.
- Likewise, Jesus was willing to give up His position at the right hand of the Father and come down to rebuild our walls of salvation and free us from the clutches of the enemy.

Phil 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!'

C. Nehemiah Weeps Over The Condition Of God's People and God's City, Jerusalem

Neh 1:3- 4 'They said to me The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.⁴ And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

- Jesus would also weep about the state of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem has been the eternal capital of the Jewish people since 1010 BC when King David captured the City. Jerusalem—*Old City Jerusalem*—was destroyed twice, besieged 23 times, attacked 52 times, and has been captured and recaptured 44 times. At the root of these intense battles lies a fierce spiritual war between principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this age—spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places... against our God to attempt to unseat the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from the very City where He chose to establish His throne.

Luke 19:41-42 'And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

⁴² Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in This Thy Day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

D. Nehemiah Defeats His Enemies In Rebuilding The Walls

Neh 2:19-20 'But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us. "What is this you are doing?" they asked. "Are you rebelling against the king?" I answered them by saying, "The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it."

- Nehemiah began building the walls of Jerusalem to restore God's glory and bring salvation and protection for God's people. In building the walls, Nehemiah had to overcome the efforts of Sanballat [picture of Satan], Geshem [picture of the World], and Tobiah [picture of the Old Nature].
- Jesus also rebuilt our salvation and restored the glory to God's name that had been lost. In doing so he defeated Satan's attacks, the call of worldly compromise, and nailed the old nature to the cross! [Matt 4:1-11, Col 2:13-15, Rom 6:6]

E. He Re-Established The Covenant & Read The Law To The Returned Exiles

The public reading of the Scriptures was required by the law to be made every seventh year; [Deut. 31:9-13] but during the long period of the captivity this excellent practice, with many others, had fallen into neglect, till revived, on this occasion.

- God used Ezra to put the Word of God before the people so it would be impressed upon their hearts.

Timing of the Conference

- a. 1st Day of the 7th month (Tishri) - Feast of Trumpets - 2nd most solemn day for Jews
- b. It is a call to prepare to stand before the judgment of God.
- c. It marks the beginning of 10 days of Repentance - Days Of Awe
- d. 10 days of introspection to prepare for the Day of Atonement on the 10th day of 7th month.

Place of The Conference

Neh 8:1a And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate,...

- The ONLY gate that did not need repair. Workers repaired the walls adjacent to it.
- This suggests that the Word of God stands forever and will not fail.
Ps. 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.
Matt. 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.
"The Bible does not need to be repaired or improved." (Warren Wiersbe -Be Determined)
- The Water Gate led from the old City of David to the Gihon Spring.
- Water is a type of the Word of God which NEVER needs repair.
- It is pure, refreshing, cleansing and enduring.

John 15:3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Eph. 5:25-26 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; ²⁶ That He Might Sanctify And Cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

Dr. Lloyd-Jones "The primary task of the church is the preaching of the Word of God.

The decadent periods and eras in the history of the church have always been those periods when preaching the Word had declined."

Truth: The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to cleanse and revive the hearts of people.

Neh. 8:1b and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

- God raised up Ezra to rebuild, cleanse and fill the Temple with the Worship Of God.

³ And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

⁴ And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; ...

⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

- ❖ On this first day of the seventh month the Word of God was given a prominent place in the midst of God's people.

- ❖ God's Word was given its rightful place and its light was put on the lampstand again.

⁶ And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

Effect of Hearing God's Word

- The people were convicted and wept tears of sorrow for their disobedience.
- They realized how far they had strayed from the teachings of God's Word.
- They renewed their covenant with God and accepted the Torah as their law.

- ❖ The return of the remnant to Jerusalem was at the same time a return to God's Word and His will. The people woke up when they heard the "trumpet-call of God's Word."

Prayer of Spurgeon: Lord God, let the words leap out of the page into my soul, Thyself making them vivid, quick, powerful, and fresh to my heart.

People's Reaction At 2nd Coming When They Recognize Their Messiah: The Word Of God

Zech. 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

F. Nehemiah Returns To Report To The King Of Persia

Neh. 13:4-6 While the cat's away...

- Tobiah [the flesh] was given a prominent place within the house of God by the high priest, Eliashib [13:28].
- 13:10-11 Levites abandoned their posts in the temple.
- 13:15-17 People profaned the Sabbath Day
- 13:23 People engaged in mixed marriages again!

What have God's people done today in this period while Jesus is back at the right hand of God? They have given the flesh and its techniques a prominent place within the church.

G. The Return Of Nehemiah To Jerusalem

Neh. 13:6-30 Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem and learned about the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, by preparing a room for him in the courts of the house of God.

- ❖ He threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. [ALL of the flesh]
- ❖ He ordered the cleansing of the rooms and returned the utensils of the house of God.
- ❖ 13:12-14 Why is the House of God forsaken? Nehemiah restored the prescribed offices so the temple services could be properly carried out.
- ❖ 13:15-22 What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?
 - yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.
- ❖ 13:19 And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.
- ❖ 13:20 merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice.

- ❖ 13:21 Why are you lodging here? Next time, I will lay hands on you. They ceased to come on the sabbath.

13:23 In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab:

- ❖ 13:25 I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.

Consider: Nehemiah wouldn't tolerate sin or actions that were not based on God's word.

- ❖ Jesus will 'rule with an rod of iron' Rev 2:26, 12:5, 19:15

Consider: This is the second coming of Nehemiah! The first time he came to Jerusalem and rebuilt the walls (salvation). This time he comes back to Jerusalem and cleanses the area, throwing out the enemies that have made their home there!

- ❖ God has called Jerusalem (ZION) his home and those who fight against God's people and city will fight against God on that day.
- ❖ The Lord comes to rescue His people and city; not to destroy.
- ❖ When Jesus Christ returns to earth at His 2nd Coming, He will cleanse the people, restore the nation of Israel and defeat ALL the enemies.

Zech 14:1-5a 'Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. ² For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. ³ Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

⁴ And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. *Then you shall flee through My mountain valley...*

Isa 31:4-5: For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.

Zech. 8:2-3: "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervor I am zealous for her.' "Thus says the LORD: 'I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the LORD of hosts, the Holy Mountain.'

Isa. 62:11: "Indeed the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the world:

"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.'"

The Lord comes back to save his people Israel Joel 2:32: "And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

Haggai 2:7,9 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

- Cleansing of Israel in Zechariah 13 straight after the return of Jesus in Zech. 12 and their recognition that He is the one they had pierced (vs 10).

Zech 13:1 'On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.'

H. Nehemiah Sets Up Worship & The Sabbath Rest

Neh 13:22 Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts. ...Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and go and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy.'

- Upon cleansing the area, Nehemiah then sets up the temple and priesthood again, and reinstates the Sabbath rest.

After cleansing Jerusalem, Jesus again sets up the temple and priesthood [Ezek. 40-47].

He initiates the True Sabbath Rest - His millennial reign, 1000 years of Jesus' kingdom.

[Isa.11:1-10, 66:17-25]

Ps 102:15-16: "So the nations shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth Your glory. For the LORD shall build up Zion; he shall appear in His glory."

Isa. 2:1-3 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. ³ And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.