

LESSON ONE: A REAL MESS

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11

INTRODUCTION

A generation has come and gone since the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. Many of the original exiles have passed away. Many of the remaining Jews living in exile know no other home than Babylonia. Nehemiah represents the very best of the exiled Jews. He is a success story; a popular and important Persian official who has remained a faithful follower of God. He is a prayer warrior who has been lifting up his people for years. Now he gets word of the exiles who have returned home and their struggles to rebuild. What is the first thing Nehemiah does?

PART ONE: WHAT DID WE READ?

- 1) Where is Nehemiah when this book starts?
- 2) Who is it that visits Nehemiah? Where did he come from?
- 3) What news of Jerusalem is received that is so bad it causes Nehemiah to weep?
- 4) What does Nehemiah do in response to the bad news?
- 5) What is the nature of the prayer Nehemiah offers?

PART TWO: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- 1) Why do you think that Nehemiah and his brother were so concerned over Jerusalem? What does this tell us about them?
- 2) Why was a wall so important?
- 3) Nehemiah spent several days in prayer and fasting and mourning. Was there a purpose and a point to all this? What was it?
- 4) Does Nehemiah attribute the exile to God? Does he blame God for the exile?
- 5) Nehemiah asks God to remember His covenant. What does it mean for God to remember?
- 6) What does Nehemiah pray for?

PART THREE: HOW DOES IT RELATE TO US?

- 1) Has there ever been a cause that you cared about as much as Nehemiah cared about Jerusalem? Why or why not?
- 2) Jerusalem needed a wall. What do you "need" that would make all the difference?
- 3) Have you ever fasted and mourned and prayed? Over what?
- 4) Do your prayers resemble those of Nehemiah? Why or why not?
- 5) For what successes do you pray?

PRAYER

Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him. You deserve the deepest reverence and respect. Lord, thank you for Nehemiah's example of faith, praying without ceasing, and commitment to kingdom business. Like Nehemiah, I pray that I will seek you through prayer before embarking on any new project. Lord, I want to be deeply concerned about your business and work. May I never be too busy to display interest and concern for what concerns you. However, if you place something on my heart, please nudge me to pray and fast for guidance before jumping into action. I pray that excitement and passion will not lead me to act prematurely.

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