THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

A PLAN TO

REBUILD THE

FALLEN WALLS

THIS APPLIES TO CHRISTIANS
AND TO
LOCAL CHURCHES OF TODAY

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DIVISION ONE

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION - PART ONE

UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORY OF JERUSALEM

The book of Nehemiah is about two main subjects. Those two subjects are, (1) the rebuilding of the fallen walls of Jerusalem, and (2) the restoring of the spiritual life of the people of Jerusalem. The walls fell because the people of God rebelled against God, would not obey His word, and they departed from worshipping God. There is no mention of how the walls fell in the book of Nehemiah. Therefore, I am going to lay a brief and basic foundation for the book of Nehemiah. It is very necessary for the foundation to be understood, or we will not understand the "rebuilding of the walls or the restoring of true worship." Israel had been taken captive by the Babylonian Empire about 590-600 BC under the rule of king Nebuchadnezzar. Babylon had totally destroyed "the temple of God," torn the walls around Jerusalem down, and burned the gates. This had greatly discouraged the people, and they stopped meeting together for worship. Seventy years later, the Babylonian Empire was overthrown by the Persian Empire under king Cyrus. In Ezra 1:1-5 we read that king Cyrus had a vision from the Lord to send the Jewish people back to their homeland of Judah and the city of Jerusalem "to build a house for the Lord in Jerusalem." Immediately about 50,000 of them or more, returned to Jerusalem and began the work of rebuilding the temple (Ezra 2:64-65). As you know, the temple was a vital part of the life of the Jewish people. However, after the overthrow of Jerusalem, the city was inhabited by thousands of "strangers" who opposed them rebuilding "the house of God." Because of the opposition, the Jewish people became very discouraged and after laying nothing but the foundation of the Temple, they quit!

About sixteen years later, God sent two men, Haggai and Zechariah, to rebuke the people for "quitting the work God had given them to do and challenged them to rise up and continue building the temple." The people were inspired by these men, and they returned to the work of reconstructing the temple of God. About twenty years later, the rebuilding of the Temple was complete. This was done by the group of Jewish people who returned to Jerusalem under the orders of king Cyrus of Persia. However, there is very little recorded in the Bible about the Jewish people returning to Jerusalem. The temple was built, <u>but worship was not restored,</u> and the walls were not rebuilt.

Some sixty years later, another group of Jewish people, under the leadership of Ezra came to Jerusalem. Ezra was a priest, and his heart was burdened to stir the people spiritually and lead them back to worshiping the Lord. However, Jerusalem was filled with people who opposed them in every manner. Plus, the walls of Jerusalem were fallen, the gates burned, and the group who had returned were living in great affliction and reproach (Nehemiah 1:3). We are seeing that in America today! Churches are building "buildings", but worship and dedication to God, in many cases, is greatly lacking. We will deal with how to restore worship later in the book.

For now, in about 445 BC we find that God had chosen a man named Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem and to lead the people to rebuild the walls. This is a brief foundation and is not vitally important to the book of Nehemiah, but it prepares our minds for the study of this book which IS OF GREAT importance today in 2024! You may be asking yourself, "Why is the book of Nehemiah of great importance?" It is important because "the walls of Jerusalem which were fallen"

left the city in affliction and reproach. Now, let me take this one step further before we begin to study the book of Nehemiah, and help you understand why the walls were so important.

INTRODUCTION - PART TWO

UNDERSTANDING THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM
Nehemiah 1:1-3

"The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto 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."

What Did The Walls Mean In That Day?

The walls around Jerusalem were "real walls." They are spoken of in many places in the Bible. Psalms 51:17-18 speaks of them, *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem."* They are mentioned again in Psalms 122:6-7. At that time, the city of Jerusalem covered approximately one square mile. The walls around the city were estimated to be about four miles long, and possibly a little longer. According to historians, the wall was about twelve feet high and nine feet wide. Those walls were built on a solid foundation, strong enough for horses and chariots to be driven on the top of them.

Today, people do not think of walls being vitally important. We do not think of an entire city being surrounded by a wall. We think of walls today simply as a wall around a house, or possibly a wall around a prison. The walls around Jerusalem were far, far more important than that. The walls around Jerusalem were a picture of "THE GLORY OF GOD" and everyone in that day, especially the Jewish people, understood that. Also, the people of the world understood that. The Babylonian Empire and king Nebuchadnezzar understood that. That is why he totally destroyed the walls! The walls were very, very special to the people of Israel. That is made clear in Nehemiah 1:3 where when Nehemiah inquired about the Jewish people in Jerusalem, he also asked about Jerusalem. That is obvious from the answer when he asked about "the walls of Jerusalem." The answer to his question was, *"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. the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire."*

The walls of Jerusalem will be in place when Jesus returns, and the new heaven and a new earth are established. Those walls are explained and pictured for us in Revelation 21:10-12 and 18-21. Those scriptures are well worth reading.

Verse 10-12: *"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the*

*glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall **great** and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:*" … Verses 18 - 21: *"And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the* twelve gates were twelve pearls*; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."*

You and I CANNOT IMAGINE a wall like the wall that will be built around Jerusalem when the Lord returns. That makes the walls of Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah very important. This is what the walls basically pictured in the days of Nehemiah. **First**, the walls in Deuteronomy 22:8 pictured a "place of protection from the world." There were no people allowed inside of those walls apart from the Jewish people, the "people of God." They were built to keep the enemy out! Revelation 21:27 states, *"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."* We will deal with that later, but briefly for now they teach us that as Christians and as a church we should have "a wall around our life and a wall around our church" for the purpose of "separating us from the things of the world and total exclusion from the world." No Christian should be hanging out with the people of the world nor have ANY participation in anything that has to do with the world. No church should bring ANYTHING pertaining to the world into the church - for ANY reason. Churches today bring all sorts of "worldly entertainment" into the church to attract people to attend their church. In I John 2:15-16, Jesus said: *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For **all** that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."* II Corinthians 6:17-18 states that clear detail. *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."* Keep "all that is in the world" out of your life and keep "all that is in the world" out of your church!

Second, the walls around Jerusalem were also a "place of privacy." In I Samuel 9:25, Samuel met with Saul before he anointed Saul king, and they "communed" together privately with no one else around. **Third**, the wall around Jerusalem was a "place of prayer." In the New Testament, it was like going in your closet to have prayer. In Acts 10:9 we find Peter going to the housetop, which refers to the high wall around his house, to spend time alone with God in prayer. **Fourth**, the top of the wall was also a "place to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ." Matthew 10:27 states, *"What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops."* (Housetops in those days always referred to the high wall around where people lived.) It was the highest of any building built in that day. All of this together, pictures "the Glory of God" and the importance of the walls around Jerusalem!

What Do The Walls Mean Today?

Every Christian should have a wall built around their life. Every church should have a wall built around their church. What should those walls picture? **First,** they should picture "THE GLORY OF GOD! That is pictured in the same scripture used above in Revelation 21:10-12 and 18-21! Also, I Corinthians 10:31 makes that clear "BEYOND ANY DOUBT! *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."* As you know, "eating and drinking" are the very basics of life. Without those you die! Then the verse goes on to say, *"…or whatsoever ye do, do all for the glory of God!"* What does the word "whatsoever" cover? It covers EVERYTHING you do, every day of your life!" There is NOT ONE EXCEPTION to that Bible statement! If you cannot do it for the glory of God - DON'T DO IT! Some churches today use "things of the world," like entertainment, to attract people to come and visit their church. That may look good and attract people, BUT it is still wrong! God does not need that type of help. If the church does all it does and glorifies God, and if the members of the church live a life that glorifies God, the people of the world WILL SEE that and will want to come in to visit the church to learn "why" the church and its members are like they are.

Ephesians 5:25-27 gives us an example and gives us a reason why we should do everything for the Glory of God. *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church,* (the church is made up of believers, which includes you and me!) *and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,* (His reason!) *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."* Every day, all day, in whatsoever we do, God is preparing us that we might be presenting to Him a "glorious church" not having spot or wrinkle. We should live that type of life, a life of holiness, and the appearance of glory!

Second, the walls and gates of our lives and of our church should picture "salvation." Isaiah 60:18 tells us that truth, *"Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise*. Explaining this practically, it means any time we are around the people of the world, at our place of work, in the marketplace, or regardless of where we might be, the people around us should see that "we are different." By what people see and hear they should know that we are godly people. If they should ask us a question, I Peter 3:15 tells us how we should respond. *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"*

Let me ask you a question. Do people see that in you, in your appearance, and in the way you live? Also, are you prepared and ready to give them an answer, based on the Word of God. if they ask? If not, you should prepare and be ready!

Third, the wall around our lives is for our protection, for the protection of our church, and for the protection of our country. The success and protection of America does not depend on the government. It depends on the church, which is made up of Christians like you and me. God is looking for a man who will "stand in the gap" that He might spare the nation. Let's go to Ezekiel 22:29-30, an Old Testament example of this. *"The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger*

wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. "

Question: Is that a picture of what is going on in our country today? Sure, it is! Verse 30 tells us that in that day, God was looking for a man who would *"make up the hedge and stand in the gap"* that He would not destroy the nation. Then He said, *"I found none!"* Verse 31 tells us the results! Today, God is still looking for a man to "*make up the hedge and stand in the gap*" for America. Will he find one? Will you be that man?

The fallen walls of Jerusalem, pictures the walls which are fallen in America. It also includes the walls which have fallen in the lives of many Christians and many churches. There is a wall which should be built around your Christian life. There is a wall that should be built around your church. There is a wall to be built around the "testimony of God" and that testimony should reach around the world. Your life, your church, and the testimony of God has an enemy, and that enemy is Satan. Satan is in a continual warfare to destroy the walls of your life, to destroy the walls of your church, and to destroy your testimony for God. As we study Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the walls, keep in mind that anytime you rise up and say, I will rebuild the walls of my life, or we will rebuild the walls of our church, Satan will rise up and say, "If you rise up and start building, I will rise up and oppose you!" There is going to be a warfare, so expect it and prepare for it. In the next chapter, we are going to look at walls which have fallen in America! America is in great affliction and reproach! Later, we will see a number of ways Satan attacks us and tries to tear down the walls of our life!

INTRODUCTION - PART THREE

WALLS THAT HAVE FALLEN IN AMERICA

The Walls of God's Divine Blessing on America have Fallen.

On November 18, 1956, Nikita Khruschev, who at that time was the Communist Dictator of Russia, was speaking at a meeting with western ambassadors in Moscow, and he said: "We will take America without firing a shot. We do not have to invade the United States. We will destroy America from within." Since that time, we have seen Ezekiel 22:29 fulfilled in our country. "*"The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.*

Today, in 2025, only 69 years after Khruschev said those words, America is no longer "one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all …" Our country is divided almost equally between the two political parties. The Democratic party is working very hard to turn the United States into a socialist state, which is Communism. Communism is not a "political party." Communism is a "perverted religion" who's God is Karl Marx. The "perverted religion" has a bible, which they call "Das Kapital," and was written by Karl Marx in 1876. Marx stated that America and Capitalism will self-destruct! We are well on that road to destruction, plus we are rapidly headed to the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. Now, not only is America divided into two parties, Democratic and Republican, but there are serious and growing divisions within both of the parties!

Saul Alinsky, back about 1972, wrote an article titled "Rules for Radicals" which explains how people can develop a "Socialist State." He gave eight steps for the people in any country to use to turn their country into a socialist state. Those eight steps are:

Eight levels of control that, once obtained, will create a social state or nation:

1. Healthcare – Control healthcare and you control people.

2. Poverty – Increase the poverty level as high as possible; poor people are easier to control and will not fight back if you are providing everything for them to live.

3. Debt – Increase the debt to an unsustainable level. That way you are able to increase taxes, and this will produce more poverty.

4. Gun Control – Remove the ability to defend themselves from the government. That way you are able to create a police state.

5. Welfare – Take control of every aspect of their lives. (Food, Housing, and Income)

6. Education – Take control of what people read and listen to – take control of what children learn in school.

7. Religion – Remove the belief in God from the government and schools.

8. Class Warfare – Divide the people into the wealthy and the poor. This will cause more discontent, and it will be easier to tax the wealthy with the full support of the poor.

Does any of this sound like what is happening to the United States? These can be found online by reading the document about "Rules for Radicals" at: http://www.openculture.com/2017/02/13-rules-for-radicals.html.

Hillary Rodham, who later became Hillary Clinton, wrote her Wellesley College Thesis in 1969 titled, "There Is Only One Fight." It was an analysis of the Slinsky model and can be found on many internet sites by typing in "Hillary Rodham's Thesis for Wellesley College."

Also, we are rapidly headed toward the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. Today, some States in America have passed laws allowing people to claim a change from their natural birth gender to the opposite sex! The walls of God's blessing on America have fallen! Psalms 33:12 states "*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance."* As you know, God is no longer the Lord of America! Who is to blame? The government in Washington has a large share of the blame. However, in my opinion, the homes and the churches of today share in that blame as churches have GREATLY changed in the last 70-100 years. Revelation 3:14-19 gives us a picture of what the churches in America are like today, *"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."* The walls of God's Divine blessing on America have fallen, and the people of America are afflicted and in reproach.

The Walls of Domestic Life in America have Fallen

The first institution God established when He created the heaven, the earth, and man, was the institution of marriage! (Genesis 2:21-24). Shortly after God created Adam and Eve, as you all know, Eve disobeyed God by partaking of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. After her disobedience, God put the woman under the rule of her husband. Genesis 3:16 says, *"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and <u>he shall rule over thee</u>."*

Satan knows that if he can destroy the home, he can destroy the church. He knows if he can destroy the home and the church, he can destroy the nation. I feel sure that everyone reading this book knows, and sees, Satan is at work to destroy the home!

Satan is working "round the clock" to turn God's plan for the home up-side-down. God's plan for the home is very clear in I Corinthians 11:3, *"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."*

Today, the walls of domestic life in the home have fallen! The divorce rate in America in 1955 was 2.3 divorces per every 1000 marriages. According to Forbes, in 2022 of all first marriages in the United States, 45% of them ended in divorce. Of all second marriages, 60% ended in divorce and of all third marriages, 73% ended in divorce!

Satan's militant warfare continues against the home in America. The unbelievable rise in the divorce rate in America began in the early 1970s. Timewise, that is about the same time that the "Women's Liberation Movement" began. The following is a statement from "The Declaration of Feminism" which you can look up online:

"The end of the institution of marriage is necessary for the liberation of women. Therefore, it is important for us to encourage women to leave their husbands and not live individually with men. All of history must be rewritten in terms of oppression of women. We must go back to ancient female religions like witchcraft."

In other areas of domestic life, from 1957 through 1962 I served with the Memphis Police Department. We had no one murdered in 1957, one murder in 1958, one murder in 1959, two murders in 1960, one murder in 1961 and one murder in 1962, which was a total of 7 murders in a period of five years! Sixty years later, in 2023, Memphis had 399 murders, which is more than "one per day." During the years from 1957 - 1962 there were a total of 149 cars stolen. In the year 2023, Memphis reported that they had 6,889 cars stolen, and they had over 10,000 cars broken into by people stealing things to use or sell and were especially looking for guns to steal! No doubt much of this can be traced back to the home where marriages fell apart, and children were not raised according to the Word of God. God's domestic walls around the homes in America have fallen! This has led to other walls falling in America.

The Walls of Decent Clothing Have Fallen.

In the early 1900s, just 125 years ago, most States in America had laws concerning what women could wear in public. In many States, a woman was not allowed to wear what we call "shorts" unless the "shorts" reached from their waist and covered their thighs down to their knees. If they were caught in public wearing anything which did not meet that standard, they were arrested and fined!

The same is true concerning a woman wearing a bathing suit. In 1908 a woman named Kellerman, was arrested because she was on a beach in Boston in a swimming suit which exposed her legs, arms, and her neck. (https://rarehistoricalphotos.com/women-arrested-bathing-suits-1920s). Even later, about 1908-1910, some states had laws concerning how much of a woman's legs could be shown when wearing a bathing suit. The law stated it must be "halfway between her groin area and her knees." They had law enforcement officers on beaches with tape measures, and they would check the swimming suit on any women who appeared not meeting those standards. If the woman's swimsuit did not meet the standard, she was not allowed to be on

the beach. Pictures of that being done are on the website above. Today, in 2025, most every state in America has beaches and swimming places where people meet and swim together naked! There are now over 200 places in America listed on: (en.wikipedia.org>wiki>List of social_Nudity).

Today, in 2025, according to printed programs and advertisements, there is pornography in theaters, on television channels, and on newsstands, with no censorship of any nature! Jeremiah 8:12 says; "*Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD."* Psalms 101:3 says, *"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes:…"*

God's Word is clear beyond doubt how men and women are supposed to dress. In Exodus 28:39-45 God gave Moses instructions concerning the "ordinary daily garments" which the priests should wear. I have underlined important phrases in those verses.

"And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needlework. And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach: And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him."

They were to have their bodies covered from their neck to their thighs! God made special emphasis on covering their bodies, by saying from *"the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach."* Some reading this book might be saying, "But that was the Israelites in the Old Testament. I'm not a priest." If that is your thinking, you are saying God is wrong! The New Testament book of I Peter 2:9 states something entirely different from your thinking: *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"* Every Christian in America or in any other country, is a priest in the sight of almighty God who created us!

In the dispensation of grace, all believers are unconditionally constituted as a "Kingdom of priests." That truth is verified in Revelation 1:5-6, which says, *"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."*

I Timothy 2:9-10 tells women how God would have them dress, *"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."*

There is a truth in Deuteronomy 22:5 that most people to do not see other than those who study "words" in the Hebrew language. I will underline the words I am talking about. This is very important today because of the way both men and women dress. *"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, **neither** shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.* Please keep in mind, this verse is talking about something that a "woman …. NEITHER a man should wear!" We do not generally think of men when we are talking about or teaching on dress standards. However, if a woman can't wear it - a man can't wear it! It is like me saying, "If my wife can't wear it, I can't wear it!"

The word "garment" in the verse above, is translated from the Hebrew word "Simlah. In Strong's Hebrew Concordance, which is the leading concordance of Hebrew and Greek, it explains the meaning of the Hebrew word "Simlah" which is translated "garment" in the English language. Strong's Hebrew Concordance states the meaning of the word "Simlah" as the idea of a covering **that assumes the shape of the object beneath it** (i.e. the person's body), a dress, a mantle, apparel, clothes, clothing, garment, or raiment." Simply stated, neither a man nor a woman should wear a garment which assumes the shape of their body beneath it. A violation of God's plan is seen anywhere and everywhere we go today - Kroger's, Lowe's, Walmart, you name it! This is especially true with women. Today women wear leggings which show the exact shape of a woman's body. Apart from the leggings being a different color, they show her as naked!

Concerning men - think about the way men dress in football uniforms today when they are on the football field, being seen by hundreds of thousands of people, both at the stadium and on television. Football uniforms assume the shape and show the private parts of a man's body from their waist down. They are clearly revealed. You say, "Well, they are playing football!" God's Word makes NO EXCEPTION concerning what men and women wear, including to play football! In both cases, referring to both women and men, the Bible declares that wearing clothing which assumes the shape of the body, is an "abomination unto the LORD thy God"

Today, in 2025, people in about every walk of life are wearing tight fitting shorts and leggings, which conform to their bodies and reveal EVERY portion of their body which can be seen beneath the garment. Today, both men and women are wearing what are called skinny jeans, which reveal EVERY shape, form, crease, and dimple of the body beneath them! Both men and women are wearing "pull over shirts" which fit very tight and conform to the parts of their body beneath them! Many women wear blouses which are open in the front and reveal the private parts of their upper bodies! The Walls of Decent Clothing in America have fallen.

The Walls of Decent Language in America Have Fallen.

As for decent language, until about 1955-56 Memphis had a "Censorship Committee" which monitored the radio, movie theaters, and television. No "four letter words" were allowed to be used. In 1939 there was a very popular movie titled "Gone with The Wind." In that movie Clark Gable, a famous and well-known actor, used a "four-letter" word. The Censorship Committee immediately shut the movie down and made them remake the film and remove the "four-letter word." In 1952, on a television show titled "I Love Lucy", the word "pregnant" was used. The show was shut down in the middle of the program and was not allowed back on television until

they removed the word. Mark 4:24 tells us to be careful what we hear. *"And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: …"*

In that same category concerning indecent things, in 1956 when "Ed Sullivan" had Elvis Presley on his show for the first time, they would not allow Mr. Sullivan to film any part of Elvis Presley's body which showed below his waist. It was classified as "indecent movement," which he did while singing! Psalms 101:3 states, *"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me."*

THE INTRODUCTION-PART FOUR

WALLS THAT HAVE FALLEN IN THE CHURCH

The Walls of Doctrine Have Fallen

The original Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek and is called "The Textus Receptus." The Textus Receptus is documented as being the "inerrant, infallible, plenary, verbally inspired Word of God." The words verbal, plenary, inspired, mean, that "each word written in the Bible is exactly and specifically the words God chose to use when He wrote the Bible through human penmen, and that there are no errors." The King James Bible, which was translated to English in 1611, was translated from the Textus Receptus and is referred to as "The Preserved Word of God" by the best experts in the world!

However, shortly after the King James Bible was written, companies began to use The Alexandrian Text and translate different versions. The Alexandrian Text came from a liberal, corrupt college in Alexandra, Egypt by two men named Westcott & Hort. It is called "The Westcott & Hort Version" and is called "The Critical Text". It was named that because it was "critical" of the Textus Receptus. Also, Egypt is "a picture of the world throughout the Bible"!

In each case, the versions translated from the Alexandrian Text use different words, and they justify that by saying, "We are rewriting the Bible in order to make it easier to read and easier to understand." Those versions began with the AMP which stands for "Amplified" version of the Bible, which was written in 1965 and was revised in 2015. In 1971 the NASB (New American Standard Bible) was written but was revised in 2020. In 1978 the NIV (New International Version) was written. In 1982 the King James Bible was revised and called the New King James Bible. In 1989 the NRSV (New Revised Standard Version) was written. In 1996 the NLT (New Living Translation) was written. In 2001 the ESV (English Standard Version) was written. In 2006 the CBS (Christian Standard Bible) was written and then revised in 2017. Again, every version has claimed it is easier to read and understand. That is the same as saying, "God was wrong" and did not know what He was doing when he dictated the Bible! What is the problem? Man thinks he is smarter than God! That is the problem!

Briefly, a few of the most important Bible doctrines which have fallen are: the doctrine that the Bible is the inspired, inherent Word of God (Psalms 12:6-7), the doctrine of "whosoever will may come" (Revelation 22:17), the doctrine of "holiness" (I Peter 1:15-16), the doctrine of eternal security of the believer (John 10:28-29), the doctrine of prayer and fasting (Acts 13:2-4

and 14:23), the doctrine of separation from the world (II Corinthians 6:17), the doctrine of salvation by faith and faith alone (Titus 3:5-7). I could continue, but these are some of the most common doctrines and the most important doctrines which "men" today have changed!

The Walls of Decision to Serve Have Fallen.

Joshua 24:14-15 makes it clear that it is up to each individual Christian to make the decision to serve the Lord. *"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD"*

The New Testament missionary movement grew greatly in the 1960's through the 1980's. There were scores of young men and women who surrendered their lives to serve the Lord on the foreign mission field. Shortly after those years hearts began to turn cold, and the number of men and women surrendering to be a missionary began to decline. Having been President and General Director of a foreign mission agency for 40 years, I generally stay in touch with Directors of a number of Independent Baptist Mission agencies. EVERY board or agency I have contact with have shared that the number of men who are surrendering their lives to serve God on the mission field is getting smaller and smaller. Each of the Directors I have talked with have told me that today, their agency is not getting enough new missionaries to replace older missionaries who have served for many years, and due to aging and health problems they have had to retire and leave the field! That is true of two agencies which I served with for 55 years! One of those agencies had 105 families in 1985. Today, that agency is down to five families!!! That is very sad considering the Commandment God gave the church in Matthew 28:18-20! As for the Mission agency which God used me to start in 1985, Fundamental Baptist World-Wide Mission, presently has a total of 32 active families, serving on 18 foreign fields. However, since 1985 the Mission has received 107 applications from men stating God had called them to the mission field. They were all interviewed and approved by their sending church. They all attended our Annual Institute of Missions, were interviewed by our Borad of Directors, approved to be missionaries, and were accepted with the Mission. At some time between the time they started deputation and the time they completed one term on the field, 75 of those resigned and quit! That is sad, because the average missionary raises somewhere in the neighborhood of $5,000.00 to $6,000.00 a month support over a two-year period. That totals about $60,000.00 to $72,000,00 per year! Some moved to a foreign field, went to language school and learned the language, but never used it. None of them ever planted an indigenous church that continues until today. What a waste of God' money. If a family spends two years on deputation, transfers to a foreign field, spends a year in language school, and THEN quits, they have wasted somewhere around $180,000.00 to $200,000.00 of God's money which was given by local churches to support missionaries! The Walls of Decision to Serve have fallen, and - continue to fall!

The Walls of Determination to Stand Have Fallen.

God called Moses to lead the people of Israel out of captivity in Egypt and to lead them to the promised land. Everyone is aware of how Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness for forty years, to where they reach the Jordan river across from Jericho. In Numbers Chapter 13, and then in Chapter 14, we read where Moses sent two men, Joshua and Caleb, across the Jordon River to spy out the land God had given them. Shortly after that, God called Moses home and set Joshua in his place as the leader, to continue to lead Israel across the Jordan River and to take "the promised land" which, at that time was controlled by the Canaanites.

In Joshua 14:6-13, we read about the determination of one of those two spies. That man was named Caleb. The Israelites had gone into the Promised Land and taken it as God promised. At that time, Caleb was talking with Joshua and said,

"*Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea."**Forty years old was I** when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these **forty and five years**, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, **I am this day fourscore and five years old.** As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance."*

Forty years had passed since Moses sent Joshua and Caleb to spy out the Promised Land. At that time Moses promised Caleb, who was 40 years old, a certain portion of the land (Joshua 14:7). After Joshua had led Israel across the Jordan River and they had taken the land from the Canaanites, Joshua and Caleb were together at the land Moses had promised him, and Caleb said he was 85 years old! 45 years had gone by since Moses had promised him the land. In Joshua 14:12, Caleb basically said, "I STILL WANT THAT MOUNTAIN!" That was after forty-five years! That is DETERMINATION! That is where the song "I Want That Mountain" came from which Bill Harvey wrote in 1971! I knew Bill and every time I heard him sing that song, in my heart I said, "I want to be like that man!" Every person in the New Testament should be committed to "Keep on, keeping on!" However, the walls of determination of many members of the churches have fallen! Many members of churches today attend their church faithfully on Sunday morning. A good number of the members return on Sunday night. That is what they call "being faithful to their church!" After that, they go about their daily tasks and have no part in the cause of Christ! Every Christian is a "member of the Body of Jesus Christ." We should be determined to be

involved in the ministry EVERY DAY and at EVERY opportunity which God gives us! That is not true today - not in most churches!

Question: Are you determined to "fight a good fight, finish your course, and keep the faith," as the apostle Paul did? (II Timothy 4:6-7).

DIVISION TWO

THE REBUILDING OF THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM

REBUILDING OF THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM - PART ONE

THE FALLEN WALLS AND THE EFFECT IT HAD ON NEHEMIAH
Nehemiah 1:1-11

Through the introduction, we studied the meaning of the walls which had fallen in Jerusalem, the walls which have fallen in America, and the walls which have fallen in the church. Now we will begin the study of the book of Nehemiah.

We will begin by looking at the effect it had on Nehemiah when he heard of the affliction and reproach of the people in Jerusalem, and of the fallen walls of Jerusalem. When Nehemiah's brother, Hanani, along with several other Jews came from Jerusalem to Shushan, he asked them about the people, which numbered about 50,000, who had returned to Jerusalem after being in captivity, and about the walls. When Nehemiah heard about the people being in great affliction and reproach, and heard about the fallen walls, he,

Prayed a Prayer of Contrition.
Nehemiah 1:1-4

"The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto 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. 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…," The word "contrition" means "to have true remorse and regret." We clearly see that Nehemiah had his heart broken over hearing about the fallen walls of Jerusalem.

After hearing the words of his brother, Hanani, Nehemiah sat down, "wept, mourned certain days, fasted, and prayed." This is where God began to work in Nehemiah's heart, which would later result in him surrendering his life to be used by God to "rebuild the walls of Jerusalem." If the walls of America are going to ever be rebuilt, God's Word tells us that it must begin with Christians who have broken walls, and churches who have broken walls. God's plan for us to rebuild our walls is found in II Chronicles 7:14. *"If my people, which 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 will heal their land."*

The church has forgotten how important it is to weep. John 11:35 tells us that "Jesus wept." In Acts 20:19 and 31 we read that the apostle Paul, a man greatly used of God, wept, *"Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews … Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."* In Luke 22:61-62, we have the account of the apostle Peter denying the Lord Jesus Christ three times. When Peter failed, it tells us how Peter got right with the Lord Jesus and was greatly used of God. *"And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before*

the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." Over the last few years, most Christians never weep nor shed tears over the fallen walls of America in their church. The church today practices a "dry eyed religion."

Also, when Nehemiah heard that the walls of Jerusalem had fallen, he fasted and prayed. The Lord Jesus, in Matthew 4:1-2 fasted 40 days when being tempted by the devil. I won't go into great detail on those verses, but it is sufficient to notice that "Jesus won the battle with the devil" after fasting. Again, the walls around the life of many Christians and the walls of many churches have fallen.

As Nehemiah wept, he fasted and prayed "certain days." When going through a trial, Luke 6:12 tells us that even our Lord Jesus prayed all night. "*And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."* Churches today have what they call a "Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting." Churches first started having those Prayer Meetings about the middle 1800s. They were started in America by Charles Finney and D. L. Moody. When churches first started having Wednesday night prayer meetings, they would come together as a church and have a "brief reading of some scripture concerning prayer" and then the church would spend about 45 minutes in prayer. If you study the history of churches in those days, they were the days when churches were in "continual revival!" This was true up until about the 1990s, especially in the Independent Baptist churches. I was a member of such a church from about 1963 until 1985. We not only had a "Wednesday night prayer meeting, but the men met together on Saturday night in the auditorium of the church and spent about an hour in prayer. That church had revival every week, until some things changed that I will not go into, but they stopped having the prayer meetings. That church is not there today!

About the 1980s, or shortly thereafter, churches were meeting together on Wednesday night and continued to call it a prayer meeting night. However, they slowly started to change. Today, churches have more of a "preaching" service. We should remember God telling us that His house shall be known as "a house of prayer" (Isaiah 56:7 and Matthew 21:13). Today, the walls of prayer have fallen! Today, churches "pray without tears", feast but don't fast, and preach without compassion. Is it any wonder that we "sow and don't reap?" Look at the difference today and the days in Daniel 9:3-19 and look back at the days of America in the middle 1980 - 1990s! After praying a prayer of Contrition, Nehemiah

Prayed a Prayer of Confession.
Nehemiah 1:5-7

"And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments. Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses."

Please stop a minute and try to put yourself in Nehemiah's place and try to feel what he felt. He began to pray with **deep humiliation and began confessing,** not only "his own sins" but at that same time, he was confessing the sins of the entire nation of Israel and his heart was broken for them. In Verse 6, Nehemiah said, "*I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinne*d. In Verse 7 he repeated that statement and said, "***We*** *have dealt very corruptly against thee, and (we) have not kept thy commandments."* I have heard a number of people pray for America. However, I was totally involved in the ministry of my local church from 1963 - 1969, after which I went to Mexico as a missionary. At this writing, I am 89 years old and have been in full time ministry for over 55 years. In those 61 years I have heard a lot of people pray for our country, but I have never heard anyone start their prayer by confessing their own sins, and have never heard anyone ask God to forgive America for their national sins. If we do not begin our prayer by confessing our personal sins, then praying for America is of no avail! Psalms 6:18 says, *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."* The starting point of all prayers should be based on II Chronicles 7:14, which we quoted above. After praying and confessing his sins and the sins of Israel, Nehemiah

Prayed a Prayer of Confidence
Nehemiah 1:8-10

"Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand."

The word "*remember*" is an important word in the book of Nehemiah. The first use of it is found above in Verse 8. It is repeated in Nehemiah 4:14, 13:14, 22, 29, and 31. All of these are used by Nehemiah to ask God to "remember His promises." Nehemiah, in all these verses, is "claiming the promises" which God had made to His people in past years! He was "reminding" God that He had made a promise. He did that because he had "total confidence" that God would never go back on His Word nor break His promise. I will give you one passage of scripture that no doubt Nehemiah knew and was claiming. That is found in Deuteronomy 30:1-7 where we will find several promises which God made that "match" the things which Nehemiah pointed out while praying to God in the scriptures above.

"And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do

thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee."

Prayers of this nature should always be "founded and rooted" on the unchanging promises of God. Please do not take this that I am thinking that we should "get in God's face and back Him in a corner." I would never do that. However, we can base our prayer on promises God has made, and can have full confidence that God, who made the promises, would never break His word and we can believe that II Corinthians 1:18-20 is totally true, *"But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."* Nehemiah had confidence in God's Word, even though He had never read these verses! Last, but not least, Nehemiah

Prayed a Prayer of Commitment.
Nehemiah 1:11

"O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer."

Keep in mind that at this time, Nehemiah was still in captivity. However, he was not living a life like we think of when a person is in captivity. He was not poor and in prison. King Artaxerxes, who is mentioned in Chapter 2 Verse 1, was a very wealthy king and lived a lavish lifestyle. Nehemiah was "the King's Cupbearer" which was a very important position. The Cupbearer always tasted the food and drink which was set before the king, to be sure that it was not poison and would not kill the king. Nehemiah had closer contact with the king than any other person in the country. Nehemiah was living a very comfortable and enjoyable lifestyle. His lifestyle was much better than the lifestyle most of us have.

It is not mentioned until later in Chapter 2, but at some time after Nehemiah heard about the people being in affliction and reproach and how the walls of Jerusalem were fallen, that he was willing to leave his high comfortable lifestyle and said, "I am going to get involved" in rebuilding the walls. Nehemiah "Made a Commitment" to give his life to God and to allow God to use him to rebuild those walls! It is not enough for a Christian to pray a prayer of Contrition, a Prayer of Confession, and a Prayer of Confidence, unless that Christian is willing to "Pray a Prayer of Commitment." Praying such prayers as those are not a substitute for making a commitment! When you pray a prayer of contrition, confession, or confidence, you MUST be willing to be part of the answer! David prayed that same type of prayer and made a commitment in Psalms 119:121-128.

Nehemiah closed Chapter One by asking God to *"grant him mercy in the sight of the man. as I was the kings cupbearer."* One of the responsibilities of a cupbearer was to keep the king happy and smiling. In those days, the cupbearer was never to ever appear before the king and look unhappy. If he did, by order of the king the cupbearer could be put to death. According to

Nehemiah 2:2, Nehemiah was afraid. However, Nehemiah was willing, by faith, to trust God to help him. His faith had no doubt grown over the past four months, as that is how much time he spent praying about what God would have him do. He prayed from the month Chisleu (Verse 1) which is December to the month Nisan (Chapter 2:1) which is April. He patiently "waited on God" to reveal His plan to him. (Isaiah 40:31).

REBUILDING OF THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM - PART TWO

GOD GAVE NEHEMIAH A PLAN
NEHEMIAH 2:1-10

"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. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me. Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel."

Nehemiah Trusted God by Faith that the King Would Send Him to Jerusalem.

When the king asked Nehemiah why his countenance was sad, Nehemiah responded and explained why his countenance was sad. After the King learned why Nehemiah was sad, he asked him a question. "For what does thou make request?" When this question was asked, Nehemiah did not immediately begin to ask for a list of things. Before he responded to the King's question, Verse 4 tells is what Nehemiah did. *"Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven."*

After he prayed, Nehemiah began by "asking the King to send him." That is seen in Nehemiah 2:1-5 and I will not quote all of it here, but in Verses 5 and 6 we find the words of Nehemiah requesting to be sent and we see that it pleased the King to send him. *"And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou*

wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it….. So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time."

Nehemiah Trusted God by Faith and asked the King to Provide Safety for Him.

After telling Nehemiah he would send him to Judah, in Verse 7 Nehemiah asked the king for more. He asked, *"Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah;"* Nehemiah was going to travel through a land in which he was a stranger. He had never "passed that way before" and it was considered very dangerous. It was about 850 miles from Shushan to Jerusalem and took about 45-50 days to make the trip. Verse 9 tells us that the king, no doubt under God's leadership, sent captains of the army and horsemen with him.

God has done the same for you and me as we travel through a world which hates our Lord and hates you and me. I will share seven verses concerning God keeping us safe: Exodus 23:20, Psalms 91:11, Psalms 34:7, Daniel 3:28, Daniel 56:22, Luke 4:10 and Hebrews 1:14. Later, in Isaiah 54:17 God made us an undisputable promise, *"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD."* In closing this subject, I would encourage you to read II Kings 6:13-17. You will find almost unbelievable protections that God provided for Elisha. That same promise is given again in Hebrews 13:5!

Nehemiah Trusted God by Faith to Supply His Needs.

In Verse 8 Nehemiah continued to trust God by faith, and he asked the king to give him letters to the keeper of the king's forest to supply him with the building materials he needed. Nehemiah said to the king, *"And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me."*

God has promised to supply our every need, according to His riches in Glory (Philippians 4:19). God will supply us with food to eat (Genesis 3:9, Psalms 107:9, Psalms 37:25). God will supply us with wisdom (James 4:7). God will supply us with what we need to fight battles (Exodus 14:14 and Deuteronomy 1:30). God will supply a plan for our life (Jeremiah 29:11-13). God will supply comfort in a time of fear, sickness, storms or loneliness (Psalms 23:4, Isaiah 51:12, II Corinthians 1:3). The time we spend waiting for God to supply should not be spent idlily. We should be doing as Nehemiah did and spend time alone with God in prayer.

Nehemiah Trusted God by Faith to Guide Him When He faced Opposition.

If you follow the pattern which Nehemiah has given us, and you have committed your life to be used by Him and to serve him - EXPECT OPPOSITION! As soon as Nehemiah arrived in Judah, he faced opposition. Verse 10 says, *"When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek*

the welfare of the children of Israel." Every church and every Christian should realize there is opposition to everything God does in and through us, and we should be expecting it and be prepared to handle it. As soon as ANY CHRISTIAN OR CHURCH says, "Let us arise and build" - the devil says, "I will arise and oppose you!"

Nehemiah was granted all these things due to *"the good hand of God upon him."* (Nehemiah 2:8b). Nehemiah realized that God was in control of everything, and he trusted the Lord by faith, believing the truth of Proverbs 21:1, *"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."* Do you have that type of faith and trust in the promises of God? You should! Every Christian should!

REBUILDING OF THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM - PART THREE

PRINCIPLES FOR REBUILDING THE FALLEN WALLS
Nehemiah 2:11-20

IMPORTANT!

I have put an emphasis on "IMPORTANT" because the book of Nehemiah was written in what we call today, THE LAST DAYS! However, I am referring to THE LAST DAYS for Israel! Nehemiah was the last prophet that God called and sent to His people to challenge them and to command them to be obedient to the oaths they had made with God over the past years. Israel had failed and disobeyed God again and again, to the point that God called them "a rebellious people." When the ministry of Nehemiah ended, the people disobeyed God again, God closed the door on Israel, and they went into what we call the 400 silent years. Those 400 years took place between the Old Testament and the New Testament. During those 400 years Israel did not hear one word from God due to their continued disobedience. At this point, because Israel hardened their hearts again and again, God hardened their hearts and also blinded their eyes. Israel, the Jews, continue in that condition until today!

This is vitally IMPORTANT to us because today, according to the scripture, we are in the last days of the church age. The church is in the Laodicea Age, saying *"I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;…"* (Revelation 3:14-21). The church continues to disobey the Word of God in many ways. Most churches have gone contemporary and are making the same failures today that Israel made in the book of Nehemiah, which were (1) Failure in Separation, (2) Failure in Stewardship, (3) Failure in Sanctification, and (4) Failure in Service. Christ is outside, standing at the door of the church and knocking! As we study, we need to ask God to make this real to us, as the church is facing the same thing that Israel faced!

Nehemiah Surveyed the Fallen Walls.

"So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. And I went out by night by

the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass. Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned. And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work."

Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem and spent three days in the city. There is NOTHING recorded in these verses where Nehemiah talked to anyone in the city of Jerusalem, nor asked any questions of anyone. It seems he simply felt he needed to spend time alone with the Lord. The principle is that Nehemiah most likely spent those three days in prayer, seeking God's guidance concerning what God would have him do about rebuilding the walls. He wanted God's guidance and blessing before he told the people why he had come and what he planned to do. The major principle here is - he did not confer with flesh and blood. He knew that since God had called him and had already provided for him, that God had a plan for him. Therefore, there was no one in Jerusalem who had any idea WHY he had come to the city! Before Nehemiah began the work God called him to do, he wanted to be sure of God's will. He wanted God to give him a plan to accomplish the work, knowing that if he did that, he would have God's blessings. Over my 60 years, I have seen men start churches but only because THEY wanted to plant a church and be pastor. Also, I have seen a good number of missionaries, who I truly feel were called of God, but then they moved ahead without a God given plan and "did it their way." Most of them quit and returned to the States before they finished their first term!

Nehemiah began his plan by going out AT NIGHT and "investigating the fallen walls of Jerusalem." He went out at night on horseback, to review the walls. As we saw earlier in the lesson, Nehemiah's heart was broken when he **heard** the walls had fallen. That is declared in Chapter 1. I cannot even imagine what he felt in his heart when he **saw with his own eyes** the fallen walls of Jerusalem. I doubt anyone today can imagine how Nehemiah felt in his heart because of what he saw. I can picture him falling on his knees, broken hearted, and weeping and crying out of control over what he saw, and begging God to let him rebuild the walls.

I will never forget a story I read years ago concerning Robert Murray McCheyne who was a great missionary in Scotland in the early 1800s. He was born and raised in Edinburgh, Scotland by very godly parents. At the age of 12 his mother took him on a trip to Dundee for a reason the article did not give. However, at some time during that trip, they were in the downtown area of Dundee and his mother was shopping. Somehow little Robert got separated from his mother and was gone. When his mother realized he was gone, she panicked and begin going up and down the streets looking for him. Dundee was a large city and there were crowds of people on the street shopping. It took her about a half an hour, but she finally located him. She saw him sitting on a small box at a busy intersection with his head between his hands and leaning over between his knees. She imagined that her son was scared to death because he was lost! She ran to where he was sitting, dropped on her knees and put her arms around him and said, "Oh Robert, Oh Robert, I am so sorry I let you get out of my sight! I am sorry! I know you are scared to death. You are going to be okay" The little 12-year-old boy raised his head and had tears running down his face. His mom assumed it was because he had been separated from her. She began to apologize to him

again and again, saying, "I am so sorry, I am so sorry!" The little 12-year-old boy looked up at her and said, "Mom! Please don't cry. I am fine. I knew you would find me." Then she asked him, "If you are not afraid then why are you sitting here crying?" He looked at her, wiped his eyes and said, "Mom, I am crying because of the sound of these hundreds, and hundreds of footsteps going by me. It has broken my heart. I could not keep from crying because I know most of them who are passing by are on their way to hell! It was more than my heart could stand. I had to cry!"

I can only imagine how Nehemiah must have felt when he actually saw the fallen walls of Jerusalem. I am sure of this, if it broke his heart to hear about the fallen walls, it broke his heart even more when he saw the fallen walls! Let me ask all of us a question. Are our hearts broken when we hear or see such people? Do we weep and pray when we hear people going by headed to hell? Our heart should be broken every time we see and talk to a person who is going to hell.

Let me give an example of something that should break our hearts and should cause us to weep and pray. Every time we see the missionary presentation of some foreign field like Mexico, South America, or any other foreign country, and we see people on their knees in front of some man-made idol with their hands folded in front of their face, tears running down their face as they pray to that idol, and WE KNOW they are not saved and that they are going to hell and be tormented for all eternity, that should break our hearts and cause us to weep and pray! If it doesn't, we have a heart problem. It does not affect most Christians in that manner. We walk out of church thinking and talking about other things, like who won the football game on Saturday!

Please stop and think of the coldness of our prayers and the hardness of our hearts. Does anyone think that God will send revival to our churches or to America when he knows that we, his people, have cold hearts and dry eyes? I doubt it! What was the next step Nehemiah took in preparing to rebuild the walls?

Nehemiah Secured Help
Nehemiah 2:17-18

"Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.

Nehemiah knew he could not rebuild the fallen walls of Jerusalem alone, walls that had been fallen for many years! However, he did not start out talking to the people by saying something like, "Why haven't you people fixed this. This is all your fault. You need to get up and get busy and do your part!" He said, *"Ye see the distress that WE are in…. let US build up the wall of Jerusalem…that WE be no more a reproach."* Then he shared two basic things with the people.

In Verse 18 he said, "*Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let **us** rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.*" Their response was - let us rise up and build.

Let me point this out. Nehemiah was only one man whom God called out to do a work for Him. However, because this "one man," a man who wept, and cried, prayed and spent time

with God alone, and followed God's leadership, we find that in Chapter 3, forty different tribes are mentioned, that joined in the work with Nehemiah. In Chapter 3:1-32, it names 40 different people or tribes who worked together to build the wall. Matter of fact, every tribe in Judah got involved, EXCEPT a group who thought they were above doing that type of work. That is seen in Nehemiah 3:5: *"…but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord."* This is a picture of what God can do with ONE MAN who will commit his life to God and let God take total control of his life. The people worked together, and the wall was rebuilt in 52 days (Nehemiah 6:15).

Every Christian should realize that God has a plan for their life. According to I Corinthians Chapter 12, EVERY Christian is a member of the body of Christ and God has given every member of the body of Christ a spiritual gift to enable "the entire body" to work together to accomplish what God wants us to accomplish in this world of fallen walls. Here is a basic plan. Ask God to burden your heart for a certain part of the ministry of your church. You do that by surveying the need, then spending time alone with God in prayer. He will always burden your heart for the part of the church ministry where He plans to use you. Begin preparing for that part of the ministry. Then, "start building!" If a Christian does not do this, they will regret it in this life and will also regret in more in the life to come! Do you want to be known as a laborer or as a noble?

Nehemiah Strengthened The People.
Nehemiah 2:18

"Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work. I personally think that Nehemiah based his efforts to strengthen them on Nehemiah 8:10. " *Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength."* He assured them that "the good hand of God was upon them…and king Artaxerxes stood behind them."

We are strengthened by remembering God's promises from the past. Psalms 106:7-8 *"Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea. Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.*"

Isaiah 40:29-31 *"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."*

Deuteronomy 1:30. *" The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes;"*

We also are strengthened by remembering God's promises for the future. Isaiah 43:2 *"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow*

thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

Jeremiah 33:3 "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

I could go on and on as there are hundreds of promises in the Bible which should strengthen us, but I am sure anyone reading this book can search and find those promises. Before moving to the next subject, let me remind you that II Corinthians 1:20 says, *" For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."* Study and saturate yourself with the Word of God!

Nehemiah Stood Against Opposition.
Nehemiah 2:19-20

"*But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king? Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem."*

Sanballat and Tobiah had opposed Nehemiah in Chapter 2:10. Now a third enemy has joined them. His name was Geshem, the Arabian. Geshem is the descendant of Ishmael, the illegitimate son of Abraham. Genesis 16:11-12 tells us that the descendants of Ishmael will be wild men and will be the enemy of God and enemies of God's people forever.

When we face opposition we should count it a blessing and remember that when someone opposes us, that means God is using us and working through us. When you share the gospel with someone and they oppose you, you know that (1) God is already working in their heart, and (2) you know that God impressed on you to share the gospel with that person, or there would not have been any opposition.

Anytime you suffer opposition, remember the promises of God. First, Romans 8:31 tells us *"If God be for us, who can be against us?*" Second, I John 4:4 tells us, *"Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world!"* Lastly, Isaiah 54:17 assures victory. *"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD."*

Also, God uses trials, such as opposition, for our good. I Peter 1:7 says, *"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:"*

Nehemiah Separated From The World.
Nehemiah 2:19-20

Regardless of the circumstances or of the opposition, and I do not care what the cause is, nothing justifies a Christian or Bible believing church yoking up with, (1) unbelievers in the world or, (2) believers who are liberal in their doctrinal position. God commanded separation from the people of the world in Ezra 3:2-5. That commandment is repeated in Isaiah 52:11, *"Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.* God did not change His position in the New Testament. God COMMANDED that the church be separate from the world, the people of the world, and the things of the world. We find that clear commandment in II Corinthians 6:17. This verse make that CLEAR BEYOND DOUBT! *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"*

Albert Barnes gives us a simple but clear understanding of the words, touch not the unclean thing; "Christians were to avoid ALL unholy contact with a vain and polluted world. Christians are to have no close connection with any unholy person. Christians are to be pure; and be distinguished in moral purity from all the rest of the world."

Nehemiah was tested by his enemies in Nehemiah 6:1-3. Nehemiah stood 100% firm on the commandment of God and practiced separation from his enemies.

*"Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;) That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of **Ono**. But they thought to do me mischief. And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?*

I thank God that through Nehemiah He gave us this pattern to follow. I thank God that "Nehemiah said "Oh no to Ono!" Let's make a firm decision to always be 100% separated from the world, the people of the world, and from liberals who do not hold a true Bible position! Sad to say, many churches today have rejected the commandment of God and have "brought the world into their churches."

Sad to say, we will see in Chapter 13 that some of the leaders in Jerusalem compromised this position while Nehemiah was back in Shushan meeting with and giving a report to King Artaxerxes. We will cover that in GREAT detail when we reach that chapter.

REBUILDING THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM - PART FOUR

THE STARTING POINT.
Nehemiah 3:1-32

I mentioned above, in the section where Nehemiah "secured people to help him" that in Nehemiah Chapter 3, it is mentioned forty times, "and _____ built next to _____, …" building the walls.

I almost decided to skip Chapter 3 and pick up in Chapter 4, but after much study I found that would be a mistake. God called my attention to what I consider a very important principle concerning the people who rebuilt the fallen walls of Jerusalem.

There are forty names in Chapter 4 of the tribes or families of Israel who participated in the rebuilding on the fallen walls. However, there are "four places" where is it said of certain families that they built *"over against his house."* From that phrase, I titled the chapter as "The Starting Point For Rebuilding The Walls." In my opinion, "the house, or the home" is the starting point of the success or failure of the family. That is of great importance, because as the home goes, so goes the church, and as the church goes, so goes the entire nation. The "home" is the first institution God established after He created the heavens and the earth. It is still the most important institute on earth. If "the home is not right, the church cannot be right, and if the church is not right, the nation is not right." If you think about it, I am sure you will agree that the fall of the walls in churches today, and the fall of our nation today, can be traced back to the fall of the home! I think it will be profitable for us to study these four verses and to understand the meaning of the names of the families who started *"over against his house."* If anyone puts anything before the walls of their home, anything, including serving in the ministry, they are disobeying God and will one day see their life and ministry destroyed.

The House of Jedaiah
Nehemiah 3:10

"And next unto them repaired Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, even over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush the son of Hashabniah."

The name, Jedaiah, means "one who invokes God." The word "invoke," according to Webster's Dictionary, means "to petition for help!" Let me ask you, not accuse you, but have the walls of the prayer life in your home fallen? Do you begin your day each morning by "invoking" the Lord to control your life through the Holy Spirit and guide you throughout the day, and keep you in His will through the entire day? If not, the walls of your prayer life have already fallen. All of us need to remember each morning that we live in a body of flesh and are subject to being lured away from God's will by the devil. When you go to bed at night, do you pray and thank God for His goodness, for His watch care over you, and for all the benefits you received from Him through the day? We should! Strengthen yourself and your house, by beginning and ending each day in prayer. Question: Are you building the walls of your house by praying?

The House of Benjamin
Nehemiah 3:23

"After him repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house."

The name Benjamin means "the son of my right hand" which in scripture means "the Lord is there beside us to protect us from all harm." It means that you and your family are protected from worry, from fear, from problems in the family, and from any and every type of danger which the devil, the roaring lion, might use to destroy your home. It is the devil's goal to destroy you,

your family and your home. I Peter 5:8 says, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: "*

Benjamin experienced that protection. Deuteronomy 33:12 says. *"And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders."* How do we dwell safely in Him? In my opinion we find the answer to that question in Matthew 6:33-34. *"But seek ye **first** the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* There are also Old Testament verses that tell us how to have the protection. *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."* (Isaiah 26:3) There is no amount of insurance which you can purchase on this earth which can protect your home like the Lord Jesus Christ can protect you and your home! Question: Are you "building the walls of your house" by staying in continual fellowship with the Lord and daily seeking His Kingdom? Are you "staying between his shoulders" all day - every day?

The House of Zadok, the son of Immer
Nehemiah 3:29

"After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house."

The Name Zadok means "being just" which means treating each other "justly!" Husbands, are you treating your wife "justly" according to the Word of God? Wives, are you treating your husband justly, according to the Word of God? The success of the home is to follow God's plan for the home. In Ephesians 5:21-24, God tells the wife how to be "just" with her husband. *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."*

In Ephesians 5:25-28, God explains the husband's responsibility, *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself."*

Over the years I have heard men talking about their relationship with their wives. I always remember what I heard one man say to a group of his friends. He said, "You guys need to be careful how much you love your wife. You can over love your wife, and she will take advantage of you."

Any man who thinks he can "over love his wife" is very proud of himself and is putting himself on a very, very high level. We are told to love our wives like Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. It is totally impossible for a man to love his wife more than Jesus Christ loves the church. You cannot love your wife too much! How is "your house" today? Are you

practicing these "God given" commands? If not, you should start and you should start immediately.

It is interesting to note that God added Zadok's father's name to this verse. His father's name was "Immer." The name "Immer" in the Bible means "talkative." One of the main problems in a marriage is how a husband and wife talk to each other. There is no other weapon used by the devil to destroy the home more than the tongue. Read James 5:3-18 where God explained just how dangerous the "tongue" is. This is very true also in the home! Husbands and wives, even when they may disagree, must talk to each other in kindness and in love. Colossians 4:6 says, *"Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."* There is NO problem in the home that is too big to solve. The problem is there are people "too small" to solve the problem! Question: Are you building the walls of your house by treating and talking to your wife with "grace, seasoned with salt?"

The House of Meshullam, the son of Berechiah
Nehemiah 3:30

"After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber.

The name Meshullam means "devoted." It is interesting that God changed the word "house to chamber" in this verse. During the days of Nehemiah, a chamber was like a "small one-room" apartment. Why Meshullam lived in a small one room apartment we are not told. Most likely it was because he could not afford a larger house. Because of that, he may have considered himself to be very insignificant and not worthy of having a part in building the walls. However, his name means "devoted," and his father's name, who may have lived with him, means "the Lord hath blessed him."

Some people may have thought that he should not even be considered to partake in the work of rebuilding the walls. However, the blessings of God on a home are not determined by the size of the house. It is determined by the "size of the person's character" who lives in the house. Meshullam had the blessings of the Lord on his chamber, because he was "devoted" to God! This is very, very important! Where do you think he learned to be "devoted to God." I think the scriptures are clear. He learned it from his father! His father's name was Berechiah. The name Berechiah means, "The Lord hath blessed him." That teaches us that his father raised him according to Ephesians 6:4, which says, *"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."* Question: Fathers, are you building the walls of your chamber, regardless of the size, by raising your children to be "devoted" to the Lord? As insignificant as he may have seemed, God still had a purpose and plan to use him. As insignificant as you may think you are, God still has a purpose and plan for your life!

According to I Corinthians 1:27-29, God uses insignificant things for His glory. *"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."*

Without going into great detail, I will give you a "real life example" of God using little things. A good number of years ago, God called a man to go to the southern part of Australia to reach the "Aboriginal" tribe. The Aboriginals were very fierce and were known to kill and eat people who came into their territory. This man, whom God called to go and reach those people, went to Australia and for four years tried to get permission to enter the Aboriginal territory, but without success. He was never once allowed to enter their territory in four years and never witnessed to one Aborigine. He returned to the United States for a short furlough and visited several of his supporting churches. One night, after he had shared his ministry with a church and was standing by his display table, a little girl about 10-12 years old came up to him and said, "I want to help you in your ministry." She handed him "a penny." That touched the heart of the missionary, and he gave the little girl a hug and thanked her. Later the missionary, because of the blessing the little girl had been to his heart, wanted to keep the penny as a "keepsake." He found a place in his billfold and put the penny there for his remembrance.

He returned to Australia and continued trying to get permission to go into Aboriginal territory but had no success. One day, he was going through his billfold and saw the "penny" the little girl had given him. It brought back good memories. However, as he looked at the penny, he said God touched his heart and said, "The little girl did not give you that penny for a "keepsake." She gave it to you to help in your ministry!" He was not sure how to use "a penny." After a few days he used the penny to buy a gospel tract. He wrote his name and contact on the back of the tract, went to the marketplace, and gave it away.

About three months later, he was sitting on his front porch, which was screened in, reading his Bible and begging God to open a door for him to go in and reach the Aboriginal people. Suddenly, there was a knock on his screen door. He went to the door and opened it and saw an Aboriginal man with all sorts of metal rings around his neck, a bone through the lower part of his nose, various things in his ears, and his fist doubled up in front of his face. He was frightened but asked the man if he could help him. The man pushed his doubled-up fist up in the missionary's face, unfolded his fist, and took out a waded-up piece of paper. He took the piece of paper and unfolded it, turned it over, and asked, "Is this you?" It was the "penny" tract he had bought and given away, and he said to the man, "Yes, that's me!" The man then said, "I cannot read," but pointing to his heart, he continued and said, "something in here tells me I need to know what this says." To make a long story short, the missionary invited him to come in on his porch, and he explained the tract and led the man to the Lord.

After talking for an hour or so, the man said to the missionary, "I want you to come and share this with my people!" The missionary graciously explained that he had been trying to get permission to enter their territory for over five years but could not get permission. The man then said, "I can get you in." The missionary, with doubts, asked "How can you get me in?" The Aboriginal replied, "I'm the chief!" Again, a long story short, the missionary went with the man to the Aboriginal part of Australia and shared the gospel for years. He ended up leading numbers of the Aboriginal people to a saving knowledge of Jesus and planted a church there. This is the best example I have ever known concerning "how God uses little things." Do not ever think of yourself as "a little thing, a nobody, so insignificant" that God can't use you. If God can use a "little 10–12-year-old girl and a small penny" God can use you."

REBUILDING OF THE WALLS - PART FIVE

SATAN'S SEVEN STRATEGIES TO STOP THE REBUILDING OF THE WALLS
Nehemiah 4:1 - Nehemiah 6:1-14

This will be a very long chapter since it will cover Chapters 4, 5, and 6. But it will be divided into seven sections to make it more easily understood. We are studying the man Nehemiah, who is one of the very best leaders in the Bible when faced with opposition. We need to always remember that when a Christian or church says, "We will rise up and build, Satan always says, I will rise up and oppose you!" I Peter 5:8 says, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:"* Every Christian and every church should always be 'on watch' and expect opposition. The victory is ours, however there is no victory without a war

Before moving to Satan's seven strategies, let me share a little about him so you will know a little more about what he is like. Knowing this, you will know better how to watch for him. Satan has at least seven different names in the Bible besides Satan and the Devil. All seven of his names tell you what his character is really like. In John 8:44, he is called a liar. In I Thessalonians 3:5 he is called a tempter. In II John 1:7, he is called a deceiver. In I John 2:14 he is called the wicked one. In Revelation 12:10 he is called an accuser. In 1 Corinthians 10:10 he is called a destroyer. In John 8:44 he is called a murderer. From a liar to a murderer. That is as bad as it can get!

Also, remember that the devil is not "just an evil influence!" The devil is a created being who rebelled against God. His original name was Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12-14). We need to continually remember his strategies. Ephesians 6:11 warns us of the tactics. "*Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the **wiles** of the devil."* The Greek word for "wiles" in "methodeia" meaning 'his methods.' All of this is for our protection. II Corinthians 2:11 encourages us to be aware of his methods. *"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."*

Nehemiah and The People Suffered Derision.
Nehemiah 4:1-3

"But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the

army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall."

This was opposition from without. In these seven studies, we will see opposition from both without and from within. The word derision means "to ridicule or to mock and to make fun of." Sanballat and Tobiah started out by making fun of the Jews and mocking them. Satan did the same thing to our Lord Jesus. Luke 22:63 tells us of that mocking, *"And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him."* They mocked Him again as He hung on the cross dying, *Luke 23:35-37 "And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God." And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself."*

You can be sure of this. The people of the world are going to treat us the same. Why? Look at I Corinthians 1:18. *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness …* If you faithfully witness to people about the saving power of Jesus Christ, there are some who are going to laugh at you and mock you! The people of the world continue to do that to Christians and to the church today. The people were laughing and mocking the Christians in the church at Corinth.

Over-Coming Derision

We find three things that Nehemiah led the people to do when they were mocked. **First:** They did not get involved in an argument with the mockers. They were nice, but they ignored them. The people had "a heart to pray" and they went immediately to the Lord (Nehemiah 4:4-5). Remember, God commanded us that we are "to be a witness for him" (Acts 1:8). He did not command us to be "lawyers" and to argue with people we witness to like we would if we were in a courtroom. You will find no place in the New Testament where the Lord Jesus, Paul, or any of the apostles were drawn into an argument with lost people. We are to "share the Gospel" with them and trust God to do the rest. God promised us that *"His Word will not return void but will accomplish what He wants it to accomplish!"* (Isaiah 55:11). If God's Word will not change them, what is the use in us having an argument with them when they laugh and mock us? We can sometimes "twist their arm" but you cannot "twist their hearts" which is where salvation comes from. Romans 10:10 tells us that truth, *"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

I am not saying you cannot answer questions, if a person asks them. That is different from an argument. **Second:** The people had "a mind to work." (Nehemiah 4:6) *"So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work."* Never let Satan draw you away from the work you are doing for God to battle with him. THAT is exactly what the 'deceiver' wants you to do. Keep rebuilding the walls regardless of the laughing and mocking. They laughed and made fun of Noah while he was building the ark, but he never stopped doing the work God gave him to do. He continued UNTIL the ark was built! **Third:** The people had "an eye to watch" (Nehemiah 4:9). I Peter 5:8 tells us why we need to watch! *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking*

whom he may devour:" Keep in mind the 'seven characteristics of the devil' and WATCH YOUR BACK!

Nehemiah and the People Suffered Discouragement.
Nehemiah 4:10

*"And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that **we** are not able to build the wall."*

This was opposition from within! Judah was a Jew. He was one of the workers rebuilding the walls. But he became discouraged and was being used of Satan to try and discourage other workers. Many times it is more difficult to deal with opposition from within than to deal with opposition from without! Judah basically said what many church members say today when they are in difficult circumstances, "This is impossible - It just can't be done! - There is just no use in continuing this work!" Why do people get discouraged? Because they are looking at the circumstances instead of looking to Christ.

Over-Coming Discouragement

First: Have your life firmly planted in God and in the Word of God. Proverbs 3:5 and 6 are key verses in any and every project. *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths".* Jeremiah 32:27 makes it clear that God is not hindered and cannot be stopped regardless of the circumstances! *"Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?"* The answer to that question is, No! Luke 1:37 "*With God nothing is impossible!*" Galatians 6:9 assures us that we can finish the work, *"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*. **Second:** Continually remind yourself that the Holy Spirit of God lives in you. We do not need worldly might or military power to do the work of God. Zechariah 4:6 makes that clear beyond any doubt. *"Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts*." (See John 14:2; Matthew 19:26 & Mark 9:23)

Nehemiah and the People Suffered Danger.
Nehemiah 4:8, 9 and 11

"But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it ….. And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease."

When Satan's plan to "laugh and mock the people" did not work and cause them to quit the work, he immediately changed his method of attempting to devour them. He moved from mocking to murder! Also, we notice that Sanballat and Tobiah had a "concerted plan" to attack Nehemiah and the people. They added some other enemies of God to help them stop Nehemiah

and the Jews. It started out with just Sanballat and Tobiah in Verses 4:1-3. However, in Verses 7-8 we find they added some enemies of God to the army. They added the Arabians, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites to their warfare. The enemies of God are willing to put aside what they disagree on and agree to join forces if they can stop the work of God. We can see that in the world today. False religions have joined hands, attempting to form a one world religion. They join and fight continually against churches that stand true to the Word of God and are preaching the Gospel to every creature!

They also had a "cruel plot" to attack them physically and slay them. Verse 11, which is quoted above, tells us of the attack they were planning. Their plan was to "slay them … and cause the work to cease." That is the plan of the world today. Governments around the world, including America, have broken into churches, taken missionaries into custody and put them in prison or deported them, and told them never to come back to their country. We had pastors in America arrested a few years ago during the Covid Crisis because they held church meetings that the government had told them they could not hold. The government of America, nor of any other country, has the RIGHT to tell churches they cannot meet together, regardless of the circumstances. In Acts 5:29, Peter said, *"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men*." Sanballat and Tobiah also proposed to put fear in the hearts of the people and cause them to give up the rebuilding of the walls (Nehemiah 4:12).

Over-Coming Danger
Nehemiah 4:14-18

First, Nehemiah told them *"Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord."* Do not just remember "who He is" but remember that in Deuteronomy 10:17 speaking of Himself, he said, *"For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:"* Remember how "awesome he was, how terrifying He was, and how all powerful He was" when Pharaoh tried to destroy His people, Israel. God totally destroyed Pharaoh and his army and not one Israelite was slain! Also, the Israelites did not have to fire a shot or war against Pharaoh in any manner. "The Battle is the Lord's."

You say, "Brother Gambrell, I am just one Christian. What do I do if I come under danger from some worldly person who is angry with me because I witness to him?" You do the same as Nehemiah told the Jews who were building the wall to do; REMEMBER!!! Remember a young teenage boy named David. Remember that a nine-foot giant named Goliath, a mighty man of war, told David in I Samuel 17:44, *"And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field."* David REMEMBERED the Lord and in Verses 45-46 David answered the nine-foot Philistine giant, and said,

"Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." The climax of David and Goliath's warfare is revealed in I Samuel

17:47-51. I encourage you to go to your Bible and read the conclusion of the giant who threatened David with danger and death. Remember, remember, remember the Lord!

Nehemiah and the People Suffered Discord.
Nehemiah 5:1-6

"And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews. For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many: therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat, and live. Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth. There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards. And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words."

Again, this is opposition from within! As I said, opposition within is often more difficult to deal with than opposition from without! This was "discord" among brethren. It may be for that reason that God said He hates discord. Proverbs 6:16 and 19 tells us of God's hate for discord among brethren. *"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him ….. and he that soweth discord among brethren."*

The discord, which was internal, involved "dishonest leaders among the Jews who ruled Jerusalem." At that time in Jerusalem, there was a heavy tax on the people. That tax was imposed by the nobles and rulers (Verse 7). Many times, the people were unable to pay the taxes. When that happened, the nobles and rulers would take their lands with the promise that the people could buy it back when they could afford it. However, those leaders knew that the people would not be able to repay the taxes, therefore, they began taking their sons and daughters and making slaves out of them. It is clear from the way Nehemiah addressed them, that they were very dishonest, overcharging the people, taking their lands and children - KNOWING they would never be able to redeem them. That tells us why Nehemiah was so angry with the nobles and the rulers. AND, at that time Nehemiah himself was governor of Judah, and had been for 12 years. However, if you read Verses 14 and 15, Nehemiah made it clear that he had never practiced such things as they were doing. In the close of Verse 8, he said, *"but **so did not I** because of the fear of God."* From the context, this was causing GREAT discord in the city of Jerusalem and was endangering the rebuilding of the walls.

Discord in a church will do more damage than anything given us in the scripture. Sowers of discord in a church are (1) Very subtle, (2) They pretend to be very spiritual, (3) They are generally very knowledgeable of the scripture, (4) They always work under-cover or behind the scenes, and they are very dangerous. Many times someone in the church will start a "home Bible study" in their house. That generally ends with them teaching some doctrine not held by the church. According to Revelation 12:10, Satan is behind most discord as he is always accusing the brethren.

Over-Coming Discord

Nehemiah 5:7-13

"Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer. Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies? I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury. Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them. Then said they, We will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise. Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise."

First: We must maintain the right attitude, according to the scriptures. When discord is being sown in the church, as difficult as it may seem, the members should be obedient to the commandment of God. If we do that, discord can always be resolved. John 15:12-13 gives us a commandment from God. *"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* I realize that may be hard to do at times, but I always remember words of wisdom which Dr. Bob Jones Senior shared several times. He said, "Do right! If the stars fall - do right!"

Ephesians 4:30-32 gives us a quick look at the attitude we should have. *"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, beput away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

Second: We must maintain the right motive. Always do that which is best for the Lord's work first. Always have a heart-felt motive to restoring a brother. Galatians 6:1 and 2 *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."* Nehemiah was angry, but he consulted with himself (Verse 7). He did not call the congregation together and tell them how low down, no good, rotten those men were, and then "vote them out of the church!" He went directly to those who were causing the problem and confronted them face to face. He told them WHAT they were doing was wrong and then told them WHAT they needed to do to make it right. He had a "heart-felt burden" to resolve and heal any schism in the body. That is according to I Corinthians 12:25. *"That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another."*

In Nehemiah 5:7-13, we see that his first goal was to "bring them to repentance." His second goal was to insist that they make restitution. His third goal was to resume the work of

rebuilding the walls! I have said before, "There is no problem in a church too big to be resolved. The problem, many times, is people are 'too small' to resolve the problem!

Third: We should always maintain the right power in order to overcome discord. The only way to do that is found in Ephesians 5:18. *"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"* Again I am repeating, but it is important to remember this. In Zechariah 4:6, God said, *"This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."* When you have discord in your church, I suggest that before you do anything, get alone with God and follow James 1:5. *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."*

Nehemiah and The People Suffered Distraction.
Nehemiah 6:1-2

"Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;) That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief.

As I said, when Satan uses one tactic and it does not work, he changes his direction and attacks from an entirely different direction. Sanballat and Tobiah, the two men who led the war against Nehemiah rebuilding the wall, used derision and danger which are oppositions from the outside. Now, they changed the tactics and sent Nehemiah a message saying, *"Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono."* Thank God that Nehemiah responded to that invitation by saying "Oh no to Ono!" The enemies re-sent the same message four times.

Sometimes, Satan comes as a roaring lion. However, when that does not work, the Bible tells us in II Corinthians 11:14-15 that both him and his ministers come as an angel of light. *"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."* Christians and churches should be VERY CAREFUL to watch for an angel of light!

Over-Coming Distraction
Nehemiah 6:3-4

Nehemiah responded to the message in the same manner each time, saying, "*And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner."*

This was Nehemiah's only response. As he had done during his entire time leading the people to do the work of God, he stood in total separation from the enemies of God. He knew that he had NO REASON to meet with such people. You and I should take the SAME STAND. We live in a day when "false religions" have started meeting together and saying, "we may disagree on various points in our beliefs, but we can still work together because we all serve the same God. You already know that is not true. Satan is trying to form a "one world church" which is taught in scripture. They formed "The World Council of Churches" years ago. They meet together and put their beliefs on which they differ to the side. Many times, that group has invited Bible believing Baptist churches to "come meet with them." At this time, most all Baptist churches in America have stood as Nehemiah did and refused to meet with them. Our response should always be the same, *"I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you!"* We do not even need to give a reason for our refusal, just stand!

Nehemiah and The People Suffered Defamation.
Nehemiah 6:5-7

"Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand; Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words. And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together."

The word "defamation" means to "discredit" Nehemiah. Stop and think about HOW QUICKLY Sanballat changed his plan of attack! That clearly tells us that Satan was behind everything Sanballat and Tobiah did to destroy Nehemiah and stop God's work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Watch your back! Satan uses the same plan against you and me.

Sanballat wrote a letter to Nehemiah accusing him of being in rebellion against the king, with the plan of overthrowing the king and becoming king in his place. He accused Nehemiah of having "a wrong motive" for building the wall. He ended his threatening letter by putting pressure on Nehemiah to come and meet with him and they would take counsel together. Sanballat was using "defamation" to discredit Nehemiah and threatened to report his rebellion to the King of Judah if he did not come and meet with him. Do you see "Satan as the accuser of the brethren, using Sanballat as one of his ministers?" Before looking at how Nehemiah "over-came the defamation" let's cover the "seventh" attack on Nehemiah, as the two attacks came together. Then we will cover how to "Over-Come Defamation and Over-Come Deception", which immediately follows the Defamation.

Nehemiah and The People Suffered Deception.
Nehemiah 6:10-13

"Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who was shut up; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let

us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee. And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in. And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me."

Derision did not work! Distraction did not work! Danger did not work! Defamation did not work. Deception is their last option! The enemy came and tried to deceive Nehemiah into meeting with them in the "house of God in the Temple" by telling him they had a message from God! They were trying to deceive and put fear in his heart, enough fear to cause him to meet with them. Nehemiah, no doubt impressed by the Spirit of God, knew they were not sent by God. The scriptures do not give any details, but somehow Nehemiah knew that Shemaiah had been hired by Tobiah and Sanballat and knew that they had hired him to put fear in his heart. Shemaiah was a priest, but for some reason, which is not given, was willing to join the enemies of God to stop His work. This was not the first time Nehemiah had faced this. Back in Nehemiah 4:10-12 some of the workers had been talking with the enemy and were discouraged. Satan was determined to "undermine the work of God." That is still his plan today. STAY 100% SEPARATED FROM THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD AND FROM FALSE RELIGIONS!

Over-Coming Defamation and Deception
Nehemiah 6:11

"And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in."

Nehemiah answered Sanballat when he attempted to distract him. His answer is found in Nehemiah 6:7. "*I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?"* Nehemiah knew that he was in the will of God and had no need to meet with the enemy.

Nehemiah answered Sanballat when he attempted to "black mail" him by defaming him and threatening to report him to the king. That answer is found in Nehemiah 6:8. *"Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart."* In the following verse, Nehemiah went direct to God and said, *"Oh God, strengthen my hands."* If you are living a clean, godly, and holy life, God will always hear your prayer and answer your prayer. God did it for Nehemiah - God will do it for you.

Nehemiah answered Sanballat when he attempted to get him to compromise. That answer is found in Nehemiah 6:11 *"Should such a man as I flee?"* PLEASE take note of this, as it is very important. Nehemiah did not even consider TALKING to those people! Nehemiah responded to all three things which Sanballat tempted him with IN A TOTAL OF 56 WORDS! What does that teach us? It teaches us that we should not get involved in a conversation or even talk with such people when they approach us with such things! God also gave us a commandment not to get involved with them in II John 1:10-11. *"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine,*

receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." God is saying "DON'T TALK WITH THEM!"

Today, when a preacher is approached by someone of a false religion and they say they would like to talk with him, most preachers generally respond and say, "Sure! I'll be glad to talk with you. What do you want to talk about?" Then that preacher, or anyone else in the church, justifies talking with them by saying, "It will give me an opportunity to witness to them and maybe lead them to Christ." They will even come to the pulpit and share with the church that God opened a door for him to talk with a couple of Jehovah Witnesses.

We need to understand and know about false religions. If they are active members of a false religion, their heart is already hardened, and beliefs are POURED IN CONCRETE! Also, they have taught their member "how to approach people of other religions" and draw them into a conversation in order to try and make them question their beliefs. They ARE NOT wanting to talk to you because they are not sure of what they believe. They want to talk to you to change you to what they believe. That is an ulterior motive.

The Watch Tower made a video several years ago. In that video, they showed classes where young members of their church were being taught how to draw people into a conversation. They are taught certain questions to ask in order to try and "trip up the person they are talking to" and make them start to doubt their own religion. Once they are tripped up, and the person begins to ask questions, the person is immediately asked if they would like for them to come back to their house and have a weekly Bible study! Many have fallen for that scam!

According to Nehemiah, we are not supposed to be drawn into a conversation with them. I recall on incident which happened about 1982 or 1983 when I was affiliated with another independent Baptist Mission agency in Natchez, Mississippi. We had a "Candidate School" for two weeks each summer to train new missionaries and refresh missionaries on furlough. The classes ran from 8 AM to 3 PM. We had about 50 missionaries attending that year. One day two very nicely dressed young men walked into the class and quietly sat down on the back row. When it came lunch time, they started a conversation with some of those affiliated with the Mission but did not reveal who they were. They got invited to stay for lunch. They quickly thanked them and agreed to have lunch. That was brought to my attention as I was Co-Director of the Mission at that time. I went to the lunchroom and "watched and listened" for a few minutes. Then, I introduced myself to them and asked them to please step out to the reception area. When we got to the reception area, I asked them why they came in and attended the class. They quickly started to "explain" in a very good way, why they wanted to attend the classes. Basically, they said they were both Christians and just wanted to learn more about the Bible and something about our ministry. Once they finished explaining, which was in great detail, I asked them very nicely, "Sir, can I ask you men a question?" They responded quickly and said, " Oh, yes sir. We would be glad to answer any question you ask." Then I said, politely but clearly, "Are you two men affiliated with the Jehovah Witnesses?" The look on their face changed immediately and they begin talking and trying to dodge the question. When they paused, I said, "You did not answer my question. Are you men Jehovah Witnesses? They finally said, "Yes Sir, we are, but …" I took control of the conversation and explained that I knew why they were there, and I knew the classes they had been through at

the training institute. I led them to the door and told them to leave and never come back! They never said another word but turned and walked out the door.

Over the years, I have learned that people in a religion such as the Jehovah Witnesses have their beliefs POURED IN CONCRETE and you are wasting your time talking to them. They are NOT OPEN to talking to you about Bible truth. They are there for one reason, and one reason only. They are there to lure you away from what you believe. It seems clear that Nehemiah knew that truth also. ALWAYS Stand totally separated from the people of false religions!

DIVISION THREE

REBUILDING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

THE REBUILDING OF GOD'S PEOPLE
PART ONE
Nehemiah 8:1-8

Please keep in mind, these two chapters are not talking about evangelism and winning people to Christ. Sadly, today churches will plan a "Revival Meeting" and then invite a man to come to their church and preach evangelistic messages on salvation. Revival will not come as the result of hearing messages on salvation. As a matter of fact, revival has nothing to do with lost people. It's like a rebirth or a re-awakening, an invigorating experience where the Holy Spirit moves freely among believers, setting their hearts on fire for the Lord. Now, let me be clear as I do not want any misunderstanding. When a church has revival, true spiritual revival, it will ALWAYS result in the members witnessing and winning lost people to Christ, but that is not revival. That is the RESULT of the revival of believers!

America was founded on the belief that the country should be devoted to God, God's Word, and living righteously. That devotion comes from studying and understanding the Word of God. When the Word of God is taught correctly and then preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, it will always produce revival. When God's people slip away from loving God, slip away from reading and studying His Word and understanding His Word, then they will lose God's blessings. Psalms 1:1-3 tell us this. *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper*."

The people of Jerusalem had been out of fellowship with God and had lost His blessings for hundreds of years! Now, in Nehemiah Chapters one through six, the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt, and all the "material needs" of the people had been met. The Jewish people had never

seen or enjoyed the blessings of God on them personally, but they heard about all God had done for their nation in the past. After seeing God's hand and blessing on the rebuilding of the walls, they had the desire in their hearts to see God's blessings restored on them. They asked Ezra to bring the book of the law and share it with them. Keep in mind there were possibly a few copies of the books which Moses wrote, but it was not like today where everyone had a copy. No doubt, the people knew that Ezra was a godly man. Ezra 7:10 testifies he was well prepared, *"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments."* Ezra gladly accepted their invitation. Ezra used a Bible for sharing the Word of God with them. That plan is found in Verse 8. He had a "three-point" outline!

"So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." After (1) reading the Word of God distinctly, Ezra went to his second point, and he (2) "Gave the sense" of what he had just read to them. In other words, he explained in common everyday language the scripture he had read. After reading the Word of God, and explaining the scriptures to them clearly, Ezra (3) "Caused them to understand" what God was saying and applied it to them personally. Note the word "understand" in Verse 8! It is VERY important for people to clearly understand the Word. The word "understand" is used six times in Verses 1-13. It is used in Verses 2, 3, 7, 8, 12, and 13! Now let us try to understand the setting, as the setting is very important because it was given to them by God a little over 1000 years before the book of Nehemiah.

"And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. 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. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: 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. Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."

Verse 2 tells us that Ezra brought the "book of the law" to the people on *"the first day of the seventh month."* That month, in the Hebrew language was 'Heshvan," which is our month of October. However, the Jews had what they called a Civil Calendar, and the month of "Heshvan" was the first month of the year. It says he brought it on the first day of the month. That made it equivalent to what we call 'New Years Day!' The Jewish people celebrated the month of Heshvan

by holding three feasts during the month. The first feast was called The Feast of the Trumpets and was celebrated on the first day of the month, which they called ‘The Head of the Year!' That is recorded in Leviticus 23:23-25. Prophetically, that was the gathering of the Jews after the tribulation. The second feast was called the 'Feast of Atonement' and was celebrated on the tenth day of the month. That is recorded in Leviticus 23:27-32. That was a feast which called for 'Sorrow and repentance.' The third feast was called 'The Feast of Tabernacles’ and was celebrated on the fifteenth day of the month. That is recorded in Leviticus 23:34. They celebrated that feast for two reasons. First, they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles as a memorial for God's deliverance of their nation out of Egypt. Second, prophetically, they celebrated it for the 1000 years of rest which God promised them after the regathering of the nation. That is explained in Zechariah 14:16-21.

These three feasts were celebrated during the first month of the year in order "that the nation could start the year right!" The people in Jerusalem had not observed those three feasts since the days of Joshua, which was about 980 years! They, after a sort, celebrated the Passover under Ezra in Ezra Chapter 6, but they had celebrated the "three feasts" since the days of Joshua. They most likely stopped having the feast after God allowed Israel to be taken captive by the Babylonian Empire about 640 BC. As Ezra brought the book out to read, he wanted to "get the nation spiritually right with God." It is for that reason that he began a "revival conference" on the first day of the New Year. This is what is needed in many churches in America today. The church today needs to go back to where they were before they became "luke-warm" (Revelation 3:16) and start over again! That may not apply to some churches, but it clearly applies to most churches in America today.

The people apparently had prepared for the conference with Ezra, as they had built, or had someone build, a "pulpit of wood" for Ezra to read and preach from (Verse 4)! This is the only place in the Bible where the word "Pulpit" is used. The Hebrew word means "a tower." Ezra was elevated above the people, which enabled him to be seen by the entire crowd and it also enabled Ezra to look in the eyes of the people in front of him. That enabled him to make the message personal and apply the Word of God to them personally. Every preacher should make his message personal to the people in front of him, and not just teach or preach like he is teaching facts from a math book! He needs to "make it personal and apply the message to the people." When a preacher is sitting on the platform, before going to the pulpit, the last thought he should have is, "What is my main purpose in going to the pulpit today?” What is the main purpose? There are a number of purposes, but I will not cover those at this time, The main purpose is for him "to be used by God to change the lives of the people sitting in front of him." That makes it personal!

Ezra began reading about 9:00 AM and read until midday, which is about noon time. According to Verse 18, he did that for seven straight days. Each day he read the “book of law" for at least three hours to the people, people who were all standing on their feet the entire time (Verse 5)! I have often wondered if a church in America today planned that type of services, standing and hearing the word of God read for three hours each day for seven days, how many members would attend! I will not give my opinion, but I am sure you can imagine how many would be there. I added that because "people must have a desire in their hearts for revival, or revival will never come!” These people had a desire in their hearts for revival and were willing to do whatever was necessary to be revived and have the blessings of God back on their life. I wonder how many of us are truly wanting revival? I do not know, but I do know this, we can have it if we want it!

The people we are talking about had revival. Let's read Nehemiah 9:3, *"And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God."* These people confessed their sins “one fourth part of a day!" We will come back to this when we reach Chapter 9! Ezra "read the book, explained the book, and made them understand the book.” The result was revival!!! However, their revival was short lived. Later in the book we find that their worship was formal and insincere.

REBUILDING OF GOD'S PEOPLE
PART TWO
SEVEN BUILDING BLOCKS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH.
II Peter 1:1-11

"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

This chapter is a "follow-up" to Nehemiah Chapters 4, 5 and 6, where Nehemiah exercised faith in God, and he put his faith into "prayer and practice." I feel sure that most of you know that when you repented, confessed your sins, and put your faith in Jesus Christ, you were born again. The second you were born again you became a new creature, and you immediately received the Holy Spirit to dwell in your heart. Regardless of whatever has happened in your life since that day, He continues to live in your heart. That is what I Peter is referring to when he said, "*that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature…*"

Everyone who has received the Holy Spirit is saved and on their way to Heaven. Sad to say, that I have talked to a good number of Christians through the years who say, “I'm saved and on my way the Heaven. That is all I need." That is not true! The day you received the Holy Spirit and were born into the family of God, you became a "son of God and a member of His body (I Corinthians 12:12-13). What is true, is that the day you became a member of the body of Christ, is when "the warfare between you and the world began." You need to realize that on that day you had an enemy who is called "the devil" and you were going to be tempted to fail God every day of

your life. God knew that you were going to be in a warfare between “the god of this world,” and “the world system which Satan controls.”

Because of that, God commanded us to "…. *giving all diligence, **add to your faith** virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity"* There is no doubt that Nehemiah had "added" these seven things to his life. These seven things are "building-blocks" that prepare us for the warfare we face every day.

Many Christians do not understand the world system. It is explained in I John 2:15-18 which says, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, i**s not of the Father, but is of the world.** And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."* Let me explain to you 'briefly" what those three things mean. **First,** “t*he lust of the flesh”* means "the desire to do more" and get more involved in the world system, go out and have fun. The word fun is not found anywhere in the Bible. Christians in the Bible got together to fellowship around the Word of God (I John 1:3). **Second**, “*The lust of the world”* means "the desire to have more." Many people today, even Christians, go out and get a second job, or their wives leave their children with a "Child Day Care" and get a job so they can "have more." I find nowhere in the scriptures where mothers put their children in the care of someone else while they went to work. I think God understands that if there is an emergency, but he does not understand or agree with parents letting other people raise their children just so they can have more. Many do that to have a bigger house or have a newer car, or many other reasons. In Hebrews 13:5 God said, *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."* The word "covetousness" in the Greek language is "tropos" and implies "the love of money." God can and will supply all we need. If we do not really NEED IT, we shouldn’t have a desire to HAVE IT! **Third**, the "*pride of life*" means you have a desire to be somebody big in the world. You want to be a "big shot." You want to be the president of a giant company or a State Governor, or President, etc. When we come to the conclusion of the chapter, we will look at some men whom the world sees as successful, but in reality, they are total failures.

Seven Building Blocks to Add to Your Faith and Strength to Be Successful.
Let's go back to II Peter 1:11-12

We find seven building-blocks, which God commanded us to add to our faith. They are found and illustrated in the life of Joseph in the book of Genesis. Those were, (1) Virtue, (2) Knowledge, (3) Temperance, (4) Patience, (5) Godliness, (6) Brotherly Kindness, and (7) Charity, meaning love! We find an outstanding man in the man Joseph in the Old Testament. Joseph had all these seven building blocks in his life. Therefore, we are going to use him as an example of the things we need to add to our life. I will not quote all the scripture at this point, but we will insert them one at a time as we go through his life. To begin, we will look at the first "building block" Joseph added in his life. The passage does not necessarily mean that we should seek to add these one at a time or in any special order. We should be working daily to "add ALL of these things to our life." It is God's plan for EVERY Christian to add these to our life. These, working together, will make us more like Jesus Christ, which according to Romans 8:29 is God's ultimate goal for

every Christian. "*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."* That is not only God's goal for us, but that should be OUR goal for our life. I was teaching a men's class in Sunday School along this line in Natchez, Mississippi. Suddenly, one of the men in the class raised his hand and said, "Brother Ernest, you are wanting us to be perfect." I responded, “No dear brother, I am not teaching that you should be perfect. That is impossible." He then said, "Then what are you teaching us?" I said, "I am teaching you that you should do everything possible to be perfect, which you can never be, but you should be doing ALL YOU CAN to be perfect." I further explained that I knew we could never reach that goal, but we should try, and that one day at the rapture we would reach that goal and be rewarded for "doing the best we could to be like Christ!"

Virtue! Joseph was a man who added the building-block of virtue to his life. The word "virtue" means holiness! Genesis 37:2 says, *"These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report."*

According to Verse 2, Joseph was only 17 years old at that time, and says, *"…Joseph brought unto his father their evil report."* The scripture does not make mention and tells us what his brothers were doing wrong. However, we read that they were away from their home and keeping the flock. We know for sure that whatever they were doing was clearly wrong. There are no questions about that, and their father was not pleased with them. I cannot prove this, but I think it is reasonable to assume that - whatever his brothers were doing, they tried to get Joseph to join them and participate and he refused. They most likely tried to lure him into joining them to keep him from sharing it with their father. But, AGAIN, he refused, and he reported it to their father.

As I said, I have no idea what his brothers were doing or had done, so I cannot make an exact comparison to it. However, there are MANY examples which we can use to show that Joseph was "a virtuous young man" and refused to join them in something that was wrong and was done in the flesh. For example, I am sure that at times Christians have been asked by friends to go to the beach with them, swim, have fun, maybe listen to some wild worldly music, and possibly have a bottle of beer with them. They try to convince them that it is "no big deal, we’re just going to have a good time. It will be fun. You will enjoy it!" Anyone who is "virtuous" will not do that. Why? There are several reasons that they would not join anyone in that type of worldly activity. First, for a man or a woman to put on a modern-day swimming suit is considered by God to be naked! Let's read Exodus 28:42. That verse is talking about clothing of the priest, *"And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach:"* That principle is repeated in Isaiah 47:2-3 where a young lady had been taken captive and was being made a slave. The verse says, *"Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man"* The principle is that a man or a woman should not show their legs from the loins, or waist, to the bottom of their thighs, which is just above the knees.

No person who is "virtuous" will put on and wear a swimming suit in public, and should certainly not listen to wild, worldly music and should never join anyone in drinking a beer or any

other type of alcoholic drink. If they do, that person has not added "virtue" to their divine nature! The first building-block to your life is "the block of virtue!" NEVER participate in anything worldly and contrary to the Bible.

Knowledge! Joseph also added the building block of knowledge to his divine nature. Let's read Genesis 37:5, *"And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.*" In the days of Joseph, they did not have the Word of God as we have today. The book of Hebrews, in Chapter 1:1, tells us that "God … *at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets."* More than once God spoke to people in the Old Testament through dreams and visions. That is what Joseph is referring to when he said, "I dreamed a dream." He was saying that "God gave me knowledge about something in my dream." We will see later that his dream was no doubt from God, because later in the book Joseph's brothers and his father, Jacob, truly bowed down to him when he became the man in charge of food during the famine in Egypt. That is what he saw in his dream (Genesis 37:7-10). Dreams and visions were the manner God used in those days to get knowledge to his people.

Today, as said in Hebrews 1:1, we get knowledge by studying the Word of God. God has commanded us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of God" (II Peter 3:18). The ONLY way we grow in grace and knowledge of God, is to do as He commanded, and spend time in the Word of God daily. That does not mean that we should just "read" the Word of God daily. I know people who set a goal to read four chapters in the Bible daily, so they can say they read the Bible through in one year. Let me tell you why that is not best. As a matter of fact, it can be harmful to your Christian life. Romans 10:17 says, *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the <u>word</u> of God."* There are two different words in the Greek language which are translated "Word" in the English New Testament. The most commonly used word in the Greek is "Logos." That refers to the written word of God. Then in Romans 10:17 it comes from the Greek "Rhema." Rhema means "to get something from God!" That is why it is dangerous to set a goal to read four chapters a day. You can READ four chapters a day just to say, "I made my goal," but you may read four chapters and get nothing from God. Before you begin reading your Bible, you should always have prayer. In that prayer, you should ask God to "give you something!" If you will follow that and desire it in your heart, God will ALWAYS give you something! He may give you something in the first ten verses you read, or He may give you something in four chapters, but He will ALWAYS give you something. He does not give us something because we read and "reached our goal." He "gives us something" because we have a desire in our hearts to "get something from Him!" And the Bible says, "*He knows what we need before we ask!"* (Matthew 6:8).

I will give you an example from my life. I was in Mexico as a missionary. They did not deliver mail house to house as they do here. You had to go to the post office to get your mail. I had a small 175 motorcycle that I generally rode to the post office. That day, my daughter Teresa asked if she could ride with me. I said, "Sure!" She climbed on the back, behind me, with her arms around me, and we rode to the post office. We lived on the corner of a gravel, sandy, dirt road. When we returned home, I turned to go in our driveway, and I down shifted to slow the motorcycle down. When I did, the back tire slipped, and we fell sideways. Thankfully, my daughter was thrown off and was not hurt since we were going slow. However, the motorcycle fell on my right knee and almost tore the entire kneecap off my knee. I went in the house, washed it good, put medicine on it, and wrapped it in gauze. My wife begged me to go to a doctor. I guess I thought I was "too

mannish" to do that, so I did not go. As the day went by, the knee swelled more and more and got very red around the edges. It began to be very painful. The next morning, I got up and it was worse. Again, my wife begged me to go see a doctor. I did not want to admit I was not man enough to handle it, but said "Ok, I'll go just to please you!"

We got to the doctor. When he looked at the torn kneecap, he said it looked pretty bad, swollen, and infected. I told him how it happened. Then he asked me if I had been given a tetanus shot within the last year. I told him no. He told me that with all the dirt that had gotten in the torn place, I may have tetanus, which can be deadly! He washed it clean, covered it in an antibiotic cream and sent me home. By that time, my knee was swollen to about twice the normal size, was red, and was infected. I went to bed that night but could not sleep. I was very worried that I might have tetanus and might die. I slowly got out of bed, hobbled to the living room, got my Bible and sat on the floor, as I could not kneel. I prayed and asked God to please show me if He was going to call me home or not. I wanted to know, because I wanted to get my wife and three children back to the States before I died. I do not recommend this, but I was desperate! I had no idea where to read. I set my Bible on its back edge and let it fall open. It opened to Isaiah Chapter 46. I started reading and got to Verse 4 which says, *"And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you."* It was as if God spoke to me and told me I was not going to die! I rejoiced, thanked Him, closed my Bible, and was going back to bed. I have never heard God speak to me in a vocal voice, but at that time God spoke to my heart in that small, soft voice and said, "I'm not through yet." So, I opened my Bible back to Isaiah 46 and read down through the end or the chapter, but I got nothing more from God. In my mind I thought, I must have just thought God was going to give me something else, and I closed my Bible again. Again! God said, "I'm not through yet." I thought for a minute but opened my Bible and began reading Isaiah Chapter 47. I read the first two verses, and God spoke to my heart again. God gave me something!!! Those verses say, *"Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers*." I cannot tell you what that meant to me. I got up, went to our bathroom and removed all the elastic tape the doctor had wrapped it in, removed the gauze, gently washed the area and patted it dry. I went back to bed and thanked God for his answer to my prayer, and for giving me something. I got up the next morning and the swelling had gone down considerably, the redness was almost gone, and the pain was almost gone. By the next day, I was back out on the street, knocking on doors and sharing the Gospel! I "Got something from God." It was glorious! It was a building-block, that strengthened my faith in God and His Word. Please start today by going to God in prayer, asking Him to speak to your heart and give you knowledge of His will for the entire day. STAY with Him until He gives you something. I assure you He will, day by day, give you answers and give you building blocks to "grow in the grace and knowledge in the Word and in Him."

Temperance: The word "temperance" means "self-control." It means to have the mastery over all our evil inclinations and appetites. It is obvious that Joseph had added "temperance" to his life. The last half of Genesis Chapter 37 tells us that Joseph's brethren, who hated him, had gone a good distance from their home to keep the flock. Later, Joseph's father sent Joseph to see how they were doing. When his brethren saw him coming, they made a plot to "get rid of him." First, they cast him in a pit to die. When they saw a caravan coming, they took him out of the pit and sold

him to be a slave. The caravan took him to Egypt, where he was bought by Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's captains. As time went by, Potiphar saw that the Lord was with Joseph, and he made him an overseer of his house in every respect, other than his wife. Now read Genesis 39:7-9 and see what happened. *"And it came to pass after these things, that <u>his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me</u>. **<u>But he refused</u>,** and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? "*

Think of the situation. Joseph was in Potiphar's house, ALONE with Potiphar's wife. She was no doubt an attractive woman, as a captain could choose his wife in those days. There was no one else in the house but Joseph and Potiphar's wife, and no one would have entered unexpectedly because it was the captain's house. Potiphar's wife invited him to "lie with her." It was an ideal situation for Joseph to "lie with her" if he had been a man after the flesh, but he was not. He had ADDED temperance to his life and was master over his evil inclinations and carnal appetites. HE REFUSED! AMEN!!!

In the Verses 7-9, Potiphar's wife tried to entice him, day by day, meaning every day! However, he continued to refuse and would not harken unto her. Joseph did not have the New Testament, but he practiced I Corinthians 9:27. *"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."* Temperance is a building block that EVERY Christian should "add to their divine nature." Being saved may not have been enough to handle a situation like that. More than one Christian that I have known has fallen to his carnal flesh. Joseph's continual refusal tells us Joseph was spending time alone with God, and God was strengthening his faith and his temperance every day! Because of Joseph's refusal, Potiphar's wife became angry and lied to her husband about him, and her husband put Joseph in prison. Are you adding virtue, knowledge, and temperance to your life and your divine nature daily? If not, you should start TODAY!

<u>Patience:</u> The word "patience" does not mean missing an airplane by five minutes and being upset. That is what we think of as patience today. Patience in II Peter 1:6 means; "Enduring suffering and cheerfully knowing that God does not move without purpose and plan." Many may think of "patience" as a minor attribute. It is not! I Timothy 6:11 lists "patience" with some very important attributes of our Christian life. *"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, <u>patience</u>, meekness."*

We know that Joseph had added "patience" to his life because of the way he responded to all he had been through. Joseph had honored God and had done right. He had been put into prison due to no fault of his own. He stayed in prison for "two full years" (Genesis 41:1). During that time, we find no place in the scripture where he complained or was upset. I can imagine how some Christians today may have responded to what Joseph went through, being "put in prison because a woman lied about him" when HE HAD HONORED God and done right. Today, some men would likely have said, "If this is what I get, being honest and honoring God, I will just quit! It is just not worth it to serve God if this is the result!"

Ask yourself this question. "What would you have done under these same circumstances?" Would you have gone to prison cheerfully, and made no complaint? Regardless of your answer, I encourage you to "add patience" to your Christian life. God always has a plan. The apostle John did. Revelation 1:9 tells us that when he was exiled and put on the isle called Patmos to die because he had been preaching the Gospel, he had patience. *"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."* After that statement, John saw the entire church age, the rapture of the church, the seven years of tribulation, the second coming of Christ, the casting of Satan into the bottomless pit, the New Jerusalem, and much more including being used of God to write the book of Revelation! WOW! If you had asked John if it was worth being sent to the isle of Patmos to die, I think you would hear him say, IT WAS WORTH EVERY MINUTE OF IT! I encourage you to "add patience" in the building blocks on your life. James 1:3-4 says, *"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."*

Godliness: The word Godliness means, "holiness and Christ like." There is no doubt that Joseph's life showed that he lived a very godly life. Genesis 39:21-23 tells us that even after going through all he had been through, cast in a pit to die, being sold into slavery, lied about by Potiphar's wife, and cast into prison, the Lord showed him mercy and the keeper of the prison saw his godly life. *"But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper."*

After all that Joseph went through, all the trials and sent to prison, the keeper of the prison "saw that the Lord was with him." Would you and I have continued to live an outstanding godly life, one that everyone could see and know that we were fully trusting in the Lord?" I try to imagine myself being in that position. I am not sure I could have lived a life of joy, contentment, and cheerfulness; a life that everyone could see those things in me, if I had gone through what Joseph went through. I would hope that I could but cannot help but wonder.

Brotherly Kindness: That means exactly what it says. Being kind to everyone around you, regardless of how they have treated you. We find that was true in Joseph's life. Let's read Genesis 42:21-25 and see how Jospeh treated his brothers after they talked about how they had hated him, cast him in a pit to die, and sold him into slavery!

"And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes. Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with

corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them." Joseph treated them with kindness.

Now, let's go to the last attribute which God told us to "add to our divine nature" which we received at the time of our salvation.

Charity: We see one of the clearest things in all the Bible concerning "Charity," meaning "love." First, let's read Genesis 45:4-5, where Joseph revealed to his brethren that he was their brother! *"And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life."*

Now, let's go to Genesis 50:15-19 and see Joseph, as a type of Jesus Christ; how he treated his brethren with "Christ-like love." *"And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?"*

Joseph is the best type of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. All of you know John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

The world certainly did not merit or deserve His love, but He loved us despite how badly we mistreated Him. Joseph's brothers certainly did not merit or deserve Joseph's love, but he forgave them and loved them, despite how they treated him and how badly they treated him. Each one of us should follow Joseph's pattern and "love our brother and love the lost people of the world."

Conclusion
II Peter 1:8-9

"For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

First: God said, IF, IF, IF you have these things, referring to the seven things he commanded us to "*add to your faith"* in Verses 5-7, you will not be barren nor unfruitful. God is saying, "You will have a successful life." He made no other additions, apart from those seven things, to have a successful life. If you do not add those seven things to your life, "you will be an unsuccessful Christian, and it does not matter what else you do!" You can understand that. For

example, would one say that Bill Clinton, who was President of the United States, lived a successful life? Certainly not. Not according to the Word of God!

Second: God said, *"But he that lacketh these things, is blind - he can not see afar off,"* implying that such a person does not look to the future and the Judgment Seat of Christ, and that such a person, one who refuses to add these seven things to their life, has even forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. When such a person stands before the judgment Seat of Christ, they will GREATLY regret not adding these seven things to their life. Below is an illustration of a longtime friend of mine who did not add those seven things to his life. He regretted it, even before he died and stood before Christ. His life came to an end while I was sitting beside his bed. He was crying tears of regret, slowly passed away, and went to stand before Jesus Christ.

I have never forgotten a conversation I had with that longtime friend that I knew back in the days when I served as a member of the Memphis Police Department. He claimed to be a Christian. He lived around the corner from me and worked in the sales department of Hull-Dobbs Ford car dealership in Memphis, Tennessee. That was the largest Ford dealer in the mid-south. He sold cars, made good money, but was never satisfied! Later he started a "used car lot" on the other side of Memphis. While I was in the police department, he would ask me to "come and work the lot while he was around town buying more cars. Again, he made good money but was never satisfied.

It was about that time, that God called me to the mission field, and we moved to Mexico. I lost track of him for about 20 years. I was told he had moved to Harrison, Arkansas where he bought a Chevrolet dealership. Later he added a Nissan dealership, and was making millions of dollars, but was never satisfied. He built a Comfort Suites Motel and made more money. Later, he built a Holiday Inn Express. Following that he built a Hampton Inn. Along the way, he bought a franchise with Dixie Café. Somewhere in the middle of all that, he built a "self-storage unit business." He was extremely wealthy. My wife and I were going to Branson, Missouri for a short vacation. As we drove through Harrison, Arkansas, we saw a sign on a car dealership with his name on it. (I am avoiding using his name, even though he died several years ago.) We stopped and he was in his office at the dealership. We talked for a while and caught up on old times. He was going through a difficult time as he had lost his wife two weeks before. That opened the door for me to talk with him and try to help him through that difficult time. One thing led to another, but he asked where we were going and we told him we were going to Branson, which was about 20 minutes north of Harrison.

He then shared that he had some motels and invited us to stay in one instead of paying a very high cost to stay in Branson, a big well-known vacation spot. Long story short, he wanted me to come back and visit with him. Sometime later, my wife and I went back to visit. Naturally, we stayed in one of his motels. After lunch one day, he dropped us off at the motel, and I told him that I would like to get together and talk with him. I am sure he knew it was something about his life, as he had indicated already. He said, "How about you and your wife coming to the house tonight for dinner?" We accepted and arrived about 5:30 PM as his wife was preparing dinner. He said, "While they finish dinner, let's go out on the back deck and talk." I was praying about how to open the conversation with him, but did not have to. When we sat down, he said, "Calvin, you see all this I have?" I responded, "I do. You have done well!" He then said, "Calvin I have spent my life

making money and having things." Then he said, "You know what?" I said, "No, not really." He said, "All this I have, these dealerships, motels, storage units, café, etc., IT DOESN'T MEAN A THING NOW! I have wasted my life!"

They called us to dinner; we ate and drove back to Memphis the next morning. However, I returned to Harrison about two weeks later, alone, and spent time with Bill. He was on dialysis and getting worse. I sat down and shared the Gospel with him. He told me he had asked Jesus to be his Savior about a week after I talked to him the first time as he was not sure where he was going to spend eternity. I went through it again, step by step, and got the assurance of his salvation. He shared again how he had wasted his life. I gave him an example; "It was like you have been climbing a ladder to get to the top, but when you reached the top, which you did, now you realized you had the ladder leaning on the wrong wall!" He realized that and said, "I thought I had been successful, but I failed. I see now I was not successful, but I have lived a life of total failure!"

He enjoyed going out with his wife or friends and "have a little drink with dinner. He enjoyed going to worldly places and having a good time. He was considered the wealthiest man in Harrison - and he loved it! Everybody in that town knew him - he was personal friends with Johnny Morris, the founder of Bass Pro Shop. He was considered a "SOMEBODY!

You say, "That won't happen to me." It could! It happened to Demas. Demas had worked alongside of the apostle Paul for several years, but II Timothy 4:10 says, *"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica…"*

It depends on the IF in II Peter 1:8! The choice is yours, NOT GOD'S. II Chronicles 16:9 says, "*For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore, from henceforth thou shalt have wars."* I am praying that you will make the right choice and therefore have the blessings of God on your life and have a successful life full of fruit!

REBUILDING OF GOD'S PEOPLE
PART THREE

PRINCIPLES FOR REVIVAL
Nehemiah Chapters 9 - 10

As I said earlier in the book, we ARE NOT talking about evangelism. You cannot "evangelize" God's people! We are talking about God's people having a true, heartfelt revival. There are four basic principles we find in these two chapters, which brought revival to Jerusalem in those days. Those same four principles are necessary if a church today wants revival. The word revival in Greek is, "Chayal." It means "To live Again." That is said, very clearly, of one of the seven churches founded in Revelation which is "the church in Sardis." Revelation 3:1 states that truth. *"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."* Many churches today, in 2025, seem to be in that same condition and need "To Live Again." The first principle is…

CHRISTIANS NEED TO RETURN TO TENDER HEARTEDNESS.
Nehemiah 8:4 and Nehemiah 9:1-3

Nehemiah 8:4, says, *"For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law."* We live in a day of "dry eyed religion." Nehemiah 9:1-3 tells us the results of the people being broken hearted and weeping. *"Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them. And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God."*

The People of God were "repenting, fasting, and worshipping God." Where does revival begin? It should begin with us, by "remembering from where we fell." In Revelations 2:1-5 God said this to the church at Ephesus, *"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee,* ***because thou hast left thy first love.*** *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."*

I imagine that many who are reading this book are older and can remember in years past when in almost every service people came to the altar during the invitation, knelt, and prayed. When they got up to go back to their seat, they were wiping tears from their eyes. Their hearts were tender! They were still "on the honeymoon with Jesus!" That was common in the 1960s and churches were in continual revival!

Most everyone was "tender hearted and broken hearted" when they first got saved! After salvation, the honeymoon started. The honeymoon is a picture of "first love" in Revelation 2:5. "First love" is a picture of what we call "the honeymoon" today. However, in many marriages as the years go by, the honeymoon comes to an end. The same is true with Christians. As the years go by, we seem to forget how sinful we are, and daily repentance and confession are slowly pushed into the background. Repentance and confession are not things that are done in just the early days of our salvation. They should be done EVERY day after our salvation. We sin every day. Therefore, we should repent every day, confess every day, and remember every day how that forgiveness is provided. It is still provided by the Son of God, coming to this earth, taking on the form of a man, suffering severely, and was nailed to a cross and left to die. We should remember that cross had our name on it, my name and your name! That should ALWAYS cause us to be tender-hearted and on the honeymoon! Yes, salvation is free to you and me, but Jesus paid an unbelievable price for our salvation! PLEASE remember how he suffered and died in YOUR place! Yet today many Christians have "…left their first love." A young man and woman date, fall in love, and are married. At that time there is not ANYTHING that they would not do for each other. They are continually hugging, kissing, and telling each other how much they love each other. The husband would spend his "last dime" doing anything to please her. However, as time

goes by, things slow down, and then the "honeymoon is over." They just take each other for granted. They left "their first love!" We need to *"remember therefore from whence we are fallen, and repent, and do the first works…"* Go back to our "first love, with Jesus, and renew the honeymoon. The honeymoon should NEVER end!

CHRISTIANS NEED TO REFLECT ON GOD'S GOODNESS.
Nehemiah 9:6-15

"Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous: And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red sea; And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day. And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters. Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant: And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them."

In these ten verses God reminds us of His grace and goodness to His people **eighteen times**! Each of those are underlined in the text above, but I will include them below to make them more easily used. This is amazing! Throughout Nehemiah Chapter 9, Ezra says, "remember, remember, remember…" What should we remember? We should remember the goodness of God to us!

Remember …"and thou preserved them all…"	(vs 6)
Remember …*Thou … didst choose Abram*	(vs 7)
Remember… *and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees*	(vs 7)
Remember….*and gavest him the name of Abraham*	(vs 7)
Remember …*and madest a covenant with him…*	(vs 8)
Remember …*he heardest their cry by the Red Sea*	(vs 9)
Remember … *shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh…*	(vs 10)
Remember …*and thou didst divide the sea before them…*	(vs 11)
Remember …*and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps…*	(vs 11)
Remember …*thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar*	(vs 12)
Remember …*and in the night by a pillar of fire…*	(vs 12)
Remember …*and thou gave them light in the way*	(vs 12)

Remember …*and spakest with them from heaven….* (vs 13)
Remember …*and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath…* (vs 14)
Remember …*and gavest them bread from heaven…* (vs 15)
Remember …*and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock* (vs 15)
Remember …*and promised that they should go possess the land…* (vs 15)

In the two verses which follow those eighteen things, Verses 16-17, Ezra reminds them of what THEY and their fathers had done, despite the goodness of God to them! "*"But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: <u>but thou art a God ready to pardon</u>, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, <u>and forsookest them not.</u>*

Their fathers had rebelled and hardened their hearts. THEY, the people to whom he was talking, had lived in Jerusalem for many years but had refused to obey God's word, and had hardened their hearts. Despite their rebellion and refusal of the goodness of God, the verse closes by saying, *"a God ready to pardon…and he forsookest them not!*" Ezra continued in Verses 20-25 reminding them of **twelve other things** that God, because of His great love for them, did for them.

*"Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and <u>withheldest not thy manna</u> from their mouth, and <u>gavest them water for their thirst</u>. Yea, forty years didst <u>thou sustain them in the wilderness</u>, so that <u>they lacked nothing</u>; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not. Moreover <u>thou gavest them kingdoms</u> and nations, and didst divide them into corners: so they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan. <u>Their children also multipliedst</u> thou as the stars of heaven, and <u>broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised</u> to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it. So the children went in and possessed the land, and <u>thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land</u>, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would. And <u>they took strong cities</u>, and a fat land, and <u>possessed houses full of all goods</u>, wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance: <u>so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, **and delighted themselves in thy great goodness.**</u>"* That is a total of **30 times** that God reminded His people of His goodness toward them as a nation! If God reminded them of His goodness, how much more would He want us to reflect on His goodness to us today? Listed below are the mentions in Verses 20-25 of God's goodness to His people, who had been in Jerusalem for many years:

Remember …*Thou gavest also thy good spirit* (Vs 20)
Remember …*Thou withheld not manna* (Vs 20)
Remember …*Thou gavest them water* (Vs 20)
Remember …*Thou didst sustain them* (Vs 21)
Remember …*They lacked nothing* (Vs 21)
Remember …*Thou gavest them kingdoms* (Vs 22)
Remember …*Their children multiplied* (Vs 23)
Remember …*Thou broughtest them into the Promised land* (Vs 23)

Remember …*Thou subduedest the enemy before them* (Vs 24)
Remember …*They took strong cities* (Vs 25)
Remember …*They possessed houses full of all goods* (Vs 25)

We see more amazing things in Chapter 9. Verse 28 says, …*"nevertheless, they were disobedient and rebellious against thee,"* but that is followed by Verse 31, *"Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God."*

As a New Testament Christian and members of a New Testament church of whom Jesus Christ is the head (Colossians 1:8), and bought with His blood, we should ask ourselves some questions. How often do we stop and reflect on the goodness and mercy of God and all He has done for us, beginning at the cross? How often do we stop, sit down, and reflect on His daily mercy and long suffering, and thank Him for His love for us, which is the reason for his mercy and long suffering? How often do we stop, put things aside and spend an hour with Him in His Word? How often do we stop for an hour and confess our sins, which we have committed that day? How often do we thank Him for all He has done for us? How often do we tell him we love him?

There is a song sung in churches today that says, "Count your many blessings name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done!" We should all, including me, stop and reflect on God's goodness, count our many blessings, thank Him for them, and spend time telling Him how much we love him. That is what people do when they are "still on the honeymoon!" We have studied the first two principles of having revival, "Return to Tender Heartedness, and Reflect on God's Goodness." Now we will study the third principle.

CHRISTIANS NEED TO RECOGNIZE THEIR OWN SINFULNESS.
Nehemiah 9:32-37 (Especially Verse 33)

"Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day. (verse 33) *Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly: Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them. For they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works. Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, **we are servants in it**: And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us **because of our sins:** also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress."*

Despite being back in the "promised land" which God had promised to their fathers, these people had been in captivity for about 90 years, and despite still "being God's people," they were still in captivity and were "servants" to the strangers in Jerusalem, **because of their sins** (Verse 36)! That tells us it is "not enough to be saved, to be God's children, and to be on our way to

heaven." Churches today need to "have revival." We need to "live again!" However, there is a price to pay for “God's people to have Revival and live again.” There is a price to pay to have God’s blessings restored on our lives, on our churches, and on our country. That price and promise is found and explained in II Chronicles 7:14. *"If my people, which 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 will heal their land."*

This verse tells us three things. **First**, Who God is talking to about revival. He said, "*If my people*." **Second**, God tells us "What we must do to have revival." God said, "*shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways…*" **Third**, God tells us "When we shall have revival." God said, "*then will I hear from heaven.…*" meaning, "THEN, and ONLY THEN, will he *"hear from heaven, and will forgive their* (our) *sin, and will heal their* (our) *land."*

Our great sin is found in Revelation 2:1-5. *"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless* ***I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first loved.*** *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works;* ***or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place****, except thou repent."* That closing statement, "thy candlestick" is referring to the Holy Spirit. That means, if we do not return and "do the first works, the Holy Spirit will be grieved and quenched" and we will not have God's blessing on anything we do. We will not have his blessing and power in our individual lives or in our church services as long as the Holy Spirit is quenched. That is a picture of many, if not most churches, in the United States today!

Our greatest sin is that we have "left our first love." This is where a right relationship with God begins and should continue. In Mark 12:28-30 God was asked *“which is the first commandment of all?* Jesus immediately responded, *"And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."* PLEASE note that Jesus said "twice" that this was the FIRST commandment of all! When we first trusted Christ, we were on "the honeymoon." We were on fire for God! There was not anything that we would not do for the cause of Christ, because we had that "first love in our heart for God." If we "fast forward" until today, God said, 'we need to remember from whence we have fallen, and we need to repent and do the first works.' We need to 'remember God's goodness' and we need to go back to the honeymoon, do the first works, and be 'on fire for Jesus!’

Now, let me ask a couple of questions. Are you being obedient to the Word of God? Are you obeying everything that you KNOW that you should do or not do according to His Word? I am not talking about things that you may possibly NOT KNOW at this time. I am asking about the things YOU DO KNOW, even little things. God does not dwell in a temple made with hands. (Acts 7:48 and 17:24). According to I Corinthians 3, 16, 17 and 19, you and I ARE the "Temple of God."

Therefore, I ask myself this question and hope you will also. Do I honor God in everything I do in thoughts, in words, in deeds, in appearance, my attitude toward God, and my attitude toward others because I love Him with all my heart and want to please and obey Him? (John 8:29) Until this is true, there will be no revival. We must **recognize our sins, confess our sins, ask forgiveness for our sins, and turn from our wicked ways… THEN God will send revival and heal our land.** Until that time, the "Spirit of God will be quenched and our hearts will be lukewarm, and our service to Him will be worthless!!!"

CHRISTIANS NEED TO RENEW THEIR OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD.
Nehemiah 10:28-39

Now, we will study the fourth principle for revival. Revival will always cause God's children to return and do the "first works" which is to love Jesus Christ like we did when we first trusted Him as Savior and the Holy Spirit came to dwell in us (Revelation 2:1-5). We were born again, and the Holy Spirit worked freely in our life every day. At that time, every Christian should have made a covenant with God to obey His word. As for God's people in Nehemiah, they made a covenant with the Lord.

Israel made an Oath with God to Practice Separation.
Nehemiah 10:28-30

"And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands ***unto the law of God,*** *their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding; They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and* ***into an oath, to walk in God's law****, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes; that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons:"*

The people of God…

"separated themselves from the people of the lands…"
"to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord…"
"that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land…"
"nor take their daughters for our sons:"

God had given the commandment to be separated from the world, the things of the world, and the people of the world. Go back to Isaiah 52:11. *"Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD."*

Today, in 2025, separation continues to be VERY important for Christians and for the church. II Corinthians 6:17-18 makes that clear beyond ANY doubt, plus it "adds the blessing of God to our life or our church! *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith*

*the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, **And** will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."* The word "touch" means that a Christian or a church is to avoid all unholy contact with a vain and polluted world. We are NOT TO TOUCH IT! There are at least four things which God has commanded us to "*separate"* from:

First: Christians and churches are to "separate and not touch bad company. You say, I would not do that. Are you sure? In Luke 22:54-55 the Apostle Peter did but regretted it. This is when Judas betrayed Jesus, and they took Him to be crucified. What Peter did, although Jesus had warned him - *"Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them."*

Second: Christians and churches are to "separate from saved people who are not right with God." God made that clear beyond doubt in I Corinthians 5:11-13. *"I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; **with such an one no not to eat**.*

Third: Christians and churches are to be totally separated from anything which has to do with the world system. I John 2:15-26 makes that clear beyond any reasonable doubt. *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."*

Fourth: God teaches us that Christians should avoid marriages with people of other tribes or nations. The people of God had practiced inter-marriage with other tribes and nations, like the "Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites!" That sin is clearly stated in Ezra 9:1-3 and tells us how serious it was.

"Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass. And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonied."

Ezra 9:10-12 states that God had commanded them NOT to marry people of other tribes and nations. *"And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor*

seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever."

Ezra 10:1-5 tells us that Ezra, under God's leadership, made the people make a covenant with God not to do those things, *"Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore. And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it. Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word. And they sware."*

I am sure there may be people who disagree with this. However, if you disagree with not marrying people of other tribes or nations, you are not disagreeing with me! YOU ARE DISAGREEING WITH GOD AND HIS WRITTEN WORD! Also, some may say, "That was in those days. Today, things are different." Hebrews 13:8 states, *"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."*

Along that same line, the people of God made the Covenant to "restore the Lord's Day" and keep it holy. That also is made clear in Nehemiah 10:31. *"And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and that we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt."* The church has never been a place for "buying or selling" anything, ESPECIALLY on the Lord's day which in the days of Nehemiah, that was "the sabbath day."

CHRISTIANS NEED TO RESTORE THEIR SERVICE TO GOD'S HOUSE.
Nehemiah 10:32-39

This last section has two basic principles. You will always see these two things take place when there is true revival in the life of any Christian! Always!

First, you will see people faithfully bringing their tithes and offerings to the House of God. That is repeated several times in Nehemiah 10:32 and 35-37. *"**Also we made ordinances for us,** to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God; And to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD: Also the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God: And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage."*

These verses make it clear, that when these people "got their hearts right with God and returned to their first love" they began to obey, and gladly obey, the commandments of God. They immediately began to give the "first fruits" of everything they had in those days, and most important, they also gave, *"the firstborn of their sons…"* All these things clearly testify that, according to II Corinthians 8:5, they gave their own selves. *"And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God*." How do you and I "give our own selves?" That is done by obeying Romans 12:1, which says, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."* As for our children, when a Christian husband and wife learn they are going to have a child, they should kneel and thank God for giving them a child, and then they should turn around immediately and "give that child back to God!"

If you truly, in your heart, want revival in your life, it begins with this principle. It begins when you "present your bodies a living sacrifice" unto the Lord! That means you DIE TO SELF! A person who has died to self is dead, which means they have NO WILL of their own. They have surrendered their life, in full, to Jesus Christ and to God the Father. That person will (1) Think like Christ thinks, (2) Want what Christ wants, (3) Ask for what Christ wants you to ask for, and (4) Do what Christ wants them to do!

Second: You will see people faithfully attending church services on the Lord's Day. The word Lord's Day, comes from the Greek word, "kuriakos." It means "The Day belongs to the Lord." He OWNS THAT DAY! Nehemiah 10:39b states, *"…and we will not forsake the house of our God."* Seven times in Verses from 32 - 39, we find the phrase *"the house of God."* As I am sure you know, that same commandment is given to you and me in the New Testament. Hebrews 10:25 states, *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*

The Lord's Day is not a day when you visit friends, visit family, have a day at the lake, a day to go hunting, a day to have a picnic, a day to sleep in, and it is not any other type of day to do anything other than make it "the Lord's Day," and assemble together in the House of God. Now please do not misunderstand me. You cannot attend the House of God when you are sick, or when you are "providentially hindered," meaning "having a reason beyond your control." It may be when a family member must be taken to the hospital, or a friend has an urgent need that needs immediate attention, or due to age and disability. I am sure you understand the phrase, "providentially hindered!"

What are the four things that will take place in your life when you have revival? (1) You will "return to your "first love" with a tender heart and tears in your eyes, much like the day of your salvation. That comes with a tender heart and the Holy Spirit controlling your life. (2) You will "Reflect on God's goodness." That comes from spending time with God, thanking and praising God for His unlimited goodness that He has shown you all the days of your life. (3) You will "Recognize your sinfulness." That comes from daily examination of your life and daily confessing your sins and asking forgiveness. (4) You will "Renew your obedience" to EVERYTHING you KNOW in the word of God. Let's have revival! *"If my people, which 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 will heal their land."* If you want revival, you CAN

HAVE IT! The choice is yours, not God's. God has already promised that He will send revival in II Chronicles 7:14.

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR REBUILDING CHURCHES
Nehemiah 11:1, 2 and 20-23 Nehemiah 12:27-30 and 43

There were approximately 50,000 Jews who were in captivity and had returned to Judah after they were allowed to do so by King Cyrus of Persia. That is recorded in Ezra 1:1-2 and was about 90 years before Nehemiah came to Jerusalem. After Nehemiah returned, rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and that worship was restored, Nehemiah explains how the people worked together to rebuild and strengthen their nation. Nehemiah 11:1-2 tells us that the rulers dwelt in Jerusalem. They also made a decision that "one out of every ten" of the Jews who had returned to Judah would also be moved to live in Jerusalem, "God's Holy City." That was 10% of the 50,000 Jews who were still in captivity but had returned to Judah. Their purpose was to help REBUILD the nation of Israel. The other 90% of those who returned lived in various cities of Judah. Today, Jerusalem remains the center of all prophecies and the center of the world.

However, those who moved to Jerusalem were far outnumbered by "strangers" of other nations, who had moved to Jerusalem after the Jews were taken captive. Those people were the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. Not only were the Jewish people greatly outnumbered in Jerusalem, but the strangers listed above also despised the Jewish people and wanted to destroy them. That is clearly stated in Esther 3:1-15, where a man named Haman conspired to deceive the king, and wanted the king to give him permission to destroy all Jewish people living in Jerusalem and Judah. Not only were the Jews greatly outnumbered by these strange people who despised them, but those strangers who were of very ungodly nations were armed for war. The people of God, who were in captivity, were not armed in any manner. However, the people of God, by faith, believed that "the battle was the Lord's," and that He had all the power needed to protect His people. They believed the promise of God in Zechariah 4:6. *"Not my might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of host."* There are basic principles given in Nehemiah Chapters 11-12 explaining how they won the victory and later dedicated the rebuilt walls of their city, Jerusalem. The same principles apply to the church today. These basic principles ensure success in rebuilding the church and seeing it grow.

THE PRINCIPLE OF ORGANIZATION
Nehemiah Chapter Eleven

Ordinarily, when we come to a chapter like Nehemiah Chapter 11 where there is a long list of names, like in some chapters where there is a list of genealogies, we may just skip over that chapter or just read it quickly and move on to the next chapter. I considered doing that on this chapter. However, after reviewing it several times I realized this chapter is a tremendous chapter of organization and of delegation among the Jews and applies to the New Testament church. There is not much more than that, but I want us to see the pattern God gave Israel and how it applies to the New Testament church of today.

If you will read Nehemiah 11:3-19, it lists EVERY family and every tribe of Israel which had moved back to Jerusalem. It shows them yoked up together and having a part in the work of

God in the restoring of worship. Fifteen times it illustrates that EVERY person had a part in accomplishing the rebuilding of the walls and the restoring of worship! This was referring to the people who live in Jerusalem. Then Verses 20-36 gives a list of the tribes who moved back to Jerusalem but lived in other cities in Judah and around Jerusalem. Notice also, that in almost every verse it says, "and this family, and this family, and this family, and this family, and this family, and this family." Then it goes on to list how every family in Jerusalem and in Judah were working side by side, or shoulder to shoulder, for the glory of God! They were organized! That is what the church of today greatly needs

. The word "organization" comes from the word "occupy." In Luke 19:13, Jesus said to the disciples; *"Occupy till I come."* The word "occupy" does not mean to simply possess a certain place or portion. That is generally what we think of when we use or hear the word occupy. However, in this text the word "occupy" means: "to busy oneself, to make improvements, and to employ themselves for the purpose of increasing and making the ministry more profitable."

In this context, God was instructing EVERY person who had moved to Jerusalem, and every person who lived in the cities around Jerusalem, to 'occupy' and be busy making spiritual improvements in the holy city! Today, to put that in words more clearly understood, God has commanded EVERY born-again member of every church, to 'occupy' and to be busy making improvements, and having a part in building the ministry of the church. In Verse 23 we noticed something a bit unusual. God named the "singers" as having a part in the ministry and also stated that they should be paid daily for their service. We would not think that God would point out "singers" as being of great importance in God's plan to restore worship in the Temple. However, the singers are the only group of workers which God mentioned by name and stated they should receive daily benefits. God had a reason for mentioning what might be the lowest group of workers in the ministry among that group of 50,000 Jews! God was teaching us that EVERY member is important! These singers are as important as the rulers!

The New Testament church must also be organized. A study of the New Testament clearly teaches that EVERY member of the church, regardless of who they are or what they do, is equally important to every other member of the church ministry. I Corinthians 12:4-11 teaches us that every person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior is given a spiritual gift along with salvation. "*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of <u>the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.</u> For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."*

Let me start this study by pointing out the reason God has given every born-again member of the church a spiritual gift. Verse 7 says, *"But the manifestation of <u>the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal</u>."* This verse means that the spiritual gift which is given to a particular person, regardless of what that gift is, that person will have a part and will profit all the other members of the church. Strong's Greek Concordance gives this as the meaning of "<u>profit with all.</u>"

It means to be an advantage to the church, for the common good of every other member. Then, following the fact that every member has been given a spiritual gift, I Corinthians 12:12-23 clearly tells us that every member of the church is equally important.

God uses an example that makes it very easy for us to understand that every member of the Body of Christ is equally important. He uses the human body to show us that every member of the body is equally important to every other member, *"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:"*

Our body is 100% organized and every part is vitally important. If you do nothing more than 'stump your toe' and the doctor must put a small brace on it, IT EFFECTS YOUR ENTIRE BODY! If you 'stumble,' fall and break your little finger, it affects your entire body. If you do not understand this, let me ask you to do something. Take a roll of tape and tape your little finger to a popsicle stick! In a VERY short time, you will understand that when your little finger is not free to do what it normally does, it will affect your entire body! Now, let's move on to the last principle in Nehemiah Chapters 11 and 12.

THE PRINCIPLE OF DELEGATION
Nehemiah Chapter Eleven.

In Nehemiah Chapters 11 and 12, there are men who are referred to as “overseers" at least five times as found in Nehemiah 11:9, 14, 16, and 22. It is found again in Nehemiah 12:42. In the church today, there is no doubt that God has put faithful men, filled with the Holy Spirit, men who have the gift of "discernment," in the church, who are as the “overseers” in the Old Testament. Those men seemingly have the gift of discernment, mentioned in I Corinthians 12:10.

There is no doubt at all that God has put men in the New Testament church who have the gift of discernment. I personally know of several men who can walk into a room and tell you if something is wrong! On the other hand, I know men who can talk to the pastor and say, "Pastor, I believe brother so and so would make a good teacher or I know a man who would fit perfectly in the bus ministry, or I know a man who would fit perfectly in a children's ministry, or I know a man who would be a great Sunday School Director. A man with the spirit of discernment can determine which spiritual gift other men have. The pastor should not only listen to those men, but he should

continually seek their advice concerning not only people who have certain gifts, but he should seek their advice concerning who or what might be a problem in the church that is quenching the Spirit of God!

Question: Are you "occupying" the place in the church which God intends for you to occupy? Do you want your church ministry to grow, to make disciples, to reach others with the Gospel, and send missionaries around the world? Are you using the gift which God gave you to help accomplish those things? If not, why not? If you are just learning that you have been given a spiritual gift by God, you should seek advice from your pastor, or older, wise men, and seek their leadership as to where you might fit and help in the work of the church.

Your church will grow when every member is a servant rather than a spectator, when every Christian is a praying Christian, when every Christian is a giving Christian, when every Christian is an encouragement to every other Christian, when every Christian is active in their church, when every Christian is using their spiritual gift, and when every Christian is "occupying" until Jesus comes! ARE YOU DOING THESE THINGS?

THE MAJOR FAILURES OF ISRAEL IN THEIR COVENANT WITH GOD
Nehemiah Chapter 13

After Nehemiah was sent to Jerusalem by Artaxerxes, the king of Babylon, to rebuild the walls of the city, we read in Nehemiah 13:6 that Nehemiah, as he had promised the king he would do in Nehemiah 2:6, returned to Shushan, reported to the king, and continued as the king's cupbearer. No one is exactly sure how long Nehemiah remained in Shushan, but it seems that he had been back with the king for about one year. After that year, Nehemiah requested permission from the king to return to Jerusalem (Verse 5). When he returned to Jerusalem, he found that Israel had been disobedient to God and broken the Covenant made with their God. Nehemiah was NOT HAPPY! As he had done while being governor of Jerusalem and was rebuilding the walls, he confronted those matters of disobedience. He addressed those who had failed and disobeyed God! Nehemiah was "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Nehemiah is a picture of what God would have every leader to be. He never changed. When he found the problems, he handled them in the exact same way he had handled the problems when he was rebuilding the walls.

The People Broke their Covenant to be Separated from the World.
Part One
Nehemiah 13:4-9

"*And before this, Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, was allied unto Tobiah: And he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests. But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king, and after certain days*

obtained I leave of the king: And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense."

The **first** matter of disobedience Nehemiah found was concerning separation. He found that Eliashib, the high priest, had prepared a chamber for the man named Tobiah who had openly opposed God and joined Sanballat in opposing Nehemiah while he was rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. He did that first by mocking Nehemiah and God's people and laughing at them as they built. That is recorded in Nehemiah 4:3. Later in Nehemiah 4:11, Tobiah joined Sanballat again and threatened to slay Nehemiah and all the people of God. Tobiah had been the arch enemy of Nehemiah and of God's people, and had greatly opposed the walls of Jerusalem being rebuilt for the glory of God.

In Nehemiah 13:5 it is hard to believe, and might be hard to understand, why Eliashib, the high priest, prepared a chamber in the house of God for Tobiah who hated God and hated God's people. Eliashib knew beyond any doubt that Tobiah was an Ammonite. We cannot help but wonder why Eliashib, the high priest, would do such a thing but it was most likely done because one of his kinfolks was married to Sanballat's daughter. Nehemiah 13:28 reveals that to us, *"And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me."*

When I hear, see, or read of things of this nature, I always remember a statement made by Dr. Vance Havner. He said, "The church will not be destroyed by woodpeckers on the outside, but by termites on the inside." Everything rises or falls based on leadership. There is no doubt that Eliashib knew that he was doing wrong and was disobeying Gods command. Nehemiah 4:3 states that such people had been forbidden to come into the congregation of God forever, *"On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever;"*

How did Nehemiah handle this problem? He did not handle it like some leaders today might handle it. He did not say, "Well, it's not really a big deal. Maybe we can change him." That would have been totally contrary to the teaching of the Word of God. In I Corinthians 5 God, through the pen of the apostle, said that we are not to keep company with fornicators and the people of the world, but then he took it to an extreme. In I Corinthians 5:9-14 Paul said:

"I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

Also, Nehemiah did not say, "Oh! I don't want to offend him or throw him out. That might cause me to lose some votes for me to be governor!" Nehemiah was not a people pleaser and was not a politician! Sad to say, many leaders in churches today are "people pleasers." It is VERY serious for a leader to be a people pleaser. Galatians 1:10 says, *"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."*

How did Nehemiah handle it? Nehemiah knew that he was called of God to "rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and restore the worship of God in the temple." That is one of the things that made Nehemiah a great leader who stood by the Word of God. Come rain or shine, he stood! Nehemiah 13:8 and 9 tells us how he handled it! **First,** he *"…cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber."* Nehemiah did not ask anyone or anything concerning what he should do but acted on what he knew the Word of God taught. He immediately caste ALL of Tobiah's household goods out of the House of God!

Second, Nehemiah was so committed to pleasing God and not defiling the house of God, that he took the cleaning of the House of God to the extreme. Verse 9 tells us that Nehemiah commanded them to "cleanse the chambers." The word "chambers" is plural, which indicates that Eliashib had not only prepared Tobiah just a room to live in, but had prepared what we call "a suite of rooms" for him to live in. Nehemiah was so grieved over the defiling of the House of God, that he commanded them to "cleanse" the chambers. The word Nehemiah used for "cleanse" means he had them fumigate the chamber. Nehemiah did not even want the smell of the ungodly world in the house of God! That is a picture of how the church should practice separation today. In II Corinthians 6:17 we are commanded to do the same, *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and **touch not** the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"*

Let me share one more statement that Dr. Vance Havner made. He said, "If you please the Lord, it does not matter who you displease. If you don't please the Lord, it is not going to matter who you do please." It seems that Nehemiah knew and lived by this same truth! We should all live by that statement, ESPECIALLY LEADERS!

Question: Are you practicing separation from the world today! Is your church refusing to allow anything from the world to be used in part of the church ministry? Are you practicing "touch not" the things of the world? If you are not practicing that, YOU SHOULD BE!

The People Broke Their Covenant to Practice Separation from the World.
Part Two
Nehemiah 13:23-31

Nehemiah found out about the people breaking their covenant concerning separation and that they did not personally separate from the people of the world. That covenant is found in Nehemiah 10:28-30.

"And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having

understanding; They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes; And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons:

However, in Nehemiah 13:23-25 the scriptures tell us that the people disobeyed God, ignored the covenant they had made with Him, went back to giving their daughter to those of another nation, and taking the daughters of other nations for their sons.

"In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And 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."

Sad to say, that failure of separation involved Eliashib, the high priest, and his son. That is found in Nehemiah 13:28. *"And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me."* That sin is clearly forbidden, and there is NO DOUBT that Eliashib and the people knew this was wrong and were willfully being disobedient to God's Word. The command to the people not to practice "mixed marriages" dates back at least to Ezra 9:1-3.

"Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass. And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonied."

They were without excuse! Those verses explain Ezra's response. However, that is not exactly how Nehemiah handled it. Nehemiah's response to mixed marriages is found in one verse, Nehemiah 13:25, *"And 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."*

The People Broke Their Covenant to be Good Stewards in the House of God.
Nehemiah 13:10-14

Again, in Nehemiah 10:38-39, we find the covenant all of Israel had made with God, that "they would not forsake the house of God." The people had promised to bring the tithes into the house of God and to provide for the Levites, the porters, and the singers, and all who lived and served in the house of God, men who served the entire nation of Israel.

"*And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house. For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: and we will not forsake the house of our God."*

Yet, when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, he found that the Levites, the porters, and the singers, who were all living and serving in the house of God, had left their places and gone to their own field to provide their own needs. They did that because it was necessary in order for them to buy food for themselves. The people had forsaken the house of God and had stopped bringing their tithes. There was nothing in the temple to buy food and meet the needs of the workers."

"And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries. And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted faithful, and their office was to distribute unto their brethren. Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof."

Malachi, who was a minor prophet during the very same time as Nehemiah, was dealing with that problem when he wrote Malachi 3:6-10. These verses are talking about these same people who had forsaken the house of God when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem. The people had robbed God. Malachi wrote, "*I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."*

That would be like a pastor today if the people of the church stopped paying them a salary. He would be forced to leave the church and find a job to meet his daily needs. God would not be pleased with that! I Corinthians 9:9-14 makes that very clear that the church should faithfully take care of and meet the needs of the pastor, and all other members of the church staff.

"For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we

should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

Nehemiah, after he had concluded dealing with the problem, turned to God and prayed. That prayer is recorded in Verse 14: *"Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof."*

What was Nehemiah saying in this brief prayer? First, he was not saying he wanted to be rewarded by men for what he had done! He was saying he wanted his reward to come from God when he arrived in heaven. He had never read Matthew 6:19-21, but he knew the truth found in those verses. He wanted God to remember where his heart was, *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

Question: Where is your heart? Are you doing what you do for the praise of man or are you wanting to lay up treasure in heaven. If you are doing what you do to please men, you are not a servant of God! I repeat, "If you please the Lord, it does not matter who you displease! If you DON'T please the Lord, it is not going to matter who you do please."

The People Broke Their Covenant to Sanctify The Sabbath Day!
Nehemiah 13:15-21

Again, Israel in Nehemiah 10:31, made a covenant with God to observe the Sabbath Day and to keep it Holy, *"And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and that we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt."*

However, when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, he found that the people of Israel had turned the Sabbath Day into a day of "buying and selling."

"In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. 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. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.

The Sabbath Day is not the day of the week when the church of today meets. The Sabbath day is on Saturday. The church meets on Sunday, the first day of the week, and it is called "The Lord's Day." All of Israel had violated the covenant they had made with God and had done even more to defile the Sabbath. They were allowing gentiles to come in the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath, not to attend any type of worship service, but to sell their products and make money.

Before moving forward, let me share my convictions. I see nothing wrong with a church having, for example, a Christian bookstore and providing Bible materials for the people of the church. However, in my opinion, no church should have a bookstore wherein they purchase books from a supplier and then sell those books "for a profit." The Bible is clear, "The Just shall live by faith." The church IS NOT IN THE SELLING BUSINESS! I see nothing wrong with the church having scriptural books, which they make available to the congregation. But in my opinion, they certainly should not add to the price they paid for those books and make a profit from their congregation. Some churches and Christians simply make books available to the people of the church and then inform the people what the church paid for the book and encourage the people to make a donation, if they wish, to cover the cost. However, if a member truly wants and needs a book and does not have the money to pay the cost, the church should provide the book as a gift.

Nehemiah dealt with this problem of buying and selling, in three different manners. **First**, he rebuked the Jews who were selling things on the Sabbath Day, and stopped them for doing so (Nehemiah 13:15). *"In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals"*

Second, he sharply and strongly rebuked the rulers for allowing any of that type of activity to be done, whether it was being done by Jews or Gentiles, and reminded them of the judgement of God on their forefathers. In Nehemiah 13:16-18 he said, *"There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath."*

Third, Nehemiah made sure that such worldliness would not happen on the Sabbath Day in Jerusalem again. The Sabbath Day, according to the Jewish clock, began at 6:30 PM on Friday and ran until 6:30 PM on Saturday. Normally, the gates of Jerusalem would be closed at 6:30 PM on Friday and would not be opened again until 6:30 PM on Saturday. When Nehemiah found them "buying and selling" on the Sabbath, he commanded the gates to be closed, "*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: To add to that he set some of this servants at the gates than nothing would be brought into the Temple on the Sabbath Day.*

All of that is found in Nehemiah 13:19-21, *"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. So the merchants and sellers of all kinds of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath."

Let me take you back to 1953 when I was in High School in Memphis, Tennessee. EVERY Sunday, the Lord's Day, there were no retail stores, hardware stores, or shopping centers open on that day. There were "four" gas stations allowed to be open: one in northeast Memphis, one in southeast Memphis, and one in northwest Memphis! There were no pharmacies open, other than pharmacies which were a part of the three major hospitals in Memphis, Baptist Hospital, Methodist Hospital, and St. Joseph Hospital! Also, no one ever saw anyone cutting their yards, or doing any other type of work on Sunday. Most everyone in Memphis went to Church on Sunday morning, and many on Sunday night. Apart from that, Sunday was a day of rest and a day to spend with your family.

Today, most EVERYTHING in Memphis is open apart from several businesses/restaurants which are owned and operated by dedicated Christian people such as Chick-Fil-A! Every shopping mall in Memphis is open for what they call normal operating hours. Every gas station in Memphis is open, and most retail stores such as Walmart, Lowes, Home Depot, and others are open as normal! Why! It is all about money!!!

I think it is worth pointing out one thing, not what Nehemiah did, but what Nehemiah did not do concerning those problems? He did not pray and ask God what to do, or what God wanted him to do! Please do not think that I do not believe in prayer, and that prayer isn't vitally important. However, when we KNOW the will of God according to the written Word, we do not need to pray about it, and God does not expect us to pray about it! I will give you an example of that statement being true. That Bible example is found in Joshua Chapter 7. When Joshua led the people across the river to take the city of Jericho, Joshua under the leadership of God, wrote in Joshua 6:18, *"And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it."*

One man, a man named Achan, disobeyed the commandment and, according to Joshua 7:1, he partook of the accursed things. *"But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel."*

In the verses following, Joshua sent 3,000 of his men to make war and to take "Ai." Because of "sin in the camp" Ai made war against them, and "3,000 men of Israel fled," but 36 of those men were killed and Israel lost that war! That GREATLY upset Joshua, and he went to God in prayer. This is recorded in Joshua 7:7-12. THIS IS WORTH READING!

"And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their

backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name? ***And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?*** *Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more,* ***except ye destroy the accursed from among you***.

When Joshua went to prayer, God said to him***,*** *"Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?* God was basically saying "What are you praying about? You know what the problem is! There is sin in the camp! Get off your face and go deal with the sin." I will not include the verses here, but you can read Joshua 7:19-28 and learn that Joshua got up from praying and cleaned the camp of Israel! That restored God's blessing, and Israel went back against Ai and defeated them. That defeat is recorded in detail in Joshua Chapter 8!

Today, many leaders do not like confrontation of dealing with sin in their church. Therefore, when they are told or learn of "sin in the church" they take what they call a very spiritual attitude and say, "Well, I will pray about that and see what the Lord will have me do." God has ALREADY told leaders what to do! Deal with the sin! If they will not, the Holy Spirit will be quenched, and the church will not have God's blessings until they deal with ANYTHING that defiles Gods' church!

In the closing verse of Nehemiah 13 Nehemiah simply said, *"Remember me, O my God, for good.*" Nehemiah had obeyed, he had glorified God and had laid up treasure in heaven! At that time, God closed the door on Israel for 400 years, and the Jewish people remain hard-hearted and blind until today in 2025. No, God is not finished with Israel. God still has a plan for "His people" but that time and plan is still in the future!

THE END