

WEEP OVER JERUSALEM. NEH. 1. 10/06/24. #01.

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1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. It came to pass in the month of Chislev, *in* the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel, ²that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. ³And they said to me, “The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province *are* there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem *is* also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.” ⁴So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *for many* days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.
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1. A sad report

- a. Nehemiah was the cupbearer of King Artaxerxes I
 - a1. Trusted advisor to king, who tasted the wine to make sure it was not poisoned
 - a2. Often, the cupbearer was the top official in a kingdom
 - a3. In Gen. 40-41 “butler” is used for cupbearer
- b. Neh. (*the Lord comforts*) received Hanani (shorten form of Hananiah, *wait on the Lord*), a kinsman, at the palace (citadel) of Sushan (others came also)
 - a1. Sushan or Susa was the winter palace of the Persian kings (150 mi. north of gulf)
 - a2. Sushan, on an alluvial plain (a dried lake bed or flood area), was too hot in summer
- c. Neh. asked about the welfare of the Jews
 - a1. It was in Ezra & Nehemiah that the Israelites began to be called the Jews, for mostly Judeans returned to the land
 - a2. Neh. was shocked to hear that the walls were still in ruins & the Jews were stressed
- d. Ezra began to rebuild the walls in 458 BC, but an outcry by enemies & a rebellion put down in Assyria put a stop to the building (Ezr. 4:7-23)
- e. Neh. mourned & fasted for 3 weeks (446 BC)

- a1. Dan. 10:2 Daniel had also mourned & fasted for 3 weeks over the remnant
- a2. Ezra had fasted over sins of Jews (Ez. 9)

2. Nehemiah's prayer (vs. 6-11)

- a. In the 20th yr. of the reign of Artaxerxes I, Neh. made intercession for the Jews in Jerusalem
 - a1. Neh.'s prayer beseeched God to help
 - a2. Neh. was willing to be an instrument God could use in the restoration
- b. Neh.'s prayer covers five points
 - a1. God is great & mighty (lit., *fearsome*)
 - a2. God had made a covenant with Israel to be their God & to provide a land for them
 - a3. If Israel sinned against God, he would remove them from the land (Dt. 28)
 - a4. Israel had greatly sinned against God, so he removed them from their land (Neh. includes himself as one of the sinners)
 - a5. Neh. asks God to forgive Israel of their sins & restore Jerusalem as his city
- c. Neh. acknowledged 3 things:
 - a1. God always keeps his commandments & decrees, including judgment
 - a2. God was right in dispersing his people due to their rebellion & sin
 - a3. Since the remnant in Jerusalem had returned to God, he promised to restore them

3. The unknown factor

- a. Neh. judged the spiritual nature of the Jews by his kinsman & his companions (*we have returned*)
- b. Neh. did not know that the Jews who had returned were still in rebellion (pagan wives, enslaving fellow Jews, Sabbath breaking, withholding tithes...)
 - a1. Neh.'s plea is based on the assumption of a spiritual remnant who had returned
 - a2. Those who love the Lord don't understand other believers who do not (Paul, Peter)
- c. Neh. awaited God's response to his prayer