

STRENGTHENED

O GOD, STRENGTHEN MY HANDS

NEHEMIAH 6:9

Sunday Morning, January 19, 2025 » Pastor Josiah Kagin

Message Title: A Burden for the Work

Message Text: Nehemiah 2:1-8

Introduction:

The walls around Jerusalem had been lying in ruin for over one hundred and forty years since the destruction of Judah by King Nebuchadnezzar. A remnant had returned from Babylon to the Jerusalem around seventy years before the time of today's text. They had rebuilt the temple under the order of King Cyrus, but for various reasons the walls remained broken down causing the city to be in reproach and an international joke. Further, the people were afflicted with many problems. As Nehemiah this received the report from his heart was grieved over the need and *burdened* to return and rebuild the walls. He sought the God of Heaven in prayer for wisdom and strength. This he did for four months! He understood that without God's strength, rebuilding the Jerusalem's walls would be impossible. Today, we will see how God began to powerfully open doors for Nehemiah so that this work could be accomplished. We can depend on God to do the same.

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

Rebuilding the Walls
[1-6]

Restoring the People
[7-13]

1. A Sustained _____ for the Work (1-3)

A. An _____ Burden (1-2)

Nehemiah 2:1-2 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. 2 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,

FOUR MONTHS — *Chisleu to Nisan (20th year of Artaxerxes)*

ARTAXERXES — According to the Greek writer Plutarch, Artaxerxes I was nicknamed "long-armed" because his right arm was longer than his left. —Plutarch

CUPBEARER — The cupbearer often served as a personal confidant to the king, and therefore possessed great influence. —FSB



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QUOTE: The office of royal cupbearer is of high antiquity, and was a place of great honor in the Persian court. The cupbearer, being in the daily presence of the king, and seeing him at his seasons of relaxation from care, had many opportunities to ingratiate himself into the goodwill of the monarch, and thus could obtain many favors that were denied others.—Evers

QUOTE: A gloomy face on such an occasion was considered bad manners according to Persian rules. The Persians thought that it was impossible for anyone to be in the king's presence and not be happy! —Evers

NOTE — Even though Nehemiah had a notable position, he was burdened by the condition of God's people and city 1,000 miles away.

B. An _____ Burden (3)

THE KING'S INTEREST

Nehemiah 2:2 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,

NEHEMIAH'S BURDEN

Nehemiah 2:3 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.

Timeline

605 BC

Jeremiah prophecies of
70 years of captivity

586 BC

Jerusalem [Judah] Falls:
Temple destroyed

538 BC

Cyrus' decree to rebuild the
temple

537 BC

Sheshbazzar leads 42,360
Israelites back to Jerusalem
[Ezra 1-2]

516 BC

The Temple completed

479 BC

Esther becomes queen of
Persia

458 BC

King Artaxerxes sends Ezra
to oversee in Jerusalem

444 BC

Nehemiah hears about
Jerusalem's condition and
returns to rebuild the walls

430 BC

Malachi is written

2. A Sufficient _____ for the Work (5-8)

Nehemiah 2:4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request?

A. Requesting the Backing of _____ (4b)

Nehemiah 2:4b ...So I prayed to the God of heaven.

DEFINITION—PRAYER: to address a deity or say a prayer; often to make a request

QUOTE: Prayer is a declaration of dependance upon God.

NOTE — This is one of eight brief prayers mentioned by Nehemiah (4:4-5; 5:19; 6:9, 14; 13:14, 22, 29)

Nehemiah 1:4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

Isaiah 65:24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; And while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing

B. Requesting the Backing of the _____ (5-8)

Nehemiah 2:4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request?...

HE REQUESTED TO BE _____

Nehemiah 2:5 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.

HE REQUESTED _____

Nehemiah 2:6 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.

See *Nehemiah 5:14*

HE REQUESTED _____

Nehemiah 2:7 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;

DEFINITIONS—LETTERS TO CONVEY: to cause to pass, travel across or pass over

BEYOND THE RIVER — The Euphrates River

HE REQUESTED _____

Nehemiah 2:8 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...

KINGS' FOREST — a reserve forest perhaps located near Jerusalem

DEFINITION—TIMBER: the wood of trees cut and prepared for use as building material.

NOTE — Nehemiah had been diligent in preparation.

WE HAVE BEEN _____ — *Mark 16:15 ...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

WE HAVE _____ — *Proverbs 27:1 Boast not thyself of to morrow; For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*

WE HAVE THE _____ — *Matthew 28:18–19 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore...*

WE HAVE GIVEN _____

THE HOLY SPIRIT — *Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

THE WORD OF GOD — *2 Corinthians 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

SPIRITUAL GIFTS — *Romans 12:5–8 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

EQUIPPING — *Ephesians 4:11–12 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

Conclusion

Nehemiah 2:8 ...And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

QUOTE: God's Work done God's way will never lack God's supply. — Hudson Taylor

Questions to Consider

Do I know where I would spend eternity if I died tonight? Am I trusting in Jesus Christ alone for my eternal salvation and the forgiveness of my sin?

Do I have a burden for the work of the Lord?

Am relying on God for the backing I need to accomplish His work?

