

“Come, Let Us Build!”

Nehemiah 2:11-20

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF NEHEMIAH

1. God’s people taken into exile in by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (586 BC). 2 Chron 36:10-21; Daniel 1:1-2
2. Cyrus, king of Persia, defeated Babylon & allowed exiles to return (538 BC). 2 Chron 36:22-23; Ez 1:1-11
3. God’s people return in 3 ‘waves’ or groups over about 100 years.
 - 1st group: led by Zerubbabel (the Temple is rebuilt)
 - 2nd group: led by Ezra
 - 3rd group led by Nehemiah (the walls around the city are rebuilt)

NEHEMIAH ARRIVES & INSPECTS THE WALLS. v.11-16

1. Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem—and waits. v.11 Compare Ezra 8:32
2. He goes by night—in response to what God was putting in his heart. v.12
3. Nehemiah inspects the walls. v.13-16
 - He kept his intentions secret at first. v.13; “by night” v.12, 13, 15; v.16

NEHEMIAH’S ASSESSMENT AND CHALLENGE. v.17-18a

1. Nehemiah acknowledged the gravity of the situation. v.17 “You see the trouble we are in...”
2. Nehemiah identified himself with God’s people in their bad situation. v.17 “...the trouble we are in...”
3. Nehemiah identified himself with the restoration work of God’s city. v.17b “Come, let us build the wall...”
4. Nehemiah made it clear this was God’s plan—not his. v.18a “And I told them of the hand of my God...”

RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORK OF REBUILDING. v.18b-20

1. God’s people responded with their words. v. 18b “Let us rise up and build”
2. God’s people responded with their actions. v.18c “So they strengthened their hands for the good work”
3. God’s people entered into a battle between good and evil. v.19-20
 - They were surrounded: Sanballat (North); Tobiah (East); Geshem (South). v.19a
 - They started ‘trash talking’ God’s people. v.19b
 - They were renounced. v.20 (Ref. Rev. 12:11)

<u>“evil” or “bad” (Heb. <i>ra</i>)</u>	<u>“good” (Heb. <i>tov</i>)</u>
2:1 Now I had not been <u>sad</u> [<i>ra</i> : ‘evil’] in his presence	2:5 If it <u>please</u> [<i>tov</i> – ‘good’] the king (also in 2:7)
2:2 Why is your face <u>sad</u> ?	2:6 So it <u>pleased</u> the king
2:2 This is nothing but <u>sadness</u> of the heart.	2:8 The <u>good</u> hand of my God was on me
2:10 ...it <u>displeased</u> them greatly...	2:10 ...to seek the <u>welfare</u> of the people...
2:17 You see the <u>trouble</u> we are in...	2:18 The hand of my God... upon me for <u>good</u> ...
	2:18 ...strengthened their hands for the <u>good</u> work...

John 13:1: Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

John 14:16-18: And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

Ref. *Love Among the Ruins* – painting by English artist Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898)

2000 BC	Abraham & Sarah		Genesis
1446 BC	Moses & Exodus Joshua & conquest of Canaan		Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy Joshua
1300-1040 BC	Israel is a federation of 12 tribes led by various rulers called 'Judges'		Judges
1040 BC	12 tribes unite to form a nation under a monarchy (king) 3 kings of Israel: Saul (1040-1010 BC), David (1010-970 BC) & Solomon (970-930 BC) → Solomon builds the Temple		1 & 2 Samuel 1 Kings 5-8; 2 Chron 2:1-8:1
930 BC	Civil war in Israel—the nation divides! <u>Northern Tribes</u> (10) Called "Israel" or "Samaria" Set up worship in Dan Followed Jeroboam, son of Nebat	<u>Southern Tribes</u> (2) Called "Judah" Kept worship in Jerusalem Followed Rehoboam, son of Solomon	1 Kings 12:1-20; 2 Chron 10:1-12:15
722 BC	ASSYRIA defeats the Northern tribes		
586 BC		BABYLON defeats the Southern tribes and takes many into Exile	2 Chronicles 36:10-21; Daniel 1:1-2
539 BC		PERSIA defeats Babylon	
538 BC		Cyrus, king of Persia allows Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem Zerubbabel leads 1 st wave Temple rebuilt	2 Chron 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-11 Ezra 6:15
515 BC			
458 BC		Ezra leads 2 nd wave	Ezra 7:1f
445 BC		Nehemiah leads 3 rd wave	Nehemiah 1:1f