

To Bring One of Ten +++

Nehemiah 10 – 13

+++ +++

~ Our Spiritual Safari is going to a rock and roll festival in our final report from the Book of Nehemiah. We're calling it Jerusa-Palooza. That may seem a little shocking and irreverent to some, but I mean no offense. It's fitting; and it's how we're going to begin. In our last several reports, we have witnessed Ezra read from the Word of God and the people confessing their sins as a result. That culminated with the children of Israel, who have now returned from the seventy years Babylonian captivity, rejoicing and praising God for their redemption. Our last report concluded with Nehemiah worshiping God for the way He had preserved Abraham and for leading their fathers out of Egypt so long ago.

You and I can thank God for two things today: that He created this universe and that He saved us from an eternity of darkness. When is the last time you thanked God that He saved you? When is the last time you told the Lord that you love Him because He loves you? Well, if you wait until Sunday to do those things, then you don't worship God properly, correctly and completely. Actually, let's just stop right here for a moment and praise God from Whom all blessings flow. Let's thank Him for saving us as sinners and for giving us everything physical and material in nature, too. A-men.

X

~ Also, in our previous report, we saw the returning remnant make a covenant with God, and Nehemiah made them all sign their names to it. Have you ever made a covenant with God? Have you ever promised Him anything? You ought to; I have, and everyone should. Well, this chapter is just another list of all the people who did exactly that. These people are all bringing their first fruits to the Lord by vow. They hadn't been doing that in the past; but they're doing it now.

When we hear churches or Christian organizations constantly complaining about not having enough money – well, the members, people and readers aren't to blame for non-support; no, what we need to do is get back to fishing. That takes patience; and skill and we need to recognize that we may go many days without catching anything substantial. That necessitates following directions. Simon Peter had to go fishing to get the tax money; so, what we need to do is get out there and win more people for the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, don't get me wrong, if you are not saved, or if you are not blessed by these reports, then I am not asking for your support; because the Lord won't use your money anyways. I never recommend we support anything that isn't an immediate personal blessing to our hearts and lives. However, if something has opened up an avenue of service, and if it blesses your heart, then you have an obligation to support that cause. Where do you get your blessing, friends? Some of you have been on a free safari for a long, long time. Well, Nehemiah is very practical as a layman; and this is the message he gave his people at the time in which we are studying....

XI

~ In chapter eleven, we find another list; and it is a list of merely "*willing people.*" These are those who were willing to forsake everything to work repairing the city and temple of Jerusalem. These are the ones who were willing to do the difficult work God wanted them to do. I hope you read these chapters very carefully; I'm not including the Bible text in this report – but these chapters are very important to read and become familiar with. One in ten were to stay in Jerusalem; maybe they drew straws to see who stayed behind and who didn't – I don't know how they made that determination. But, either way, the other nine went out and dwelt in other cities. I think there may have been a lot of complaining with people saying, "... *oh, why did God make this happen to me?*" – and that sort of thing. I feel most of those who had returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls under Nehemiah now wanted to move out to the suburbs; but those who

were willing to accept their lot in Jerusalem simply thanked God for what they had. Are you willing to serve God? Will you serve Him with a willing heart? May I say to you: God takes note of the willing hearts — and those are the names recorded in the Word of God: You may seriously want to write that down....

XII

~ It should be no surprise at this point that this chapter brings us to yet *another* list of names. This list is a little different, though; because these are all the people who were praising God. If you died right now, do you think your name would end up on this list? Well, let me ask you: why do you praise God and what do you praise Him for? Those are important questions to rectify in our mind, my beloved. May I be personal here? I have some extreme hardships and sorrows in my life — but — I don't need anyone's comfort or pity. See, I know how to praise God; and simply writing this report to you is one of the best ways. I thank Him for that privilege. I have no doubts Andrew Hunt is in this list. We may not have the most up-to-date list, because God keeps His current record private for the time being; but, there is no question in my mind, because I praise God — *ALL* the time.

So, this chapter also brings the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem; and they did so with myriad musical instruments listed in verse twenty-seven — and the songs could be heard at every gate in the city. Every visitor and passerby heard the shouting and singing for joy; I'm sure they wondered what in the world was going on. This is Jerusa-Palooza! It was really a rock and roll festival, too: the groups that performed "*Rock of Ages*" and "*When the Roll is Called up Yonder I'll be There*" were the main acts. I'm sure they had a very good time that day. All of these people in these chapters we are studying are those written in the Lambs Book of Life — and they all met together in Jerusalem. Nehemiah brought them there because that's where the temple was. We should all have this type of joy in our services today. There is *NOTHING* that has the power of real, genuine joy. Paul says to the Philippians that our very *SOURCE* of power is *JOY*. Nehemiah has already

said the joy of the Lord is our strength; so, *JOY* is our power *and* our strength....

XIII

~ Chapter thirteen recapitulates the fact of eternal vigilance as the price of Christian freedom; and is also the price of Christian liberty. Alright, somewhere between the intervals of chapter twelve and thirteen, Nehemiah went back to his job at the palace in Shushan. Remember, Nehemiah had only asked King Artaxerxes for a temporary leave of absence. We aren't told how long Nehemiah has been in Jerusalem – my estimation is about two years. Here, he asks for *another* leave, and returns again to Jerusalem. This is when Nehemiah discovers they aren't keeping a proper separation as they had been commanded. There were a whole lot of Ammonites and Moabites that had crept in at this time.

Verse four displays the high priest himself disobeying God in the critically important matter of intermarriage. God forbade intermarriage — and He gave a humorous illustration of an ox and an ass hitched together, you will recall. An ox is a clean beast, and an ass is unclean; and they were never to plow together in the field. Likewise, a believer and an unbeliever should never be married under any circumstances. Many people are paying an awful price for making partnerships that should never have been made. This principle applies to business, friendships, and social acquaintances, also.

In this chapter, those responsible for the temple converted the room designated for offerings into a free-rent residence for Tobiah. If Nehemiah had remained in Jerusalem, this would never have happened. Either way, it did happen — and it grieved Nehemiah. So, Nehemiah is going to get rid of Tobiah post-haste. The Lord Jesus commended the church in Ephesus in Revelation because they examined those who said they were apostles and discerned the phonies; and they put out imposters. Well, Nehemiah threw Tobiah's stuff out the window. There are a whole lot of so-called "*apostles*" running around who need to be thrown out of Jerusalem today.

This chapter also reveals how deeply the service of the Lord was being neglected; because the Levites were forced to go to work in the field. Many who faithfully serve the Lord are being asked to do too much today. Those who desire to and are capable of teaching the Word of God properly, correctly and completely usually have to neglect their studies in order to merely eat and live indoors – and that is simply shameful. Someone needs to take responsibility; and that is going to mean giving support to the right causes. I love Nehemiah, because he says the Bible teacher should get paid. I always like men who think like that. God approves of this, too, by the way.

Well, they were also breaking the Sabbath Day in verse fifteen; and Nehemiah put an end to that, too. He just closed the gate on the Sabbath. They were under Mosaic Law at this time, of course; and they were to obey God in Levitical law – but they weren't obeying it. Nehemiah used some extreme measures because extreme measures were needed. Revival *ALWAYS* leads to reformation; it simply cannot be otherwise. If the Word of God doesn't clean up your life, then you just don't happen to love the Lord Jesus Christ – impossible! I say that categorically and dogmatically, without question. It's no surprise we see Nehemiah ending his book in prayer. His final words to us are, "... *remember me, oh, my God, for good!*" I'm sure God does remember Nehemiah that way – I do! ~

+++ +++