Nehemiah

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Nehemiah 6

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Nehemiah is a cup-bearer for Persian King Artaxerxes, and when he hears about the state of the wall of Jerusalem, he prays and asks the King if he can go and re-build it. The King lets him go and gives him resources for rebuilding the wall (including an armed escort).

He faces opposition from the people who were living around Jerusalem.

Zechariah said that the New Jerusalem would be a city without walls:

"And there *was* the angel who talked with me, going out; and another angel was coming out to meet him, who said to him, “Run, speak to this young man, saying: ‘Jerusalem shall be inhabited *as* towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and livestock in it. For I,’ says the Lord, ‘will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.’ ” (Zechariah 2:3-5)

- The enemies of Nahemiah (Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem, etc.) start plotting to take Nehemiah out
- They sent him the message four times to meet with them but he rejected them each time: "Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?" - it is a time for work, not a time for discussion or debate.
- Then they threaten him - with a letter to the king with lies on it. But he does not back down, putting his trust in God
- Then they accuse him of cowardice and try to get him to hide in the Temple - but he does not back down. He knows the tricks of the enemy
- They spread rumors about him
- The wall was completed in record time (52 days) and all perceived it to be the work of God

1 - Who is the enemy of this story?

- It is Satan. And Satan has many tricks up his sleeve, but they are very predictable
- In the last chapters, we saw that he started with ridicule, then threats, then he tries to attack from the inside. But nothing could stop the work of Nehemiah.
- Then he starts to go for Nehemiah himself in this chapter - with a plot to kill him, with threats to go to the king, with accusations of cowardice, with rumors that he sinned to try and ruin his reputation, etc.
- Nehemiah recognized the attacks of the devil and was always one step ahead.
- Even after the wall was complete, the enemies (like Tobiah) never ceased their opposition, even though they perceived that the work was done by God
- Satan does not delight in seeing God's will accomplished.

2 - A time for work, and a time for debate

- Not all debate is fruitful. We have to have wisdom for when should we enter into debate with someone.
- Some are interested in debating or discussing so they can win; others want to debate to get a fuller understanding. It's fruitless to debate with someone who has no interest in the TRUTH

Nehemiah 10

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Nehemiah 9:38 (last verse of chapter 9)

“And because of all this,
We make a sure *covenant* and write *it;*
Our leaders, our Levites, *and* our priests seal *it.*”

Verse 1-29:

- We have entered into a Covenant with God which was sealed not by signatures and a document, but by the Blood of Christ: "Take drink, this is my Blood of the New Covenant"
- A contract is signed by men and can be annulled... but a covenant cannot.
- "all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God"
- We are different and separated from the rest of the world.
  - "Separate for me Barnabas and Paul" means Consecrate them to Me
  - To make holy
- There are levels of consecration
  - All Christians are one level of consecration
  - He who consecrates himself to monasticism is another level of consecration
  - He who consecrates himself to a life of service as a consecrated servant is another level of consecration
  - He who consecrates himself to the priesthood is another level of consecration
- They entered into the oath to walk in God's Law which was nothing new, but a renewal for them

The seven ordinances and statutes:

1. We would not give our daughters as wives to the peoples of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons;