

NEHEMIAH

Used of God To Clean Up The Mess In Israel



Nehemiah was a man who was greatly used of God to usher in a revival that completely changed the history of God's people. He was used to clean up the mess that God's people had made.

We will consider such things as...

1. Why did God work in such a marvelous way, and can we expect him to do the same today?
2. The ten gates that Nehemiah and his men repaired or rebuilt and how we must repair or rebuild those gates if we are going to see the power of God.
3. The three basic things God's people did during the **"Prelude To Revival,"** and how we must do the same if we would experience a revival today.
4. How they dealt with the opposition that came from without, and the opposition that came from within.
5. We will consider the revival that began in chapter eight and then come back and look at the **"Prelude To Revival"** as seen in the first seven chapters of the Book of Nehemiah.

Revivals don't just happen. In Nehemiah 2:16, we read about those that *"did the work."* In verse eighteen we read *"they strengthen their hands for this good work."* In chapter 4:6 we read, *"the people had of mine to work."* In fact, the word **"work"** is in the Book of Nehemiah fourteen times in the first six chapters. We also read that Nehemiah said that *"The enemies were very much cash down for...they perceived that this work was wrought of our God"* (Nehemiah 6:15).

We are not suggesting that revival can be worked up by some human wisdom; however, neither will we experience a revival, in God's definition of the term, if we are not willing to do our part. We read the phrase, *"observe to do"* eighteen times in the Word of God. Our problem does not rest in the fact that we have not *"observed"* things concerning revival. Our problem rests in the fact that we have not *"observed to do"* what we need to do.

We will begin with Nehemiah chapter eight where the revival was underway, and then go back to Nehemiah chapter one to see the prelude to revival.

Nehemiah 8:1-3,

1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

A Request From The People For The Word of God

The results of a genuine Holy Spirit controlled revival is, those revived have a deep desire for the Word of God. Verse one says their desire was *"bring the book of the law."* Verse three says they stood, *"from the morning until midday."* Strong's Concordance says morning here refers to *"day-break, dawn, morning light."*

What Nehemiah Chapter Eight Reveals About The Revival.

“Bring The Book”

- **Nehemiah 8:1**, “*The people...spake unto Ezra the scribe to **bring the book of the law.***”
- **Nehemiah 8:2**, “*And Ezra the priest **brought the law** before the congregation both of men and women.*”
- **Nehemiah 8:3**, “*All the people were attentive unto **the book of the law.***”
- **Nehemiah 8:5**, “*And Ezra **opened the book** in the sight of all **the people.***”
- **Nehemiah 8:8**, “*So **they read in the book in the law of God** distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.*”

“All The People”

- **Nehemiah 8:1**, “***All the people**” had a desire to get back to the Word of God.*
- **Nehemiah 8:3**, “***All the people** were attentive unto the book of the law.*”
- **Nehemiah 8:5**, “*Ezra opened the book in the sight of **all the people.***”
- **Nehemiah 8:6**, “***All the people** answered, Amen, Amen.*”
- **Nehemiah 8:7**, “***All the people**...stood in their place.*”
- **Nehemiah 8:9**, “***All the people** wept, when they heard the words of the law.*”
- **Nehemiah 8:12**, “***All the people**...understood the words that were declared unto them.*”
- **Nehemiah 8:13**, “*And on the second day were gathered together... **All the people**...to understand the words of the law.*”

The Threefold Response of The People

There was an *intellectual* response, an *emotional* response, and a *practical* response. The practical response is recorded in chapter ten.

An Intellectual Response

- **Verse 3**, “*Those that could **understand.***”
- **Verse 7**, “*Caused the people to **understand.***”
- **Verse 8**, “*Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that **taught** the people.*”
- **Chapter 10:28**, “*Every one having knowledge, and having **understanding.***”

There is much going on today under the umbrella of revival that is not of the Holy Spirit. To have an intellectual response is to understand what revival is. There is much going on today labeled as a revival that is actually satanic.

Rock Conferences And Rugby Matches

Time Magazine on August 15, 1994, printed an article titled “*Laughing for the Lord.*” They pointed out that Anglican parishes across England today bear a greater resemblance to “*rock concerts*” and “*rugby matches*” than to Christian worship.

Acting Like Animals

On February 20, 1995 *Newsweek*, in an article entitled “*The Giggles Are for God,*” reported that people in churches worldwide were jerking spasmodically, dancing ecstatically, and acting like animals. The article reported that this behavior by Christians has already spread from Canada to “*roughly 7,000 congregations in Hong Kong, Norway, South Africa, and Australia, plus scores of churches in the United States.*” We are living in an age when *faith* has been replaced by *feelings*, *fantasy* has replaced *facts* and human *reasoning* has replaced *revelation*. We need to be able to “*discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not*” (Malachi 3:18).

An Emotional Response

- **Verse 6**, “The people answered, *Amen, Amen*, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.”
- **Verse 9**, “All the people *wept*, when they heard the words of the law.”

What The Bible Says About Emotions

Man is a three-part being. We are made up of a *body*, *soul*, and *spirit*. The Holy Spirit does not communicate with our mind, He communicates with our spirit. In turn, our spirit, under the control of the Holy Spirit, should dictate to the mind and thus the mind will influence our emotions.

Emotion is from God; however, emotion must not rule the intellect. We will be blinded to the truth when emotions are in control. Emotion, that are not under the control of the Holy Spirit is simply a reaction that is based on a human sentiment or feeling.

Emotion under the control of the Holy Spirit will always be in harmony with the Word of God. Emotion under the control of the mind alone, are humanistic and can be extremely harmful to the cause of Christ. Emotion should be what salt is to a steak; too much salt will ruin the steak.

Scriptural Emotion Will Produce Scriptural Results

Below are a few examples of the results of emotions under the control of the Holy Spirit.

The Emotion of Love Bears The Fruit of Obedience.

- **John 14:15**, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”
- **First John 5:3**, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.”

The Emotion of Hope Bears The Fruit of Patience.

- **Romans 8:24,25**, “But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”

The Emotion of Sorrow Bears The Fruit of Repentance.

Second Corinthians 7:10, “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.”

- The response of the people was *intellectual*.
- The response of the people was *emotional*.
- The response of the people was also *practical*.

An Emotional Response

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The Prelude To Revival

Nehemiah was not a prophet, priest or king. He was a young man who appeared suddenly on the scene and disappeared as quickly. Nothing is recorded about his birth or his death. His father’s name was Hachaliah, and herein lies a clue as to the spiritual depth of Nehemiah. Hachaliah means, “whom Jehovah enlightens.” Nehemiah’s father was enlightened of the Lord, and obviously was faithful in training his son in the things of the Lord. Nehemiah had an important government job. Here we see the providence of God working in the life of Nehemiah. He was where God wanted him to be, and he was willing to do whatever God wanted him to do.

Nehemiah 1:1-3,

1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

3 And they said unto me, The **remnant** that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the **wall** of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the **gates** thereof are burned with fire.

“Concerning The Jews...And Concerning Jerusalem.”**Nehemiah 1:2,**

“Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them **concerning the Jews** that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and **concerning Jerusalem.**”

It had been many years since the Jews were allowed to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the city. Nehemiah did not return with the original group. Perhaps, it was because he had a very special job in the government and did not want to go back. Maybe it was because he had that position in the government and he was not allowed to leave. One thing is obvious he had a burden for his people back in Jerusalem. We read that he “asked them **concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.**” Nehemiah was concerned about the **people** of God and the **place** where God had chosen to set His name (Nehemiah 1:9).

“In Great Affliction.”**Nehemiah 1:3,**

“And they said unto me, The **remnant** that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great **affliction** and **reproach**: **the wall** of Jerusalem also is broken down, and **the gates** thereof are burned with fire.” Concerning the people, we read, they were “in great affliction and reproach.” Concerning the place, we read “the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.”

Today, we are living among the second and third generation of what we call fundamentalists. First generation fundamentalists preached “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). Second generation fundamentalists changed from preaching “all the counsel of God,” to reaching crowds, and as a result Christians are taught only the “smooth things” (Isaiah 30:10). Third generation fundamentalists have two problems. One, many who are members of our fundamental churches have voted for Jesus but are still unsaved. Second, those who are saved have little or no ability to discern what is happening today, because they have not been taught how to discern. The command to be, “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9), is foreign to them because they haven’t been “taught” to do that, or “taught” how to do it.

“When I Heard These Words.”**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.”

Sitting Down - Weeping - Mourning - Praying

- **Nehemiah “Sat Down.”** Nehemiah stopped everything he was doing when he realized the condition of God’s people at Jerusalem. He was genuinely concerned.
- **Ezra Also “Sat Down.”** God had previously touched the heart of Ezra when he realized “the people and the priests had not separated themselves from the people of the land” (Ezra 9:1). In Ezra 9:3 we read that Ezra said, “And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished.” (Translated “astonished” twenty times).
- **Nehemiah “Wept.”** We also previously find **Ezra** “weeping and casting himself down” (Ezra 10:1), because of his concern regarding the condition of God’s people.

- **Nehemiah “Mourned.”** We read that **Ezra** also “mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away” (Ezra 10:6).
- **Nehemiah “Fasted.”** **Ezra** also fasted. In Ezra 8:23 we read “So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.”
- **Nehemiah “Prayed.”** **Ezra** also prayed. In Ezra 10:1, we read “Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God.”

Four Months of Prayer

We read in chapter 1:1 that Nehemiah received the information about the situation at Jerusalem “in the month Chisleu.” Chapter 2:1 tells us he went to the king about the situation “in the month Nisan.” According to our calendar he prayed from December to April about the need of God’s people. It was not just a casual prayer, we read he, “sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.”

The Power of Prayer

R.A. Torrey pastored the Chicago Avenue Church from 1894 to 1905. The 2,200-seat auditorium soon began to be filled. Torrey later said he didn't believe a day went by without someone being saved as a result of the church. The success was the prayer meetings, for all over the city there were little groups who would stay up late on Saturday night, or get up early on Sunday morning to pray for their pastor.

In 1898, a weekly prayer meeting was organized each Saturday night from 9 to 10 p.m. The attendance grew until it numbered an average of 300 people. For the next three years the prayer meetings continued, followed by Torrey and three or four associates having a second prayer meeting until about 2 a.m. One night Torrey had a burden to pray that God would send him around the world with the Gospel. Within a week two strangers from Melbourne, Australia approached him following a Sunday service saying they felt Torrey was the man God wanted to come to their country for evangelistic services. He would see about 102,000 come to Christ in the next few years. About 2,000 prayer groups were conducted in various sections of the country praying continually for revival! A thirty day revival meeting in New Zealand resulted in a total of 20,000 decisions for Christ.

In 1903 R.A. Torrey was in England, beginning his Liverpool crusade. In four weeks about 5,000 people trusted Christ as their personal Saviour. At Dublin, Ireland, some 3,000 accepted Christ. By 1904, around 30,000 persons around the world had committed themselves to pray for the team and worldwide revival. Also in 1904, God was using R.A. Torrey to spark the fires of revival in Birmingham, England. The thirty-day crusade saw around 7,000 people trust Christ. In September, 1904, in Bolton, Wales (3,600 saved), then on to Cardiff to a 7,000-seat auditorium which filled nightly (3,750 saved). In Cardiff, it was estimated some 35,000 were turned away on the last day of the meetings. About 7,000 were saved.

From February to June 1905, the famous London Crusade was held with nearly 15,000 professed conversions. It seemed as though all of London was singing revival hymns. The "Glory Song" captured the city. It was sung at every service. Tell Mother I'll Be There was also greatly used. About 6,500 were saved at the Royal Albert Hall. Meetings held in South London saw 5,000 converts and then in the final month another 2,500 were saved. A closing service at the Royal Albert Hall announced the totals--202 meetings, 1,114,650 attended (average 5,500 per service) with over 17,000 converts!

Torrey also went to Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee in Scotland; to Dublin and Belfast in Ireland seeing 4,000 people saved. Then to Manchester where another 4,000 were saved. A total of 70,000 came to the Lord during these three years of ministry. His book on How to Promote And Conduct a Successful Revival (1901) is considered one of the best books on personal and mass evangelism ever written.

“I Pray...Day And Night.”

*“Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which **I pray before thee now, day and night**, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee; both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.”*

- **Confessing dishonesty**, “We have dealt very *corruptly* against thee.”
- **Rejecting God’s Commandments**, “We have not kept the *commandments*.” (God’s constitution for living).
- **Rejecting God’s Statutes**, “Nor the *statutes*.” (Decreed limits - standards - Second Kings 17:8 “They walked in the statutes of the heathen”).
- **Rejecting God’s Judgments**, “Nor the *judgments*.” (Learning how to discern so as to make right decisions”).

“If Ye Transgress...Yet Will I Gather You.”

8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:

9 But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.

10 Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.

*11 O LORD, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant **this day**, (7x - Nehemiah) and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.*

1. **Concern**,

- **(V.2)** - “A matter of importance causing involvement.”

2. **Conviction**

- **(V.4) - John 16:8**, “When he is come, he will *reprove* the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

3. **Confession - (Vs.6-7).**

- “**Commandments**” - Basic fundamentals upon which the Christian life is to be built.
- “**Statutes**” - “Decreed limits” - i.e. standards
 - **Second Kings 17:8**, “walked in the *statutes* of the heathen.”
- “**Judgments**” - Ability to discern so as to make scriptural decisions.

4. **Commandments**

- **(V.5)** - “Mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments.”
- **(V.7)** - “We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments.”
- **(V.9)** - “But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.”