

**Articles and Sermons :: Zac Poonen ~ Concern for God's name****Zac Poonen ~ Concern for God's name - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/6/30 8:58**

Nehemiah was one of the men God used in the movement of His people from Babylon to Jerusalem. He lived about 70 years after Zerubbabel, Joshua, Haggai and Zechariah. The temple had been built and Ezra had already gone to Jerusalem - about 13 years earlier.

The burden God had given Haggai, Zechariah and Zerubbabel was to build the temple. Ezra's burden was to teach people the word of God. But Nehemiah's burden was to build the walls of Jerusalem, organize the city's administration, and bring people back to the covenant that they had forsaken. He was a reformer. Spiritually, he was a man of vision and prayer. Practically, he was an organizer and a motivator. So he had all the qualities that were required in a leader of God's people at such a time as this.

Nehemiah was living in Susa, the capital of the world's only super-power of those days - the Medo-Persian empire - and was on the personal staff of its king, Artaxerxes.

In Nehemiah Chapter 1:1-3. When Hanani and other Israelites came to Susa from Judah, Nehemiah was concerned enough to find out the state of the exiles who had returned and of Jerusalem. This is the primary characteristic of any man whom God uses - he has a concern for people and then God gives him a burden. If you want to serve the Lord, begin with a concern for others. God never uses a man who has no concern for others. Nehemiah asked Hanani, "How are things going on there?" And Hanani told him that the walls were broken down and the gates burned with fire.

In Isaiah 60:18, we read that the walls of Jerusalem symbolize salvation and the gates symbolize praise.

The walls speak of separation from the world and of security. God wants the church to be separate from the world. The walls have to be high, so that a worldly-minded person cannot join the church. To be a part of Jerusalem, one has to be a disciple, one who loves Jesus more than anything else on earth. Throughout the last 20 centuries, preachers have lowered the standards that Jesus and the apostles laid down, so that now the walls are so low, that anyone can jump over the wall and come in. Jesus once said that one who climbed over the wall and came in was a thief (Jn. 10:1). There is a way to come in - through the gate - and the gate to Jerusalem is very narrow. But preachers have lowered the standards so that the wall of separation is now very low. In some places, the wall is broken down completely, so that there is no difference between the church and the world. In fact, many worldly people behave much better than many so-called "believers". That is what a church with broken-down walls is like.

The gates symbolize the spirit of victorious praise that must always be found in the church. The gates are also the place where the elders of the city sit - the place of authority. The church today has lost the spirit of victorious praise and it has very few men with spiritual authority.

Nehemiah was concerned about the broken walls and the burnt gates. When he heard the news, he wept and mourned for many days, and he fasted and prayed. That is the type of man whom God is looking for today - one who has a concern and a burden when he sees the condition of God's church.

When was the last time you mourned, not for sorrows of your own, but because the church of Jesus Christ is in such a pathetic condition today? When was the last time you fasted and prayed because you were concerned that the name of Jesus should be glorified in the church of Jesus Christ today? But if we don't have a concern in our hearts, we will never be the men and women that God wants us to be.

Nehemiah lived under the old covenant. He did not have the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, as we have. He did not have a full Bible, no church-fellowship, books, tapes or conferences such as we have today in such abundance. He did not know anything about the cross. Yet he had such a tremendous burden. He was not a "full time worker". He was a man who had a secular job. He supported himself and served the Lord. Nehemiah is a great example of a man who was absolutely selfless and who was concerned for the glory of God's Name alone. If we can be challenged to emulate his example, God may be able to do something with our lives too.

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**Re: Zac Poonen ~ Concern for God's name - posted by Christisking (), on: 2006/6/30 9:31**

That was great Mike! Thank you for posting it.

**Concern for God's Name - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/7/1 0:37**

Hi Patrick,

Amen! That we had more concern for God's namesake, for the Lord Jesus Christ