

Gene Cunningham

Hot Springs

Australia

Nehemiah

Neh. 1:1

Nehemiah Lesson #1

Imagine a place where there are people of God, but they are scattered, without direction and without a cohesive unit, facing a lot of opposition. There is a man far away who begins to pray, and he does not realize that God is going to use him.

Any ministry which is God called and God-ordained, that there will be opposition. However, we know that we will have the final victory. The enemy force is headed up by two individuals. They follow all the topics of those who want to oppose the truth. They pretend like they are interested and they come in; they used bullying attacks; then they use letters to intimidate; they use a threat of force, etc.

This basically describes the book of Nehemiah.

There are two walls being built. A physical wall built around Jerusalem for protection. One gate does not need to be rebuilt; the others do. We see the enemies trying to attack from within.

When Nehemiah was called by God, he was beginning some work but continuing some other. This is about 2500 years old, but it is relevant to our lives. As these people pull together and bind for a common task. Nehemiah is going to set up revival in this nation. When God burdened Cunningham to pray for Australia, little did he realize that God would bring him there.

We will only introduce the book tonite.

The author is Nehemiah. In the Scriptures, Ezra-Nehemiah is one book. Cunningham is inclined to believe that Nehemiah was at least the scribe here.

About 432 B.C. and this is the return from the Babylonian captivity. Some noble sons deported. 587 B.C. one set of deportation. Jeremiah told us that this deportation would last 70 years. 3 major deportations and 3 return times.

Zerubabel 537 B.C.
Ezra 458 B.C.

Nehemiah 444 B.C.

The restoration of the nation actually began with Zerubbabel. The restoration of the nation really occurred under 5 men. 3 prophets: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi were also involved.

Nehemiah is one of the last records written. These are among the final things written. Then there would be about 400 years of silence.

Chapters 1–6: The building of the faith of the people.

Elements of the service of God. Certain characteristics stand out. He will step down to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Remember those who were bound and those who are suffering as if we are with them why should we be concerned about all of these other places in the world? We are supposed to remember the needs of those in the world.

What are the elements of revival. What is genuine revival. Look at James 4:6–10 It begins with broken-heartedness. There will be required a rebellion against God. It is not this slap happy affair. Often a matter of great grief. The building of the wall

Chapters 7–14 The building of the faith of the people.

It has been 100 years since the return of the first group of captives. No walls still. Relentless opposition of the enemy. There was constant opposition to these walls. Nehemiah was a cup bearer of the king, but cup bearers were often castrated. In Neh. 13, he is angry. There is apathy of the people. Nehemiah in 12 years will accomplish what the people will not accomplish for 100 years.

Nehemiah could not do this alone; he needs the help of God's people. It is a team effort. Some outstanding lessons about spiritual balance.

The Balance to be Struck

1. The balance of spirituality and practicality; Nehemiah does not think it all depends on him nor does he think he can sit and let God do it.
2. Prayer and works balance. Sometimes we will answer our own prayers.
3. Balance between faith and fearlessness. When he steps out on fulfilling the plan of God, he fears greatly. He is terrified.
4. The relationship between the physical and the spiritual rebuilding.

Many times we will not see the power of God crashing into our lives until we take the first step. He steps out on faith and god is there to uphold him. The outline of his message based on all one's difficulties?

Personal memoirs. Higher (arrogant) critics. They like to say, Nehemiah did not really write this; Ezra did not write this. They begin from the point, miracles do not occur. So,

whenever there is a prophecy which comes to pass, then it is assumed to be written after the fact.

Nehemiah will go and give comfort to Jerusalem. Ezra means *helper*; Nehemiah = *the Lord comforts*; and Esther means *star [relating to the crown]*. If we persist, we will enjoy the crown.

The 20th year is 445 B.C. is the time that Nehemiah puts on the writing of this book.

Isa. 44:24–28: Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: "I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself, who frustrates the signs of liars and makes fools of diviners, who turns wise men back and makes their knowledge foolish, who confirms the word of his servant and fulfills the counsel of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, 'She shall be inhabited,' and of the cities of Judah, 'They shall be built, and I will raise up their ruins'; who says to the deep, 'Be dry; I will dry up your rivers'; who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose'; saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'"

Isa. 45:1–9: Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed: "I will go before you and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things. "Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness; let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit; let the earth cause them both to sprout; I the LORD have created it. "Woe to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots! Does the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' or 'Your work has no handles'?"

Jews did not like the idea that God would use a Gentile to deliver the Jews; and God says, "Who are you to quarrel with your maker?" God says He is going to use Cyrus to rebuild the city, and this is 120 before Cyrus and before the city was destroyed.

Ezra 1:1–4: In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to

Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel--he is the God who is in Jerusalem. And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem."

God moves Cyrus to have a desire to rebuild the Temple, and this begins with Zerubbabel. The prophet Isaiah says that God will use a Gentile. Then we read that we are fulfilling the words of Jeremiah. Ezra is talking about Jer. 25:11–12.

Jer. 25:11–12: This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste.

When Cyrus attacked Babylonia, the water was diverted. The water went dry; The bronze gates kept everyone out, but without the water, they could come under the gates.

Dan. 9:1–5, 24–28: In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans-- in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules..."Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."

Daniel picks up the book of Jeremiah and Isaiah, and they realize that the time has come. Now, they will pray that God will do what He says He will do. He confesses his own sins. They still identify themselves with these sins. An idea here which is unique. A sense of identify in the community of the people of God. This is the corporate witness and the corporate responsibility.

The angel of Gabriel has been sent to explain to Daniel how this will all come to pass. There is this starting point given to these people. **Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time.** This is the rebuilding of Jerusalem, not with the building of the walls or the temple.

When was the command given to restore and rebuild Jerusalem? Neh. 2. In Neh. 1, we have a confession of Nehemiah.

6 things to be accomplished, which essentially mean the restoration of Israel.

Nehemiah confesses the sins of his people, and then he goes in to do something about it.

Neh 1:1 –11: **The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the capital, that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire." As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And I said, "O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses. Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your dispersed be under the farthest skies, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.' They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." Now I was cupbearer to the king.**

We have people thinking that Christians in the White House will solve everything. God's solution is not through human means.

He speaks about Huckabee and said he is a nice guy, but he is now compromising. This is when Huckabee was governor of Arkansas.

A Few Points

1. History is working according to a divine plan. What God did 2500 years ago He does today through those who are willing to be used. We are either with it or against it.
2. Only God's Word can tell history in advance. We look around the world and we see conditions which we take for granted, and they are fulfillments of Scripture.
3. When believers live by God's Word, they will always be in step with what He is doing in history.
4. God's plans are foretold through His prophets and fulfilled through His servants.
5. God has a part for each of us to play in amazing things which He is doing right now. We tend to look at these people and think what exciting times those times were; but they are just as exciting and as vital today.

When we get to the building of the wall, some will help, but just for a little. And some will do double duty. Some families, a couple will help and the rest does not.

The enemies are named here. When the wall was finished, then the enemies were ashamed. Tobias and Sanbalat. They are looked down upon today as opposing the plan of God.

Neh. 1:1

Nehemiah Lesson #2

Going to be a review at first. The book of Nehemiah is astounding. We often elevate these Biblical characters beyond imagination, but these people have their areas of weakness as do we. These are just people. God has a plan which He is working out in history, particularly in Australia, which is possibly from where he is teaching? Everywhere we look, we see churches compromising Scripture. We see men and women in pulpits where they do not belong; and they are leading people away of Christ.

He is asking about those who went back to Jerusalem under Zerrubbabel. Nehemiah mourns for many days about this.

What brought Nehemiah to this place. We won't all have a spectacular position or function from the eyes of men. Because of rebellion on the part of Israel, God sent them into captivity. The northern kingdom, the 10 northern tribes, were sent into captivity under Assyria, during the time of Isaiah. Isaiah was telling them that this was going to happen. The southern kingdom went into captivity in 606-586 B.C. during the time of Jeremiah.

Isaiah prophesies that the Jews would come back under Cyrus the king. Ezra 1:1: [In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.](#)

Prophecy and Nehemiah

1. Isaiah lived about 125 years before Cyrus and prophesied him by name. When Cyrus said the Jews could return, he was fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah. Jeremiah 23:11–12 25:9–10 spoke of this continuing for 70 years, and Cyrus made his proclamation at the end of this time period.
2. They build the altar first and then built the temple around the altar. God works from the inside out; advertising works from the outside.
3. Nehemiah had hoped they would rebuild the city, but the city is in ruins.
4. The prophet Daniel foretold of the command to rebuild the city.
5. Neh. 2 445 B.C. and take this to the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem. This is the 69 weeks, or 493 years. There is this converging in the life of Nehemiah. Prophecies of Jeremiah on Cyrus and Isaiah and the prophecy of Daniel all come together during the time of Nehemiah.
6. Neh. 2:7–8 is the fulfillment of all this.
7. If you had the Jews enslaved to you, would you want them to leave and set up a wall. The Greeks began to encroach on the western borders of the Persian empire, but Jerusalem is an ideal place to stand at the western border of Persia.
8. The Wiseman which came from the east were a remnant of the wise men under the instruction of Dan. 2:8, 2=38. They were trained in the study of the stars. They were correct, as a star led the wisemen to Jesus.
9. When Jesus entered Jerusalem in Matt. 21, it was the very time at the fulfillment of Dan. 9. Prophecy establishes a couple things which are relevant to our life.

We may take this for granted. God has included in the Word of God specifically relevant to our life. The Bible comes alive to us at times and some passages will speak to us in a particular place at a particular time. You will find out if you go against the Word, there will be misery involved and divine discipline. Only the Bible basis its validity upon prophecy.

If you covered the state of Western Australia and covered it a few feet deep in silver dollars, the chance of reaching into this pile and getting the correct one, is 1 in 10^{17} , which are the chance that even 8 prophecies of Jesus coming true.

Neh 1:1 –4: [The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month of Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the capital, that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire." As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.](#)

Nehemiah goes into a prayer next:

Neh. 1:5–11: And I said, "O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses. Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your dispersed be under the farthest skies, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.' They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." Now I was cupbearer to the king.

Matt. 7 for the issue of prayer. Two things Christians struggle with: divine guidance and prayers which are not answered. The latter is an abnormal spiritual condition. The effective prayer of a righteous man. In the life of a believer pursuing the will of God for his life, exercising his right to come boldly before the throne of grace, that prayer is supposed to be mighty. This is God's power at work.

Mos preachers say we should keep praying even if we don't seem to get answers. However, Jesus tells us to pray expecting there to be an answer.

Matt. 7:7–11: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! You will never ask God for a good thing and not get it.

James says, if you need something, then ask for it. Everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds, and whoever knocks, it will be opened to him. No one was more positive about the power of prayer than Jesus.

Then just out of the blue, Jesus then says, "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

Prayers Ineffective

1. The first key is relationship, which implies love and concern. There is concern on the part of the father when there is need on the part of the child. Our society is abnormal where parents do not have much concern for their children. Mothers can

give their children up for adoption; a father can walk away from the family, parents can use their children as bargaining chips in a divorce.

2. There are things which are necessary and good; a bonafide need. Going back to the stone for the bread and the serpent for the fish. Imagine a father would give a father scorpion for the son who asks for an egg. Now, if the child needed bread, the Father knows what he needs. He will not give us wrong things, even if we ask for it. Christians often ask for harmful things. We may ask to marry someone, and that person might make us totally miserable. God can save us a lot of heartache and misery by saying no.
3. There is persistence in the request. It is asking, seeking and knocking. There is the idea included, can I be a part of my own answer? You may pray for the salvation of someone, and it is possible that you will participate in being the person who witnesses to them.
4. Implicit in Jesus' promise to answered prayer is a life of obedience. It is implicit; it is inseparable. The son comes naturally to the father asking for the things he needs.
5. There is certainty; God much more will give. That is the principle of a fortiori. Paul uses the much more when he speaks of more grace.

Notice in vv. 5–6 the relationship; no Jew in the Old Testament would have called God his father. **And I said, "O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned.** They have perverted and distorted God's ways. We have not kept your statutes, ordinances, etc. There are about 8 of these words for commandments, statutes and ordinances.

Neh 1:8–9: Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your dispersed be under the farthest skies, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.'

How many things are we lacking from God because we do not ask for them? I pray the word that you command; if you are faithful, I will regather you; if you are faithless, I will scatter you. Paul says, can the clay argue with the potter? Now, you cannot take this to the point of making a person a believer or an unbeliever. We still have free will.

Jer. 18:1–6: The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do. Then the word of the LORD came to me: "O house of Israel, can I not do

with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. If it does evil in My sight, then I will not do the good which I had promised. Behold, I am fashioning a disaster. All of this indicates that we can turn things around. The idea is, we can choose.

Jer. 8:7–12: If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it. Now, therefore, say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: 'Thus says the LORD, behold, I am shaping disaster against you and devising a plan against you. Return, every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your deeds.' "But they say, 'That is in vain! We will follow our own plans, and will every one act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.'

We cannot lift ourselves out of the mire; but we can call to Jesus Christ to remake us. Many Christians trying so hard to be discipline; only to the point of saying, "God, I give up; remake me."

Confidence in the Word of God; we are asking you to remake it.

In vv. 10–11, Nehemiah asks for God to hear him.

Neh. 1:10–11: They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." Now I was cupbearer to the king.

A Joshua and a Caleb can turn the tide in Australia. What does God want to do for Australia and who will be the vessel?

Neh. 2:1

Nehemiah Lesson #3

Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah are the final books of the Old Testament in time.

3 Shifts

1. The shift from the powerful leaders and an emphasis upon powerful, charismatic leaders, to a united community, working together rebuilding the walls.
2. The shift from the oral authority to the written Word of God. Ezra arrived about 12 years before Nehemiah.
3. The shift from the purity of the Temple to the purity of the people.

Rebuilding of relationships between one another.

4 Things which will stand out

1. Perfection of God's providence.
2. Useful and effective in the service of God by His servants. We have been saved to serve. Maturity is the means to achieving the ends of God's plan for your life.
3. The victory of persevering faith.

4 Primary things about Nehemiah's Prayer

1. 3 elements to effective prayer. Prayer is a vital part of the believer's life. Often we can pray and be ineffective.
 - a. An attitude of great reverence for God. Matt. 6 Our Father, hallowed by Your name.
 - b. There is a faith in God's faithfulness.
 - c. Confessing; describing the sins committed.
 - d. An emphasis upon the Word of God.
 - e. The basis of his prayer is redemption. We pray in Jesus' name, as it is based upon His work of redemption.
2. 3 More points on prayer.
 - a. Grant him mercy in the sight of this man. He has an idea in mind of what he wants to accomplish.
 - b. God has ordained to do certain things along with the prayers of men. 2Chron. 7:14 is a good example here.
 - c. Effective prayer moves arm of God. James 5:16
 - d. Nehemiah shot up a prayer when anything happened; whatever the need was, he expressed dependence on God.

Artaxerxes will actually commission Nehemiah to not only rebuild the city but to also to build the walls.

536 B.C. is the first return of the captives under Zerubbabel. Ezra 1:1-2:2, Cyrus was named by Isaiah before he was even born (Isa. 44:28).

2nd return under Ezra 458 B.C.

3rd. Return under Nehemiah in 445 B.C. This is the basis of our study.

Neh 2:1-4: In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. And the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart." Then I was very much afraid. I said to the king, "Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' graves, lies

in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" Then the king said to me, "What are you requesting?" So I prayed to the God of heaven.

Nissan is the first month of the Jewish calendar and the time is 445 B.C. *It came to pass* is an indication that God is working behind the scenes. When things just seem to happen, that is God working behind the scenes. This is the principle of the providence of God.

Some people read the book of Esther and said that they got nothing out of it. God is completely out of sight in the book of Esther.

Providence

1. Gen. 22:14 Abraham calls God by a unique name: Jehovah Jireh, which means *God will see to it*.
2. The word providence from a Latin word meaning *to see something before hand* and there fore *to provide for in advance*. The Lord's crucifixion is seen by God in advance
3. Isa. 44:8 45:1–8 is fulfilled in Nehemiah 2.
4. There are 3 lines followed by God:
 - a. The fulfillment of His Word.
 - b. The inner working of His people
 - c. His providential control of unbelievers and their actions and related events. God is at work behind the scenes at all times. His creative work was done at the end of the 6th day; however, He continues His redemptive work.
5. The burden of Nehemiah becomes a prayer in the rest of Nehemiah. God put a burden on the soul of Hannah. He controlled circumstances and events involved with her life.
6. God works all things to fulfill His plan. He has a plan for today and a plan for this generation. Rom. 8:28 We will participate in it and enjoy it. Eph. 1:11 Psalm 76: God uses the wrath of men to please Him.
7. We must consider what God's purpose and providence are working out for us right now. It is important that we know that we are a part of this.

Nehemiah is lacking a team and he will need to organize a team. God takes that which looks like a disaster and organizes it into an opportunity.

If Nehemiah is vital to the monarch and his life is filled with personal concerns, then he can be put to death. Nehemiah knows that his life can be in danger here. "Why should their not be evil in my face" Nehemiah literally asks. Now he has been fasting for 4 months.

In v. 4, there is a quick draw prayer. Nehemiah throws up a very quick prayer to God. Nehemiah teaches us that we can pray quick prayers throughout. His prayers are quick, short bursts. Nehemiah prays between the king's question to him and his answer to the king.

Neh 2:5 And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it."

Nehemiah asks for everything. He does not hold back here. He is bold in prayer. He is close to the top to the king, and he asks to leave.

Neh 2:6 And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), "How long will you be gone, and when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time.

Summary Points

1. He sets up a time frame for the king here, and letting it be up to the king. This is a critical request at a critical moment. Nehemiah's request here is going to depend upon his service to the king. If he was a sloppy servant to the king, why should the king grant him anything? We need to be faithful in order to have opportunities in the future.
2. Nehemiah asks to be sent to the land of his fathers. Only thing allowed was the building of the Temple.

In Dan. 9, we have a prophecy. While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding. At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision. "Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator." (Dan. 9:20–27). 69 7's is 483 years, which is when Jesus entered into the Temple. Jesus said, "You can tell the signs of the weather, but you do not know the signs of the time."

Summary Points: Why is the King Pleased Here?

1. Egypt had recent revolted. They were under Persia. The Greeks began to press on the western borders of Persia.
2. Ezra 4:19–22 Artaxerxes stopped the building of the Temple. The attitude in Scripture is, Jesus could come to day.

3. God uses the wrath of men to praise Him; the will of the unbeliever.
4. This follows 4 months of fasting and prayer. Do you ever take the approach that, if you perceive something is the will of God, that you do not bother to pray? We need to pray.
5. There is a balance in the book of Nehemiah between prayer and action. Neither one alone gets the job done.
6. Do not pray without being willing to be a participant in the prayer.
7. Nehemiah is bold here; he is sweating out being killed because of his attitude. He asks for letters as safeguards.

Neh 2:7 And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy." And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

He asks for a pass and now Nehemiah will need a workforce; he will need the people. The king grants it according to the good hand of my God on me.

7 Principles on the Good Hand of God on Me

We will all have to ask the question, as the ideas he will present to us, are they a part of the plan of God.

1. 1Peter 5:6: If we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, He will exalt us.
2. We have to be willing to submit to our God of discipline and training in order to enjoy the blessing from His hand.
3. God is Spirit; *hand* is a figure of speech; and anthropopathism. The hand of God refers to the execution of His plan. Our hands become the instruments by which we execute His plan.
4. The Bible assures us that God's perfect will for us is good, gracious and acceptable. Rom. 8:28 Eph. Jer. 29:11: **For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.**
5. When we surrender to God's will, His mighty hand works to our blessing. 2Chron. 30:12: **The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD.** Ezra 7:9
6. When anyone believes in Jesus Christ as their Savior, that person is held in the mighty hand of God. John 10:29–30: **My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.** God was enlightening Nehemiah; he was strengthening Him; He was providing for him.
7. To reject Jesus Christ is to remove God's hand of deliverance: Isa. 59:1–3: **Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and**

your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness. God is able to deliver us; we cannot save ourself. Self-discipline will help us overcome sin is not going to work; God can deliver us and He is willing to deliver us. He is willing to deliver us; but our attitude may put us out of this deliverance.

If our future is in our own hand, our future is bleak; if our future is in God's hand, then we have a great and wonderful future.

Neh. 2:1

Nehemiah Lesson #4

Nehemiah was a part of the captives taken into the Babylonian captivity. There were prophecies about Cyrus letting the people return to the land. Dan. 9:24–27 sets up a time table. 445 B.C., the command was given, and 69 weeks to Jesus entering into Jerusalem. We think that because we hold to a certain truth or to a certain doctrine, we are better than other believers; but God has love for all believers. We have the truth because of the faithfulness of God.

King Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah the permission to go back into Jerusalem. Nehemiah is a man of rare faith and courage. He really stuck his neck out with Artaxerxes, because he could have been killed for making this request.

It is one thing to say that, 2500 years ago, Nehemiah did these great things; but there is a lesson for us. The same principles by which Nehemiah built the wall are principles that we can use to rebuild our lives. When we choose to go away from the will of the Word of God, we will have to turn back or we will be under discipline or taken home early.

Spiritual recovery: the church of Ephesus: **"I have this one thing against you; that you have left your first love."** The moment there is something you love more than Him, you have strayed; you have left your first love.

7 Principles

1. If you are going to begin rebuilding spiritually or you need to light yourself on fire spiritually; someone, somewhere will have to be lit on fire. If you do not have a fire burning in your soul, then you need a spark. We must trust the providence of God. The good hand of God is upon me. God is overseeing everything which is taking place. God knows the way we need to go.
2. Prepare for varied resistance. There were officials who were disturbed about Nehemiah being concerned about the people of God. These figures here represent the kind of resistance that we will run into.
3. Vv. 11–16: Nehemiah does a reconnaissance. We need to do a personal reconnaissance.

Neh 2:9–11 Then I came to the governors of the province Beyond the River and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen. But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah, the Ammonite servant, heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek the welfare of the people of Israel. So I went to Jerusalem and was there three days.

The Ammonites are from Lot and one of his daughters. These have been enemies of God from that time forward. When we want to have some dedication to God, there will be some old sin of ours which keeps coming up. Be sure your sins will find you out. They may come to get us when we think they are long gone.

You will accomplish the will of God for your life. Satan convinces Christians to go out and do things which God really does not want done. **Faithful is He Who calls you and He will do it.**

James said, **Count is as joy when you face various trials.** There are often two characters who stand in the way of God's will. Usually one is extremely arrogant and another person who is inadequate. Paul warns about wolves in sheep's clothing. They may act as if they are with you, but they are not. John the Baptist called these men vipers, which was strong language. These are fighting words.

Neh 2:12–16 Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. And I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. There was no animal with me but the one on which I rode. I went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Dragon Spring and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal that was under me to pass. Then I went up in the night by the valley and inspected the wall, and I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, and I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest who were to do the work.

He goes out the dung gate. This is strong language, weakened by the English translation. Nehemiah is being very wise and cautious here, and he is going to check things out carefully first. We will have to evaluate the wall and find out where it is broken down. We are going to have to check our lives and see where the problem is. 2Cor. 13:5: **Test yourself.** Evaluate yourself on a regular basis.

The 3 gates are significant:

1. The valley gate: we must begin with an attitude of humility, which is what this represents.
2. The dung gate, which speaks of cleansing. The refuse and waste was taken out of the city through this gate. In India, there are villages just in the same situation. There are places where there are gutters and that is where the waste runs through. 1Joh 1:9

3. The fountain gate; if we humble ourselves and if we confess. There are 9 gates and we want to be at gate 8. This gate is the gate of the Holy Spirit.

Neh 2:17 Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision."

4. There is some rebuilding involved. This is v. 17.

Ezekiel speaks of finding a man who will stand in the gap. There wasn't a man, but now there is. Will we stand in the gap for this nation? Will we rebuild this spiritual wall? The breakdown of the family destroys the souls of the kids. No father in the home destroys a child. He does not understand authority, strength or gentleness.

When we live for self, we are completely wrapped up in sin. 2Peter 2:8: **Lot tortured his own soul.** Desolation or ruin. The gates being burned; the idea here is loss; they lose something wonderful. He squandered his possessions on riotous living. Reproach is a word which means disgrace or shame. Let's put an end to the shame of Jerusalem. When we live a selfish lifestyle, we are bringing shame to Jesus Christ.

Neh 2:18 And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work.

5. If we are going to rebuild our lives, then we will have to rebuild based upon the strength of God. We must rest and trust in divine power. V. 18
6. Disregard the tactics of the enemy. V. 19 These men use contempt and ridicule. The most dangerous thing with slander is taking something which has actually occurred and then you attribute an evil intent for their actions. You must disregard this. People will mock us. They will scoff at us. We have to disregard it. We let God take care of them. 1Peter 5:7–8: Cast your cares upon Him, for He cares for you. The devil walks around like a roaring lion.
7. Trust in the Word of God; trust in His promises. V. 20 Nehemiah trusts in what God has promised that He will do. God's will done in God's way. If we live and walk by faith, we will overcome. Overcoming will be as normal as having breakfast in the morning. Rom. 8:37

God will do this for anyone who is willing to follow these 7 steps. Heb. 12:3– deals with becoming weary and God disciplining us. He disciplines us as a father disciplines a child. Therefore, strengthen the hands which hang down. These are arms which have become nonfunctional. They are hanging down. Lameness refers to a member out of joint, which is us. A shoulder out of joint makes the arm useless. When we are out of joint, we are useless; we are a useless member. **Pursue peace with all people and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord.** Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Purity of heart means that you can see some of the things which God is doing.

Pursue sanctification; pursue that constant refining in your life. If you have trusted God, you will see Him in eternity; but we need to see Him right now.

Neh 2:19 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they jeered at us and despised us and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?"

Neh 2:20 Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem."

Neh. 3:1

Nehemiah Lesson #5

2003

Nehemiah went out to see the work which was before him, to get an idea as to what you should do. Every good work will garner opposition. Some will wait until you are most of the way done, and then they tell you what you have done wrong and how you should have done it. They do not tell you in advance what you should have done; they wait until that is an impossibility.

If you fail to plan, then you plan to fail. You need to determine in advance what you are going to do, not necessarily in great detail. You can become too extreme, because things do not always go according to plan. You need to establish a flexible plan based upon principle. Principle works on a broad system. We will then see the object lessons of the work.

The gates which we have all represent something.

Sometimes, a work is planned, and then not enough show up. If you are in a position of spiritual leadership, then you need to be one of the people there. A good work day on Saturday. There is a wonderful fellowship in rolling up your sleeves and working together. They are building some sort of adventure course.

Leadership and Work

1. Leaders need to be out in front, leading. We respect and follow the example of those we see.
2. The builders are given responsibility for specific work. Matt. 25:15 Mark 13:34
3. There is a record of the workers and there are 42 groups of men named. Those who take part of the work are noticed by God. This is important and can be applied today. Those who excel are noted as well. So, there is more than just showing up.
4. Each and every believer has a gift and a work which accompanies that gift. We are placed on the team by the Spirit of God.
5. We will each be evaluated by the Lord Jesus Christ. There will probably be a record presented of those who volunteer for work and those who show up. We will find out if we worked well or not.

Working as a Group

1. Nehemiah oversees the building parties and he puts the parties into action. There is a team effort by priests in v. 1, rulers in vv. 12–19, women v. 12, and several groups of craftsmen (vv. 8–32); including perfumers who probably prepare bodies for burial. Team effort, working together.
2. Many of them began building at their home. Vv. 10, 23, 28–30 and Christian service begins at home. They begin in front of their home.
3. There are some mentioned who were formerly disobedience to God. Vv. 11 who is found in Ezra 10:18, 31 for marrying a pagan wife. It is never too late to recover or to return to Christian service.
4. There is a phrase which occurs over 12 times *and next to him*; and the phrase *after him*. The emphasis is the side by side labor and effort. They were working together for a common goal. Fellowship is what we have in common; it is active engagement and things which are actively in common. There is quite a ministry for those who are willing to work together. There are some who are always there to help out; and there are others who are always out there to take in the good times. The idea is to teach and to work as a group and to grow. We are here to serve. You cannot have maturity apart from service; you will serve, if you are mature.

The object lessons are found in the gates; there will be 10 of them tonight. The priest taking the spiritual leadership begin building at the sheep gate.

God said, *My ways are not your ways and My thoughts are not your thoughts*. When God acts in an opposite way of nature. When a person comes to Christ, they become a new person in Christ and they operate on a plane opposite of those who are unbelievers.

Neh 3:1–2 Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brothers the priests, and they built the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and set its doors. They consecrated it as far as the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Tower of Hananel. And next to him the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built.

The lamb as a sacrifice goes all the way back to the lamb offered by Abel; and then to the substitute for Abraham's son.

Neh 3:3–5 The sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate. They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And next to them Meremoth the son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz repaired. And next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, son of Meshezabel repaired. And next to them Zadok the son of Baana repaired. And next to them the Tekoites repaired, but their nobles would not stoop to serve their Lord.

The fish gate speaks of evangelism. Mark 1:17 **Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men**. How can they hear unless someone tell them? There is a prayer list and some people have been witnessed to for several years.

Neh 3:6–12 Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Gate of Yeshanah. They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And next to them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, the seat of the governor of the province Beyond the River. Next to them Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, goldsmiths, repaired. Next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, repaired, and they restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. Next to them Rephaiah the son of Hur, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, repaired. Next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph repaired opposite his house. And next to him Hattush the son of Hashabneiah repaired. Malchijah the son of Harim and Hasshub the son of Pahath-moab repaired another section and the Tower of the Ovens. Next to him Shallum the son of Hallohesh, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, repaired, he and his daughters. .

This is the way of faith, which is also called *the old way* because it never changes. Once the work of Christ is proclaimed and we respond, then we go to the valley gate. The valley gate is one of humility.

Neh 3:13–14 Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and repaired a thousand cubits of the wall, as far as the Dung Gate. Malchijah the son of Rechab, ruler of the district of Beth-haccherem, repaired the Dung Gate. He rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars.

The rebel in the book of Ezra deals with the dung gate, which speaks of cleansing. Once the vessel has been cleansed, it can be used of God. When we lose that peace, then we need to examine ourselves and prayer for wisdom and insight so the God can tell us what the problem is.

The dung gate has significance to him for being in Jerusalem and they went to the steps of David as he escaped during the Absalom revolt. There is this picture of cleansing; David had failed and had destabilized the country. He is fleeing with an uncertain future.

Neh 3:15 And Shallum the son of Col-hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate. He rebuilt it and covered it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And he built the wall of the Pool of Shelah of the king's garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David.

John 7:37–39 speaks of the water associated with the Holy Spirit. Jer. 2:13. All the attempts to gratify oneself will be like water running through a broken cistern; it will run out of their hands.

Neh 3:16–25 After him Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, ruler of half the district of Beth-zur, repaired to a point opposite the tombs of David, as far as the artificial pool, and as far as the house of the mighty men. After him the Levites repaired: Rehum the son of Bani. Next to him Hashabiah, ruler of half the district of Keilah, repaired for his district. After him their brothers repaired: Bavvai the son of Henadad, ruler of half the district of Keilah. Next to him Ezer the son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, repaired another section opposite the ascent to the armory at the buttress. After him Baruch the son of Zabbai repaired another section

from the buttress to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. After him Meremoth the son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz repaired another section from the door of the house of Eliashib to the end of the house of Eliashib. After him the priests, the men of the surrounding area, repaired. After them Benjamin and Hasshub repaired opposite their house. After them Azariah the son of Maaseiah, son of Ananiah repaired beside his own house. After him Binnui the son of Henadad repaired another section, from the house of Azariah to the buttress and to the corner. Palal the son of Uzai repaired opposite the buttress and the tower projecting from the upper house of the king at the court of the guard. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh

Neh 3:26–27 and the temple servants living on Ophel repaired to a point opposite the Water Gate on the east and the projecting tower. After him the Tekoites repaired another section opposite the great projecting tower as far as the wall of Ophel.

The 7th gate does not need repair. Eph. 5:36 the cleansing affect of the Word of God. The necessity for spiritual growth is emphasize. The 7th gate does not need repair because this is the number of perfection.

Neh 3:28 Above the Horse Gate the priests repaired, each one opposite his own house.

The Horse Gate is the 8th gate. Tekoa was a place where there was a school of wisdom or something. The horse gate speaks of spiritual warfare. The #8 marks new beginnings. We attack the strongholds of the enemy and he will counterattack. Once you begin to grow, conflict begins to emerge. There are all kinds of trials and we know we are there. Atheliah, the mother of Ahaziah, the evil king; she is related to Jezebel and was quite evil. She tried to take over the throne of Judah. Good versus evil; the will of God versus the will of the devil. We are to be good soldiers of Christ. Most people do not like the person of Paul because he is a soldier of Christ. He was a capable man during times of crisis. In the book of Acts, Paul sends Luke and the others by ship; and Paul went by ground, and he traveled through two mountain ranges. No soldier involved in active service entangles himself in this life. Eph. 6: the full armor of God. The idea of the warrior mentality. Our society is build around seeking comfort, pleasure; avoiding conflict, problems, difficulties. We will go through times of stress and difficulty and there will be times for it.

Neh 3:29 After them Zadok the son of Immer repaired opposite his own house. After him Shemaiah the son of Shecaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, repaired. After him Hananiah the son of Shelemiah and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph repaired another section. After him Meshullam the son of Berechiah repaired opposite his chamber.

The east gate speaks of Christ's return. The more we are involved in spiritual warfare, the more we look to Christ's return. How eager are we for His coming? The person who greatly desires it who looks for and longs for the day of the Lord; that is a man involved in spiritual warfare. However, others do not want to think about the return of Christ, as it would intrude in their plans.

Your house is left of you desolate; you will not see Me again until you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” One sealed a gate to attempt to keep Christ out at His return.

The Apostle Paul lived his life expecting the return of the Lord, and expecting the crown of righteousness. The grace of God which brings salvation.

Neh 3:31 After him Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired as far as the house of the temple servants and of the merchants, opposite the Muster Gate, and to the upper chamber of the corner. And between the upper chamber of the corner and the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and the merchants repaired.

When Jesus returns, there will be judgment. 10 is significant insofar as God’s control and authority. As believers, as Jesus states in John 5:24, there is no judgment for the believer. “He that believes in Me won’t come into judgment.” God will separate between the wood, hay and stubble.

This is a picture of spiritual growth and spiritual progress. The Spirit of God will always lead us to the Word of God and the Word of God will lead us into spiritual warfare.

Summary

1. We are, as believers, building a living temple. 1Peter 2:5 the stones of the believers.
2. This is to be achieved by a united effort in the body of Christ. There should not be a civil war in Christianity. We should never interfere with the ministry of others. 1Cor. 6:19
3. When you are busy building the wall you are building you don’t have time to evaluate everyone else’s work.
4. We will never be good workmen unless we are growing personally. You cannot achieve spiritual maturity unless you are involved in some sort of spiritual service. What God works in, we work out.
5. Gates challenge each of us to press on to the high quality of Christ.

Nehemiah’s prayer, preparation, and the building of the wall. If you commit yourself to a worthwhile task, people will come out of the woodwork.

Neh. 4:1–23

1Cor. 3:9–17 Nehemiah Lesson #6

2003

By way of background before we get into Neh. 4: there were 3 returns from the Babylonia captivity just as there were 3 deportations. 1st return with Zerrubbabel; then 2nd return was with Ezra, who drew the attention of the people to the Word of God. Nehemiah brought in the next group.

Daniel's countdown began with Nehemiah received the authorization from Artaxerxes to return to the land to build the walls. Now, even though these people had tremendous spiritual accomplishments, we have much more than these people would ever have.

1Cor. 3:9–11: **For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no one is able to lay any other foundation than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.** We often want to remake and remold the Lord into Someone Who will not disrupt our lives. His viewpoint will not be ours; His thinking is not our thinking.

If you are going to build a building a stones, then you must get each stone into its correct place. The believer needs to figure out where his stone goes. We have to take responsibility for our own spiritual lives. The minister can be so preoccupied with building others up that they do not grow themselves. All people must take responsibility for their own spiritual lives. Cunningham has a responsibility to his congregation this night; he needs to provide the spiritual information which others need. If Christianity is a game to us or a superficial thing, then we cannot call someone else into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. God's plan and our plan will not mesh unless we get with His plan. Every day, we face, it is His will or our will. He had to learn obedience. Paul tells us that we are God's building.

God's grace called Paul to be an Apostle. God's grace worked differently in Paul's life than in Peter's. God's grace works uniquely. I have laid the foundation and another lays upon it. **No one can lay a foundation other than what God has laid, i.e., Jesus Christ.**

Probably everyone there tonight believes in Jesus Christ and we all surrendered to that call and we trusted in Him and we received Him as our Savior. We need to come to the same point which Peter did, when he recognized that Jesus was his due authority. This did not come easy to Peter. He resisted and staggered and fell over and over again. He never quit until finally the Lord reigned in his life.

We are all building something in this life and Jesus Christ knows what that is. And what we are building will be exposed by Jesus Christ in His blinding essence.

4 Principles

1. God's will will always involve a work to be done. If God has a purpose and a plan for us, then there will be a work for us to do. Study to show yourself approved" where *study* is not the goal but the means. We are studying to be equipped to accomplish the work which God wants for us to do. The studying is not an end in itself.
2. God's work will always be opposed. When a believers gets serious about pursuing the Word of God in their life, they will always face opposition. Philip. 3:18 tells us that there are people who are committed to tearing down the work of God. They always tear down; they never build up. They are always there to destroy. Paul calls

this kind of a person an enemy of the gospel and an enemy of the cross of Jesus Christ.

3. Faith will always meet and overcome all opposition. Nehemiah and those working with him will meet the opposition. With each attack, there is a spiritual response. There are 5 sections which speak to this. 1John 5:4–5

Neh 4:1–2: But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish; stones that are burned? The critic brings in the spiritual aspect here.

Neh 4:3–5: Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall. Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach upon their own heads, and give them as spoils to a land of captivity. Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have provoked You to anger before the builders. Satan will mock us; whatever we do, he will find a way to mock us. We will be mocked for praying before a meal and we will be mocked for studying the Word of God. There is a full task ahead of this church; some sort of a camp. If we fail our part, we will lose out and never regain it.

Best way to meet this is with prayer. When we are mocked, meet it with prayer. Those who attack us are attacking Jesus Christ. God will take care of this. Be prepared to respond.

Trouble never comes alone. When something goes wrong, something else will go wrong to, which is Cunningham's dad's wisdom, apparently. There are often pairs of men who oppose spiritual things. This is often the arrogant and the inadequate. Turn to the Lord and use your first line of defense, which is prayer and dependence upon Him.

Neh 4:6–8: So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a heart to work. And it came to pass, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem had been restored up and the gaps had begun to be closed, that they were greatly infuriated, and all of them conspired together to come and make war against Jerusalem and to create confusion. Archeology has found out that these walls were 200 feet high.

Nothing will frustrate an enemy of God more than to see that God's work is advancing. So they want to come to Jerusalem and cause problems. Nehemiah sets up a watch against these guys. They think they will make the Jews stop, and they are wrong.

First the mockery, then the attack, then the threats, and the response: prayer and the 2nd line of defense is preparing to take actions—vigilance. When you are alert to the enemy, to their strategy and tactics, it is important. **Your adversary the devil walks about like a**

roaring lion seeing whom he can devour. Satan is out there and he is probing. Forewarned is forearmed. Spirituality was practicality in everyday life.

The third level of attack:

Neh 4:9–13: Nevertheless we prayed unto our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night. Then Judah said, The strength of the laborers is stumbling, and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall. And our adversaries said, They will neither know nor see anything, till we have come into their midst and killed them and put an end to the work. So it was, when the Jews who dwelt near them came, that they told us ten times, From whatever place you return, they will be upon us. Therefore I stationed men behind the lower parts of the wall, at the bare places; and I stationed the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. There are always those people who complain or indicate that things cannot be done; they have no constructive advice. There is discouragement because of the rubble; there are so many rocks to be moved. Long hours, hard work, fear and anxiety; and just when the people are beginning to fail, they hear, “You never know when they are going to come.” and others which say, “They are going to get you.” There are those who will try to keep you from the plan of God.

Some think, *you should just be involved in your own church.* However, the church involvement is from the center to the circumference. God’s plan is always expanding. It is not to be confined. We have had enough of superficial Christianity. It is time we realize that we are at war and we need to battle. Problems are met with exhortation and courage. Spread your courage and keep your fears to yourself. We need to help strengthen those around us and give them encouragement. We do not need to share any portion of our fears.

There is an effeminate mentality today, and that is not a part of spirituality. Jesus told his disciples, at one time, to sell one coat and buy a sword. 1000's of Christians are dying every day north of Australia and they are dying singing hymns. They are banding together. We have a right to defend our homes and our families. We do not just sit and try to figure out the psychological problems of a thug breaking into our houses. We have forsaken right thinking today. There are mobs who may attack us for being Christians.

There is a distinction between mobs and martyrdom. You do not submit to a mindless mob.

Neh 4:14–18: And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses. And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had broken their counsel, that all of us returned to the wall, each one to his work. So it was, from that time on, that half of my servants did the work, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and wore armor; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they did

the work, and with the other held a weapon. Every one who was building had his sword girded at his side as he built. And the one who sounded the shofar was beside me. They are building here, but they all have a sword on. You have to be alert to the enemy; he is going to do everything he can to hinder you. Nehemiah is wise; he is practical; he thinks through. He meets things on a practical level, but always depending upon the Lord.

Neh 4:19–23 Then I said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, The work is great and extensive, and we are separated far from one another on the wall. Wherever you hear the sound of the shofar, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us. So we did the work, and half of the men held the spears from the rising of the dawn until the stars came out. At the same time I also said to the people, Let each man and his servant lodge inside Jerusalem, that they may be a guard to us by night and workers by day. So neither I, my brethren, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me took off our clothes, except that everyone sent them away for washing. Amazing practicality; they slept in their clothes and did not take them off until it was time to wash. Cleanliness is important in a foreign country on the mission fields. You can die on a mission field or get sick for not using soap. The 5th line of defense is a wise strategy. How we are going to engage the enemy has to be figured out.

Command, and when the trumpet sounds, they are to come to the trumpet; communications; conscription. Nehemiah said we need people who live there at night; some had to be at the wall as guards. There were 24 hour shifts.

1Cor. 3:12–15: Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will be revealed; for the Day will declare it, because it will be disclosed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is consumed, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. We can choose every day of our life, whether to build with stone or with wood, hay and stubble.

1Cor. 3:16–17: Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which you are. You may be wise for being promoted, having a great job, or being successful. However, you need to be a fool for Christ.

1Cor. 3:18–19: Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become foolish that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He catches the wise in their own craftiness;...

We have the mind of Christ; let this mind be in you.

Floor #1: the thinking of Christ, which comes about as we lay hold of the thinking of Jesus Christ for us. This means, an understanding of His grace. Grace orientation. We must realize that His attitude toward us is a sacrifice. Jesus Christ thinks that we are of great value. He considers us worth enough to die for us on the cross.

Once we lay ahold of the thinking of Christ, we can move ahead with our Lord's thinking toward things. Nothing can supplant the Word of God. When we reach that point, we know we have mastered the details of life.

3rd level: the thinking of Christ regarding others. This is where we begin dealing with loving your neighbor as yourself. It begins to extend out to others. It is willingness to show consideration; the ability to be forgiving. Everyone passes through life and is betrayed. Do not focus on someone who has let us down, but focus on people we have let down. Let the mind of Christ—the value of other people, each regarding the value of others above you—be in you. We are not clutching, we are not grabbing, we are not pushing self.

4th level: we move beyond application to those around us, to love toward God, love toward a spouse, love toward friends. We need to have the mind of Christ toward others in a relaxed sense. A neighbor, someone you meet on the street.

Final level, the last level is the attitude of Christ in perfect inner peace and stability. We have a stronghold; a firm perimeter. You are my stronghold; you are my shield. Within David's soul, within his spiritual growth and development, God has become David's strength. I will not fear because you are my shield. A full perimeter of defense. He had peace, tranquility. There are many Biblical synonyms for Paul's buildings. We will be attacked this week. We will not go through one day or our life where we are not attacked. If we are so sidetracked or mislead, that Satan does not need to attack us anymore, as his attack has worked. This puts us on the sidelines. What God does, like the rich young ruler which came to Jesus. That was the area where the young ruler needed to fix.

Neh. 5:1 Haggai 1:3–11

Nehemiah Lesson #8

2003

We are either building something up or we are tearing it down; we are either advancing or retrogressing. Only we can build up or destroy our own spiritual lives. Others may help or encourage us, but they cannot build our spiritual lives. We are always accountable for our spiritual lives. Others may lead us astray, but we have to choose to be follow. We can only be deceived if we are willing to be deceived. We have to place the responsibility of spiritual growth plainly on our own shoulders. Anything which is worth building is going to be opposed. Anything worth building, is worth defending.

4 attacks:

1. ridicule and mockery (trouble comes in pairs, and those who are evil often work in pairs);
2. The threat of force (“we will come and we will attack you”) (which was not carried out);
3. The attack of discouragement (there was so much rubble). We may fail and screw up, but God can fix that.
4. Fear and panic among the people.

5 Lines of Defense

1. Prayer, which is a good first line of defense.
2. Then the people took action. They had a mind to work. Action neutralizes anxiety.
3. They were vigilant; they set guards on the wall; they watched and were alert.
4. They used teamwork.
5. They had weapons in their hands; they were ready to fight for their own freedom.

There are things worth fighting and dying for. If we are going to fight and win a victory, we need to know exactly what we are fighting for. We need a clear-cut objective. He uses Vietnam as an example of not having a clear-cut objective.

Neh 5:1—: And there was a great outcry of the people and their wives against their brothers the Jews. For there were those who said, We, our sons, and our daughters are many; therefore let us get grain, that we may eat and live. There were also some who said, We have mortgaged our fields and vineyards and houses, that we might buy grain because of the famine. There were also those who said, We have borrowed money for the king's tax on our fields and vineyards. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and indeed we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been brought into slavery. It is not in our power to redeem them, for other men have our fields and vineyards.

This is a sad situation. There is no building in Neh. 5. When self rises up and turns its ugly head, we are in trouble.

Haggai 1:3–11: Then the Word of Jehovah came by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses, and this house to lie waste? And now, thus says Jehovah of Hosts: Set your heart on your ways. You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but do not have enough; you drink, but are not filled with drink; you put on clothes, but no one is warm. And, one hiring himself out earns wages for a bag of holes. Thus says Jehovah of Hosts: Set your heart on your ways. Go up to the mountain and bring wood and build this house. And I will be pleased with it, and I will be glorified, says Jehovah. You looked for much, and, lo, it came to little. And when you brought it home, then I blew on it. Why? says Jehovah of Hosts. Because of My house that is in ruins, and you, each man, runs to his own house. On account of this, the heavens above you hold back the dew, and the earth holds back her fruit. And I called for a drought in the land, and on the mountains, and on the grain, and on the new wine, and on the oil, and on that which the ground brings forth, and on man, and on livestock, and on all the labor of your hands. The people forsook their responsibilities with respect to the Temple of God. As Haggai emphasizes, the problem is spiritual and the solution must be spiritual.

Am I disregarding spiritual things for the day-to-day things. Anytime we are on the throne of our life, things will be messtup.

The Jews were not allowed to put money out on loan to other Jews at interest. 2 things happen: separation of one from the other. The Jews were to be a common people.

Division, strife and warmongering would come in. James: **Where to these wars come from? Don't they arise from your lusts and the pursuit of your own pleasure?** This does not even refer to pleasure which is illegitimate.

4 Problems of that Time

1. Inequity: some were fat while others were hungry. Some people today have billions of dollars and they have great power. At the same time, there are multitudes who are starving to death. We could feed everyone on this planet, and have 10% food left over. We are accountable for those who are starving. There are nations which can come up with enough money to buy weaponry, but not for the sustenance of their own people. You cannot say, "These people are under discipline, and we need to stay out of God's way." But, these people, the little that they have, they will give us the best that they have. These are very gracious and humble people (in Africa?).
2. There are those in Israel who have mortgaged off their lands.
3. There is the problem of interest and a high interest.
4. The problem of slavery.

Keep these passages in mind: **Let no man seek his own wealth, but the wealth of others.** And **Love seeks not its own.**

Neh 5:6–10: **And I was extremely infuriated when I heard their outcry and these words. After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said to them, Each of you is exacting usury from his brother. So I appointed a great assembly against them. And I said to them, According to our ability we have redeemed our brothers, the Jews who were sold to the nations. Now indeed, will you even sell your brothers? Or should they be sold to us? Then they were silenced and found nothing to answer. Then I said, What you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies? I also, with my brethren and my servants, am lending them money and grain. Now let us leave off this usury!** Nehemiah lent out money and without interest. He practiced what he preached.

Neh. 5:11–13: **Restore now to them, even this day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, also a hundredth of the money and the grain, the new wine and the oil, that you have charged them. So they said, We will restore it, and will require nothing from them; we will do as you say. Then I called the priests, and caused them to swear that they would do according to this word. I also shook out empty the bosom of my garment and said, So may God shake out each man from his house, and from his property, who does not carry out this word. Even thus may he be shaken out and emptied. And all the assembly said, Amen! and praised Jehovah. Then the people did according to this word.**

We need to be angry at our own sins. We need to think reflectively on the problems we see or face. Sometimes problems need to be dealt with openly. Widespread problems often need to be dealt with openly. Paul said, **The name of God is blasphemed among the nations because of you.**

In the early church, in the book of Acts, there was a willingness to share what they had.

Nehemiah's example is next:

Neh 5:14–19: **Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers have eaten the food of the governor. But the former governors who had been before me were heavy on the people, and took from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even their servants bore rule over the people, but I did not do so, because of the fear of God. Indeed, I also prevailed in the work of this wall, and we did not buy any land. All my servants were gathered there for the work. And at my table were one hundred and fifty Jews and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations around us. Now that which was prepared daily was one ox and six choice sheep. Also fowl were prepared for me, and once every ten days an abundance of all kinds of wine. Yet in all of this I did not demand the food of the governor, because the labor was heavy on this people. Remember me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.**

Nehemiah did not take that which was rightfully his. Their former governors took too much from them. Nehemiah shows right action and conduct, which comes from a right relationship with the Lord. Nehemiah is providing for many of these people out of his own pocket. He does pray to God to remember him for what he has done for these people.

1. Nehemiah turned down that which was rightfully his because it would have had to come from the people. Senators and Congressmen continue to increase their salaries. There was a time when it was a consistent policy of presidents not to take their salary. As a matter of principle, many took nothing to show that they were not in it for the money.
2. The false Apostles were constantly attacking Paul. They would blow into town and absorb all the financial benefit that they could. Paul chose to work for his own cash rather than to demand it from any church, which he could have asked for.

1Cor. 9:12–18: **If others are partakers of this authority over you, should we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this authority, but endure all things so that we might not hinder the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so with me; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my exulting void. For if I preach the gospel, there is no glory to me, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.** A pastor sometimes has no faithfulness to their own church; a church comes along with a higher offer of money, and the pastor takes off for the money. Sometimes, the first thing a pastor asks is, *what does it pay?* This is tragic.

The Doctrine of Denying Self

When the Bible calls upon us to deny self, that is not the same as self-denial. Jesus: **If any man will follow Me, then let him deny himself, and follow Me.**

1. The desire to follow Jesus Christ. We can only desire for ourselves. We personally must make the choice and we must choose to come after Jesus Christ. It has to be a craving and a spiritual desire. It is something that I want, desire and crave.
2. Then there is death. This is denying oneself. *Ἀρνεομαι* = *to repudiate, to thrust from us*. This command is reserved only for those with the desire. *If you desire, then this is what you do.* Aorist middle imperative. Immediately do this, this is a command, and it will benefit you. Whatever we focus on is on the throne. Do we look to our own things or to Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is the example here, when He denied Himself and died for our sins. A pastor from Romania, with 50 lbs of chains kept in solitary confinement, and even guards wore felt bottomed shoes so they could not hear him coming. He wrote 300 or 350 sermons which he later wrote down and taught. Sometimes pastors rave against particular sins because these trouble them the most. He spoke of erotic fantasies. It seems ridiculous to deny self when I have so little to give up.
3. Then, there is the duty—take up your cross daily. We often take this as some burden that we must bear. The cross of cross resulted in redemption (Rom. 3:24), forgiveness of sins, propitiation (God was satisfied with our Lord's sacrifice—1John 2:2); reconciliation (**Even when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God**). 2Cor. 5:14–21: We are given the message of reconciliation so that we can spread this message to others. 1Peter 2:5–9: We boldly go to the throne room of God to pray for others. 1Cor. 12:4–7: This man put into solitary confinement, prayed for everywhere that he knew and for pastors throughout the world.
4. Then we need the discipline: keep on following Him. Do we wear sandals; grow long hair and a beard. God has a will for us today. Are we willing to go where He wants us to go? Can we have maximum effect and maximum benefit?

You cannot fill a full cup. It is already full. If a life is absorbed with Jesus Christ, then we do not have to worry about all of these other things. We become preoccupied with Jesus Christ; we learn His Word; and this makes us absorbed with His work, and we understand what He says about coming to do the work of His Father.

Neh. 6:1

Nehemiah Lesson #9

2003

The renewed conflict:

Neh. 6:1–2: **Now it came to pass when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not set up the doors in the gates), that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, Come, let us meet together in one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do evil to me.**

There is a spiritual war; Satan's strategy is to oppose every work by God and His people. The war entered into human history with the fall of man in Gen. 3:16. This state of antagonism continues to exist. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we denied Satan's claim to authority and rulership in this realm of earth.

Satan's Targets

To the degree that we are filled with the Spirit, Satan will target us.

1. Satan targets the woman—he used the woman to begin with to bring about the fall. However, through the woman came the Savior. The woman would be used as the instrument through whom Christ would come.
2. Satan continues to assault Israel, which will continue until the end of history.
3. Finally, Satan attacks individual believers. The more committed we are, the more dedicated to growth, the more of a threat we are to him.

The enemy will be hostile to any building which goes on in our lives; recovery from sin; recovery from reversionism; when the attack comes, if we resist the devil, he will flee from us; but, he will regroup and come back?

Opposition Tactics

1. The enemy uses mockery and ridicule.
2. He will use the threat of force. We don't face this too often related to Christianity in the free world.
3. Discouragement is used against us; we even get discouraged in our own spiritual life.
4. Instilling fear.
5. Self-centeredness of the people themselves; they were plundering their brothers for personal gain.

The 3 enemies mentioned here are products of past sins in Israel.

Sin in the Life

1. Sin can never be successfully hidden away; the results will continue.
2. All sin has ongoing consequences. It is like dropping a pebble in a pool; ripples are sent out. Gal. 6:7: **what a man sows, so he reaps.** Rom. 8: to be carnally minded is death.
3. There is only one thing which can overcome sin and its consequences—the grace of God. The grace of God can transform the consequences of our sins. **God causes all things to work together for good.**

Neh 6:3–6: **So I sent messengers to them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and come down to you? But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner. Then Sanballat**

sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. In it was written: It is reported among the nations, and Geshem says, that you and the Jews plan to rebel; for which reason, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king.

You have to be alert to the wiles of the devil. Let us do evil that good may come, was the motto of someone? These men were constantly plotting they were constantly manufacturing schemes. Nehemiah was wise enough and discerning enough to see through all of this. We are living in a time when all these churches want to have dialogues with Buddhists and other religions; but you do not have dialogue with the devil. Do not allow yourself to be drawn in where you are compromised.

Someone was railing about the violence in America, but every 18 minutes, someone disappears in Australia.

Nehemiah places a great value on the work which God has called him to. What God has called us to may not seem to be much. I would rather be a doorkeeper at the tent of my God than some big guy in the tents of the enemy.

In persecution, the enemy will try to get us, by some means, to stop what God has called us to do. There is always to demand that we deny Jesus Christ. So many people could have been spared torture had they only denied Jesus Christ. Do not let the enemy wear you down.

It's reported or this is a concern to many people and other similar phrases is used back up in v. 6. *It is reported among the nations....*

Neh 6:7–9: *And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah! Now these matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let us consult together. Then I sent to him, saying, No such things as you say are being done, but you contrive them out of your own heart. For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.*

When an attack against God's project don't work, then Satan attacks leaders.

Satan's Points in a Letter

1. Satan suggests widespread support. They never identify the source; instead, they say, *many say this*.
2. They give credibility to a charge by naming one or two opponents.
3. They seek to incriminate the leader and to separate him from his followers. *You and the Jews*. All you need to incriminate someone is an unverified report.
4. When the devil writes a letter, he will imply that the one doing the work has selfish motives and for self-exaltation. He says Nehemiah is selfish.
5. He uses follow up stuff; rumors and the like. Even blatant lies.

6. The devil will always warn of dire consequences if you do not submit to his will; these are dire warnings; dire things will result if you do not do such and such.
7. The devil will always put forward his people to act as mediators to resolve the fabricated problems. They fabricate a problem and then they offer to meet about them.

Nehemiah's Response

1. Nehemiah speaks the simple truth. He hits the nail on the head. He identifies the source of the rumors.
2. He sees through the plot and recognizes its true goal (they want to make us afraid).
3. He prays for God's supply of strength. He had tremendous leadership abilities, but he does not depend upon himself. He recognizes his own inadequacy. He asks God to harden him.

These verses seem to teach about persecution. The attacks will never end; the enemy backs off for awhile and then they come back.

Persecution

1. Persecution is due to the spiritual war and is inevitable. 2Tim. 3:12: all who desire to live Godly will suffer persecution.
2. Persecution can come from those who are closest to us.
3. When and if we are persecuted, remember that it is a mark of divine favor. It is evidence of divine favor. It should be a cause of rejoicing. Blessed are you when you are persecuted and when they speak all manner of evil against you.
4. Persecution is evidence that we have reward waiting for us in heaven. We are often persecuted because our life is making a difference. **Your reward in heaven is great.**
5. Persecution can be beneficial; it has a refining affect in our lives. In this, we draw near to God; we evaluate our lives. It is worthwhile in listening to what your enemies say; if what they are saying is true, then we ought to pay attention to that. When persecution comes against us, we should intensify our efforts. With Nehemiah, all they wanted him to do is to stop the work. *Just stop* whatever your gift is or whatever your calling is. In certain areas of the world, there are certain doctrines which are not accepted, like eternal security. Another one which is resisted: the blood of Christ. When you step onto the battlefield and you are challenged, you intensify your warfare right at that point.
6. We need to pray for those who persecute us. We ought to pray that they come to their senses. No one in their right mind sets themselves up as a persecutor. They may appear to win, but they always lose. Who can resist the will of God and win? Voltaire comes and goes; Tom Paine comes and goes; they pass from the scene and God's work keeps on going. These are those who have been taken captive by Satan to do God's will. They are pawns. Matt. 5:44

7. Winston Churchill was maligned and attacked for his radical views; and it appeared as though his political career was over, and then WWII broke out. He was asked to speak much later as an old man, and he said, "Never, never, never quit" and he sat down. Do not forget those who are with you are more than those who are against you, as found in 2Kings 6:16. Do not forget that He Who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. The pain we feel will hone us and guide us in the spiritual life.

Neh. 7:1

Nehemiah Lesson #10

2003

This is an important book in terms of the persecution of Christianity throughout the world. There are Christians who are still being tortured and put to death, simply for believing what we believe. It is wrong to think that God favors us over them; it is probably just the opposite. It could happen to us. There is an iron heel of persecution at play today, and in some countries where this was not the case before. At this point, none of the tactics have succeeded.

They began to single out Nehemiah in Neh. 6; so the enemy shifts his tactics a little. When Satan attacks people, he uses people. When the Bible tells us that Satan hindered us, that we are probably speaking of people who have done this, under the influence of Satan; human pawns. The tactics of treason and treachery. Those who will be the primary instruments of attack are those who work right next to them. There were spies watching Daniel; they accused him and they could not find anything that he could accuse Daniel of. He observes us; he watches us; he has a fat file of figures and information. The spies will end up having to shift to false prophets.

Neh 6:10–12: [Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who was under restraints; and he said, Let us gather in the house of God, inside the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night they will come to kill you. And I said, Should such a man as I flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in! Then I perceived that God had not sent him, but that he had spoken this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.](#)

They already tried the open letter tactic; sending a letter with someone, but that is the person whom they want to have the letter.

Here, this is a ploy, acting as though he is in danger as well as Nehemiah. Psalm 91:5: [Do not be afraid of the terrors of night.](#) Times when you are lonely or without money and you feel fear. Certain things you fear may happen; but not all of them will.

FEAR = false evidence appearing real. The whole object of the enemy here is that the work cease. This is what was expected of all believers, to get their work to cease.

A lion, when it attacks, cannot be turned. When it decides to charge, it will cover 100 yards in a few seconds. Cunningham saw a tape of a hunter blowing the heart out of a lion at 30 yards and the lion still smashes into him. We cannot be defeated standing on God's ground; we might be hurt or feel pain, but we cannot be defeated.

We know of only one great danger; not to be in the center of God's will. This couple went to Afghanistan, and were hacked to death. I think this is a Danish missionary couple?

If Nehemiah flees, then the people can hold something against him.

If he flees by apparent action, he will strengthen his enemies.

If he goes into the temple, he will be in a place designed only for priests.

Do not run because of fear.

Courage

1. Courage is the path to peace. If you know about Amelia Earhart. She said, courage is the price which life extracts in know peace.
2. Courage is not the absence of fear. Eddie Rickenbacker stuck at sea, and he prayed for food, and a seagull flew and landed on his head. He took the seagull, killed it and gave thanks to God. We all have fears and things which you fear, someone else would not. In fact, some fears we would consider silly and even funny.
3. Spiritual courage comes from trust. Joshua 1:6–9: "Be strong and courageous.
4. Courage is strengthened by being in God's will.
5. Life without spiritual courage is not a life worth living; when we live in fear, there is no pleasure and no enjoyment in life. A coward dies a thousand times, but a brave man can only die once. To love health is bad, to lose a friend is worse, but to lose courage is everything.

Neh 6:12–13: [Then I perceived that God had not sent him, but that he had spoken this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. For this reason he was hired, that I should be afraid and do accordingly and sin, to make for a bad reputation, that they might reproach me.](#)

Discernment sometimes follows obedience; Nehemiah discerned that this guy was hired by Tobiah and Sanballat, and he was not who he said he was.

Spiritual Discernment

1. Often conscious knowledge must follow unconscious obedience. We simply follow the will of God, and then the discernment comes. This might be considered to be reflex faith. It is said an action must be done 300-3000 times in order to make a habit out of it.
2. Discernment is the Spirit of God working in us. There is a sensitivity developed by habit and spiritual development.

3. The church is filled with false brothers; there are lots of them. It is true of all over. We have been lulled to sleep. We are gullible. We think *no one will infiltrate the church here*; but they do and we need to be aware of it.
4. Spiritual discernment is consistent with spirituality and growth.
5. If we want to discern in our lives, we must let the Word of God discern our life. Heb. 4:12.

Neh 6:14: [My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these works of theirs, and the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who were terrifying me.](#)

This is one of Nehemiah's quick-draw prayer. Ezekiel is called the rebuke the female prophetesses.

You need the planners or the plotters. This is something we will periodically observe. In Czekoslovakia this Christian was told to turn in some people or he would be killed. Rev. Thang Sheen. The Communists bring his mother, who had been brought to them. They came to honor your mother and father; and they said, "Now, here is your mother; what will you do now?" He asked the mother, and she said to refuse to turn his friends in.

A Communist comes to a pastor and said, you will have to inform, and we will allow you to teach all you want. He was threatened with an indisgression. He refuses to submit to the Communists, and he is thrown into prison.

All they ask you to do is to play the game. All you have to do is give up a little here or there and they will give you what you want.

In history, some of the greatest persecutors have been believers.

There is every possibility that we could see persecution in our time.

The plotters, the pawns and the payoff. Nehemiah takes no action against those who are in the family; he leaves them to God.

Neh 6:15–19: [So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days. And it came to pass when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were cast down in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work had been done by our God. Also in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and those from Tobiah came to them. For many in Judah were pledged to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had taken in marriage the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. They also reported his good deeds before me, and were delivering my words to him. Tobiah sent letters to make me afraid.](#)

They win the victory as a team. They complete the wall so quickly that some commentators say that it is done too quickly to be possible.

The greatest kind of victory is one which is 1) God-given. 2) it is a victory which the enemy cannot deny; they have tried everything, and the one thing they were unable to interfere with the completion of this wall.

Next week will be Nehemiah 7.

Miracles happen all the time and you simply watch God at work. Some don't want this camp to go on, but it will and it will be a victory which is God-given and something which cannot be denied. Every victory will lead to a new battle. The enemy does not play this way. You don't beat him and that is the end of it.

Do you lie to Communist interrogators? You should not be so stupid and naive to hold to "You cannot lie." One guy named the infiltrators; the Communist pawns. This is because it is a war. Is a lie a lie? Is there a time when a lie is okay? Yes, which we found out under Rahab, who lied.

What about no work to be done on the 7th day and circumcize another on the 8th day. Which one wins out? Jesus commends David for taking the break of the priests. We need to think through some tough questions. Every victory will be followed by another counterattack.

Satanic Attacks

1. When we have a victory, then we strengthen our position, because the enemy will attack again.
2. Each victory will be followed by a counter attack, from a new direction.
3. Have you heard, "We need to dialogue with the enemy." One way the enemy will counterattack is, the infiltrator, the attacker will try to pass himself off as a friend. Let's let bygones be bygones. We need to be extremely discerning in these times. We do not need to be paranoid. Preparation is not paranoia. We do not need to see a demon behind each corner.

Cunningham thinks that we will see persecution in our lifetimes. No matter how frail and fragile we are or with the newest faith; still you daily stand in the will of God. Stories of children who stand up against Communists. 12 year old girl, shipped off to prison for her comment about man coming from monkeys.

Neh. 7:1

Nehemiah Lesson #None

2003

This was not covered in the study:

Neh 7:1 Now it came to pass when the wall was built and I had set up the doors, when the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed;

Neh 7:2 that I gave the charge of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, for he was a faithful man and feared God more than many.

Neh 7:3 And I said to them, Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and while they stand guard, let them shut and bar the doors; and appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, each one at his post, each across from his house.

Neh 7:4 Now the city was broad and large, but the people in it were few, and the houses were not rebuilt.

Neh 7:5 Then my God put it into my heart to gather the nobles, the rulers, and the people, that they might be registered by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of those who had come up in the first return, and found written in it:

Neh 7:6 These are the people of the province who came back from the captivity, of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone to his city.

Neh 7:7 Those who came with Zerubbabel were Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, and Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel:

Neh 7:8 the sons of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two;

Neh 7:9 the sons of Shephatiah, three hundred and seventy-two;

Neh 7:10 the sons of Arah, six hundred and fifty-two;

Neh 7:11 the sons of Pahath-Moab, of the sons of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and eighteen;

Neh 7:12 the sons of Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four;

Neh 7:13 the sons of Zattu, eight hundred and forty-five;

Neh 7:14 the sons of Zaccai, seven hundred and sixty;

Neh 7:15 the sons of Binnui, six hundred and forty-eight;

Neh 7:16 the sons of Bebai, six hundred and twenty-eight;

Neh 7:17 the sons of Azgad, two thousand three hundred and twenty-two;

Neh 7:18 the sons of Adonikam, six hundred and sixty-seven;

Neh 7:19 the sons of Bigvai, two thousand and sixty-seven;

Neh 7:20 the sons of Adin, six hundred and fifty-five;

Neh 7:21 the sons of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety-eight;

Neh 7:22 the sons of Hashum, three hundred and twenty-eight;

Neh 7:23 the sons of Bezai, three hundred and twenty-four;

Neh 7:24 the sons of Hariph, one hundred and twelve;

Neh 7:25 the sons of Gibeon, ninety-five;

Neh 7:26 the men of Bethlehem and Netophah, one hundred and eighty-eight;

Neh 7:27 the men of Anathoth, one hundred and twenty-eight;

Neh 7:28 the men of Beth Azmaveth, forty-two;

Neh 7:29 the men of Kirjath Jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty-three;

Neh 7:30 the men of Ramah and Geba, six hundred and twenty-one;

Neh 7:31 the men of Michmash, one hundred and twenty-two;

Neh 7:32 the men of Bethel and Ai, one hundred and twenty-three;

Neh 7:33 the men of the other Nebo, fifty-two;

Neh 7:34 the sons of the other Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four;

Neh 7:35 the sons of Harim, three hundred and twenty;

Neh 7:36 the sons of Jericho, three hundred and forty-five;

Neh 7:37 the sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-one;

Neh 7:38 the sons of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty.

Neh 7:39 The priests: the sons of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy- three;

Neh 7:40 the sons of Immer, one thousand and fifty-two;

Neh 7:41 the sons of Pashhur, one thousand two hundred and forty-seven;

Neh 7:42 the sons of Harim, one thousand and seventeen.

Neh 7:43 The Levites: the sons of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, and of the sons of Hodevah, seventy- four.

Neh 7:44 The singers: the sons of Asaph, one hundred and forty-eight.

Neh 7:45 The gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, the sons of Shobai, one hundred and thirty-eight.

Neh 7:46 The temple slaves: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth, Neh 7:47 the sons of Keros, the sons of Sia, the sons of Padon,

Neh 7:48 the sons of Lebana, the sons of Hagaba, the sons of Salmai,

Neh 7:49 the sons of Hanan, the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar,

Neh 7:50 the sons of Reaiah, the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda,

Neh 7:51 the sons of Gazzam, the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah,

Neh 7:52 the sons of Besai, the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephishesim,

Neh 7:53 the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur,

Neh 7:54 the sons of Bazlith, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha,

Neh 7:55 the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Tamah,

Neh 7:56 the sons of Neziah, and the sons of Hatipha.

Neh 7:57 The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of Sotai, the sons of Sophereth, the sons of Perida,

Neh 7:58 the sons of Jaala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel,

Neh 7:59 the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth of Zebaim, and the sons of Amon.

Neh 7:60 All the temple slaves, and the sons of Solomon's servants, were three hundred and ninety-two.

Neh 7:61 And these were the ones who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but they could not declare their father's house nor their seed, whether they were of Israel:

Neh 7:62 the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, the sons of Nekoda, six hundred and forty- two;

Neh 7:63 and of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Koz, the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name.

Neh 7:64 These sought their listing among those who were registered by genealogy, but it was not found; therefore they were considered desecrated, and excluded from the priesthood.

Neh 7:65 And the governor said to them that they should not eat of the set apart, holy, things till a priest should stand with Urim and Thummim.

Neh 7:66 Altogether the whole assembly was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty,

Neh 7:67 besides their male and female servants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred and forty-five singing men and singing women.

Neh 7:68 Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five,

Neh 7:69 their camels four hundred and thirty-five, and donkeys six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

Neh 7:70 And some of the heads of the fathers gave to the work. The governor gave to the treasury one thousand gold drachmas, fifty basins, and five hundred and thirty priestly garments.

Neh 7:71 Some of the heads of the fathers gave to the treasury of the work twenty thousand gold drachmas, and two thousand two hundred silver minas.

Neh 7:72 And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand gold drachmas, two thousand silver minas, and sixty-seven priestly garments.

Neh 7:73 So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple slaves, and all Israel dwelt in their cities. When the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities.

Neh. 8:1

Nehemiah Lesson #11

2003

The subject here is revival; they have accepted the leadership of Nehemiah. They faced a monumental task, and they rebuilt the walls of the city in a relatively short period of time. The people had become united in all of this. They had become a team. Each one had a part to play, a niche to fill; they have depended upon one another. The result is Neh. 8.

Revival is the awakening of God's people; it is not a movement of unbelievers becoming believers; that is an awakening. Before there can be an awakening, there must first be a revival. God's people recognized that they were slack; they were failing in their spiritual lives, and they were shaken. Neh. 8 is revival, so we need to figure out what is real revival. However, it does not just happen, you can plan for it.

Eph. 5:14: **Therefore He says: Awake, you who sleep, stand forth out from among the dead, and Christ will shine on you.** It is a wake up call; you have to realize that you are asleep and then you have to respond to the call. The death is the death of real spirituality; falling for the counterfeit; falling for that which appears to be genuine but is not. Revival is ours for the asking.

We should be content with what we have, but not with who we are or what we are or where we are. Now all of the people were gathered together as one man in one square which was in front of the water gate.

If you have no great sense of personal need, then the Word of God becomes dry and boring and too much of a demand. The ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the Law.

There must be a unity of God's people. What the cross is, is, you take the letter / and then you cross it out. Cunningham has been teaching for 30 years and he still gets nervous before a crowd. As soon as you forget yourself, there is no point to self-consciousness.

Acts 2:1: **And when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.** Matt. 5:23–24: **Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.**

You need to be willing to take responsibility for the problems that exist. If have or know of a problem with another person in the overall body, then take responsibility for that and try to settle that problem.

1. There must be a unity of God's people.
2. The Word of God must take its rightful place; it must be taken in high esteem. They want to hear the Word of God. If there is a unified body who want to come together and hear the Word of God, then God can work through that body. Psalms 138:2b: **You have magnified Your Word above all Your name.**
3. There has to be a teacher gifted and called by God; in this case, it is Ezra called by God. Nehemiah was the leader, but he was not the teacher. We each have a part to play. Ezra 7:6–10: **this Ezra came up from Babylon; and he was a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which Jehovah the God of Israel had given. The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of Jehovah his God upon him. Some of the children of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple slaves came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. On the first day of the first month he began his journey from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach the statutes and ordinances in Israel. Ezra knew that the people needed the word; he committed himself to learning the Word of God and he continued to fulfill teaching the Word of God. It is necessary for us to get our hearts right before God.** Eph. 5:26: **that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word,** All cleansing and correction in life is done by the Word of God and it continues throughout all of our lives.
4. There must be the committed study. From early morning until noon, the Word of God was read. For 24 days running, God was doing this work among the people. Deut. 31:12–13: **Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the sojourner who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear Jehovah your God and take heed to do all the Words of this Law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear Jehovah your God all the days you live in the land which you are crossing the Jordan to possess.** Rom. 10:17: **So then faith is of hearing, and hearing through the Word of God.** 2Tim. 1:13–14: **Hold fast the form of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, guard it by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.** 2Tim. 2:15: **Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.**
5. There must be genuine worship. Neh. 8:4: **So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand,**

stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. He opens the Bible and shows them what it says. When you witness to someone, open the Word and show them where it comes from. There is a certain power from the written word. This is not this person's thoughts or some latest even or a personal opinion or what is recorded or what is written.

6. There must be accurate interpretation. Neh. 8:7–8: they helped the people understand the Law. They read distinctly from the law of God. These men were able to expound on the Scriptures. Sometimes we make things too difficult. It is a pitfall to fall into the desire to please the crowd. Sometimes, you need to rattle their cages. Sometimes they need to be rebuked. Doctrine rebukes and corrects and then it instructs. 1Tim. 4:11–16: **These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but become an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Attend to these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will deliver both yourself and those who hear you.** You do not allow anyone to look down on you; the reading of the Word, you explain the Word and this is backed by the fact that you live the Word. We are so busy to teach that we don't read the Word. Let's say, instead of teaching, we read a book. When Paul wrote a letter to a church, that letter was simply read to the church. They might expound upon it; they might give some examples. First, there is the clear reading of the Word. Then you give the true interpretation of what it says. The Bible means what it says and it says what it means. We need to stick with the clear sense of what it says. Interpretation is not to bring out some hidden meaning. Thirdly, we apply this to daily life. How is this applied? Young guys, you need a lot of application. How does this apply to today's life, to personal relationships, etc. This needs to be amplified.
7. There must be a godly sorrow which leads to repentance. We need to be of one mind. He quotes from some place in Neh. 10. These people felt a genuine sense of grief in how far they fell short. They are told not to mourn and not to grieve. When we see these things in their proper place,... A godly sorrow means we see our lives and realize that this is not what we want our lives to be. If the Spirit of God is grieved, then we ought to be grieved with Him. The joy of the Lord is our strength; that healing can only follow our healing.

In his congregation now, there are 7 men committed to teaching the Word of God. In a previous congregation of 400, there was no one. He is going to start a Bible college there at the first of the year.

What God does with his young men depends upon how much they prepare. God does not use ill-prepared people. You preparation is more important than your ministry.

In the timelessness of eternity, we will see that there is no exhausting the Word of God. Cunningham has never taught the same message twice. It is constantly developing and

constantly growing and there are constantly new thoughts and new associations brought in.

Worship is our expression of who God is and what He is. David will talk about the person of Jesus Christ. He describes the essence of God the way a man in love would discuss the qualities of a woman he loves. Heb. 13 speaks of authority, the purpose the spiritual leadership, and what it is. The whole purpose is to direct our focus toward Jesus Christ. We reflect upon Who He is and we see this personified in the person and life of Jesus Christ. We have a concrete person that we can attach these attributes to, so it is not completely academic. Genuine worship is necessary if we want revival.

When the world see the joy in us, that should make them interested. We cross out the / and focus on the body; on the team.

Neh. 8:1

Nehemiah Lesson #12

2003

Revival is used improperly; revival is among believers in Jesus Christ; an awakening is what occurs with unbelievers. Revival implies that there has been a lukewarming; an apathy. It creeps in and we wonder, *where is our hunger for the Word? Where is my joy?*

A bad marriage can be a hindrance in our spiritual growth; but a good marriage can be a hindrance as well. A couple thought seriously about maintaining a love relationship and that nothing would be allowed to intrude into the barrier of love which they raised up. Nothing could penetrate this shining barrier, as they called it, until Jesus Christ did. The woman became devoted and the guy resented it. Almost subconsciously, the man pulled back, even though they were both believers. In later years, not many marriages can be called good marriages.

9 Ingredients/Elements for Spiritual Revival

Revival means a restoration.

1. There must be a unity among God's people. We must come to a point of single-mindedness. This is the idea of being of the same mind toward one another. Loving others as we love ourselves means the death of self.
2. There must be a focus on the preeminence of the Word of God.
3. There is a need for a teacher who is gifted by God; the sheep need a shepherd. At this point, Ezra was 90 years old or so, and he was still teaching.
4. There must be discipline and diligent study of the Word. No good to have a teacher without having the teaching.
5. There must be genuine worship. A sense of wonder is necessary in worship; we need to have a great attitude toward Him. Worship costs something. David would not offer up an animal to God that he received free.
6. There must be the proper interpretation of the Word. In the old days, the churches used to meet for 3 hours and 2 hours was teaching. Sheep do not know what direction they need to go in; sheep will go places they can't get out of. They eat

things which make them sick. The rod and staff comfort me refers to a sheep, and these things are used to beat on a sheep or to hook him and take him out of danger. There is a right way to study the Word of God. If we fail to apply the proper principles of interpretation, then we don't get anything from it. The Bible tells us how to study the Bible. The Bible is its own interpretation.

7. There has to be Godly . Neh. 8:9: **And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, This day is holy to Jehovah your God; do not mourn nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the Words of the Law.** A national day of confession and prayer. However, we ought to be rejoicing, Nehemiah says. Judas had a worldly sorrow. Prov. 3:5–6: **Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not lean toward your own own understanding. Acknowledge Him in all your ways.** A pastor never wants to discipline his congregation. Just like a parent does not like disciplining his child. James rebukes these people severely, and he talks about their schisms. He calls them unfaithful to God (adulteresses). Therefore, submit to God, and flee the devil; draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Attitudes determine actions. It is easier to correct the action than the attitude. This is why some people are never victorious over some sins in their lives because they cannot deal with the attitude. **Lament and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to joy.**
8. Revival restores faith and obedience to the Lord. God does not require that we understand everything in the Bible. There are things which occur in our lives which we will not understand. Like a family which he dealt with, and a young lady who lost her life suddenly due to a medical reason.

Most of us want to be happy and God wants us to be happy; however, much that we pursue works against our own happiness. Like the prodigal son. Jesus Christ will never hold a place in our live any different than the importance of the Word. What time do you spend in the Word? How much do you love the Word of God? If you say you love Jesus Christ but you don't love His Word, then there is no real love. The Bible is the mind of Christ. Cunningham's interest is the fruit of the spirit. He is thankful to play a part in the lives of these people, and he feels privileged to be able to play a part in these lives. When there is joy in your soul because of your happiness in the Lord, you are a powerful person. This is because you have something that other people do not have. Joy means that beautiful people can have it and the rest of us can have it as well. When you have beauty, then you have to watch it fade. Cunningham has lived half a century and never thought he would make it past 30. Your joy is a good thermometer as to your spiritual growth.

We don't have to understand everything which God does, but we do have to trust Him.

The following verses were not really covered at all (a few were mentioned in the previous class):

Neh 8:1 Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they commanded Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which Jehovah had charged Israel.

Neh 8:2 So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women, and all who could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month.

Neh 8:3 And he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

Neh 8:4 So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiyah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

Neh 8:5 And Ezra opened the book in the eyes of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up.

Neh 8:6 And Ezra blessed Jehovah, the great God. Then all the people answered, Amen, Amen! while lifting up their hands. And they bowed down and prostrated themselves before Jehovah with their faces to the ground.

Neh 8:7 Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place.

Neh 8:8 So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.

Neh 8:9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, This day is holy to Jehovah your God; do not mourn nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the Words of the Law.

Neh 8:10 Then he said to them, Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of Jehovah is your refuge.

Neh 8:11–12: [So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved. And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the Words that had been declared to them.](#)

Obedience will bring greater joy.

Neh 8:13–17: Now on the second day the heads of the fathers of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe, in order to have insight into the Words of the Law. And they found written in the Law, which Jehovah had commanded by the hand of Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, Go out to the mountain, and bring olive foliage, foliage of oil trees, myrtle foliage, palm foliage, and foliage of leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written. Then the people went out and brought them and made themselves booths, each one on their roofs, or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim. So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness.

God commanded Israel to do this—the Feast of Tabernacles—and yet, they had not done this since the days of Joshua.

3 Disciplines which the Church has Forgotten

1. Fasting; most Christians have not fasted for their entire lives. Jesus said, if you fast, do it in private. The idea is, for one meal, or for a day; it indicates that you are going to feed your soul rather than feed your body. You spend meal time doing something related to God. The early church fasted; Paul fasted. The virtue is not in the fasting but what you do in the time that you fast.
2. Meditation; and the average Christian thinks that you are imitating orientals. However, the orientals took this from us. We empty and purify our minds of all the garbage of this world. Meditation might be taking a passage or a chapter and learning that passage or thinking or praying about that passage. You attempt to get everything that you can out of this verse. It is best done in a quiet place. 1Tim. 4:15
3. Watching. Matt. 46:21: watch so that you do not enter into temptation. Stand fast in the faith. Keeping a vigil. It is the same word used of a shepherd watching his flock. When you watch spiritually, you take the responsibility to guard your soul. Is your soul being threatened? It takes tremendous energy to focus on prayer. Most of us just drift day by day in our lives. We go in whatever direction the current takes us. Watching means that we stay awake; we ask ourselves uncomfortable questions.

He who comes to me and drinks, then out of him will flow living waters (John 7:37).

Revival should be a daily experience. Cunningham is heading for the states and he will be back in 3 weeks.

Neh 8:18 Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the prescribed manner.

Neh. 9:1

Nehemiah Lesson #13

2003

Neh 8:10 Then he said to them, Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of Jehovah is your refuge.

When you come into contact with the Word of God, you become aware of sinful areas in our lives. When you recognize your spiritual failures, you are often closer to God than when you think you are doing everything right.

Introduction to [the joy of Jehovah is your refuge](#)

1. Life is not fair; it is filled with injustice, sorrow and loss. People are unfair. People tend to look at us in the worst possible light; they often assume the worst about us.
2. The adversities of life are greater than all human strengths and capabilities. Every person somewhere in life will run into a situation where all their abilities will not be enough to deal with the situation.
3. These people had been overthrown, taken captive, enslaved, exiled, and opposed in every way. They came out of captivity after 70 years. Some were born outside the land. There were about 13 areas of opposition and hostility. When it happens, where will you find the strength? There is a lot of Christian peer pressure today. What will give you the moral strength to stand on your own convictions? When life put a weigh on you which is overwhelming, where will you turn for strength? Nehemiah tells us that the joy of the Lord is our strength.
4. This presents one of the greatest and mightiest strengths for our lives. Some get involved in an emotional joy, and when they are faced with real problems, they cannot conjure up that emotion joy.

Chadad (חַדָּד) [pronounced *chah-dahd*], which means *joy*. It is called *the joy of the Lord*. This tells us where this comes from and Who it belongs to. We can only get this from God; no individual person can give this to us. Jer. 31:13 he warned Israel for 40 years about what would happen. *I will turn their mourning into joy; I will make them rejoice rather than sorrow.* This can be our strength when going through a difficult time.

Death is very difficult for the unsaved, because we don't know what is going to happen; we have no assurances. Insofar as the unbeliever knows, is that person is gone forever, never to be seen again.

Azaz = *strength*. God wants us to be strong so that we can overcome. Rev. 12:11 we are supposed to be overcomers. The Bible tells us that there is no trial or temptation which can overtake us. God will provide us a way to come through it and come out on top. This is related to the word oz, which means *strength, might; a stronghold, a place of refuge*. Prov. 10:29: the way of the Lord is a stronghold to the upright. Bad decisions bring bad results. When you go for days and years with bad decisions, the result is an overload of bad consequences. You cannot deal with a year or two of bad decisions in a half-hour counseling session. God does not want us to fall apart; He wants us to have a confident attitude. What you do today prepares you for victory or defeat later on.

Jer. 16:19: *Oh Lord, my strength, my refuge.* Eccles. 7:14: *In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity take note that God also has ordained the one next to the other, in order that man should not find anything after him.* In changeable circumstances, God never changes.

A lot of people equate joy with happiness

1. All men want and pursue happiness.

2. Happiness is far inferior to joy. You may be happy tonight. In a group, there are only a handful who are happy. God demands much more of us. He wants us to grow up. He wants to form Christ in us.
3. Happiness is built upon changing circumstances, but joy is built upon an unchanging God. Heb. 13:8: **Jesus Christ is the same today, yesterday and forever.** We are told that we are accepted in the beloved. God loves us as He loves His own Son. We, since entering into the family of God, have probably gone astray. There is a misconception that God does not love us less because of this. He may be displeased with our lives, but that does not change His love. Because of our relationship, we have the strength and the power to face anything in this life. We can laugh at whatever is thrown at us; Satan cannot touch us.
4. Happiness is fickle; it will leave us when we need it the most. We are going along and everything is going our way, and suddenly, the very thing that we counted on is taken away. This does not mean you will slap happy; it does not mean that you will not experience tears.
5. Joy is most evident when things are running against you. That is when it shows the most stability. The darker it gets, the brighter joy is. How many things we would be better off to lay aside.
6. Happiness is the slave of circumstances, but joy is always the master.
7. The world says, *don't worry, be happy*. God's word says, do not be anxious; rejoice.

Heb. 12:2: **...looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.** Jesus in all of His pain, depended upon...? Philip. 1:12 **But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,...** Paul's circumstances have worked out to the greater progress of the gospel. It means *to cut a path*. Philip. 4:4: **Rejoice, and again, I say, rejoice.** It is the grace of God which is behind the joy of the Lord (the words are related). When Paul says to the Philippians, he says, *my circumstances may look bad, but they are working for the good; so, therefore, rejoice; and again, I say, rejoice.*

Joy is when your friends forsake you, but you know that God won't. People will be there one day, and gone the next. You can fall from the favor of men; you will never fall from the favor of God. Joy is when you are despised by men, so you enter into your status as beloved by God. Men may misunderstand you, but God won't. Joy is when life's burdens are too great, but God has provided. Your sufferings are too great to bear, but you hand them to Him who can bear all things. It takes life's many trials to teach us about joy. We can have joy and sorrow. We can have joy in pain and in adversity. We can have it anywhere at anytime. God does not need strong people; He needs people who are weak and are willing to be used. If you choose not to believe, not to follow the teachings of the Bible, then you have robbed yourself of joy.

Hmm, we did not cover much of Nehemiah.

One more session in Neh. 8 before we go into Neh. 9.

What part does ritual play in the life of the believer? We have two: baptism and the Lord's table. In Nehemiah, we have a ritual which has been forgotten: the Feast of Tabernacles. All religions have rituals, and they are all dead, as they represent nothing.

Neh 8:13–17: Now on the second day the heads of the fathers of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe, in order to have insight into the Words of the Law. And they found written in the Law, which Jehovah had commanded by the hand of Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, Go out to the mountain, and bring olive foliage, foliage of oil trees, myrtle foliage, palm foliage, and foliage of leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written. Then the people went out and brought them and made themselves booths, each one on their roofs, or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim. So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness.

While this revival is going on, they have returned under Ezra and then Nehemiah and Zechariah? Because they were actively involved, that there was a fellowship involved. The idea of being in fellowship is a very passive thing.

Charismatics keep telling us that we will see great end time revival; however, in the endtimes, there will be great apostasy. How confused can the church be that, when they call it revival, it is exactly the opposite. That which brings revival is the teaching of Bible doctrine.

Matsa is the word *to find*. This is a treasure which they found. We have lost out on the benefit of fasting. We will find out in a short time what is stronger, the flesh or the Spirit. Instead of mealtimes, sit down and learn the Bible and about the Spirit.

Meditation is another. We have allowed Oriental religions to hijack the concept of meditation, which is not emptying the mind of all thinking, but to focus on God's Word.

Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit as our teacher would bring to our remembrance the things that we have been taught. The Lord will answer our prayers and we need to be silent, waiting and watching. Prayer is us communicating with Him.

The Passover looks to the cross, the blood forming the cross. Leaven represents evil, and the unleavened bread to separation from evil. The feast of firstfruits is at the barley

harvest. It anticipates the harvest of souls through the gospel. In the 3rd month is the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Pentecost. It anticipates the coming of God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament necessary for the bringing in of the unsaved.

Regathering of Israel, the feast of Trumpets. Then the Feast of Atonement which speaks of the revival of Israel.

They were to reflect on their pilgrim origins in the Feast of Tabernacles. God remained faithful, even though God was faithful. What was their personal relationship with God? The Word of God was taught every day. They would mediate and reflect on how God's Word entered into their lives.

In vv. 16–18, the feast is restored:

Neh. 8:16–18: Then the people went out and brought them and made themselves booths, each one on their roofs, or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim. So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness. Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the prescribed manner.

Solemn remembrance; personal evaluation,

This had not been practiced since the time of Joshua. Very early on, Israel forsook the Law of God.

How is it possible for a people to totally forget the Word of God?

1. Choose to disobey known truth. We know what the Word of God says, and we disobey it.
2. As a result, we choose to neglect or set aside the Word of God. When the Word of God speaks to our disobedience, it is uncomfortable. When involved in this, we don't want to hear it.
3. The result is increasing hardness of heart. Paul compares this to branding or searing something with a hot iron.
4. There is also a forgetfulness; it is possible for us to blot out from our memory principles, promises, etc., which we have excised from our memory.

A result of the restoration of this feast means that there was great gladness. *Hayah* means that *there came to be*; joy is the natural result here. Joy is much greater than happiness. Happiness is unstable; happiness depends upon circumstances.

Jesus Christ stands up and cries out with a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, come to me and drink; and he who comes to me and drinks, out of him will come the springs of living water.”

A parallel passage in 2Chron. 30: where there is the restoration of another feast. Ahaz has closed the temple and he led Israel into idolatry. He closed the Temple. Hezekiah opens up the Temple and restores the teaching of the Word of God.

Cunningham has devoted himself to reading through the Word of God in this year again; which must be an active participation again. A pastor-teacher instructs us so that we can read the Bible. You cannot understand everything; Cunningham doesn't understand everything.

A restoration of the Feast of the Passover. The sacrifice of the lamb. Hezekiah finds out that they are not sanctified. God heard his prayer and these people were healed.

2Cor. 30:13–27: And many people, a very great assembly, gathered at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. They arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and they took away all the incense altars and cast them into the Brook Kidron. Then they slaughtered the Passover on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed, and consecrated themselves, and brought the burnt offerings to the house of Jehovah. They stood in their place according to the ordinance, according to the Law of Moses the man of God; the priests were sprinkling the blood from the hand of the Levites. For many in the assembly had not sanctified themselves; therefore the Levites had charge of the slaughter of the Passover for everyone who was not clean, to consecrate them to Jehovah. For a multitude of the people, many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, O good Jehovah, provide atonement for everyone who has prepared his heart to seek God, Jehovah the God of his fathers, though not according to the purification of the sanctuary. And Jehovah gave heed to Hezekiah and healed the people. So the children of Israel found at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great joy; and the Levites and the priests were praising Jehovah day by day, with loud instruments unto Jehovah. And Hezekiah spoke to the heart of all the Levites who were teaching the good understanding of Jehovah; and they ate throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings and making confession unto Jehovah the God of their fathers. And the whole assembly took counsel to keep the feast another seven days, and they kept it another seven days with joy. For Hezekiah king of Judah had given to the assembly a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep, and the rulers had given to the assembly a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep; and a great number of priests consecrated themselves. The whole assembly of Judah rejoiced, along with the priests and Levites, all the assembly that came from Israel, the sojourners who came from the land of Israel, and those dwelling in Judah. So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem. Then the priests, the Levites, rose up and blessed the people, and their voice was heard; and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, to the heavens.

3 times it is emphasized that the people are having great joy. It is what the Spirit produces in us. God's plan and God's people experience great joy. There is effective prayer; the priests are blessing the people.

The priests are blessing the people, meaning that they are calling upon God to bless these people. Making a people healthy, blessing their crops and production, is what blessing from God is all about.

Our nation cannot defend itself. Many nations look at us (Australia) like a great plum, and we have something Asian nations want: room, space. There are nations which have fallen because the US has turned its back on its own allies.

Two things are apparently being done in Australia: the military is being beefed up and there are new home invasion laws. The lines and the connections by which these things happen cannot be traced.

Australia has a magnificent Christian heritage which has been removed from most people's knowledge. Many of the founders of Australia were believers. There is a stanza in the Australian national hymn which speaks of Jesus Christ as the cornerstone.

1Cor. 5:7–8: **Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**

They are starting a Bible college there, which is no small undertaking. We feast day-by-day on the Word of God. God has a specific plan for us; a plan with our name on it. If we do not fulfill our plan, no one else will.

We are a member of a group. One defeat when Israel was taking the land, and it was because of one man who took something that he should not have.

Attending Bible class can become a ritual without reality.

This is apparently the end of the series, even though the book Nehemiah has not been completed.