

Cell Notes

June 20th 2010

Nehemiah 1

Between now and the end of August we are going to work our way through the little book of Nehemiah. Ezra / Nehemiah contain vivid 1st person memoirs of key players in a turning point in the history of God's people. After many years of pressure and attrition, the rump of David's kingdom Judah, and her capital Jerusalem finally fell to the armies of the mighty Babylonian Emperor, Nebuchadnezzar. In 586 b.c. her last king, Jehoiachin, was taken into exile along with all the nation's leadership. These terrible events are recorded in the last chapters of 2 Kings and reflected in the book of Jeremiah. Then, as Isaiah had prophesied, Babylon was herself conquered by the Medes and Persians under the leadership of their mighty king, Cyrus. This man allowed the exiles to begin to return and the temple to be rebuilt (538 - 516 b.c.)

The events recorded by Nehemiah happen several generations after this, around 445 b.c.

Read Nehemiah 1

1. Ch 1 describes Nehemiah's response when he receives news of the plight of his own people
2. *Would you agree that he is deeply affected by a more-than-human grief? Have you ever experienced anything like that?* Despite all that his people have been through, he knows that the God of heaven is a God of love who 'keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands'
3. He does not hesitate to identify himself and his father's house with the sins of the people that have brought down calamity upon the nation.
4. Through this time of deep, emotional and mental heart searching God brings N to a remarkable conclusion.... a brave and audacious plan
5. *How does our situation compare with the situation of N and his people?*
6. Our abiding temptation in our own situation is to withdraw emotionally from the plight of the nation, to exhaust our energies in blaming it all on other people. *Do we need to repent of that?*
7. **The spirit in which we do a thing matters even more than what we do.** In a time of anxiety - recession - national humiliation - national church decline there is a lot of fear, anger, frustration etc about. *Do we need to give God permission and opportunity to lead us through all that stuff to a deeper place closer to his heart... ask God for a spirit of deep repentance - turning to him - to take over the whole church? c.f Zech 12.10*
8. *N realized that God wanted him to go home and oversee the rebuilding of the walls and gates of Jerusalem. Do we believe that our building project is God's audacious plan for us?*
9. *Think about how you might use the '40 Days of Prayer' or TTTT*