

REBUILDING IS NOT EASY

Dear Friend:

In the mid-400s B.C. when Persia (Modern Iran) was in control of the Middle East, King Artaxerxes gave the order that the exiled Jewish people were allowed to return to their homeland. Along with this declaration, Artaxerxes ordered surrounding city/states in his kingdom to allow safe passage of the Jews. (In other words: "hands off"). Under the leadership of a Jewish man named Nehemiah, a remnant of Jews went back home to Jerusalem. When Nehemiah and the remnant returned, what a mess they found! The wall surrounding Jerusalem (the #1 defense weapon) was mostly a pile of rocks; for all practical purposes there was no wall around Jerusalem.

Before leaving for Jerusalem, Nehemiah had gotten permission from the king to rebuild the wall and with that permission the king also sent a "hands off" order to peacefully allow the Jews to rebuild the wall. However, cities nearby did not like the idea, so they ignored the Persian Kings orders and began threatening Nehemiah and all the wall builders. The Jewish remnant was intimidated but Nehemiah's response to them in Nehemiah 4, teaches us three great lessons about what to expect when we want to do the Lord's work. And don't forget this – a relatively small remnant of Jewish returnees were facing thousands of "enemies".

Nehemiah says... "Remember this, remnant...". First, when you have progress, you never have rebuilding without opposition. Jerusalem's neighbors felt threatened, they just presumed the Jews had harmful intentions. People don't like change, people prefer this life motto: "Come we, come whoa, my status is quo". Second lesson: People will exaggerate against you to try and stop you. Nehemiah 4:1-3 reveals that enemies exaggerated about the poor quality of the wall and then threw insults at the Jews. Lesson Three is an internal problem, not a problem brought on by the enemies. When the Jews built the wall to half its' height they wanted to quit. Have you ever felt that way? You are working on a project, make great progress but about half-way through you feel like it will never get done? When the Jews faced this, Nehemiah said: "God is great and awesome, he gives us the strength and will fight for us. Move on, remnant".

I hope you can find application in Nehemiah 4. Whether as an individual or as a church remember the 3 lessons and remember where our strength comes from.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Mike

Prayer: Bonnie Boone, Midge Gathers, The family of Melvin Burdette, The Israeli/Hamas war doesn't spread

Events: This Saturday – TURN YOUR CLOCKS BACK, Sunday Worship 10:15 – Communion