



How Do You Change Your World? (Part II)

**Nehemiah 8:10: (NASB) ...for this day is holy to our Lord.
Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.**



Last week we began talking about what it takes to actually change the world around you - what it takes to not only have a dream for change but to begin that process of change. We talked about Nehemiah, a little-known figure in the Old Testament who not only had a ridiculously big dream for change, he worked on the idea and recruited the masses to help him progress towards making that dream a reality. Today, we finish the story as we catalogue the principles and techniques Nehemiah used to accomplish what seemed impossible. Not only did Nehemiah achieve something magnificent, he also left clues and tools along the way for us to pick up on and use, to apply to the changes we want to affect in our own lives.

Greatness in all of us, *Dream - Motivational Video, Mateusz M*

- *(Mateusz M) For those of you that have experienced some hardships, don't give up on your dreams. There are rough times that are gonna come, but they have not come to stay, they have come to pass.*
- *(Will Smith) Greatness is not this wonderful, esoteric, illusive, god-like feature that only the special among us will ever taste. You know, it's something that truly exists in all of us.*



recap
recap



Nehemiah lived about 100 years after the period of Israel's captivity in which Cyrus the Persian allowed Jews to go back to their land. In Nehemiah's time, the Persian ruler was Artaxerxes I Longimanus (ruled 465-424 BC). Nehemiah was his personal cupbearer.

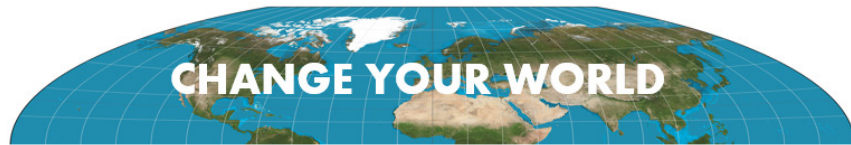
We discussed the character of Nehemiah.

First, he was meticulous in ordering details which would indicate a man who paid very close attention to staying true to truth: Nehemiah 1:1-2

Second, he was obvious in his loyalty and that loyalty was to God Almighty and His chosen people: Nehemiah 1:3-4

A problem with leadership today is mixed agendas - personal agendas conflict with the agenda of helping others. Nehemiah avoided any personal agenda.

Please see the CQ podcast from November 27, 2017, "How Do You Change Your world? (Part I)."



Find your noble passion
Press your passion into personal purpose
Pass your passion and purpose on to the right people
Practice your passion and purpose with urgency



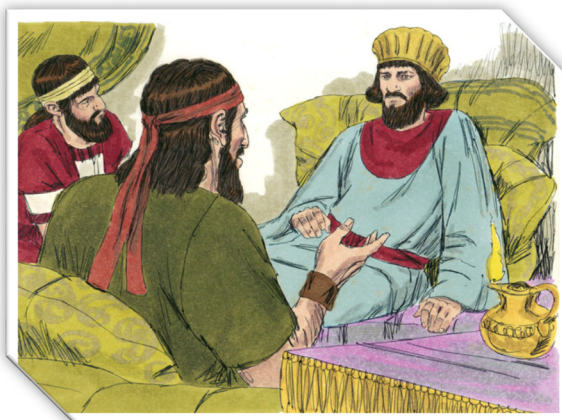
What do we have so far? We have a mighty crew of workers, each with their own motivation to repair Jerusalem for the sake of God first and for the sake of their own heritage and protection second. What is coming? Threats, fear, doubt, internal strife - typical issues that come with changing your world!

Trouble is a telling test for any leader.
What kind of trouble came and how did Nehemiah handle it?

It is one thing to have a vision, act on it, share it with others and get them on board with you. It is an entirely different thing to face serious trouble in this process. Trouble brings any leader to the crossroad of fight or flight, and this is where the leader's character and mission are tested at a whole new level. He had a single focus to honor the Lord in everything he did. What inspiration!

 **Most people stop, *Dream - Motivational Video, Mateusz M***

- *Most people, they raise a family, they earn a living and then they die. They stop growing, they stop working on themselves, they stop stretching, they stop pushing themselves. Then a lot of people like to complain, but they don't wanna do anything about their situation. And most people don't work on their dreams. Why? One is because of fear - the fear of failure. "What if things don't work out?" And the fear of success. "What if they DO and I can't handle it?" These are not risk takers.*



Nehemiah took risks. He was a cupbearer for the king and was now starting a giant construction project. Even asking the king for the time off and a list of materials was a risk!



Power through enemy adversity with defiance and mutual ownership

The truest test of leadership and the buy-in of those following is trouble - lots of trouble.

In a climate of uncertainty and fear, without strong and visionary leadership, people panic.
— Patrick Dodson

The rising up of controversy and insult as they begin to rebuild the wall:



Nehemiah 4:1-6: (NASB) ¹Now it came about that when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became furious and very angry and mocked the Jews. ²He spoke in the presence of his brothers and the wealthy men of Samaria and said, What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to restore it for themselves? Can they offer sacrifices? Can they finish in a day? Can they revive the stones from the dusty rubble even the burned ones? ³Now Tobiah the Ammonite was near him and he said, Even what they are building—if a fox should jump on it, he would break their stone wall down!

To this point the Jews had been merely annoying - now they were a cause for heckling and anger.

Think about this for today in terms of tweeting. Imagine if Sanballat had a Twitter account what he might say:



Sanballat @sanballatthehoronite - 2m



Who do they think they are? A fox could knock that wall down tomorrow! HA! These people are so foolish. #sillysrealites #NehemiahFails #HoronitesRule



53K



37K



190K

The enemies mocked and insulted Nehemiah and the people, trying to demean them. If the people were weak, this could get to them, wearing them away little by little. No one is immune to criticism.



The people heard the heckling and threats and were shaken, so Nehemiah prays for their strength:

⁴Hear, O our God, how we are despised! Return their reproach on their own heads and give them up for plunder in a land of captivity. ⁵Do not forgive their iniquity and let not their sin be blotted out before You, for they have demoralized the builders.

Do not forgive their iniquity - why was this an appropriate prayer? They were demoralizing the builders who were doing God's work. He was asking for justice for their behavior that stood directly against God. Powering through enemy adversity is best fueled with sincere prayer for God's protective hand!

⁶So we built the wall and the whole wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.

Even though they were shaken by the talk, they had a mind to work. The people were a unified and defiant force as they spurred one another on in their difficult and now obviously dangerous work. One reason they were unified was because families were working together on the section of the wall outside of their own houses. He got them working for personal reasons.

The progress just aggravated Sanballat and his minions.

Heckling and insult now become a serious threat of attack:

Nehemiah 4:7-14: (NASB) ⁷Now when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repair of the walls of Jerusalem went on, and that the breaches began to be closed, they were very angry. ⁸All of them conspired together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause a disturbance in it.

Now the Jewish effort is becoming a threat.

To power through enemy adversity with defiance and mutual ownership, Nehemiah knew to always go back to his original source of strength - PRAYER:

⁹But we prayed to our God, and because of them we set up a guard against them day and night. ¹⁰Thus in Judah it was said, The strength of the burden bearers is failing, yet there is much rubbish; and we ourselves are unable to rebuild the wall. ¹¹Our enemies said, They will not know or see until we come among them, kill them and put a stop to the work. ¹²When the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times, They will come up against us from every place where you may turn...

The strength of the burden bearers is failing - the word on the street was the people were getting tired; doubts were rising. The enemies plotted to surround the people. The Jews who lived nearby heard ten different times that the enemies would come up against us from every place where you may turn.

Tensions continued to mount as the people began to lose heart. Nehemiah reacted decisively:

¹³then I stationed men in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, the exposed places, and I stationed the people in families with their swords, spears and bows.

Families together would fight hard to protect each other. Guards were put around the outside edge of the wall while the work was going on.



¹⁴When I saw their fear, I rose and spoke to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people: Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your houses.

Nehemiah was intuitive. He kept watching the people and saw their fears. He continually reminded their leaders it is God Almighty overseeing the work and who they are honoring.

And fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your houses - this is a fight first and foremost for God, but also for you and the very place you live.

Defy the evil! Defy the darkness! Resist the devil and he will flee from you!

Our strongest power and defiance against any enemy is based on faith in God's protection, coupled with our willingness to stand and fight for that which we have committed to.

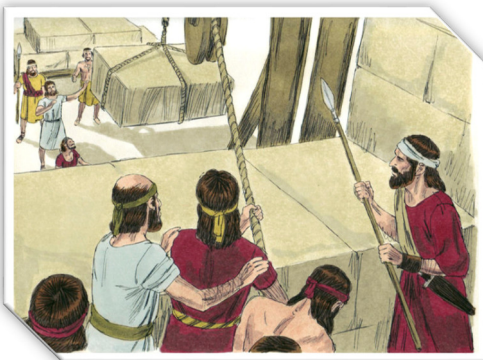


When I was younger and at a youth camp there was a horrific rain storm, the tents were leaking and many things were going wrong. The director of the camp was putting out fires and I simply carried his umbrella from place to place so he would not get wet. He was my Nehemiah. I couldn't do the work he was doing, but I could help.

Trouble inevitably comes from the outside, but what do you do when it comes from within your own ranks?

We have not yet seen how Nehemiah's decisive faith and action countered the enemy's plans and already we are looking at other potential issues - this time from within. Anyone who has the audacity to try and change their world will inevitably be faced simultaneously with multiple issues.

Nehemiah 4:15-23: (NASB) (selected verses) ¹⁵*When our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had frustrated their plan, then all of us returned to the wall, each one to his work...*



They now adjusted the work plan. Half of the people did the work and half of the people carried their weaponry. For those working directly on the wall, they bore their loads one-handed with their swords in the other hand. Each builder wore his sword with a trumpeter nearby. Everyone was armed and ready but still working. This made the work difficult but *the people had a mind to work*. Now defiance really started kicking in.

¹⁹*I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, The work is great and extensive, and we are separated on the wall far from one another. ²⁰At whatever place you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us. ²¹So we carried on the work with half of them holding spears from dawn until the stars appeared.*

From dawn to dusk every day, powering through required tactical leadership! This gave the enemy cause for concern. No more could they be taken off-guard, because the workers were ready. Attacking would meet with great resistance.



The people had to power through enemy adversity with defiance and mutual ownership! There is no better way than by example:

²²At that time I also said to the people, Let each man with his servant spend the night within Jerusalem so that they may be a guard for us by night and a laborer by day. ²³So neither I, my brothers, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us removed our clothes, each took his weapon even to the water.

People slept at work, always ready. Nehemiah personally lived the change and sacrifice he wanted to see. This is what we can do, setting a high example to give others strength.



Everyone won't see it, *Dream - Motivational Video, Mateusz M*

- That everybody won't see it. That everybody won't join you. That everybody won't have the vision. It's necessary to know that. That you are an uncommon breed! It's necessary that you align yourself with people and attract people into your business who are hungry. People who are unstoppable and unreasonable. People who are refusing to leave life just as it is.*

Nehemiah taught the people how to be unstoppable.



Within the body of Christ we have trials and challenges, but it helps create more growth in Christ by working through disagreements in a Christian way. If you want to change your world, you cannot bring your old world with you. We will have friction if we stretch ourselves, but we can do it with godly principles, just like Nehemiah did.

External trouble and threats are significant, but internal trouble and strife are in many ways worse. To change your world requires wisdom, focus and a "follow what I do" approach.

It is not enough to stare up the steps, we must step up the stairs. — Vaclav Havel

So many were engaged in this work that food supply problems were compounded on top of a lack of rain:

Nehemiah 5:1-12: (NASB) ¹Now there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers. ²For there were those (first group) who said, We, our sons and our daughters are many; therefore, let us get grain that we may eat and live. ³There were others (second group) who said, We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our houses that we might get grain because of the famine. ⁴Also there were those (third group) who said, We have borrowed money for the king's tax on our fields and our vineyards. ⁵Now our flesh is like

the flesh of our brothers, our children like their children. Yet behold, we are forcing our (children) to be slaves...and we are helpless because our fields and vineyards belong to others.

There was an enemy around them but now different groups of people internally were starting to murmur. When that happens, distrust can start fostering.

⁶Then I was very angry when I had heard their outcry and these words.

Much of their issues stemmed from some caring for themselves at the expense of others.

Nehemiah perseveres through the internal strife with brutal honesty and personal example:

⁷I consulted with myself and contended with the nobles and the rulers and said to them, You are exacting usury, each from his brother... ⁸...We according to our ability have redeemed our Jewish brothers who were sold to the nations; now would you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us? Then they were silent and could not find a word to say.

They mortgaged themselves to others to be indentured servants. *We according to our ability have redeemed our Jewish brothers who were sold to the nations* - "While you are taking care of your own pocketbook, I have been sending emissaries to surrounding nations and personally buying the freedom of other Jews to help us rebuild God's city. You are re-enslaving our own people while I am buying them back out of slavery?" Nehemiah set an example so high that when they found out what he was doing, they literally were speechless.

(Source: Bible commentary by Albert Barnes) Nehemiah had spent money in redeeming some countrymen in servitude among the pagan; they were causing others to be sold into slavery among the Jews.

Nehemiah's example was humble and deeply charitable, but was it enough to spark needed change?

It is always necessary with internal crisis that the leader be able to step up and calm everyone to the point of re-engaging their ability to listen. Nehemiah cut right through all points of view to the vital core of the matter which was that they all desperately needed each other more than they needed their own personal comfort and advantage.

Once again, the power of Nehemiah's devotion to righteousness and God shows the way:

Nehemiah 5:10-12: (NASB) *¹⁰And likewise I, my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Please, let us leave off this usury. ¹¹Please, give back to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive groves and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money and of the grain, the new wine and the oil that you are exacting from them. ¹²Then they said, We will give it back and will require nothing from them; we will do exactly as you say.*

The hundredth part of the money - the people were charging each other interest. We are all engaged in changing our world. If you own it the way I own it, we can dedicate all of ourselves to the cause. We should not make a nickel off our brethren. Our godly cause is more important than our bank account.

Nehemiah changed their perspective based on his own godly example. Not only did he stem the tide of disunity and ill will, he reversed it! He changed their world!



I must see it for myself, *Dream - Motivational Video, Mateusz M*

- (Mateusz M) *Someone's opinion of you does not have to become your reality. That you don't have to go through life being a victim. And even though you face disappointments, you have to know within yourself, that "I can do this. Even if no one else sees it for me, I must see it for myself."*
- (Will Smith) *This is what I believe, and I'm willing to die for it. Period.*
- (Mateusz M) *No matter how bad it is, or how bad it gets, I'm going to make it.*
- (Will Smith) *I wanna represent an idea. I wanna represent possibilities.*

Nehemiah 5:14-16: (NASB) ¹⁴Moreover, from the day that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah...for twelve years (his time as governor), neither I nor my kinsmen have eaten the governor's food allowance. ¹⁵But the former governors who were before me laid burdens on the people and took from them bread and wine besides forty shekels of silver; even their servants domineered the people.

Governors before him made it burdensome for the people because they were looking to get paid, but not Nehemiah.

But I did not do so because of the fear of God. ¹⁶I also applied myself to the work on this wall; we did not buy any land, and all my servants were gathered there for the work.

While the work on the wall was going on, he did not take anything from anyone because he saw God as a giving, blessing God. He took the principle of God giving and blessing others and did not take from others. Working as the king's cupbearer seems to have been a job that made him wealthy. He could have become a powerful landowner but did not.

The example of Nehemiah could not go unnoticed, and the whole governing process changed in accordance with Nehemiah's high standards of serving God first and the people second. (Please see CQ Rewind Bonus Material for more on the wonderful things Nehemiah did for the people.)

With the internal strife dissolved, the work went on. Nehemiah would again be externally tested:

Nehemiah 6:1-9: (NASB) ¹Now when it was reported to Sanballat, Tobiah, to Geshem the Arab and to the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall, and that no breach remained in it, although at that time I had not set up the doors in the gates, ²then Sanballat and Geshem sent a message to me, saying, Come, let us meet together... in the plain of Ono. But they were planning to harm me. ³So I sent messengers to them, saying, I am doing a great work and I cannot come down... ⁴They sent messages to me four times in this manner, and I answered them in the same way.



If Nehemiah is a threat to you and refuses to take the bait, what do you do next? Invent fake news!

⁵Then Sanballat sent his servant to me... a fifth time with an open letter in his hand. ⁶In it was written, It is reported among the nations... that you and the Jews are planning to rebel; therefore, you are rebuilding the wall. And you are to be their king, according to these reports.

The enemies made up stories about what was allegedly being spread around.

⁷You have also appointed prophets to proclaim in Jerusalem concerning you, A king is in Judah! And now it will be reported to the king according to these reports. So, come now, let us take counsel together.

"Why, this news is damaging to you, Nehemiah! We had better talk..." They created stories so he would be nervous and could destroy the leadership that held the people together.

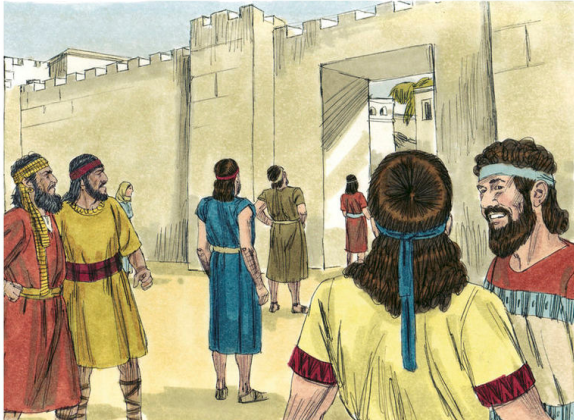
⁸Then I sent a message to him saying, Such things as you are saying have not been done, but you are inventing them in your own mind. ⁹For all of them were trying to frighten us, thinking, They will become discouraged with the work and it will not be done. But now, O God, strengthen my hands.

His resolve was strong. Yet another trap follows this attempt regarding taking sanctuary in the Temple. (Please see CQ Rewind Bonus Material for this part of the story.)

The glaring truth of this whole world-changing process is: Nehemiah was so deeply entrenched in honoring God, serving God's people and city that he was utterly immovable by fear or temptation.

With such powerful leadership and example, success was imminent.
But, how long would it last?

To achieve lasting success in changing anyone's world requires long-term, heartfelt, uncompromising devotion to that change by those who lead. This example must be public for it to be powerful.



Nehemiah proved to be such an example and the fruits of his godly efforts are stunning:

Nehemiah 6:15-16: (NASB) ¹⁵So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶When all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations surrounding us saw it, they lost their confidence; for they recognized that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.

The people had a mind to work and a leader who kept their minds on the work. Nehemiah constantly prayed, looked to God for direction and gave God praise. This spread out to others and even their enemies saw that God was with them.

But even with this result, more threats were sent to Nehemiah! (Please see CQ Rewind Bonus Material for this part of the story.)



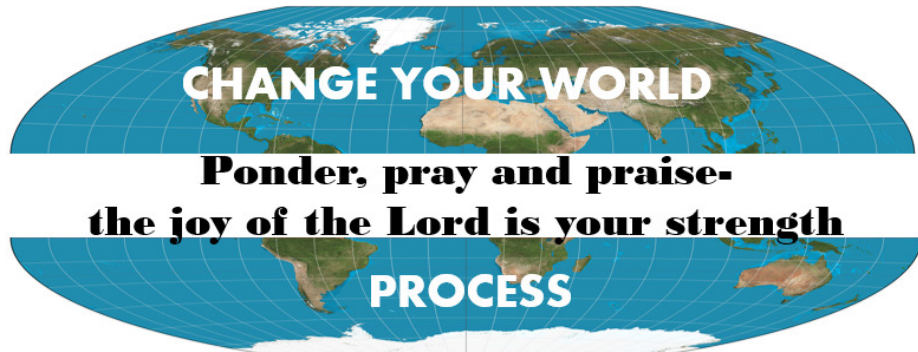
It's not over until, *Dream - Motivational Video, Mateusz M*

- If you still talk about your dream. If you still talk about your goal, but you have not done anything, just take the first step! That you can make your parents proud, you can make your school proud, you can touch millions of people's lives and the world will never be the same again because you came this way. Don't let nobody steal your dream! After we face a rejection and a "NO," or we have a meeting and no one shows up, or somebody said, "You can count on me," and they don't come through. What if we had that kind of attitude when our car gets repossessed, nobody believes in you, you've lost again, and again, and again! The lights are cut off but you still are looking at



your dream, reviewing it every day and saying to yourself: "IT'S NOT OVER, UNTIL I WIN!"

We would rephrase that: "It is not over until God's will is done."



Live the change of your original noble and godly passion and in so doing, you will see that *the joy of the Lord is your strength*.

Nehemiah now turns things over to the prophet Ezra, as that is the appropriate action of a great leader. The prophet was God's spiritual representative. Nehemiah was a tool to do the physical work. He did not have pride; he had honor for God's will.

Now witness the transforming power of having your world changed towards godliness:

Nehemiah 8:1-10,1 2: (NASB) ¹And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the Law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel. ²Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women and all who could listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. ³He read from it...from early morning until midday...and all the people were attentive to the book of the Law.

Gathered as one man - such unity! After accomplishing what looked like a miracle by their own hands and God's providence, the people are now captivated by their God and His laws!

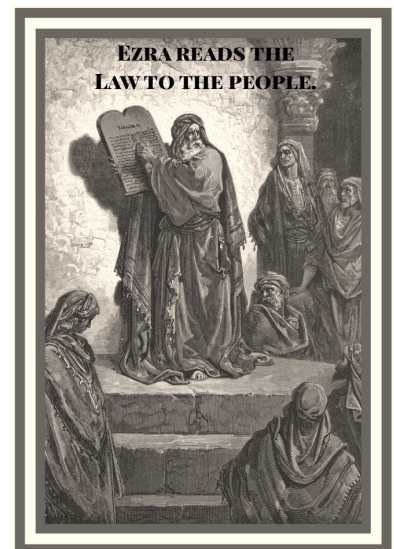
Ponder! The value of godliness is planted...

Ponder



**The value of
godliness is planted...**

⁴Ezra the scribe stood at a wooden podium which they had made for the purpose. And beside him (stood the priests...) ⁵Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the LORD the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, amen! while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. ⁷Also...the Levites, explained the law to the people while the people remained in their place. ⁸They read from the book, from the Law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.





Listening to God's word from your heart invokes the need and desire to *Pray!* *The value of godliness takes root...*

⁹Then Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep. For all the people were weeping when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰Then he said to them, Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

Pray



**The value of
godliness takes root...**

The people wept out loud hearing the Law because they realized how far off they had been. Ezra explained that today was a day of praise not of weeping. They were to just take in the goodness of God as a set apart, holy day. *The joy of the LORD is your strength.*

Absorbing God's word and blessing invokes *Praise!* *The value of godliness blossoms!*

Praises

Ponder



**The value of
godliness is planted...**

Pray



**The value of
godliness takes root...**



**The value of
godliness blossoms!**

...¹²All the people went away to eat, to drink, to send portions and to celebrate a great festival, because they understood the words which had been made known to them.

They took Ezra's advice and had a great day of celebration. Ezra and the priesthood (with Nehemiah's help) would go on to re-establish Israel's religious identity.

This leader, Nehemiah, showed the people of Israel how to change their world. He showed persistence, clarity and how to always do the will of God. Put that in your heart and change your world. Work on noble, godly projects.



**So, how do you change your world?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**



**And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!**

Additional Scriptures and commentary:

More detail showing the steady, powerful and selfless example of Nehemiah before many important people on a daily basis:

Nehemiah 5:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷Moreover, there were at my table one hundred and fifty Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations that were around us. ¹⁸Now that which was prepared for each day was one ox and six choice sheep, also birds were prepared for me; and once in ten days all sorts of wine were furnished in abundance. Yet for all this I did not demand the governor's food allowance, because the servitude was heavy on this people. ¹⁹Remember me, O my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.

(Source: Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament) But this was not all; for Nehemiah had also fed a considerable number of persons at his table, at his own expense. 'And the Jews, both one hundred and fifty rulers, and the men who came to us from the nations round about us, were at my table,' i.e., were my guests. The hundred and fifty rulers, Nehemiah 2:16, were the heads of the different houses of Judah collectively. These were always guests at Nehemiah's table, as were also such Jews as dwelt among the surrounding nations, when they came to Jerusalem.

Another trap set by Nehemiah's enemies:

Nehemiah 6:10-14: (NASB) ¹⁰When I entered the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined at home, he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you, and they are coming to kill you at night. ¹¹But I said, Should a man like me flee? And could one such as I go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in. ¹²Then I perceived that surely God had not sent him, but he uttered his prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. ¹³He was hired for this reason, that I might become frightened and act accordingly and sin, so that they might have an evil report in order that they could reproach me. ¹⁴Remember, O my God, Tobiah and Sanballat according to these works of theirs, and also Noadiah the prophetess and the rest of the prophets who were trying to frighten me.

(Source: Bible commentary by Adam Clarke) Verse 10. "Who was shut up" - lived in a sequestered, solitary state; pretending to sanctity, and to close intercourse with God. Let us meet together in the house of God. The meaning is, "Shut yourself up in the temple; appear to have taken sanctuary there, for in it alone can you find safety." This he said to discourage and disgrace him, and to ruin the people; for, had Nehemiah taken his advice, the people would have been without a leader, their enemies would have come upon them at once, and they would have been an easy prey. Besides, had Nehemiah done this, he would have been shut up in the temple, his government would have been declared at an end, and Sanballat would have assumed the reins.

Additional detail on the restoration of godliness to the people - here "the Feast of Booths" is restored:

Nehemiah 8:13-18: (NASB) ¹³Then on the second day the heads of fathers' households of all the people, the priests and the Levites were gathered to Ezra the scribe that they might gain insight into the words of the law. ¹⁴They found written in the law how the LORD had commanded through Moses that the sons of Israel should live in booths during the feast of the seventh month. ¹⁵So they proclaimed and circulated a proclamation in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying,

Go out to the hills, and bring olive branches and wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches and branches of other leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written. ¹⁶So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. ¹⁷The entire assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them. The sons of Israel had indeed not done so from the days of Joshua the son of Nun to that day. And there was great rejoicing. ¹⁸He read from the book of the law of God daily, from the first day to the last day. And they celebrated the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly according to the ordinance.

Now, for a brief overview of the rest of the book of Nehemiah. Going through the final chapters solidifies the character, actions and heart of Nehemiah as a true champion for God, God's people and God's city.

Nehemiah 9 was about the confession of sin by the people before God and a solemn covenant that followed.

Nehemiah 10 begins with the names of those who signed that solemn covenant.

After the names comes the details of the covenant - it is all about restoring godly reverence to the people:

Nehemiah 10:28-39: (NASB) ²⁸Now the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the law of God, their wives, their sons and their daughters, all those who had knowledge and understanding, ²⁹are joining with their kinsmen, their nobles, and are taking on themselves a curse and an oath to walk in God's law, which was given through Moses, God's servant, and to keep and to observe all the commandments of GOD our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes; ³⁰and that we will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons. ³¹As for the peoples of the land who bring wares or any grain on the sabbath day to sell, we will not buy from them on the sabbath or a holy day; and we will forego the crops the seventh year and the exaction of every debt. ³²We also placed ourselves under obligation to contribute yearly one third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: ³³for the showbread, for the continual grain offering, for the continual burnt offering, the sabbaths, the new moon, for the appointed times, for the holy things and for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and all the work of the house of our God. ³⁴Likewise we cast lots for the supply of wood among the priests, the Levites and the people so that they might bring it to the house of our God, according to our fathers' households, at fixed times annually, to burn on the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the law; ³⁵and that they might bring the first fruits of our ground and the first fruits of all the fruit of every tree to the house of the LORD annually, ³⁶and bring to the house of our God the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, and the firstborn of our herds and our flocks as it is written in the law, for the priests who are ministering in the house of our God. ³⁷We will also bring the first of our dough, our contributions, the fruit of every tree, the new wine and the oil to the priests at the chambers of the house of our God, and the tithe of our ground to the Levites, for the Levites are they who receive the tithes in all the rural towns. ³⁸The priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive tithes, and the Levites shall bring up the tenth of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers of the storehouse. ³⁹For the sons of Israel and the sons of Levi shall bring the contribution of the grain, the new wine and the oil to the chambers; there are the utensils of the sanctuary, the priests who are ministering, the gatekeepers and the singers. Thus, we will not neglect the house of our God.

Chapter 11 focuses on the eventual re-populating of Jerusalem and how that was accomplished. Chapter 12 deals with the priests and Levites who came to live in Jerusalem, the Dedication of the Wall of Jerusalem and Temple procedures. Chapter 13 is about the passage of many years and the subtle relaxing of the spirituality of some and how Nehemiah returned and did not tolerate such things.