

## Rebuilding of God's People – Part 1

### Introduction and Review

- God used Babylon to punish Israel (Judah) for massive & persistent sin – destruction of Jerusalem & captivity [587 BC].
- God used Cyrus king of Persia to send exiles back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple (538 BC).
- God used Artaxerxes king of Persia to release Nehemiah & exiles to finish rebuilding Jerusalem (445 BC).
- In spite of intense opposition & major difficulties, the wall was miraculously rebuilt in 52 days to the glory of God...

### I. God Reveals His Compassion & Will (7:5a)

#### A. God gives the priority

*God communicates to people directly & indirectly – “Then my God put it into my heart”. Directly – audibly, dreams, visions, inward impressions & the written word (OT/NT). Indirectly – other people & circumstances. God reveals His will for ministry which must take priority in a believer's life – glory to God & edification for God's people.*

#### B. God gives the plan

*The plan must come from God regardless of the means of communication. God unveils His plan along with his will – “to assemble...to be enrolled...”. Uniquely gifted people are needed inside the walls now for this ministry to progress. Many people left Jerusalem because of sin & the destructive consequences and now it's time to return, **but not everyone.** God knows who His people are, where they are & He still has a plan for them even after their sinful past & awful consequences (Jer. 29:11).*

**ILL:** Sometimes a coach must take a valuable player out of the game because he will not obey/cooperate. Sitting on the bench is a result of disobedience, but it does not mean that the coach forgets or has no plans for the player. Only the coach knows & calls for his return.

**APPL:** The same is true in the church. Sometimes Christ disciplines His church for sin & disobedience; puts us on the bench & keeps us inactive for a while. He has not forgotten us or His plan for us & He will call us back to active ministry when He's ready...

### II. God's People Respond in Obedience (7:5b-73)

#### A. Nehemiah's role (v. 5b-6a)

*Nehemiah took the initiative to obey the command of God. Details are often revealed as we obey God. With God's help, he found a method to carry out God's plan – “I found...”. He also called a meeting to discuss the plan – assembled nobles, officials & the people. Everyone needed to be informed of God's plan & His call for obedience – regardless of past sins, pain & destruction.*

#### B. The people's role (v. 6b-73)

*People must obey God from their own convictions (v. 6b) – “They returned...”. The people knew & accepted the ministry (function) to which God had called them: priests (v. 39-42), Levites (v. 43), singers (v. 44), gatekeepers (v. 45), temple servants (v. 46-56) & the sons of Solomon's servants (v. 57-59). They had been in exile for many years, but still remembered what God had called & equipped them to do. True priests had to prove their identity & relationship or be disqualified for ministry (v. 61-65). In the NT believers are also priest who must have proof of a true relationship with Christ (1Pe. 2:9; Mt. 7:15-18). God provides the needs for ministry (v. 66-73). This was only a remnant or small number of people with limited resources, but it was sufficient to do the work of the Lord (603K men over 20 years old – Num. 1:46).*

**APPL:** Even though these believers were despised, rejected, ridiculed & scorned by the world, they were still God's people & He still had plans for them. God was using this poor, despised group of people in this unpopular & unlikely place to carry out His glorious redemptive plans. The same is true of us today...

## CONCLUSION

So then my beloved brothers & sisters, can you relate to Nehemiah & the people of God? Have there been times in your own life when you were made to be inactive in ministry because of personal failures & sin? Are you perhaps experiencing that right now? Well remember that God has not forgotten you. He obviously knows where you are physically & spiritually; He knows how long you have been inactive & how long you must be inactive. He alone knows the plans he has for you & those plans never change because you cannot surprise God with you actions or reactions. If you feel the guilt & shame of sin is keeping you from faithful ministry, then repent today & confess. The Lord promises to forgive you & cleanse you (1Jn. 1:9). If Jesus saved you, He has definite plans for you – so surrender to Him today...

And if you are not a Christian, you can be forgiven & cleansed today also. You must also repent & believe that Jesus alone is the only way to have a right relationship with God.... Will you trust Him & believe today...?

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[Prepared by Willie D. Woodmore](#)