

What You Don't Know *Can* Hurt You! (Nehemiah 1:1-4)

The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah: In the month of Kislev, while I was in the citadel of Susa, Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."
Nehemiah 1:1-3 (NIV)

Historical Timeline:

- 922 BC** Death of Solomon. The unified Jewish nation divides into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.
- 785 BC** Prophetic ministry of Isaiah begins.
- 722 BC** Assyria destroys northern kingdom of Israel.
- 626 BC** Prophetic ministry of Jeremiah begins.
- 605 BC** Babylon invades the southern kingdom of Judah. Daniel and friends taken captive.
- 597 BC** Second Babylonian invasion. Ezekiel, Mordecai and Esther taken captive?
- 586 BC** Final Babylonian invasion. Jerusalem ransacked. Temple destroyed. City walls broken down.
- 539 BC** Babylonian Empire overthrown by the Persian Empire. Daniel, Esther, and Nehemiah all serve in Persian royal courts, though at different times.
- 538 BC** King Cyrus of Persia issues edict allowing Jews to return to Jerusalem. 50,000 return under the leadership of Zerubbabel. Prophetic ministries of Zechariah and Haggai. Temple rebuilt.
- 458 BC** Second group of exiles return to Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra.
- 445 BC** Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem. City walls rebuilt. Spiritual and social reforms enacted under the leadership of Nehemiah and Ezra.

I. THE REALITY OF BROKEN WALLS

The wall of Jerusalem is still rubble, and the gates are still cinders.
Nehemiah 1:3 (MES)

II. THE REMEDY FOR BROKEN WALLS

I am Nehemiah son of Hacaliah, and in this book I tell what I have done.
Nehemiah 1:1 (CEV)

God's remedy for broken walls is never first a program; it is always a person.

TRUTH: God cannot rebuild the walls of a culture until He can redirect the wills of His people .

I looked for someone to build up the walls and to stand before me where the walls are broken to defend these people so I would not have to destroy them. But I could not find anyone. Ezekiel 22:30 (NCV)

TRUTH: When you put God first, it doesn't take long!

God's remedy for broken walls never begins with your hands; it always begins with your heart!

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.
Nehemiah 1:4 (NIV)

Do you have a passion for the welfare of people?

TRUTH: You can never fix a society until you fix people.

I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare. All others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ. Philippians 2:20-21 (NLT)

Do you have a passion for the _____ of God?

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.
1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV)

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

"And wherever they [the Israelites] went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, 'These are the Lord's people and yet they had to leave this land.' I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone."
Ezekiel 36:20-21 (NIV)

God's remedy for broken walls is never _____; it is always _____!

I was cupbearer to the king. Nehemiah 1:11 (NIV)

If you don't go all the way with me, through thick and thin, you don't deserve me. If your first concern is to look after yourself, you'll never find yourself. But if you forget about yourself and look to me, you'll find both yourself and me. Matthew 10:38-39 (MES)

Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings. Isaiah 58:12 (NIV)