

Goal Beyond Goal

By Phyllis Corbin

Nehemiah 6:15 -16

15 ¶ So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-and two days

16 And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

Ne 2:10; 4:1,7; 6:1; Ps 126:

On the 25th day of October 445 BC the wall of Jerusalem was built. Excavations at the site reveal the wall was 2.75 meters thick (almost 91/2 feet). The walls had been neglected for nearly 150 years and now they were rebuilt in 52 days. You would think there should have been a great celebration to mark this great occasion but it seems that life went on as usual until chapter 12:27 when the celebration occurred.

Let me express a note of caution here. Nehemiah knew that that this milestone was no reason to lower his guard. Too many people reach a certain place in their spiritual lives and then stop growing.

The completion of the wall in Jerusalem was the first line of defense for Nehemiah and his people. Let me compare it to getting saved. The first wall of protection we build is the blood of Jesus Christ which is applied to us when we kneel before Him., repent and ask his forgiveness for our sins. The next wall of protection is being baptized in Jesus name and the third wall of protection is receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38). But remember, even with the wall up, there is still a city filled with rubble that needs to be repaired. But remember, even with the wall up there is still a lot of work to do on us. There are a lot of rooms to be cleaned. There is quite a bit of baggage that needs to be taken care of. So when the altar experience is over the Christian walk has just begun. Nehemiah was right not to relax when the wall was up even though it had a powerful effect on the enemies of Jerusalem . We as Christians need the Holy Ghost in our lives in order to have the power to live for Jesus.

The Bible tells us they were "cast down in their own eyes." They were amazed and deeply troubled that Jerusalem arose from the dust and the heap of rubble. They could not see all that needed to be done on the inside of the city, but now there were 10 foot walls to scale and gates and bars to protect Jerusalem . But more than this, the heathen nations around them began to perceive that the God of Israel was back in the midst of His people. They had heard stories of His might and power and now they were gripped with fear that God would begin to show Himself in power and might.

The power of God is truly amazing. If God could save someone like me then He could save anyone. There were people when they heard that I had got saved were shaken to the bottom of

their shoes. Sinners, like Nehemiah's enemies, lost their self-confidence when one of their friends submitted themselves to God. Be thankful though that God puts up the first wall. For if the wall of salvation is not put up the other walls that need to be built will never rise in your life and mine.

Nehemiah 6:17-19

17 Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them. {sent... Heb. multiplied their letters passing to Tobiah}

18 For there were many in Judah sworn unto him, because he was the son in law of Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah.

19 Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear. {Words: or, matters}(NIV)

The wall was up, but the problems were far from over. Tobiah still had strong family connections in Judah and letters were continually being exchanged. Even some of the people who worked on the wall were not aware of the evil intent of Tobiah. They tried to influence Nehemiah of the goodness of Tobiah. It must have been hard to lead when the nobility of the country couldn't recognize the enemy. They also acted as spies and reported what was happening in Jerusalem to Tobiah. Tobiah used every piece of intelligence he could glean and keep the pressure steady as he attempted to paralyze Nehemiah with fear. Folks, if the devil can make you fearful, he can keep you from ever cleaning up the streets of your Jerusalem and then helping someone else with theirs.

The breaks between chapters in the Bible is not necessarily inspired breaks. Some of them occur in the worst of locations. The break between Chapters 6 and 7 is really artificial since what begins in chapter seven is really a response to the crisis of chapter six. Here is the way Nehemiah describes how he gave leadership despite the temptation to relax after a victory – completion of the wall.

Nehemiah 7:1-6

1 ¶ Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors, and the porters and the singers and the Levites were appointed,

Ne 6:1

2 That I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem : for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many.

Ne 2:8; Ex 18:21

3 And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar them: and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one to be over against his house.

4 Now the city was large and great: but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded. {large: Heb. broad in spaces}

5 ¶ And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, and found written therein,

6 These are the children of the province, that went up out of the captivity, of those that had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and came again to Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city;

Ezr 2:1

What follows this is nearly 60 verses filled with the names of people who were part of Jerusalem . Not inspiring reading, but an important record. Warren Wiersbe , in his book, BE DETERMINED, says these people are "God's bridge from the defeats of the past to the hopes of the future. These Jews were the "living link" that connected the historic past with the prophetic future and made it possible for Jesus Christ to come into the world" Wiersbe says Nehemiah 7 is to the Old Testament what Hebrews 11 is to the New Testament a - a listing of people of faith and courage. These genealogies are the lifeline to the heritage of the past and the hope of the future These are the lists of pioneers.

It is interesting that in the years to come should JESUS tarry, that someone will look back upon the ministries that we are involved in for Jesus and say, "Here are the pioneers." We will leave a legacy to our children. We are the ones who reflect the character of and spirit of a New Testament church. We are the stones in the foundation of a ministry where our own children will hopefully introduce their own children to the true worship of God in spirit and in truth and in dedicated service. Hopefully we will build a future for them of faith and courage to stand up for what is taught in Acts 2; 38. And it will be built brick by brick as we stay on the wall and hold to God's unchanging hand.

God bless

Sister Phyllis