



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study:
THE AWAKENING OF A CHAMPION

Nehemiah 1:1-11

In the world of athletics, science, politics, education, etc., people always look for champions and experts. Individuals and organizations are in search of people with extra-ordinary gifts and talents. The church is also looking for champions who can accomplish great tasks for the Lord. God is looking for people like Nehemiah who can champion the worthy cause of our Lord Jesus Christ. In our community, local government, province, state or nation, we should think on how to become champions for the Lord. Nehemiah never thought that God could make a champion out of him. But with the right principles, he was able to get the work done. With little resources and lack of experience, he accomplished a great task for the Lord and his people. He was a servant who became the governor and ruler of the nation of Israel. Family background, limited knowledge, lack of experience etc., should not make us shy away from God's work. Nehemiah was an ordinary child of God who became an extraordinary champion for God. The work he did got him national, international and eternal recognition. In his days, the nation of Israel was in desperate need which he responded to. There is a desperate need in our society today and we need to respond promptly. Like Nehemiah, we must rise up to the challenge of rebuilding the wall of integrity, family, spirituality, morality, righteousness and holiness.

By rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, Nehemiah changed the course of his life and that of his people. Though he had a good job as a cupbearer in the king's palace, he left his secular engagement for something sacred. His greatness and exploits started with the information he got. If we must make progress in life, we must cultivate the habit of asking questions. By being inquisitive, we will get to know more about the situation in our country, the welfare of believers as well as the state of sinners. Whatever information we get from the media and other sources should lead us to compassion, prayer and intercession.

Champions are not made by accident; it depends much on the information at their disposal – spiritual, social and national. Nehemiah had a proper understanding, interpretation and application of God's word, that if they transgress, they would be scattered abroad among the nations. Thus, he identified with them in their transgression and interceded on their behalf. It is only when we acknowledge our shortcomings that the Lord can forgive us.

THE PROFILE OF A CHAMPION

Nehemiah 1:1; 2:1; 4:21-23; 6:10,11; 8:8; 13:15-17.

We should desire the passion, pursuit and enthusiasm that Nehemiah had for the work of God. Before this time, he was not a preacher, reformer, an architect, builder, a construction worker, leader, manager, or organizer. His responsibility was to serve wine to the king. Yet, he became a teacher, reformer, interpreter of God's word, a prayer warrior and a revivalist who brought the people back to the Lord. He mobilized, equipped and trained the people. Though Nehemiah had not been a captain of an army before this time, he developed a strategy with which he was able to overcome the threat and distraction from the opposition. He managed his time effectively and summoned courage to confront the men who tried to intimidate him. In the face of persecution, we must be courageous enough to face the enemy. We have no reason to abandon the work because champions never quit. When we have the heart of a champion nothing will intimidate us. Nehemiah was conscious of the fact that God has not given us the spirit of fear but of love, power and sound mind.

As a true champion, Nehemiah possessed uprightness of character and sound moral principles. He had an unwavering commitment to the word of God. Like him, we must never compromise or bow to the wishes of our enemies. The prayer, passion, pursuit, principle, and practice of the life of Nehemiah were ordered according to God's revealed will in His word. He did everything with confidence while depending upon the promises of the Lord. He never took any step without prayer. And God always answered his short, powerful and pungent prayers. His dedication to the task at hand, even though the time was unfavourable were

proofs that he had his foundation in the word of God. Considering the situation in our land today, it is only champions that can give themselves to the task of church-planting, prayer and soul-winning. There is no future for churches and individuals who cease to talk about God in difficult times. This is the best time to rise as champions and work for the Lord.

Nehemiah's life was characterised by loyalty, which is a product of conviction. He had his conviction rooted in the word of God. (1) His loyalty to God was supreme. (2) He was loyal to the king as superior. (3) He was loyal to his subordinates. With loyalty, there will be stability, reliability, initiative and perseverance until the work is finished. Unlike many Christians who have mastered their circumstances, Nehemiah had the capacity to dominate and master his circumstances. He knew he was in charge of the assignment that the Lord had given to him. The intrigues and manipulation of the opposition could not stop him. He saw the entire project through to a successful conclusion. If characters such as Moses, Joshua, David, Paul etc., accomplished the goal they set for themselves through determination and help from the Lord, we can set goals in our personal lives and follow them through.

THE PASSION OF A CHAMPION

Nehemiah 1:2-4; 9:36,37; Luke 19:41,42; Romans 9:1-3; 10:1; Matthew 9:35-38.

Champions don't think the way ordinary people do. They know what to do at a given time. They take problems and turn them into success. When there is no holiness, righteousness, security, and courage in the lives of the people, that is when we need to rise and work for the Lord. Whether in our community, local government, state or nation, we must have the passion to set things aright like Nehemiah. We should be willing and ready to improve the condition of the people by turning things around for their benefit. Passion should drive us to every nook and cranny of our nation with the message of salvation and hope. Like Nehemiah, we should be the right man in the right place at the right time, doing the right thing in the right way with the right attitude for the right reason. As saved, sanctified and Spirit-filled believers, we may be the right men for the work, if we do not question whether we are at the right place or not.

The information Nehemiah received set his heart aflame for God. Thus, he could no more remain complacent in the palace. The news he received awakened a champion's passion within him and set him on a course that redirected the nation's history until the time of Christ. We must not allow our secular job, business, wealth, career, profession etc., to deprive us of the privilege of winning souls for the Lord. Nehemiah was ready to lay all on the altar to serve the Lord and His people. If we would have the mind, spirit and passion of Christ, it will move us to constantly think about the spiritual condition and eternal destiny of sinners around us. We must follow our Lord's pattern who, apart from His three-fold ministry of healing, teaching and deliverance, gave Himself completely to preaching the gospel.

THE PRAYER OF A CHAMPION

Nehemiah 1:4-8; Isaiah 66:7,8; Jeremiah 29:11-13.

The prayer of Nehemiah was different from the prayer of an average Christian. The prayer of a champion is centred on things that have eternal value. It is not enough to pray: the content, passion, desire, and request in our prayer matter a lot. Like Nehemiah, our prayer must centre on people without hope, on the verge of going to hell. Through our prayers sinners will be convicted, converted and God will turn things around for our nation. It is through our prayer that weak believers will be strengthened, brought to maturity and made to focus on the rapture and heaven.

It is amazing what God can do with one person who decides to give up his will, position, prestige, success or status and consecrate his life to be all that the Lord wants. God used Nehemiah and gave him the power of transforming prayer to plan, build, train, organize, motivate, mobilize a high performance team. His passionate prayer also provided the resources he needed for the task. He strengthened the workers, restored the nation back to God and recovered the lost glory of the city of God. These are days of revival and we must allow God to accomplish His desire through us. It is time we forget the past and move into a glorious future.

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