



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

**Special Study:**  
**PASSIONATE INTERCESSION BY A ZEALOUS BELIEVER**

Nehemiah 1:1-11

According to Historians, Nehemiah was probably born and raised in Exile. While still in a strange land, he enquired about the welfare of his people. The information Nehemiah got gave him a new vision and dream. Hence, he meditated, wept, fasted and prayed while still attending to his secular engagement. Nehemiah occupied an important, prestigious position in the most powerful government in the world during that period. Yet, he was not indifferent to the deplorable condition of God's people. Though exalted in the society, he had spiritual burden, scriptural conviction and righteous character. He was living far away from the afflicted people but he asked questions so he could be well-informed about the spiritual state and the physical condition of the people. Nehemiah did not give room to any form of discouragement, hence, he rose up to the task that was before him in spite of the challenges he faced. When Nehemiah was informed that the remnant that were left of the captivity were in great affliction and reproach, his heart was broken and burdened. He became concerned and grieved because of their suffering, spiritual destitution and eternal separation from God.

Nehemiah's concern was not passive but passionate. Information received led to intercession resumed. He internalised the information and identified himself with the people. He surrendered himself to God in prayer, willing to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He was prompt at offering his prayer and life to God for use. If we offer our prayer to God without offering ourselves to Him, our prayer cannot be effective. People who do exploits in any generation are those who offer their prayers and lives to God. The Lord is looking for men and women who will give their time, talent and money for His service. Nehemiah made sacrifice for the total redemption of his perishing people. Single-minded and separated from the world, he gave himself to God in prayer, seeking only the welfare of the people, not his own advantage or prosperity. Such passionate, selfless and prayerful believers are needed today.

**CONCERN OF THE FAITHFUL FEW FOR THE PERISHING PEOPLE**

Nehemiah 1:1-3; 7:2; Psalm 79:4; Isaiah 64:10; Lamentations 2:15.

It takes few faithful men like Nehemiah, Hanani and Hananiah to change the course of a nation. It is only when we isolate ourselves from the crowd and become loyal, committed and consecrated that the Lord will use us. Time should not affect the faithfulness of true believers. If God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Word, the Cross, the mind of men and their resistance to God's word have not changed, we must not adjust our faithfulness with time. We are the mouthpiece of the Lord and must preach His word faithfully to sinners around us. The Lord expects us to remain faithful in order to rescue the perishing, especially as individuals and churches that started well are compromising their standard of holiness and righteousness. This is because faithfulness, commitment, lifestyle, discipleship, consecration and zealotness of believers are growing cold. If it took only Nehemiah to change the course of the nation of Israel, we too can change the course of our nation in our modern times.

The seemingly casual information given to Nehemiah led to a purposeful mission and a great historic service for God's glory. He took the information he received as a divine call. Although no direct appeal was made, he heard God's call for a lifetime mission. The cry of the lost around us is a divine call for us to rise and save the lost. The awakened believer will answer God's call without hesitation and at any cost. With Nehemiah's kind of heart, we too can become agents of change in our nation. He was concerned for the city of the Lord's habitation from where His glory, presence and power shone forth in days gone by. God's sovereign rule and law came forth from Zion in Jerusalem to govern the nation. But as he recalled the past glory and saw the present degradation, his heart was broken and felt concerned for his people. The decreasing level of holiness, righteousness and integrity in our nation today should spur every concerned believer into action of rescuing the perishing.

## CONSECRATION AND FOCUSED FASTING WITH PREVAILING PRAYER

Nehemiah 1:4-6; Psalm 69:9,10; Joel 2:1; 2:12,13,15,16,17; Luke 18:7,8.

Generally, people who make historic changes are consecrated, devoted, determined and courageous. They are willing to take risk; they recognise the reason God has placed them in a particular position. Like Moses, Joshua, Caleb, David etc., we must be focused and consecrated in accomplishing the task that the Lord has committed into our hands.

Nehemiah's deep concern led to a deep contrition, conviction and consecration. He wept and mourned certain days, not just at the time he heard the news. He fasted and prayed, seeking God's face from the month of Chisleu to the month of Nisan. The desolation and the distress in our society today requires similar concern and prayerful commitment from us. He fasted and prayed, not in the public but before the God of heaven who sees in secret and would reward openly. Throughout the period of praying and fasting, seeking God's guidance, wisdom, favour and divine providence, he remained engaged in the king's palace as his cupbearer.

Nehemiah was a type of Christ who was rich but made himself poor. In answering God's call, he was willing to sacrifice all the luxury and ease of his present position. He was also willing to toil and face danger and hostility from the surrounding communities. He exchanged his VIP robes for a soldier's armour. With present devastation and destruction upon the land, there is need for us to wait upon the Lord. God will not move until the church moves His hand through prayer. For our prayer to be effective, it must be borne out of passion and concern for the spiritual condition and deprivation of the people. With faith in our heart, family and church, nothing can hinder our prayer from being answered.

## CRYING TO THE FAITHFUL FATHER WITH PROPER PERCEPTION

Nehemiah 1:7-11; 2 Samuel 7:25.

Nehemiah prayed with proper perception of what was happening to the children of Israel and why it happened. The crisis in our nation today is as a result of corruption, sinfulness and carelessness of the people. When we realise this and ask God for forgiveness, He will heal our land. God is a faithful Father who answers prayers that are based on His Word.

Nehemiah's prayer is one of the model intercessory prayers in the Bible. He recognised the authority and sovereignty of the King of kings and Lord of lords in the affairs of men. His prayer was according to God's Word. He came to God with His promise on his lips, reverently reminding Him of His commitment to His covenant. He said: "**And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken, do as thou hast said**". Nehemiah's prayer is instructive: he was reverent in his attitude towards God and honoured Him as he prayed. He was also earnest, fervent, constant, persistent and importunate in prayer, saying, "**I beseech thee; hear the prayer of thy servant**". As he prayed and pleaded with the Lord with constancy, we ought to pray and not faint, praying without ceasing. He was penitent in his tone and temper, scriptural in his presentation and definite in his request. He prayed with faith, expressing confidence in the faithfulness of the covenant-keeping God. Faith is an important element in prayer. It honours God, pleases the Saviour and rests on His promises. If we come to the Lord with burden, passion, earnestness, zeal, and commitment, like Nehemiah did, He will answer our prayers.

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