Let Us Build the Wall of Jerusalem

[Nehemiah 2:1-20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Nehemiah%202&version=ESV)

Key Verse 17: “Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision.”

Summary

The walls of Jerusalem were broken down and its gates destroyed by fire. The people of Israel were living in shame and were under the judgment of their sin.

This greatly saddened Nehemiah. Why? Jerusalem is God's City where the temple was located and where God’s chosen people dwelled. Jerusalem represents the place where heaven meets earth, like the garden of Eden. But the precious city was in ruins.

Nehemiah had it on his heart to rebuild the walls and gates of God’s city.

Walls create boundaries, gates control what comes in and what goes out. Without walls and gates it is not possible to separate the holy people from the world.

V1-8

1. Read Verse 1-2. What was Nehemiah’s relationship like with King Artaxerxes?

• Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the king.

• Nehemiah and King Artaxerxes had a special relationship and the King cared for Nehemiah. Mirroring the relationship we have with the Father.

2. V3. Why was Nehemiah sad?

• Nehemiah explains to Artaxerxes: “The place of my fathers' graves lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire”.

• In Neh 1, Nehemiah received the news that the remnant who had survived the exile was in great trouble and shame and that the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire. Nehemia’s response to this news in Neh 1:4 was: “As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.”

• Nehemiah was not just grieved because a physical city was in shambles, he knew that this was a reflection of the spiritual status of the jewish people. The cause of the city’s downfall was the sins of the people. Nehemiah wept because his people sinned against God and they received judgment.

• Often we may only worry about our own lives and our own sin problems, but spiritually mature people like Nehemiah are able to see the bigger picture. We can learn from Nehemiah that when others sin we ought to grieve, mourn and wail and pray to God for recovery, especially if they are our own people, our own brothers and sisters, our own family members, our own church. Their sins are our sins. Now it was time to repent and rebuild.

3. Why is it spiritually significant that Jerusalem was in ruins and that its gates had been destroyed by fire?

• Jerusalem is God's City where the temple was located and where God’s chosen people dwelled. Jerusalem represents the place where heaven meets earth, like the garden of Eden.

• God has a special purpose for Jerusalem and its people, to usher in a new age of peace and prosperity under God's rule, Immanuel/God with us. But the precious city was in ruins.

4. V4-8. How did Nehemiah use his position as the King’s cupbearer for God’s purpose?

• Nehemiah could've ignored Jerusalem and focused on his easy prosperous life as the cupbearer to the King, but he chose to leave his comfort to serve God and his people.

• Furthermore, he received all that he requested of the King because the good hand of God was upon him.

V9-20

5. V9-10. Why were Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant displeased greatly? What does this reveal about the spiritual realm? What can we learn from this?

• Satan will get irritated and rouse up whenever God starts working.

• We shouldn't be caught off guard or surprised when we meet opposition. We should even expect to receive opposition when God is working in our lives or when we are sent on a clear mission.

6. V11-16. What did Nehemiah do after arriving in Jerusalem? Why is it important to inspect our spiritual environment?

• Nehemiah received information about the state of Jerusalem second-hand and so he conducted a thoughtful and careful inspection himself before taking any action or sharing his plan.

• We similarly ought to conduct thoughtful inspections on our own walls and gates regularly as the enemy always wants to get into our city. The spiritual realm is not visible to the naked eye, we ought to always pray and conduct a thoughtful inspection and see what God says and get direction from God before acting in the physical realm.

7. V17. Why did Nehemiah want to build the walls and gates of Jerusalem? Why is it important to have walls and gates in a city? What is the spiritual significance of establishing walls and gates?

* 1. How can these concepts of walls and gates be applied to our lives? Personally, Spiritually, Family/Home, Church, etc.

• In the beginning God separated the light from the darkness. A big theme in the Bible is holiness and separation.

• God calls us to be a holy and separate people, to not do what the world does. This is why we need clear boundaries to keep wickedness out and purity in.

• We need gates to control and filter what goes in and out. What are you letting in, what are you keeping out?

8. V18. What was Nehemiah’s testimony to the people? How did the people respond?

• Nehemiah didn't just share his own ideas or point out the obvious: that the city was in ruins. He also didn't point out Israel's sin problems at this time.

• Instead he shared his personal testimony: explaining what God did in his life to set up this rebuilding effort. He shared his clear purpose and mission.

• This helped to encourage the people. V18 “Let us rise up and build.” So they strengthened their hands for the good work.

9. V19-20. What opposition did the rebuild movement have? How did Nehemiah respond?

• Nehemiah focused on what God was doing, not what the enemy was trying to do. V20 Then I replied to them, “The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem.”