

The work of Nehemiah

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Nehemiah, chapter 1, and the first verse, the word of the Lord, sorry, the word of Nehemiah, the son of Hekeliah, and it came to pass in the month Jislu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Juzam, the palace, that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah, and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem, and they said unto me, the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach.

The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.

[00:01:03] Now shall we turn to the second chapter?

An answer to his prayer is that he gets to Jerusalem, and the eleventh verse of the second chapter reads, So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days, and I arose in the night, I and some few men with me, neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem, neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.

And I went out by night, by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung-port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.

Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool, but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass.

Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and [00:02:07] entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned.

And the elders knew not whether I went, or what I did, neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.

Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.

Then I told them of the hand of my God, which was good upon me, as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me, and they said, Let us arise up and build, so they strengthened their hands for this good work.

[00:03:01] Should we turn over to the 6th chapter, the 15th verse, So the wall was finished in twenty and five days, in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days.

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

I wanted to speak very simply on this book tonight, this wonderful book of Nehemiah, because I feel that with this book there is so much up-to-date teaching for us, so much that we can benefit in the day in which we live. To tell you the truth, I do like this book very much, and aren't they reading it in the young people's meetings on the last Saturday in the month, how I'd like to be there, but I'm not always able to get away on Saturday, but how wonderful a book it is to read, and [00:04:05] how much we can benefit by it.

Now you remember we were hearing concerning the temple this afternoon, and after the temple had been built, those people had worked in such a wonderful way, worked with all the energy that they might, they had been very energetic in spite of enemies that were around them, and then there was the lull. I wonder why?

Sometimes you know, when we have a work to do for the Lord, when we see the end of that work, then we drop our hands, and then things begin to go wrong, don't they?

Here it appears that for quite a number of years there had been nothing done in that city. There was the temple, and there those men had worked so faithfully, but now I'm afraid that things had gone backward instead of going forward. Had anybody noticed the going back there? [00:05:03] Had anybody noticed the grieving conditions there in Jerusalem at that time? It appears that few people had noticed much concerning it, if they'd noticed, as that good man Hanani, they'd taken little care concerning it, but God noticed.

God noticed because of the very fact that city had been placed there to his glory.

It was a wonderful city, the city of blessing, and as he'd noticed these things, it was not to be allowed to stay as it was.

What would he do? Would he use somebody? Yes, he'd firstly raise up a servant, and then of course a servant cannot be used on his own.

He must have others in fellowship with him in the work that he does for the Lord, and therefore having raised a servant, he would gather servants round him so that they would be able to work and restore that city to some of its former glory.

[00:06:06] Who would he use?

There was Hanani in the city, and with regard to him, Nehemiah, his brother, said at a later time that

he was a good man.

He was a good man, and I feel that he's like so many of us today, a good man, but doing nothing about those things that are for the glory and the honour of the Lord. He was a good man.

He was a good man.

And if we turn and if we look among our brethren today, we can say concerning so many, he was a good, he's a good man.

But what are we doing, brethren, in these later days, just before the coming of the Lord, with these conditions that prevail in our midst?

What are we doing about these things? So I feel just at that moment God had not a man in the city of Jerusalem among that 50,000 men that could do that task for himself.

[00:07:01] So where would he look?

Well, he looked outside, miles, hundreds of miles away to that place, Shushan, the palace. He looked to Nehemiah.

Now you say, well, why didn't Nehemiah go back? He was, if he was such a faithful man, why didn't he go back for the 50,000 that went? There was the willingness and readiness for the authorities to allow them to go back. Why didn't he go back?

Now there is a grave warning here for every one of us that will do any service for the Lord. I would suggest to you with regard to Nehemiah, he had not been led of the Lord to go back with those 50,000 other of the Israelites that went back. He would not. No, he hadn't been led of the Lord, and he stayed just where he was until this time when the Lord would be able to use him in such a greater way, in influence with regard to the authorities, so that he could go and be instrumental in the rebuilding of Jerusalem's [00:08:07] walls.

Isn't there a warning? Isn't there a lesson for us in this?

That whatever other people might be called to do, don't let us do that same thing.

Don't let us move a step because they're moving. Let it be that we wait till we hear the word of the Lord speaking to us, and then let us move, and not before.

So we see here that Hanani, that good man with several of his friends, go that long journey, and they go to Nehemiah who is found in Shushan the palace. Look up at the map at the back of your Bible, and look at the journey that he took, and you'll ask yourself, did he take this journey because of the very fact that he desired to see his brother?

I feel that he was led of the Lord even to take that journey so that he might communicate [00:09:03] with his brother concerning the sad conditions in Jerusalem. And it appears he's not long in the company of his brother before his brother asks him, where is Jerusalem?

Well, it was natural for him, was it not, to ask for that place because it had such a great place in his heart, that place Jerusalem. The place that he had come from, the place where God had chosen to place his name, what a great place it had in the heart of this man Nehemiah, and the people that were there, how much he cared for them, although he was so far away.

And he asked the question, how are they doing in Jerusalem?

And he says the gates are burned with fire, the walls are broken down. What a sad picture Adhanani brought to Nehemiah just at this time, and what effect would it have on this wonderful man that God would raise up? There are things that he didn't do, but there are many things that he would do in these [00:10:05] circumstances. Firstly, there was one thing that we are so prone to do. He didn't criticise, did he? He might have said, confirming those 50,000 that had gone, well, you know, I really expected that, didn't you? There was nobody among them that could do anything much, and well, it's just left, and I can expect it.

No, he didn't criticise.

The easiest thing, brethren, is to criticise and how sad it is when we criticise others.

I know that there can be constructive criticism, and later on in the second, in the third, second chapter, you'll see, he says, you'll see what distress we are in. That's the kind of criticism that's desirous today. On the other hand, he didn't shrug his shoulders. He might have said with regard to himself where he was, well, look, I've got my service to do here with the King, and however can I be of any use?

[00:11:03] How can I leave the work that I'm on here and come to you? I might have the qualities to do that work, but however is it possible? I just can't do it.

You know, sometimes we are prone to do that. Sometimes it is, with regard to ourselves, we would like to think that others can do the service of the Lord, but there are so many things in our lives that are a hindrance to us, well, we just can't do it. But what did he do?

He full well knew the difficulties in his pathway with regard to this. He full well knew the problems that he had with this great man, this one of the greatest monarchs, and as he thought of the difficulties, it says that he sat down.

That's the thing that we very rarely do easily, is it, to sit down. What we want to do, immediately there's something to be got on with for the Lord. We want to get on with that task. [00:12:01] But here this man, I feel that he wouldn't be so popular today in the fact that before he started his service for the Lord, he'd sat down and he'd prayed, he'd wept, he'd mourned, he'd planned for four months.

You'd say, what a waste of time. No, no waste of time.

The scripture, doesn't it say in one place that the man of God must not make haste? And this man of God truly did not make haste in the fact that firstly with regard to him he sat down and contemplated the people of God there in Jerusalem and the condition that they were in.

Here was a man then that had a care for the people of God and such a care for the people of God

that now he sits down and contemplates their conditions, the prevailing conditions in Jerusalem.

I wonder how often we sit down, we who have a care for the Lord's people, I wonder how often we sit down and contemplate the Lord's people in the condition and position that [00:13:06] they find themselves today. You know, there's so much that we should contemplate. I feel that these contemplations should not make us so morbid and so unhappy that we have no joy in the Lord.

Let it ever be that their joy is in the Lord and that when we come together we have such a joy in him that he has a portion in us. But let it be that in this last day we contemplate the people of God in their sad condition today and let it be that here as we contemplate them we have a real care for them. This man did. Firstly by that which he did I feel that he had a real care for them in that here he sat down. Not alone did he sit down but the scripture says concerning him, this great, this strong man, this man that would stand in the presence of the king so often because of who he was, it says that he wept.

[00:14:02] He wept.

I would suggest to you just at this moment that as I see this man weeping he's now taking the sides with God who at this moment alone grieved about the condition of the people of God.

He takes his side with a grieving God with regard to the conditions that prevailed in Jerusalem.

That's what he does.

Don't you see the same attitude with regard to Elijah when he sees the people astray and when he takes sides with God and when he prays as God would allow him to pray according to my word?

Yes, he's a man because he has a care for the people of God. He takes sides with God in grieving concerning that which had come in. Not alone though did he take sides with God but with regard to him it says that he mourned. He took his place as one that mourned because of the sad conditions that were prevailing [00:15:03] and he was one of those that he felt was responsible for the conditions that were there. If you read the prayer that he prays in the first chapter you'll see I and my father's house have sinned. That's the mourning.

He not only took his place with God grieving because of the condition but now he takes his place with the people and he takes his place so that he might in that way show how grieved he is concerning the sad condition in which they find themselves and he finds themselves in being one of them. So he sat down, he mourned, he wept, he prayed.

He prayed!

Let's think of that for a moment because that's the right approach with regard to prayer to firstly contemplate and then mourn, yes, and grieve and then to pray.

You think for a moment that sometimes we're in the position or in the attitude for prayer [00:16:02] when something comes into our lives. Isn't it first that we should contemplate as before the Lord and then with the mourning and with the weeping then get down before him and pray and pray as this man prayed in all his earnestness, firstly confessing the sins of his father's house and then praying for those people and then not only praying for those people but at the end praying for the man.

He speaks of this great monarch, perhaps the greatest man living at that time and he says to God concerning him, well have mercy on me so that in the position I am I might find grace with this man because he was nothing more than that to him in this position. We must know that he as a godly man showed the respect to him as a master in the next chapter but here as before God he was a man. He was a man and a man in God's hand.

[00:17:01] So what did he do you say in the first chapter? Well he sat down, he wept, he mourned, he fasted and he prayed but that wasn't all.

That's a good, I was going to say a good and a proper start with regard to any work of the Lord and yes it is but with regard to that man there is something that is left out of that first chapter that we must put in because of the very fact that afterwards we see that it's there.

Wasn't there the fact that at this time during those four months he was able to plan because of the fact that he had prayed in faith.

If you look at the beginning of the second chapter you'll see he stands before that man the king and you'll see that there he was in fear and trembling of his life that he had been praying and he was praying in such a way that when the king says well what is your request? He was able to tell him the time that he would be away from the palace, able to tell him [00:18:02] all that he needed for his journey and for his business there and in every way we see that he had that mind that was directed by God to plan this work that was before him.

You know I don't think I've got much time for people that don't sit down and think much about their ministry.

If they've got something before them of the Lord I don't think we should have too much tabulated you know but I think it should be gone over in the presence of the Lord so that when there is something like this arise we've got the plan before us and we're able to go on. And therefore with regard to Nehemiah he was blessed of the Lord his prayer was answered his plan was submitted and there he goes to Jerusalem. What's he go for? To see the conditions that prevailed in Jerusalem and as he goes with just a few no doubt at this time we see that he tells nobody concerning what he's going to do.

[00:19:01] Now he would be a man that would be looked up to among those people in Israel in Judah and with regard to him coming amongst them he might have been in a position of authority and he might in one way have shown that authority over them but he just didn't. What he did was that he came in all humility so that he might work not only over them but with them and among them.

He was not going to lord it over them was he?

And therefore he comes in all humility he waits three days before he begins to look around the city and those days were not wasted.

I would feel that this man being the godly man and the great man that he was he spent those days in supplication to his god concerning the great service that he had and as he was found there at the end of the three days it's his time and god says go. God says go.

[00:20:01] When does he go?

He goes at night and as I think of him going at night it shows me that with regard to his position among them there he wasn't going to be a carping critic. No he hadn't come in that way. A critic is somebody that I feel that we can do without unless his criticism is constructive and unless he speaks as afterward this man spoke concerning the conditions of these people. He goes out by night and he's going to view the city and how should he view the city? Should he go and where the wall is still raised should he go and view it from the top of the wall? No he goes through the valley gate.

He goes through the valley gate and he returns through the valley gate. It is with regard to this man he's clothed with humility and he goes forth in this way and as he goes forth in the night looking at the various conditions of the city he finds [00:21:01] what a sad case this city is in.

And so on the next day he gathers the people together and as he gathers them together he says you see what distress we are in, we are in.

How saddened he was concerning the position of the people there in those ruins and how sad he was to see that city that had been glorious now burned, the gates burned with fire. You see what distress we are in. I want you to notice how he speaks to these people that have been living in these conditions and not bothering about them.

He spoke concerning the condition and the distress that they were in. Then he spoke of the good, the hand of his God that was good upon him, the hand of his God that was good upon him. I wonder what he told them at this time. Well he must tell them firstly I think concerning Hanani coming with a message concerning their [00:22:02] city and that he would say is how I knew concerning the conditions. And then he must say concerning the prayer that he prayed before God and then he must say concerning the time when he spoke to that king that was lord over him when he spoke to him he said I told them of the good hand of my God upon me and also the words of the king. Now see he brought them in on this work because he just couldn't do this work on his own. He was not going to do this work on his own. Every work of the Lord needs fellowship among the people of God so they work together. And here going down and sitting with them and owning his sin, owning his departure with them in that then telling them the encouraging thing about the hand of the Lord and what can be more powerful.

Then they say as a whole let us arise and build.

Now would to God that spirit was amongst us today how different would our meetings be [00:23:06] how different would be the work in various ways today if we were able to realize and appreciate the good hand of the Lord amongst us and that which is at our disposal. He had so much at his disposal because of the word of the king and how different our conditions would be if we knew something of that.

Wouldn't it bring joy to our hearts today if we in our little meetings could hear the word of everyone in the meeting let us rise and build.

Now somebody I know will say with regard to what I'm saying yes but don't forget brother this is a day of small things and we don't expect, you don't?

You don't expect any blessing? Well you just won't get it will you? How can you get a blessing if you're not expecting it? Isn't it always possible that God can give a little reviving but we are to be in the spirit so that the Lord can use us.

[00:24:03] We are to be in the spirit of revival not that we are to be dropping our hands and knowing that it's the last days to just give up. That's not the thought at all. Let us arise and build.

Now I wonder how they built and what they did. Now if you look into the third chapter well I wouldn't like to read it through here I make enough mistakes as I read already and I'd make more I suppose if I read that chapter but in that chapter we see they began to build and they did begin to build and as we see them building you'd say well where did they begin? Where did they begin then? Because if you look at the beginning of the chapter you'll find one man Eliashib he began to build and he put the door on the hinges he rebuilt the sheep gate. Yes that was where the work began at the sheep gate.

And when I think of that which they were going to do they were going to restore the walls [00:25:01] to some of their former glory I would say some of their former power.

Those walls were there to keep out the enemy and so that the people of God might be in their separation might be in their separation.

And here when I think of the walls and the gates being rebuilt again how much that's necessary today.

How much it is necessary to get back to the very thought that we're trying to keep the enemy out and also that we are showing more than we do today that separation that is becoming to the people of God.

I feel that that's something that's lacking. But if there is to be any service for the Lord I would realise where it is to begin and where it is to end.

They began working at the sheep gate and if you remember in the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John you'll find a man there in the sheep gate.

[00:26:02] The sheep market it says there but it's the sheep gate and that's the place where the Lord met that man in his need in the sheep gate and that's the place where we firstly meet the Lord Jesus Christ. We meet him in our need.

We meet him at the cross and as I think of the Lord Jesus Christ as the lamb offered for sin I feel that that's the place where we start.

You know I don't quote choruses very often in an address but there is a chorus that comes to my mind at Calvary's cross is where we begin.

Where we begin our work.

And if there is one that is unconverted here tonight I would say to you, you can't participate in any work at all for the Lord. It could not be possible in the Old Testament times and you'll see that at the end of the second chapter of this book. They couldn't participate in the work of the Lord, neither can

you. But as I look into the third chapter I see that it was for everyone that was a person [00:27:04] belonging to God, every one of them were to participate in the work of the Lord here and they began at the sheep gate. And that reminds me so much of our Lord Jesus Christ and his cross of suffering. That's brethren where we must begin. Where did they end?

If you look concerning those ten gates that are mentioned in that chapter you'll see and they built right round again to the sheep gate. Let us never get away from the cross.

Let it be that whatever we may do for the Lord in service for him, whatever we may be, let it be that always we come back to the cross and sit there and see him there dying for our sins and let us be humble before him because of the position that he took for us. It will be humbling if we think of the Lord of life and glory bared in death for us. [00:28:01] Yes, that's where they began at the sheep gate. And as I think of them, if you had read the chapter you would have seen concerning them and next to him and next to him and next to him all the way through the chapter so that we see there, there's a little, a thin line of workers all the way round the city separated maybe by distance but joined in that one great work. And what a wonderful work it was. Next to him, next to him, next to him.

What does that teach me today?

It teaches me something that more than ever before should characterize our gatherings and that is unity. Next to him, next to him and as we see this thin line of workers all the way round inside that city wall we'll see that they so worked so that after 52 days the walls were rebuilt and the doors were there hanging ready for people to go in and out again.

[00:29:05] So the unity in the service made it that that great work was completed to Hanani's satisfaction, to Nehemiah's satisfaction but above all to the satisfaction of a God, a holy and a righteous God who was then called the God of heaven, the God of heaven. Now when we think of them working in that way in unity then aren't we, aren't we surprised that we don't work in that way today? Isn't it that today we seek to do this or to do that and sometimes we're isolated instead of having the unity of our brethren? As we think of them let's remember this work, brethren, firstly in the fact that they worked together. Although they were that thin line around inside the wall everyone worked together in that unity so that that work was completed.

But I wonder how they did work? How did they work? [00:30:01] Well with regard to them firstly I would like to say to you that there were so many different kinds of workers among these that worked.

There were the apothecaries, there were the princes, there was the priests, there were so many, there was the merchants, the goldsmiths, all kinds of workers all working together to one end and that was so that the wall might be built again to the glory of God. But they were all working together. Some, it seemed as though the tasks might be impossible for them but there they worked.

And as we see them work in this way what a wonderful thing it is that the Lord has a work for every one of his servants. I can imagine that in those wonderful days when they began to work that work, that great work for God, that there would be those that would come to Nehemiah and said what should I do? And there were very, very few that weren't doing anything for the Lord, that weren't doing anything for the Lord and that should touch their hearts. [00:31:04] But what kind of workers were they? Now I'd like you to think of the first one in the third chapter because, well, it's sad to see that so great a man, a representative man as Eliashiv the high priest, should do his work in such a slipshod

way.

I know that there are older brethren that are here that will say tonight yes, he put no bolts or bars on his gate.

No, that's one thing that he did not do. And if you look right at the end of the book, in the twelfth chapter, you'll find with regard to him he let one of those enemies in that we read of this evening, Tobiah the Ammonite, he let him in the gate.

He let him in the gate. He wasn't careful, he was careless.

How do we do our work?

As I think of the work that God would have us to do, let us do it as one did in that chapter where it says concerning him, he worked earnestly for the Lord. He worked earnestly.

[00:32:01] Here they were working in a careless way. And then it was in that same chapter, in the fifth verse I think it is, that there were Techoites mentioned, the fifth verse of the third chapter. And as we see those Techoites mentioned, it says concerning them, but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord.

But what a hindrance it is when we look at those that are older, or those perhaps that we feel are more spiritual, if they're lacking in earnestness in the work of the Lord.

How frustrating it is for younger people to see this.

As we see these Techoite princes, as we see them, the nobles, there they are. And as the work is continuing, they haven't got a will to work. They haven't got a will to work. But what effect did it have on these Techoites, the ones that should have been under them in that service? Well, they so worked in that place that if we look, [00:33:02] I think it's in the 27th verse of the same chapter, it says concerning them, they built another piece.

They not only were able to work hard just where they were for the Lord, but it says concerning them that they built another piece, they built another piece.

And how wonderful it is when we are willing and ready so to work that God puts something in our hand in another place, he gives us another piece to work and to do for him. But you say, well, this is all very well, there they were inside the wall, and there they seem to be going on very well, but did they have any hindrances to the work? Because, you know, in our meeting we have so many hindrances, don't we? You don't know the hindrances that we have in our meeting, but they had greater hindrances inside their wall than you have in your meeting. And those hindrances, I will go into one or two of them before I close, but when I think of the so many hindrances, they made no difference to the work of the Lord, [00:34:03] they were willing and ready to do the service in spite of the hindrances. In the second chapter, the 19th verse, when Sam Ballat sees that which they are doing, it says concerning him, when he saw this thing, and when Tobiah saw it, they laughed as to scorn.

They laughed as to scorn.

And if there's one thing this poor old pride doesn't like, it doesn't like to be laughed at, does it? Do you like to be laughed at?

They laughed as to scorn.

But here, Nehemiah, the one that was here called the Tershaphah, or the governor, he was the one that when this laughing came to him, he realized the greatness of his work.

And he would realize that scorn would be that which would be meted out to him.

And when I think of the Lord Jesus Christ, and when I think of the shame and the scorn that was his, can we expect any better treatment in our lives, those of us that trust in him?

[00:35:02] Yes, they laughed them to scorn.

But yet, brethren, don't you think that sometimes the enemy is able to laugh us to scorn in the way that we do the work of the Lord? I don't think that he was able to here, but I would suggest to you that I feel that sometimes he's able to laugh us to scorn in the way that we do our service for the Lord. It may be that he looks into the prayer meeting, and on that prayer meeting night, I don't think that he doesn't know the inside of our room where we hold the prayer meeting, but he looks and sees just two or three there, and perhaps thirty or forty in the meeting, and what does he do? Well, he laughs us to scorn. He knows that if there's not that energy in prayer as before the Lord, he knows that if there's not the earnestness with regard to the service that's in that little meeting, well, there's no bother there, and he can laugh us to scorn. He laughs us to scorn sometimes when it is that a few old brothers get to the reading, [00:36:04] and perhaps younger ones could get there. I know that it's not always possible, but what a great thing it is if we can grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ by getting to the Bible reading and hearing the word as it is expounded, but I feel that sometimes it's not, and he laughs us to scorn. I feel that sometimes, you know, after a meeting such as this, if we are not occupied truly with that which has been brought before us during the meetings, and we're occupied with anything and everything apart, he can laugh us to scorn, can he not?

Because of the very fact that that which we come together to receive the Lord, by the time we reach our homes, he's all gone, and he laughs us to scorn. And then a little later, you remember the words that were spoken as they were building the wall, and Tobiah the Ammonite came along with Sanballat, and as they looked upon that which was done, [00:37:02] that man Tobiah said, well, if a fox came along, he would knock down their stone wall.

They said, what a weak lot you are, what a weak lot you are. Look at the work that you're doing. And the work that they were doing so graciously and so fervently for the Lord, they were laughed at again and they were mocked. I know that here tonight amongst us there are many that serve the Lord in various ways, and don't forget the words that Nehemiah said concerning this work later on, you are doing a great work.

Let it not be that mockery and that which we hear from others makes any difference to our work. We are serving the Lord Christ, we are doing a great work, and in that great work, let it not be that we take notice of opposition of others.

And then later on, I'm sorry to say, we read in the fourth chapter, concerning others that were the

hindrance, [00:38:01] and there I see concerning Judah, I think it's in the fourth chapter, verse 10, it says Judah says, the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed and there is much rubbish.

So there was the weariness and the rubbish that were a hindrance to the building of that wall for the Lord, the weariness and the rubbish.

And in the day in which we live, how much weariness there is, isn't there? So weary we are that we are not able to take up in some ways the work of the Lord that we should, so weary we are in so many things, and it is sometimes because of the rubbish that comes into our lives, the rubbish, the much rubbish.

And these weary ones later on, we see, I think it's in the twelfth chapter, they found time to write letters to Tovar, the enemy, and if they could find time to encourage and speak to the enemy, certainly they could have found more energy in the service of the Lord. [00:39:03] But there it is, much rubbish. And lastly, before I close, I see at the beginning of the sixth chapter there, that although the enemy had not prevailed against them, and although the walls were now so much that they were well up, but the gates were not hung, it is that now the enemy comes in in another way, and he sends a letter.

Now I feel that sometimes letters are sent that ought never to be sent, this letter ought never to be sent, and how horribly spiteful some letters can be, and how much discord can be spread about through letters.

And here a man brings a letter. He brought four letters, and let's see how Nehemiah dealt with this letter. What was in this letter? It was an invitation from these men, Sanballat, Tobiah, and the rest, an invitation to them to come down, come down with us into the plain of no, oh no, [00:40:02] come down so that we may talk with you. See, why don't you compromise? Why don't you come from your high position in serving your God? Can't it be that you can lend a little time to us so that you come down with us? Why couldn't they go up with the people of God? Because they had no lot or part in the work of God, and therefore if the enemy can get in anywhere at all, he'll say, come down.

And he said to Nehemiah and those that were with him, come down. But what was his answer?

It was to the plain of oh no, and without being too sentimental, he could say a plain, oh no, I'm not going down, I'm not going down.

And the letter was sent to him four times, but there was no prevailing over this great man. At this juncture it was that he said, I am doing a great work, why should the work be hindered while I come down to you?

[00:41:02] And brethren, when we think of these hindrances to the work of the Lord, we know them as we see them in our pathways today.

Let's be warned against these hindrances, and let us realize that with regard to these hindrances, the great work of the Lord must come further.

So we see at the end of the chapter, I think it's in the 15th verse, so the war was completed in 52 days, and straightway somebody here in going out the door tonight will say good night, Ofer and

Nehemiah though.

Yes, but why Ofer and Nehemiah? This man, as Elijah, was a man of like passions as ourselves. God has no superman in this day, neither has he ever had a superman in any day.

The Lord Jesus Christ I would not for a moment speak of in that way, because holy and reverend is his name, but let's remember God has a man.

A man that has a care for the Lord's people, [00:42:02] a man that prays, a man that weeps, a man that mourns, but a man also that's willing to plan and to work. And if that's true concerning each one of us, how much work will be done for the Lord before his coming again.