

Nehemiah 1:3-8

WHEN I HEARD, I WEPT AND PRAYED

- I. Sad setting.
 - A. Nehemiah came to Jerusalem around 445 BC, about 90 year after the first captives returned and 13 years after Ezra.
 - B. Who is Nehemiah?
 1. He held the very prestigious position of cupbearer for Artaxerses, king of Persia, and lived in the palace in Shushan.
 2. His heart was in Judah, though he did not take part in any of the opportunities to return to Canaan.
- II. Nehemiah's response was that he was shattered and began a lengthy time of weeping, fasting, and praying.
 - A. First, consider the distressing news Nehemiah received.
 1. The people were "in great affliction" (serious distress, misery and adversity) "and reproach" (shame and disgrace).
 2. The walls of Jerusalem represented the spiritual safety of God's people (cf. Ps. 48:2,12,13; Isa. 26:1; 60:18).
 - B. Such a response by Nehemiah could only be because the condition of the church militant was the love of his heart.
 - C. This led to Nehemiah praying for a lengthy amount of time (three months) with intensity and sincerity!
 1. Note that the summary of his prayers indicate that he drew ideas from Moses, Solomon, David, Daniel and Ezra.
 2. First, he declared God's greatness and his dependence on God.
- III. We are to learn some powerful lessons.
 - A. Nehemiah was motivated by love for the church of Christ, not by selfish gains or the pleasures of this life.
 - B. Nehemiah thought corporately, i.e., covenantally, not independently.
 - C. Nehemiah reminded himself that his God is the great sovereign, the "God of heaven" who is "the great and terrible God."