Minor Prophets
Lesson 16

Nehemiah 1-4 The Return

In the same way that God raised up prophets to speak to His people the warnings of coming judgment, God also raised up men to encourage the people to return to Him when the time of judgment had passed. Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah were three of those men. Zerubbabel was to be the governor of the community of the returnees and Ezra was to be the legislator and peacekeeper for the king. Nehemiah would serve as a protector and workman to reestablish hope and security for the people. Under his leadership the next phase of Israel's reestablishment in their land would move forward. Cyrus of Persia had given the decree for the people to return in 586 BC, but approximately 70-80 years later the city is still in ruins. Though the Temple had been rebuilt, many people continued to live in the surrounding villages around Jerusalem because of the lack of protection in the city. Therefore, when Nehemiah's brother returned from Jerusalem and gave a report of the situation, the news was disturbing to Nehemiah because the city had not been restored as a thriving religious center of worship to Yahweh. God was about to raise Nehemiah up to complete the next phase of the return of the exiles.

READ CHAPTER 1

1. What was Nehemiah's concern, and what information did he receive regarding it? 1:1-3

2. What was Nehemiah's response to the information? 1:4

3. *Identify Nehemiah's approach to God in prayer.*

   a. *What does Nehemiah identify that is the basis his prayer? vs.5*

   b. *What reality did he specify next? vs. 6-7*

   c. *What does he identify next that is the reason he feels he can appeal to God? Vs. 8-10*

   d. *What is his actual request? Vs.11*

READ CHAPTER 2

Although Nehemiah was born in captivity, his heart was in the land of his forefathers and he desired to see restored worship of God there. "The fact that both he and his father's name (Hecaliah, Neh.1:1 and 10:1) contain the name Yah may well indicate that he and his family were loyal to the Jewish orthodox faith."
~ Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia

4. *About 4 months had passed since Nehemiah heard the news about Jerusalem and he had been in prayer regarding it. Describe how God answered his prayer from 2:1-8.*

5. *How did the leaders of the area around Jerusalem respond to the kings letter that Nehemiah had been given about his task? 2:9-10*

Sanballat was the acting governor of the area of Samaria and his home was possibly in the region of Ephraim. Although he seems to be a worshipper of Jehovah, his name means "Sin (the moon god) has saved." Tobiah was an Ammonite and probably governed the area east of Judea. He was either a subordinate of Sanballat or in close collaboration with him.
~Key Word Study Bible

6. *How did Nehemiah begin his plan of action? 2:12-16 What did he do next? 2:17-18*

7. *What tactics did the opposition use to discourage them, and what was Nehemiah's response? 2:19-20*

READ CHAPTER 3

8. *How did Nehemiah go about accomplishing the task of rebuilding? 3:1-32. In what ways do his steps to complete this daunting process show his leadership abilities? Nehemiah 1-3*

READ CHAPTER 4

9. *What is Nehemiah's continual response to the threats of his adversaries? 2:18.20; 4:4,9, 14-15*

10. *What does seeing Nehemiah's actions in response to God's call teach you?*

Prayer requests:

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Group time notes:

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