

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH



7. The Power of Confession

Introduction

When Nehemiah heard the news that the walls and the gates of the city of Jerusalem had been broken down, he prayed and asked God's forgiveness on behalf of his people. God hears his cry and opens the way for him to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. Now the work is complete. As we come to chapter 9 we read that all the people came together to fast, pray and confess their sin. This is a key if we want to see restoration and revival in our lives, our church and nation.

Scripture Reading: Nehemiah 9:1-6

- ✿ Describe what the people did on the 24th day of the 7th month.

The prayer the people prayed that day is recorded in Nehemiah 9:5-38. They began with worship, and then recounted all that God had done for them throughout their history, remembering his faithfulness towards them. However they acknowledge that they had been rebellious and unfaithful to the Lord and renew their commitment to serve him.

- ✿ How important is confession and repentance in our lives as believers? Look at these verses: 2 Corinthians 7:9-10, James 5:16, Revelation 2:5, 3:3, 19

(These verses are written to believers, showing us it is important for us be sorry and repent when we have done wrong. When we do, we are forgiven and restored.)

- ✿ What did the people in Nehemiah's time promise to do once they had confessed their sin? Nehemiah 9:38, 10:28-29

(They promised to obey all the Lord had said.)

What happened in the time of Nehemiah is really an example of repentance. The word repentance means 'to turn away from sin and turn to God'. This is what the people were doing, and what we need to do if we disobey the Lord. Isn't it wonderful to know that God forgives us! Following this gathering when the people confessed their sin and promised to obey him, the walls of the city were dedicated.

- ✿ How can we dedicate ourselves to the Lord today? Romans 12:1-2

(We are to offer every part of ourselves to the Lord daily, choosing to follow him and not the ways of the world. As we do we will be transformed.)

- ✿ What happened on that day when the wall was dedicated, and how did the people respond? Nehemiah 12:27, 30, 43

(The priests and Levites purified themselves, and then the people, the gates and wall, and then they offered sacrifices. Everyone responded with great joy!)

Conclusion

We began this series on the book of Nehemiah by seeing how the walls of the city of Jerusalem were broken down. This is a picture of what people's lives are like. When we come to Christ he begins to restore us. As we allow his word to shine into different areas in our lives and repent of any sin, and dedicate ourselves to the Lord, we are healed and the gaps in the wall are filled up. Then we too will be filled with joy!

Jesus said, "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love ...
I have told you this so that my joy may be in you ..."

