

OPPOSITION TO THE WORK, Continued,

3. Under Nehemiah. A message from Hanani of Jerusalem and concerning the condition of the brethren at Jerusalem as well as the condition of the wall about Jerusalem.
 1. The people were in great affliction and reproach.
 2. The wall of Jerusalem was broken down and the gates had been burned with fire.
 3. THE ACTION OF NEHEMIAH: He sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and prayed before the God of heaven. Nehemiah 1:1-4 This was in December of B. C. 446.
 4. Nehemiah commissioned by Artaxerxes to return to Jerusalem.
 - (1) Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem and after three days views by night the broken down wall.
 - (2) He came back and encouraged the people to build the wall.
 5. OPPOSITION UNDER NEHEMIAH.
 - (1) Opposition from Sanballet the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, described as an ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it:
 - a. They laughed us to scorn, and despised us. Neh. 2:19
 - b. They said by Tobiah, "even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." Neh. 4:1-3
 - c. When they could not stop the work otherwise they said, "Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. Neh. 6:1-3
 - d. Nehemiah's reply: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? Vs 2,3
 - (2) Opposition from weak-hearted, faithless brethren from within. Neh. 4:10, 11; 5:1-5
 - a.) We don't have enough strength to fight and build at the same time. Let us just sit here and hold our own.
 - b. Others said;
 1. Our sons and daughters are many, and we are obliged to get corn (food) for them, and go in debt for it, that we may eat. 5:2
 2. We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we may buy corn, because of the dearth. Neh. 5:3
 3. We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards. Neh. 5:4
 - (3) Opposition from false prophets.
 - a. Shemaiah, the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets. All seem to have been hired by Tobiah and Sanballet. Neh. 6:10-14

IN SPITE OF ALL THIS OPPOSITION THE WORK WAS COMPLETED

So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, Neh. (September) in fifty and two days. 6:15

1. The work was finished in record time:
 1. In spite of opposition in the form of discouragement and selfishness from within Israel. Great harm is done the cause of Christ by those within who are discouraged, selfish, stingy and faithless.
 2. Elders, deacons, preachers, and all members who want to control the action of the congregation by their selfishness, greed, faithlessness should read this great story.
 3. It was done because the people had a mind to work. Neh. 4:6.

NEHEMIAH, THE MODEL WORKER

1. He was a man with a glorious conception of the sacredness and nobility of the work of the Lord. He was not willing to leave the great work, even to meet the great ones of the district. He considered it a "coming down." 2. He was able to inspire others to work as well as work himself. 3. He was not dismayed or disturbed by opposition from without, or in.

AN OVER-COMING FAITH.

1 John 5:4

Haggai 1:1-6

Ezra 1:1-11

Nehemiah 1:1-11

THE BACKGROUND

1. In 597 and 586 B. C. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, made his second and third invasions of Jerusalem. From the time of these invasions the Israelites had been held in captivity with most of them being carried to Babylon proper.
2. On the third invasion Nebuchadnezzar completely destroyed the temple at Jerusalem and carried away the sacred utensils of the temple to Babylon.
 1. It was from these vessels that Belshazzar drank wine before the thousands at a saturnalian feast and at which time old Belshazzar suffered a nervous collapse when in the midst of the feast he saw the fingers of a man's hand writing on the wall of the palace. Daniel 5:1-6
3. The Edict of Cyrus in 536 B. C.
 1. Cyrus was the Great king of Persia and had conquered Babylon (Daniel 9:1; 10-1) and through him Isaiah 44:28 said, "That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasures: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."
 2. This great return of Israel was started under Cyrus and through him the sacred utensils were returned to be used in the temple at Jerusalem. Ezra 1:1-11.

THE ORDER OF RESTORATION

1. The return of the first detachment was under the guidance of Zerubbabel and Jeshua. Ezra 1:6
Time: B. C. 536. Ezra
2. Seventy-eight years later (B. C. 458) Ezra led a sizeable group back to Jerusalem. 7-10 Ezra
3. Fourteen years after the expedition of Ezra (B. C. 444) Nehemiah came back to Jerusalem to view the work that had for 16 years been stopped. Nehemiah 2:15

OPPOSITION TO THE WORK

1. Under Zerubbabel and Jeshua
 1. The enemies of the children of Judah and Benjamin, when they heard that they were rebuilding the temple said, "Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do, and we do sacrifice unto him..." Ezra 4:1-23. The people of the land sought to hinder the work in three ways:
 - (1) By seeking to draw the Jews into an unholy union. Ezra 4:2,3 What fellowship hath light with darkness?
 - (2) By weakening the hands of the people and hiring counsellors against them. This, they did all the days of Cyrus. B. C. 537-529=8 years they tormented the people. How they did this:
 - a. Their proposition made and rejected stirred up dissension among the people.
 - b. Worldly men would think that the offer of the Samaritans should have been accepted by Zerubbabel and Jeshua, who with advancing years were had grown to be too conservative and narrow. Dissension in sentiment is a weakening of the hands.
 - (3) By accusations lodged with Ahasuerus and Darius. Ezra 4:6-24. In this we see:
 - a. The world's opposition to the church. The world does not mind an "everything in general and nothing in particular" doctrine.
 2. The temple completed under Zerubbabel and Jeshua in the sixth year of the reign of Darius on March 3 (in the month of Adar) making twenty-one years elapsed since the laying of the foundation.
2. Under Ezra.
 1. Under Ezra, who arrived in Jerusalem April 12, about 457 B. C. , the people who had lost their separated position by intermarrying with the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites were told, and they did send these strange wives back to their homeland. Ezra 10:1-44

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