

Thursday, August 11, 2022

From Darren:

Nehemiah 1:1-3:14 — Nehemiah prepared for the opportunity to talk to the king by praying

Ps 31:19-24 — “Praise the LORD, for he has shown me the wonders of his unfailing love.”

Pro 21:4 — Conversely, kind, humble, and loving are not sin

1 Corinthians 7:1-24 — Premarital counseling 101

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Nehemiah 1:1-3:14

1 1 These are the memoirs of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah. Nehemiah’s Concern for Jerusalem
In late autumn, in the month of Kislev, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes’ reign, I was at the fortress of Susa.

2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came to visit me with some other men who had just arrived from Judah. I asked them about the Jews who had returned there from captivity and about how things were going in Jerusalem.

3 They said to me, “Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire.”

4 When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven.

5 Then I said, “O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps his covenant of unfailing love with those who love him and obey his commands,

6 listen to my prayer! Look down and see me praying night and day for your people Israel. I confess that we have sinned against you. Yes, even my own family and I have sinned!

7 We have sinned terribly by not obeying the commands, decrees, and regulations that you gave us through your servant Moses.

8 “Please remember what you told your servant Moses: ‘If you are unfaithful to me, I will scatter you among the nations.

9 But if you return to me and obey my commands and live by them, then even if you are exiled to the ends of the earth, I will bring you back to the place I have chosen for my name to be honored.’

10 “The people you rescued by your great power and strong hand are your servants.

11 O Lord, please hear my prayer! Listen to the prayers of those of us who delight in honoring you. Please grant me success today by making the king favorable to me. Put it into his heart to be kind to me.” In those days I was the king’s cup-bearer.

2 1 Early the following spring, in the month of Nisan, during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes’ reign, I was serving the king his wine. I had never before appeared sad in his presence.

2 So the king asked me, “Why are you looking so sad? You don’t look sick to me. You must be deeply troubled.” Then I was terrified,

3 but I replied, “Long live the king! How can I not be sad? For the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins, and the gates have been destroyed by fire.”

4 The king asked, “Well, how can I help you?” With a prayer to the God of heaven,

5 I replied, "If it please the king, and if you are pleased with me, your servant, send me to Judah to rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried."

6 The king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked, "How long will you be gone? When will you return?" After I told him how long I would be gone, the king agreed to my request.

7 I also said to the king, "If it please the king, let me have letters addressed to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River, instructing them to let me travel safely through their territories on my way to Judah.

8 And please give me a letter addressed to Asaph, the manager of the king's forest, instructing him to give me timber. I will need it to make beams for the gates of the Temple fortress, for the city walls, and for a house for myself." And the king granted these requests, because the gracious hand of God was on me.

9 When I came to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River, I delivered the king's letters to them. The king, I should add, had sent along army officers and horsemen to protect me.

10 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of my arrival, they were very displeased that someone had come to help the people of Israel.

11 So I arrived in Jerusalem. Three days later,

12 I slipped out during the night, taking only a few others with me. I had not told anyone about the plans God had put in my heart for Jerusalem. We took no pack animals with us except the donkey I was riding.

13 After dark I went out through the Valley Gate, past the Jackal's Well, and over to the Dung Gate to inspect the broken walls and burned gates.

14 Then I went to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but my donkey couldn't get through the rubble.

15 So, though it was still dark, I went up the Kidron Valley instead, inspecting the wall before I turned back and entered again at the Valley Gate.

16 The city officials did not know I had been out there or what I was doing, for I had not yet said anything to anyone about my plans. I had not yet spoken to the Jewish leaders—the priests, the nobles, the officials, or anyone else in the administration.

17 But now I said to them, "You know very well what trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire. Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and end this disgrace!"

18 Then I told them about how the gracious hand of God had been on me, and about my conversation with the king. They replied at once, "Yes, let's rebuild the wall!" So they began the good work.

19 But when Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab heard of our plan, they scoffed contemptuously. "What are you doing? Are you rebelling against the king?" they asked.

20 I replied, "The God of heaven will help us succeed. We, his servants, will start rebuilding this wall. But you have no share, legal right, or historic claim in Jerusalem."

3 1 Then Eliashib the high priest and the other priests started to rebuild at the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set up its doors, building the wall as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and the Tower of Hananel.

2 People from the town of Jericho worked next to them, and beyond them was Zaccur son of Imri.

3 The Fish Gate was built by the sons of Hassenaah. They laid the beams, set up its doors, and installed its bolts and bars.

4 Meremoth son of Uriah and grandson of Hakkoz repaired the next section of wall. Beside him were Meshullam son of Berekiah and grandson of Meshezabel, and then Zadok son of Baana.

5 Next were the people from Tekoa, though their leaders refused to work with the construction supervisors.

6 The Old City Gate was repaired by Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah. They laid the beams, set up its doors, and installed its bolts and bars.

7 Next to them were Melatiah from Gibeon, Jadon from Meronoth, people from Gibeon, and people from Mizpah, the headquarters of the governor of the province west of the Euphrates River.

8 Next was Uzziel son of Harhaiah, a goldsmith by trade, who also worked on the wall. Beyond him was Hananiah, a manufacturer of perfumes. They left out a section of Jerusalem as they built the Broad Wall.

9 Rephaiah son of Hur, the leader of half the district of Jerusalem, was next to them on the wall.

10 Next Jedaiah son of Harumaph repaired the wall across from his own house, and next to him was Hattush son of Hashabneiah.

11 Then came Malkijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-moab, who repaired another section of the wall and the Tower of the Ovens.

12 Shallum son of Hallohesh and his daughters repaired the next section. He was the leader of the other half of the district of Jerusalem.

13 The Valley Gate was repaired by the people from Zanoah, led by Hanun. They set up its doors and installed its bolts and bars. They also repaired the 1,500 feet of wall to the Dung Gate.

14 The Dung Gate was repaired by Malkijah son of Recab, the leader of the Beth-hakkerem district. He rebuilt it, set up its doors, and installed its bolts and bars.

Psalm 31:19-24

31 19 How great is the goodness you have stored up for those who fear you. You lavish it on those who come to you for protection, blessing them before the watching world.

20 You hide them in the shelter of your presence, safe from those who conspire against them. You shelter them in your presence, far from accusing tongues.

21 Praise the LORD, for he has shown me the wonders of his unfailing love. He kept me safe when my city was under attack.

22 In panic I cried out, "I am cut off from the LORD !" But you heard my cry for mercy and answered my call for help.

23 Love the LORD, all you godly ones! For the LORD protects those who are loyal to him, but he harshly punishes the arrogant.

24 So be strong and courageous, all you who put your hope in the LORD !

Proverbs 21:4

21 4 Haughty eyes, a proud heart, and evil actions are all sin.

1 Corinthians 7:1-24

7 1 Now regarding the questions you asked in your letter. Yes, it is good to abstain from sexual relations.

2 But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband.

3 The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfill her husband's needs.

4 The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his body to his wife.

5 Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

6 I say this as a concession, not as a command.

7 But I wish everyone were single, just as I am. Yet each person has a special gift from God, of one kind or another.

8 So I say to those who aren't married and to widows—it's better to stay unmarried, just as I am.

9 But if they can't control themselves, they should go ahead and marry. It's better to marry than to burn with lust.

10 But for those who are married, I have a command that comes not from me, but from the Lord. A wife must not leave her husband.

11 But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else be reconciled to him. And the husband must not leave his wife.

12 Now, I will speak to the rest of you, though I do not have a direct command from the Lord. If a fellow believer has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to continue living with him, he must not leave her.

13 And if a believing woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to continue living with her, she must not leave him.

14 For the believing wife brings holiness to her marriage, and the believing husband brings holiness to his marriage. Otherwise, your children would not be holy, but now they are holy.

15 (But if the husband or wife who isn't a believer insists on leaving, let them go. In such cases the believing husband or wife is no longer bound to the other, for God has called you to live in peace.)

16 Don't you wives realize that your husbands might be saved because of you? And don't you husbands realize that your wives might be saved because of you?

17 Each of you should continue to live in whatever situation the Lord has placed you, and remain as you were when God first called you. This is my rule for all the churches.

18 For instance, a man who was circumcised before he became a believer should not try to reverse it. And the man who was uncircumcised when he became a believer should not be circumcised now.

19 For it makes no difference whether or not a man has been circumcised. The important thing is to keep God's commandments.

20 Yes, each of you should remain as you were when God called you.

21 Are you a slave? Don't let that worry you—but if you get a chance to be free, take it.

22 And remember, if you were a slave when the Lord called you, you are now free in the Lord. And if you were free when the Lord called you, you are now a slave of Christ.

23 God paid a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world.

24 Each of you, dear brothers and sisters, should remain as you were when God first called you.