

The Tragic News from Jerusalem (1-3)

¹ The name "Nehemiah" is a Hebrew name that means "Jehovah comforts."

The time is the Nov-Dec time of 446 B.C.

² Very early in his conversation with those from Jerusalem he asked about the remnant in Jerusalem. Jerusalem had been resettled by the exiles returning from Persia.

⁴ Here we see Nehemiah's passion for Jerusalem. He was grief stricken at the sad news.

⁵⁻⁷ The second step of great prayer is to confess our sin and our dependence upon God. The first step, even as Jesus modeled it, is to recognize the greatness of God. Nehemiah uses this approach.

¹² The "cupbearer to the king" was the one who tasted the king's food to ensure that it was not poison.

¹ The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, ² Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

³ They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

Confession and Prayer of Nehemiah (4-11)

⁴ When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. ⁵ Then I said: "O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, ⁶ let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you. ⁷ We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

⁸ "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, ⁹ but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

¹⁰ "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. ¹¹ O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man." I was cupbearer to the king.