Nehemiah 2:1-8

1. Intro
   1. God’s will will be done.
   2. Nehemiah was chosen for such a task, sent for the task, and gifted to accomplish the task.
   3. After much prayer, God’s timing was now.
2. Text
   1. Verse 1:
      1. Nisan late march…4 months after original confrontation
      2. The king would have wanted everyone to be happy while in his presence, yet Nehemiah couldn’t fake it any longer.
      3. Nehemiah was broken, convicted, and had one thing on his mind.
   2. Verse 2-3:
      1. The king recognized the sadness to be deep and from the heart.
      2. It was illegal to not have a pleasing countenance in the presence of the king.
   3. Verse 4-5: with great fear and prayer, Nehemiah makes his request.
   4. Verse 6:
      1. Artaxerxes allows, given the timeline, and Nehemiah has permission
      2. The Queen was beside him…

From Ray Stedman: Ezra and Nehemiah are one book in the Hebrew Bible, for they are part of the same story. In fact, the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther all come out of the same general period of Israel's history. They appear in our Bible in reverse order of the chronological order in which they took place. In other words, Esther actually happened when God first began to move in the midst of Israel's captivity to return this nation to the land. That was soon after the halfway mark of the seventy years that Jeremiah had predicted the captivity would last. God raised Esther, a young Jewish maiden, to the throne of Persia as queen. It was her husband, King Ahasuerus of Persia, who is the Artaxerxes of the opening chapters of Nehemiah. This heathen king gave the command for Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem to build up the walls of the city. Perhaps that accounts for a very interesting parenthesis that appears in this book in chapter 2, verse 6, when Nehemiah went to the king: "And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him)." That queen, I believe, was Queen Esther, the Jewish maiden who had been raised to this prominent position by the grace of God.

Neither Artaxerxes nor Ahasuerus are the names of this king. That is what is so confusing. These are really titles. Artaxerxes means "the great king" and Ahasuerus means "the venerable father." These were not the king's given names. It may or may not be helpful to know that this Artaxerxes and Ahasuerus are also Darius the Mede of the book of Daniel. And then, to add to the confusion, Artaxerxes in the book of Nehemiah is not the same Artaxerxes as in the book of Ezra. Now do I have you thoroughly confused?

* 1. Verse 7: Nehemiah seeks letters of recommendation, because no-one along the way would have believed the story.
  2. Verse 8: The king granted the request because the good hand of God was upon Nehemiah.

1. Point
   1. **God Answers Prayers**
      1. Nehemiah asked for success and mercy, and now sees this come to reality
      2. Nehemiah had been praying and fasting…then said a quick prayer as he began to speak
      3. He seeks the Lord earnestly, and diligently.
      4. This had to have been a new and empowering chapter for Nehemiah, he is learning how to talk to God, and hear from God.
      5. Point: Nehemiah was prompted to be in right standing with God, and it would appear this would have been a new revelation.
      6. Can you testify that God answers prayers?
         1. If you start a prayer journal, you can keep track
         2. If you haven’t heard from God yet regarding your prayer, be reminded of past answers, and celebrate with others that have experienced answers.
   2. **God’s favor is not dependent on man**
      1. Pagan King can be used by God to bless His people
      2. Long story:
         1. Sometimes there are many differing aspects in a long line of events that lead up to the revelation of God’s plan.
         2. Connections over time and even generations, can bring us to a point to realize that all along, GOD HAD A PLAN
      3. Philosophers:
         1. The Butterfly Effect in chaos theory
         2. Small seemingly inconsequential events can chain react into a larger event.
         3. A butterfly flapping its wings can turn into a tornado given the right timing and conditions.
         4. The butterfly effect is a theory that may allow us to see connected events, but it is just a theory
         5. The FAVOR and WILL of God is clearly leading to something that huge, and has great consequences, but it is not chaos, IT IS DESIGNED!
      4. The favor of God was on Nehemiah
      5. God has a plan for your life as well
         1. Don’t look at all the circumstances and draw your own conclusions
         2. Look at the circumstances, follow the Lord by Faith, and let God bring you to His will.
   3. **God Has a will to accomplish**
      1. God is going to accomplish what He wills to accomplish
      2. Why would Artaxerxes allow Nehemiah to go and rebuild the wall?
         1. Maybe he wanted to honor the servants in exile???
         2. Maybe he was fond of Nehemiah and wanted to be nice???
         3. No, those are human responses, it must have been that GOD WILLED IT!
      3. Nehemiah is sent to Judah by God, not by Artaxerxes
      4. You are the LORD’S, so let the LORD do HIS WORK in you and through you.
      5. What is the Lord’s will for your life, family, and ministry?
         1. Seek and you will find
         2. God will reveal in His time
         3. Be prepared to launch into your next phase when He directs
         4. But don’t grow weary in your current role while you are waiting for the next door to open.
2. Close