THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH
"Rise and Build"
Nehemiah 2:17-20

Introduction

1. Anything ever accomplished for God is the result of a blessed spirit of burden and cooperation amongst God's people. What an illustration of this here!

2. The factors which netted a spirit of unity in Israel under Nehemiah are provided in the text. The whole passage just breathes with the breath of God. The Lord was truly at work! If this were not true, you would never have the record of this chapter nor the next! Look at the factors listed:-

1. DESCRIPTION OF NEED. v. 17.

a. Distress. Nehemiah called attention to the distress of the nation. This word is used earlier (cf. 1:3). The nation is called to see ("ye"), but Nehemiah associates himself with them for he says "we are in." The use of these emphatic personal pronouns is significant.

b. Jerusalem. The city is wasted (cf. 2:3). The gates have been burned (cf. 1:3; 2:13). Destruction abounded! No guess work. Eyes could see!

c. Reproach. The noun here means "disgrace." Israel stood like this before the nations (Gentiles). If His people were this, it was also that the situation was a "shame" to HIM.

2. PERSUASION OF SUPPLY. v. 18.

a. Through God. It is essential that one notes Nehemiah puts God first! He had done this before (2:4,5). God was "my" God to Nehemiah. His hand was upon him for "good." The authority of the heavenly power was on "me."

b. Through the king. Human intervention was not decried. Nehemiah acknowledged the help of man who had been touched by the Lord (1:11).

3. ADMISSION OF DIFFICULTY. v. 19.

a. Identified. Three persons are named. Opposition
is not ethereal, but substantive! Sanballat and Tobiah a
mentioned earlier (v. 10). Geshem is new and probably the
term "Arabian" means Ishmelite (cf. Jer. 25:24). All spe-
cf the flesh and worldly Satanic opposition to the work of
God. All were relatives of the Israelites. Expect opposi-
tion and be aware of the source.

b. Described. Four words do this: 1) They heard. Any
work for the Lord will be spread around. People will hear.
This is the signal for opposition. Don't cooperate, but
oppose! 2) They laughed. This verb means to scorn and
speak in a barbarous foreign tongue. It signifies to mock
This means to "tread under foot." It raises the feelings
higher than the previous verb. 4) They questioned. Two
are recorded here: the first questions the very activity
and the second questions the loyalty. This is the nub of
the problem: we are to do His work and be loyal to HIM!

NOTE: If you run unopposed in the Lord's work, find out if
you are running.

4. INDICATION OF SUCCESS.

a. By Nehemiah. v. 17. It is forceful to see that
Nehemiah did not say: fine, friends, you build! He re-
sponded: "let us" do the job. He felt the constraint of
God's blessing!

b. By Israel. v. 18. The third person plural shows that
Israel wasted no time, but joined heartily with Nehemiah
for "they said" (v. 18). This is not all. They actually
did what was required to have strength for the job which to
them and to Nehemiah was "a good work."

c. By God. v. 20. This is by intimation. If God would
not give success, their building would have been in vain
(Psa. 127:1). The use of "Heaven" shows that the expecta-
tion was from above. The verb "prosper" is hifil and means
to "provide a break-through" (cf. Joshua 1:8). No wonder
Nehemiah refers to himself and the people as "His servants"
(v. 20).

Conclusion Work carried on in this fashion will glorify the
Lord. Revival will come when such a spirit obtains. It will
call for every one to affirm that the opposition has "no por-
tion, no right, and no memorial in Jerusalem." There must not
be any worldliness, compromise, or fleshly effort.