

A DAY OF GREAT AFFLICTION AND REPROACH

NEHEMIAH 1; MATTHEW 27

Text: Nehemiah 1:3

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³ And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province *are* in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also *is* broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

Introduction:

Some events in human history impact us so greatly, that we will forever remember the circumstance surrounding where we were when we heard the news.

I remember watching as Christa McAuliffe began her journey to be the first teacher in space, only to have it end so abruptly and tragically.

September 11, 2001, was a day that Americans will never forget. It was a day that changed our way of life forever, a day that destroyed our sense of invincibility.

When the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center and the walls of the Pentagon fell to the

ground, citizens feared what would become of their great country.

Thoughts turned to religion and to the Bible. How could a loving God let this happen? How can Christians continue to worship a God who presides over such destruction and catastrophe?

We find an example similar to in the Bible.

Read Nehemiah 1

Neh. 1:1-4

The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, [2] That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. [3] And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

[4] And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

Nehemiah was broken hearted over the broken wall and the burned gates. Nehemiah was a patriot. He

allowed the words of affliction and reproach move him to do something.

Note what Nehemiah did.

1. HE WAS CONCERNED FOR HIS NATION (VS 1-4)

A. He sat down and wept, mourned, fasted and prayed.

B. We too should be concerned so that we will pray.

2. HE CHOSE TO GET INVOLVED (2:17)

Neh. 2:17

Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.

A. His concern led to his choice to get involved.

B. Nothing will be accomplished sitting idly by.

3. HE CRIED TO GOD (NEH 1:4-11)

Neh. 1:4-11

And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven, [5] And said, I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: [6] Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. [7] We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. [8] Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: [9] But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. [10] Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. [11] O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and

to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

Many cried to God on that dreaded day September 11th 2001 when our country was attacked by terrorists.

- Some cried to God for help.
- Some cried to God for strength.
- Some cried to God for family members
- Some cried to God for friends
- Some though cried and wondered where God was.

Where was God on that day when planes crashed into the twin towers and pentagon?

A. The same place He was when Adam rebelled in Eden – waiting to cover his sin.

Genesis 3:21

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

B. The same place He was when Noah built an ark – protecting him from disaster.

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

C. The same place He was when Job lost everything he had proving Himself to be God despite unfortunate circumstances. (Job 1-2)

Noah experienced the world's greatest natural disaster, Job no doubt ranked near the top of personal disaster.

Though Job was an upright man he still experienced great loss.

D. The same place He was when Daniel (Dan. 6) was thrown to hungry lions – resting comfortably on a “lion-skin-rug” while jealous men sought to end his life because of his faithful testimony

But maybe the greatest insight into the heart of God when a tragedy strikes such as the 9-11 is to consider

E. The same place He was when Jesus hung on the Cross – enduring the pain for the benefit of others. (Matt 27)

Matthew 27:45-46

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. [46] And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Close:

Could God have stopped what His Son went through. Sure, but He had a larger picture in view. There was a greater good to be accomplished by the suffering and death of Jesus.

Through the suffering of One, many would be made whole. Through the sacrifice of One, many would have their sins forgiven. Through the death of One, many would be made alive.

He wasn't just sitting idle and helpless as His Son suffered. He was using the schemes of wicked hearts to bring about the redemption of mankind.

God was not surprised by 9-11,
Though no doubt He was saddened by it.

God did not cause 9-11,
But He did and still comforts those affected by it.

God may not prevent future acts of terrorism,

But He will provide peace to those whose hearts are filled with hatred if they will turn to Him.

You may have been affected by that day that we will never forgotten and history books will inform the future generations of.

If there was to be another 911 and you were a victim where would you be?

The Bible says in Romans 10:9-10,13

Romans 10:13

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

2 Samuel 22:7

In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears.