



## 2019 Q4 Ezra and Nehemiah: Lesson 2 Nehemiah

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

### SABBATH

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The memory verse describes how Nehemiah fasted and prayed asking for God to intervene.

Do we fast and pray asking for God to intervene in human history?

- Do we really want the final events that usher in the second coming of Christ to occur?
- Do we ever pray “come quickly Lord Jesus” but then turn around and pray to hold back all the strife?
- Do we realize that before the Jesus returns difficult events transpire on earth?
- What would you do if an angel knocked on your door tonight and said, “Grab a backpack and come with me, you must flee your home and hide in the mountains.” This is what Lot faced—what would you do?
- We speak about believing in the second coming of Christ—but are we prepared to act, to move, to leave, to suffer, to speak, to stand up, to face trials for God’s cause?

What is the purpose of fasting and praying? Is it to get God to do something He would not otherwise do?

Or, is fasting a praying a means of focusing us and connecting us with God so we can become more attuned to God’s purposes? Could it be God is waiting to act because He needs His people to be ready to fulfill His purposes?

Did God need someone like Nehemiah? What kind of people does God need today?

Read first two paragraphs, “To date, two groups of captives...” What lessons are there in this history?

Do we recognize only the historical events or do we realize that what God had recorded in Scripture is also revealing truths about the larger controversy and the plan of salvation? In other words, are there, in addition to historical events, object lessons in them?

For instance, Israel was taken captive by Babylon—why? Because of unfaithfulness to the Lord. Is there an object lesson in this? If we are unfaithful to the Lord will our hearts and minds become captive to evil and selfishness?

Does Babylon represent something beyond an ancient kingdom in the Bible?

A system of confusion—a system that we are called to come out of, to be set free of.



As Israel went into captivity to ancient Babylon because of unfaithfulness, Christianity because of rejecting the truth about God's law, because of accepting Satan's lie that God's law functions like human law—imposed rules requiring God to inflict imposed punishments, is in the captivity of religious superstition and myths. The minds of people are held captive.

We are called out—just as Israel was called out—but interestingly for ancient Israel there were three groups that came out, or three times people came out, before Jerusalem was actually rebuilt—before the walls were repaired.

Are we called to be repairers of the breach of God's law? Are there three callings out that occur for us before the breach is repaired? I would suggest the possibility that we, this generation with this message about God's design law, are the third and last group to be called out, the ones who will finish the repairing of the breach in God's law.

The first calling out, the Loud Cry, began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century with William Miller and the Great Disappointment of 1844.

The second calling was 1888 with the Righteousness by Faith message, but it also didn't result in the repair to the breach in God's law

What is the breach in God's law? That God's law functions like human law, with all the imperial distortion to God's character and the plan of salvation. We are calling people back to worship Him who made the heavens, earth, and fountains of water. This is Creator worship—and the repair to the breach is to reject the human law construct and return to design law and all that it entails.

This is the message of Revelation 18, the message that is to be repeated to lighten the world for Christ's return.

There are lessons we can learn from Israel, Nehemiah met opposition, we have and will continue to meet opposition. But Nehemiah was a man of prayer and a man of faith—we need to pray and move forward in faith, in trust of God taking this message forward—to free minds from the imperial lies about God, repairing the breach in God's law.

Consider this quote from *The Great Controversy*:

The prophet thus points out the ordinance which has been forsaken: "Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and **call the Sabbath a delight**, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and **shalt honor Him**, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord." Verses 12-14. **This prophecy also applies in our time.** The **breach was made in the law** of God *when* the Sabbath was changed by the Roman power. But the time has come for that divine institution to be restored.



The breach is to be repaired and the foundation of many generations to be raised up. {GC 452.4}

Do you hear this through imposed law lenses, as an arbitrary day to go to church upon—or do you hear a battle between design law and imposed law?

How was it possible for the church to change the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday? Why isn't there one church, given the state of our world, that has voted that their members are immune from environmental toxins, or air pollution etc.? Because human beings have no power to change design laws!

So, what does it mean that the church did change the day of worship? That Christians no longer see God's law as design law, but merely as imposed rules. This is the breach, this is the change.

Note the quote said, "The breach was made in the law of God *when* the Sabbath was changed by the Roman power." It didn't say the breach IS the change in the Sabbath!

The Sabbath change was the *evidence* of the breach, but in and of itself was not the breach—the true breach, which changes our fundamental understanding of God—in other words changes the God we worship—is when we believe God's law functions like human law. This idea corrupts everything and makes us view God like a dictator and the source of inflicted pain and death. This is paganism and this is what we are called out of.

The SDA church has come into existence and reclaimed the right day of worship—but it has not yet fully repaired the breach because it hasn't rejected imperial/imposed law with its penal legal lie about the plan of salvation.

Notice the Isaiah quote we repair the breach when we call the Sabbath a delight—can delight in something be legislated? No!

The only way for the Sabbath to be a delight is for a change to occur in the heart—and what makes the Sabbath a delight? The truth about its purpose and what it reveals!

The Sabbath reveals the character of God—truth, presented in love, leaving us free! It is a gift of God to us revealing His love, kindness, mercy, truth, and methods! Is it a delight to be free, to have true liberty? This is what the Sabbath guarantees—why and how?

Because God, in the context of a war by Satan against His right to rule, after giving evidence of His Creatorship on days 1-6, gives evidence of His character on day 7. Day 1-6 we learn God is powerful—day 7, we see God step back and stop using power, establishing a day in which intelligent beings are left free to think for themselves.

If God were an imperial dictator like Satan alleges, there would be no Sabbath; the Sabbath proves Satan lied.



When we realize this, that the Sabbath was created for humanity; it is a gift to us a blessing to us, but also an evidence to the entire universe of God's methods and character. Like an engagement ring is a gift to the woman, but is also evidence to the entire world of her engagement. The Sabbath was made human beings, but is evidence for the entire universe.

It is not a rule we are obliged to keep, but a space in time we are invited to embrace and enjoy, then we delight in the Sabbath.

So, how do we repair the breach—by rejecting the imposed law lie and worshipping our Creator by embracing Him and His design laws for life.

From *Prophets and Kings*:

The spiritual restoration of which the work carried forward in Nehemiah's day was a symbol, is outlined in the words of Isaiah: "They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities." "They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Isaiah 61:4; 58:12. {PK 677.2}

**The prophet here describes a people who, in a time of general departure from truth and righteousness, are seeking to restore the *principles* that are the foundation of the kingdom of God. They are repairers of a breach that has been made in God's law--the wall that He has placed around His chosen ones for their protection, and obedience to whose precepts of justice, truth, and purity is to be their perpetual safeguard. {PK 677.3}**

In words of unmistakable meaning the prophet points out the specific work of this remnant people who build the wall. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 58:13, 14. {PK 678.1}

In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. **The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired.** God's remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show **that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform [why? Because it is the law of life, the principles upon which life is established and operates. One cannot have health in violations of the laws of health]** and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as **a memorial of creation**, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to



co-operate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in. See verse 12. {PK 678.2}

What was the breach made in the law **when** the Sabbath was changed? It was not the mere change of the day of worship—the breach was the idea that God’s law is imposed law—this is the breach we are to repair.

## SUNDAY

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Nehemiah receives bad news that the walls of Jerusalem have not been repaired. What is the application, the object lesson for us in this story?

Well the walls represent the law, which is a hedge of protection to the righteous. But the law, wall has been breached by believing a lie about the law, that it functions like human rules and thus all types of destructive beliefs and practices have entered Christianity through this lie.

Examples of the lies that entered because of the imposed law view:

- Salvation is achieved through legal means, not healing of hearts
- The church has legal authority over souls
- Sins must be punished
- If sins are not fully accounted for on earth they must be punished in purgatory before going to heaven
- Sins can be removed by payment of gold or works to the church (indulgences)
- If someone dies and isn’t given last rights by the church they don’t go to heaven
- If someone isn’t baptized by the church they can’t go to heaven
- Relics hold power
- Jesus died to pay our legal debt and to keep God from killing us
- God is required by justice to use His power to inflict punishment upon sinners
- Jesus is in heaven pleading His blood to the Father to pay our sin debt and to get the Father to legally pardon us and remove the Father’s wrath

Do you see how the breach in the law, accepting the lie that God’s law functions like human law, opened the church, the minds of people up to all kinds of lies about God which leads to a form of godliness with no power?

Do you see why reformation is needed, why the message of Revelation 18 is needed, why we need to repair the breach to God’s law, to call people out of this confused system of legal appeasement theology and back to Creator worship?

And in repairing the breach to the law—leading people to reject the imposed law view and understand and embrace design law what happen?



Consider what Isaiah has to say about the walls and see if you see a connection to removing the imperial law lie and restoring design law truth?

No longer will violence be heard in your land,  
nor ruin or destruction within your borders,  
but you will **call your walls Salvation**  
and your gates Praise.  
<sup>19</sup> The sun will no more be your light by day,  
nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you,  
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your God will be your glory.  
Your sun will never set again,  
and your moon will wane no more;  
the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your days of sorrow will end.  
<sup>21</sup> **Then will all your people be righteous**  
and they will possess the land forever.  
They are the shoot I have planted,  
the work of my hands,  
for the display of my splendor. Isa 60:18-21

What is being described? The earth made new and the walls are called salvation and the people will be righteous—is there a relationship to the walls of salvation and repairing the breach in the wall—the lie about God’s law?

Here is another quote from Isaiah:

In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

We have a strong city;  
**God makes salvation  
its walls and ramparts.**  
<sup>2</sup>Open the gates  
that **the righteous nation may enter,**  
the nation that keeps faith.  
<sup>3</sup>You will keep in perfect peace  
him whose mind is steadfast,  
because he trusts in you. Isa 26:1-3

Is there a connection between repairing the breach in God’s law and salvation and becoming righteous and our earth made new?

The righteous are the ones who trust God—they trust the Creator; they understand His design laws, which all reveal His trustworthy character of love.



But the imposed legal lie leads to theologies that don't trust God instead people trust in:

- the blood payment made by Jesus to assuage the Father's wrath
- the robe of righteousness to hide them from the Father
- the blood erasing the historical record of their sins so the Father won't know about it in the judgment
- Jesus to stand as their advocate to plead the Father in their behalf

Notice how the imposed law legal view leads to doctrine after doctrine which is designed to hide us or protect us from God, because those who hold those views don't actually trust God.

We are to be repairers of the breach! Repairers of the truth, of God's plan of salvation, which is repairers in God's law and thereby reveal God's true character restoring people to trust in God!

There is a false gospel—a form of godliness with no power, but we are called to repair the breach, to restore the walls, which are the walls of salvation, which means we must present the truth about God's law and character of love, the nature and character of sin and God's solution—which is Christ in you the hope of glory.

In other words, we must present the healing gospel and expose the penal/legal gospel as the fraud and call people out of that confused legal system of Babylon.

Have you experienced in your life, as you have come to know and embrace God's character of love AND His design laws, that knowing and embracing His design laws have become a wall of protection for you?

## **MONDAY**

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The lesson examines Nehemiah's prayer and identifies a structure, read first section: "1. God, You are..."

The lesson points out this prayer has a special structure—what do you think of this?

Is this a Bible guide to prayer? Is this a special code, a form of a proper incantation, a spell we can use to get God to act the way we want Him to?

In other words, is this special structure a formula that works in getting our prayers heard and processed by God? Or, is this merely the prayer of a very sincere person whose heart loved God and wanted to see God's plan move forward and he reached out and asked God to use him in His plan?

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:16 NIV84

Is it about the right formula or the right heart, motive?



Jesus said:

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. John 14:13,14, NIV84

What does this mean? Is this a different formula, a different incantation? Do we need to add the words “in the name of Jesus” at the end of our prayers?

Or will that not work because Jesus is Greek and not His true name we need to say “in the name of Joshua”? Is that the secret to effective prayer?

Or, does “name” in the Bible mean character and Jesus is saying, when you pray with my character reproduced within you, then you will pray with the right motive, asking for the right actions, and seeking the right goals and purposes in harmony with me and my Father and of course I will be eager to do it?

So, from *The Remedy*:

And I will do whatever you ask—that is in harmony with my character, methods, and principles—so that the Son may bring honor and glory to the Father by revealing the healing and life-giving power of his methods You may ask me for anything in harmony with my character and methods, and I will do it. John 14:13,14 *The Remedy*

Which makes more sense—pray for anything and add the tag line at the end “in the name of Jesus” and then Jesus in heaven is obliged to dispense His power to make your prayer happen, OR, pray for things in harmony with God’s character, methods, principles and purposes and God will eagerly work to bring about His will, of which your prayer was in harmony?

So, for what was Nehemiah praying—for the fulfillment of God’s plan, God’s purposes, in harmony with God’s methods and principles and goals.

This is the secret to effective prayer!

The lesson points out that while Nehemiah reminds God of what God has already promised to do, that God actually doesn’t need reminding, as the lesson states, “it is not that God doesn’t know or remember His promises. Instead, God takes pleasure in our willingness to claim His promises.”

Is that it, or is there another element? I agree that God does take pleasure when we seek Him, when we trust Him, when we claim His promises, absolutely so—but is that what God is waiting for—for Him to be pleased, for His pleasure? Could it be that God is waiting for people who actually trust Him and are *willing* to cooperate with Him, to go and do what God would have done, to be His vessels, His agents, the conduits through whom God can act in humanity? Does God delight in people who do not





merely claim a promise, but are willing to invest themselves on God's team to cooperate with God in fulfilling His purposes?

So, when you claim a promise, do you also say to God, "And if I can be of any use to your cause, please use me!"

Here is a quote I love from the book *Christ's Object Lessons*:

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings.  
COL 333.1

## TUESDAY

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Do we see the quote from COL above fulfilled in the life of Nehemiah? Was Nehemiah empowered to speak out, to be successful in his mission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem?

What about us today? Do we cooperate with God to speak out for the rebuilding of the walls—the rebuilding of the truth about God's law and His salvation found in Jesus?

What do you think of the following historical facts:

- Captives—essentially defeated slaves—Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah—become advisors to Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon and also to Darius and Persia
- Captive—Nehemiah becomes advisor to Artaxerxes I
- Slave—Joseph becomes advisor to Pharaoh and ruler in Egypt

What are the lessons from this?

Certainly, God can bring good out of difficult circumstances—no doubt about that—but what is the human side of this equation?

Did these human beings have a role—did God need human beings that despite adversity, hardship, betrayal, enslavement who maintained their trust in Him?

Consider the implications, do you think any of the people above were tempted with feelings of anger, hurt, resentment, bitterness toward their captors? Do you think they were tempted with feelings to rebel?

Do we see in any of these individuals that the temptations took root and they began to practice methods of violence, deceit, hostility, or warfare against their captors?

While they were being abused and having their rights violated, to whom did these people seek deliverance?



Will we as a church fulfill God's end-time mission by using human governments to pass laws to mandate our moral principles?

One of our online class members, Gwynnith Roberts-Baxter sent me an email last week with the following quote:

"Law reflects but in no sense determines the moral worth of a society. The values of a reasonably just society will reflect themselves in a reasonable law. the better the society the the less law there will be. In Heaven there will be no law, and the lion will lie down with the lamb. The values of an unjust society will reflect themselves in an unjust law. the worse the society the more laws there will be. In Hell there will be nothing but law and due process will be meticulously observed" Prof Grant Gilmore, Yale University, retired 1978

When we experience mistreatment do we turn to God for deliverance trusting Him and His purposes beyond our ability to immediately see? Do we consider we may be being placed in a situation to do a great work for God's kingdom—IF we trust Him and don't resort to worldly methods!

## **WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY**

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Nehemiah is sent to rebuild Jerusalem with a royal authorization and letters, a decree from the king—did that mean there was no opposition?

When we get permission or authorization from whatever government or ruler to proceed with an endeavor for God's kingdom (perhaps a building permit for a new hospital or school or church) does that mean there will be no obstacles, no opposition, to problems seeking to derail or frustrate the endeavor?

What are wise ways to proceed in moving a project forward when opposition is likely to try and obstruct the project?

In Thursday's lesson it lists several leadership lessons:

1. Don't publicize your plans—keep your activities private until the must go public.  
Is keeping things private, is not disclosing information the same as lying?

Why do you think that Nehemiah didn't publicize his plans to the Jewish leaders as well as the enemies? An old WWII saying, "loose lips sink ships" meaning that information can get to enemies innocently once it is out there.

2. Make plans before starting to build—organize, have a vision, determine the steps necessary to succeed, anticipate obstacles and have plans to eliminate or avoid them.



3. Present the task with a vision for its success and its divine authority and local permission. In other words, remove from people potential objections—like it isn't what God would have us do. Or, we don't want to get in trouble with the king etc.

Any other steps you would take?

## **FRIDAY**

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Read question 1—what about Jonah, did Jonah face outside opposition or only from himself?

Read and discuss question 3—how and when should we cooperate with pagan or human authorities for the fulfillment of God's cause?



## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**PODCAST: Come and Reason with Dr. Tim Jennings** weekly Podcast is now broadcasting, please follow us.

*The Remedy Psalms* is complete and online and will soon be updated to the free app.

**October 9-12, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville. Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth in the exhibit hall sharing our material with the attendees.

**November 15-17, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Norwegian SDA Health Worker's Retreat in Oslo, Norway.

**November 24, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Aachen Germany.

**January 17-19, 2020:** The Power of Love Training and Equipping Course. If you would like to be prepared to more effectively share this message then come to this course. More details will be forthcoming shortly. Allen Texas (30 miles north of DFW airport). See [events.comeandreason.com](http://events.comeandreason.com) for more details and to sign up.