

Rebuilding

Scripture Reading — Nehemiah 2:1-20; 6:15-16

The surrounding nations were afraid . . . because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God. — Nehemiah 6:16

This story takes place around 445 B.C. Nehemiah, like many other Jewish people, had remained in Persia after a group of exiles were allowed to return and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple there. Though the temple was now rebuilt, the walls of the city were still in ruins.

Learning about this from visitors, Nehemiah despaired. As a cupbearer for the king of Persia, his life was good, but his people in Judah were struggling. God's people in the land of promise were vulnerable on all sides.

When the king asked Nehemiah why he looked so sad, Nehemiah explained. And, after praying to God, Nehemiah asked the king for permission to return so that he could rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. In response, the king sent Nehemiah with authority and supplies to renovate the city.

Despite great obstacles and local opposition, Nehemiah led the people to repair Jerusalem's wall and rebuild its gates. In fact, the work was complete in just 52 days! Recognizing the amazing help of God in this feat, the surrounding nations stopped threatening Jerusalem.

We too can have hope today amid the wreckage of human failings, when we finally realize we cannot save ourselves. Into the ruins of life Jesus has been born. The Lord our God is our help and strength always.

Prayer

Father, by your mighty hand you redeem and restore us through Jesus, our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

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