

Fasting

Part 6

⁴ The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, ² Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. ³ They said to me, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.” ⁴ When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. ⁵ Then I said: “O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, ⁶ let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father’s house, have committed against you. ⁷ We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses. ⁸ “Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, ⁹ but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.’ ¹⁰ “They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. ¹¹ O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.” I was cupbearer to the king.” (Nehemiah 1:1-11)

Above is another Scripture in the bible that speaks more about fasting, as we read and meditate on the word of God in this message then we can apply that in our lives.

Nehemiah as he was in exile in the citadel of Susa he received bad news about his city Jerusalem. His brother Hanani came from Judah with some other men, and he questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. They said to him, *“Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.”* They brought him very sad news that hurt Nehemiah’s feeling and brought sadness and grieve to his soul. Nehemiah wept from the depth of his heart, he was really hurt to the bone for the news he heard. He was in pain after the news that he received about his people, the people of God and about Jerusalem and Judah.

The same pain that was in the heart of God for the people situation and suffering, that pain found also in the heart of Nehemiah when he heard the bad news. Sin, rebelliousness and disobedience had brought God’s wrath and ruin over the life of the people in Jerusalem and Judah and brought them into exile away from the Promised Land.

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Nehemiah reaction to weep, mourn, fasting and praying came from the following elements:

1- Repentance: Nehemiah realized that all the bad things that had happened to the people of God and the destruction that came upon Jerusalem and Judah was due to sin. He confessed his sin and the sins of his forefathers; they acted very wickedly toward God. They did not obey the commands, decrees and laws God gave through Moses. Sin had destructive power, and that what will bring troubles on the believers and on the church today. Fasting without repentance it had no effect. If you want to fast then you need to realize your sins and the sins of the believers and the church, and you need to repent of these sins and renounce them, then the Lord would listen to you.

2- Concern and Compassion: Nehemiah moved in heart when he heard the bad news, he had concern for the bad situation of the people, he moved with compassion to do something for the welfare of the people of God. You need to have concern and compassion toward the lost souls and toward those who live in bondage and they need deliverance. We need to have concern and compassion toward the believers and the churches that live in bondages due to their sins and disobedience. We need to pray and fast for those people and churches with pain and compassion in our hearts toward them to get delivered. God pleased with Nehemiah reaction because Nehemiah shared with God the pain that was in the heart of God to the current bad situation of Jerusalem and the people of God who were in miserable situation.

3- Humility: Nehemiah humbled himself in God’s hand realizing that without the aid of God nothing can be done to reverse the miserable situation of the people of God and Jerusalem. He prayed and asked the Lord favour in the sight of the king that he was working as cupbearer to give him the permission to leave for a while and go to Jerusalem and do something to help the people.

God answered Nehemiah fasting, petition and prayer and the Lord granted him the following:

1- Favour: Nehemiah was given a permission to leave his job temporarily and go to Jerusalem to rebuild it and to do the work of God.

2- Provision: Nehemiah was given the provision that he needed to travel and do the work of God. The king granted his requests to have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide him safe-conduct until he will arrive in Judah. And a letter to the keeper of the king’s forest, so he will give him timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence he will occupy.

3- Vision: The Lord gave Nehemiah clear and complete vision how to rebuild the wall and the city of Jerusalem and to be restored back to what it was.

My dear and Beloved: God will give you the same, favour, provision and vision to go forward and do his work and will, but he wants from you real repentance, humility, compassion and concern to the things that touch and fill the heart of God with pain as you agree to pray.

My Prayer: *Dear Lord let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of your church. I confess the sins we the people of your church, including myself, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave us. Remember the instruction you gave your servant, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name. They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor provision and vision to move forward and do your will and your work. This all I ask and pray in Jesus name, Amen.*