

Strategy for a God Sized Vision

“When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for a number of days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven.” Nehemiah 1:4

Text: Nehemiah 1:1-2:1

South Orlando Baptist Church

Topics: Contrition, Intercession

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Supplemental Texts: See below

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As we seek to form a God-sized vision for the future...

1) Collect the information (vs. 1-3)

A. “...I questioned them about Jerusalem and the Jewish remnant that survived the exile...”

2) Consider what is at stake (contrition)

A. “When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for a number of days...”

B. Jesus wept over the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 10:6).

C. Moses stood in the gap for the Israelites (Exodus 17:4).

Jeremiah wept over the burden he carried (Jeremiah 3:21)

3) Complete a fast (vs. 4)

A. Fasting: Giving up food or some other activity in order to devote more serious time and attention to prayer.

B. In the Old Testament, a fast was practiced in four ways: as a way to humble yourself (Ezra 8:21), as a form of confession (1 Samuel 7:6), as a sign of repentance (Jonah 3:5-8), and as a form of prayer (Daniel 9:3).

C. In the New Testament, fasting is seen as a part of serious prayer (Acts 14:23) and is assumed to be a normal part of the Christian life (Matthew 6:16; 9:15)

4) Commit to prayer (vs. 4-11)

A. This prayer represents one of the Scripture’s most moving confessions and intercessions before God (MacArthur Study Bible)

5) Continue forward in patience (vs. 2:1)

A. When Nehemiah became broken it was the month of Chilslev (December), in 2:1, the month of Nissan is the month of April.

Application Questions

These questions are provided for your further study and application of today's message.

1. Why did Nehemiah question his brother? ([1:1-2](#))
2. What report did Hanani and his men give to Nehemiah? ([1:3](#))
3. How did Nehemiah describe God in his prayer? ([1:5](#))
4. According to Nehemiah, with whom does God keep His covenant of love? ([1:5](#))
5. What made Nehemiah more aware of his own sinfulness? ([1:5-6](#))
6. What is the major theme of Nehemiah's prayer? ([1:5-11](#))
7. On whose behalf did Nehemiah pray and fast? ([1:6](#))
8. Of what sins were the Israelites guilty? ([1:7](#))
9. What instruction did the Lord give to Moses? ([1:8](#))
10. What promise of the Lord could the Israelites claim, according to Nehemiah? ([1:9](#))
11. How did Nehemiah describe the people of Israel in his prayer? ([1:10](#))
12. What specific request did Nehemiah ask God to grant him? ([1:11](#))
13. What admirable traits do you see demonstrated by Nehemiah?
14. What did Nehemiah's prayer accomplish?
15. What are the benefits of focusing on the attributes of God?
16. What role does prayer play in your life?
17. How do you think you need to change your prayer habits?
18. Why does God want Christians to pray?
19. In what circumstances do you think it would be wise to fast and pray?
20. What can we learn from Nehemiah's example about how to deal with disappointment?
21. Nehemiah got more confident as he prayed and fasted. How did this prepare him to get more involved? How does this compare with what you have experienced in prayer?

Where is Jesus in Nehemiah 1?

Jesus is in every chapter of the Old Testament in some way. Here are some examples of how to see Jesus in this Chapter:

- 1) **Nehemiah 1:4 Nehemiah was heartbroken for the safety of his people. His desire joins with the desire of all believers to arrive in heaven where all will be safe in the protective eternal reign of Jesus. (Rev. 21:27)**
- 2) **Nehemiah 1:5-11 Nehemiah's intercession for the people prefigures Christ's intercession for us before God the Father (Heb. 7:25).**
- 3) **Nehemiah 1:6 As Nehemiah confesses his sins and the sins of his people, through Jesus, we can be confident that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us of all of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)**