

We will now begin the eighth lecture on the Book of Ezra and the Book of Nehemiah. /Today we will begin with Nehemiah chapter 5. /In verses 1-5 /is the outcry of the poor. / There were many obstacles when the people of Judah rebuilt the city of Jerusalem.

/There was a famine at the time. /Hardships overlapped with one another. /The people did not have food to eat, and so they began to resent their brothers. /They began to speak.

/In verse 2, they said, “We and our sons and daughters are numerous...we must get grain.” /Verse 3 says, “We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our homes to get grain during the famine.”

/Verse 4 says, “We have had to borrow money to pay the king’s tax on our fields and vineyards.” /Verse 5 says, “We have to subject our sons and daughters to slavery.” /“Some of our daughters have already been enslaved.” /“Our fields and our vineyards belong to others.”

/The rich took from the poor in the time of the famine. /The rich received interest from the people to earn money. /Hence, the people rose up in a great outcry.

/In verses 6-13, /Nehemiah rebukes the rich and comes up with a solution. /Nehemiah was angry when he heard the people’s outcry. /In verse 7, Nehemiah rebuked the nobles and officials. /Nehemiah said, “You are exacting usury from your own countrymen!”

/The rich took advantage of the famine to receive interest from their poor brothers, and this was considered wicked before God. /The poor became poorer. /When our brothers face difficulties, we must have compassion on them and help them.

/We will be acting against our faith if we do not help our brothers but rather, receive interest to increase our wealth. /In verse 8, they brought back the brothers who were sold to the Gentiles.

/Nehemiah rebuked them for selling their brother’s children. /We must free our brothers, and anyone who buys and sells anyone else as slaves is wicked before God and others.

/The people treasured money, but did not treasure their brothers. /The people also ignored God. /They ignored God’s love and grace. /They greatly sinned before God.

/God did not give us money so that we could sin. /God gave us possessions so that we could use them in our faith. /However, the people sinned because money became their idol.

/In verse 9, Nehemiah said, “Shouldn’t you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies?” /Nehemiah asked, why didn’t they think about being reproached by their Gentile enemies?

/Nehemiah also rebuked them saying that those who fear God should not behave this

way. /Those who fear God consider their brothers of faith more valuable than money. /They also help their brothers with their possessions.

/Anyone who sacrifices his possessions for the movement of salvation is one who fears God. /Nehemiah suggested a plan between the rich and poor. /First, they were to stop exacting usury of grain and money. Verse 10.

/It is good to lend money without interest. /When we accept interest from the poor, we make our brothers poorer. /This is not treating our brothers with love.

/We will betray God's grace. /The Gentile peoples would have slandered them. /Therefore, the people were to stop receiving interest. /Second, the rich bought fields, vineyards, olive groves, houses, gran, new wine, and oil from the poor. They were to return a hundredth part of the money. /Verse 11.

/A hundredth part was a very small amount. /However, it would be a consolation to the poor. /It would give courage to the poor. /The poor would be thankful for the love that would be the basis of this material help.

/Then they would work with all their heart to build the Jerusalem city wall. /In verse 12, the nobles and officials promised to do as Nehemiah suggested. /Now, the poor would not starve to death.

/Nehemiah called the priests and the rich took an oath to do what they promised. /They took an oath so that they would not change their minds before God. /The devil takes advantage of materials.

/Thus, it is easy for one to change his good decision. /Therefore, it is important to make vows and promises before others. /The church keeps annual financial records because of this.

/It is because it is easy for many to change his mind. /In verse 13, Nehemiah shook out the folds of his robe and said, "In this way may God shake out of his house and possessions every man who does not keep this promise."

/Then the whole assembly said, "Amen." /Hence, Nehemiah's plan was put into action. /Therefore, the whole assembly rejoiced and praised God.

/In verses 14-19, /Nehemiah revealed his conduct. /Nehemiah was governor for twelve years, and he did not receive the food allotted to the governor. /In verse 15, it says that the earlier governors placed a heavy burden on the people and extorted the people.

/The earlier governors also took forty shekels of silver and food and wine from the people. /However, Nehemiah did not receive food because he did not want to burden the people. /In verse 16 it says that Nehemiah devoted himself to building the wall and he did not acquire any land.

/The people were faithful because Nehemiah took the lead in his faithfulness. /In verse 17, it says that Nehemiah's family, including the Jews and officials, totaled 150.

/There were also people who came from surrounding nations. /Nehemiah brought these people because he needed them to complete his duties as governor.

/In verse 18, one ox, six choice sheep, and some poultry were prepared every day for food for him. /However, Nehemiah did not receive the people's taxes or food allotted for the governor. /Nehemiah used his own money to fulfill his duties as governor.

/He was sacrificial as he fulfilled his duties as governor. /He had the right to receive money, but he did not. /We do not know for sure whether or not Nehemiah had inheritance. /It is possible for rich men to have offered materials to Nehemiah.

/However, Nehemiah did not want to put a heavy burden on the people. /Nehemiah's actions for the people of Judah were highly praiseworthy before God. /It was noble for Nehemiah to not accept food allotted for the governor and make sacrifices.

/It was noble for him not to put a heavy burden on the people. /Hence, he poured out his heart into building the city wall. /This was the result of God's grace on Nehemiah.

/Nehemiah 6:15 says, the twenty-fifth of Elul. /Nehemiah 6:15 says, "The wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul." /The wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul. /God allowed them to complete the wall in fifty-two days. /God worked.

/Elul is the sixth month on the Jewish calendar. /In today's time, it would have been sometime around August and September. /Nehemiah faced many difficulties.

/In 6:1-9, /he faced his first hardship. /Sanballat and Geshem was the cause of this. /They are mentioned again in verse 9. /Sanballat and Geshem put Nehemiah through many difficulties. /They wanted to make the people tired so that they would stop the work.

/They wanted to make the people afraid, and they continued to do the devil's work. /This happens to us personally. /This happens in families. /This happens in our workplaces. /These works continue to happen around us.

/Yet, we must not be afraid. /We must rely on God and we must have courage. /We must go forward thinking, "If I perish, I perish." /Our hands must also not grow tired.

/These two are important. /We must not be afraid, /and our hands must not grow tired. /It is important that we stand strong and not be afraid, /and our hands must not grow tired.

/In 6:1, there was a time of hardship. /When do hardships come? /They come when there is not a gap in the construction of the wall. /It is when a door in the gates would be completed.

/God allows believers to build and not leave a gap in the wall, no matter how difficult it may be. /God helps believers so that they could put in the door that would complete the wall. /It will not come to an end, just as the earth would never stop rotating.

/God's work is neither slow nor will it fail to be fulfilled. /All things happen in God's time. /It is important that we believe in this, /not be afraid, and not become weak in our hands.

/The construction of the wall will be completed even with the interference of many powers. /God helps us complete it by putting on the door. /It is important that we overcome hardships and go forward.

/Why did God allow believers to encounter hardships? /God allowed this so that believers would remain diligent and not be careless.

/In verse 2, /Sanballat and Geshem wanted to meet on the plain of Ono. /The plain of Ono was located about 33 kilometers northwest of Jerusalem. /This was the region located between Samaria and the Philistine land. /How did Nehemiah overcome the temptation to meet on the plain of Ono?

/The key to overcoming the temptation of Ono is in verses 3-4. /First, /Nehemiah had faith in God's works. /God's works are the greatest, and therefore, cannot be stopped.

/Nehemiah could not leave that place. /Hence, he did not meet the enemies at the plain of Ono. /We must consider God's works the greatest. /We can refuse to go to the plain of Ono when we consider God's works the greatest.

/We can overcome the temptation and not be harmed. /Matthew 22:37. /Anyone who loves God with all his heart, soul, and mind can overcome all things.

/We cannot stop our work because we consider God's works the greatest. /We can overcome the temptation of the plain of Ono when we have such faith. /The second key to overcoming this temptation /was unchanging faith, as it says in verse 4.

/How many times did the temptation of the plain of Ono come? /Four times. /The number four is a humanly number. /The same temptation came four times. /How did Nehemiah respond to this? /His answer was the same each time. /He gave the same answer.

/This was faith like that of Daniel and his three friends. /Daniel and his friends answered. /King Nebuchadnezzar said that he would give them another chance, /but the three friends said they did not need to answer.

/Their answer would be the same. /Nehemiah did not need to answer. /Nehemiah had unchanging faith. /His faith in considering God's works the greatest helped him overcome the temptation of the plain of Ono.

/Nehemiah's unchanging faith also helped him overcome the temptation. /In verse 5, on the fifth time, Sanballat sent a letter for all to read. /He said, "Let us meet together on the plain of Ono." /The devil does not give up. /The devil does not back away.

/The devil attempts to devour us like lions whenever he has the chance. /This time, the devil was deceiving. /The enemies sent an unsealed letter so that anyone could read it. This was his trick to publicly stir up the people.

/The contents of the letter are in verses 6-7. /The enemies tempted the people with lies. /They tempted them with made up stories. /They wanted to frighten Nehemiah and make his hands tired.

/The enemies wanted to stop construction of God's city. /Therefore, we must not be afraid. /We must not let our hands grow tired. /Our hearts must not grow tired. /We must gain new strength.

/Next is the second temptation. /This is in verses 10-14. /The temptation came through Shemaiah. /Verse 10. /The first temptation came through Sanballat and Tobiah, /and the second temptation came through Shemaiah.

/When the enemies' external temptation failed, /they attempted to tempt the people through a false prophet. /They bribed the false prophet and wanted to create internal conflict. /Shemaiah did not come out of his home.

/Shemaiah locked himself in his house and did not come out. /He received a bribe from Sanballat and Tobiah. /He received a bribe and falsely prophesied. /There were false prophets in Nehemiah's time.

/The false prophet falsely prophesied and wanted to kill the true servant. /We must always discern whether or not anything agrees with God's word. /Shemaiah spoke to Nehemiah.

/He said, "Let us go hide in the house of God, inside the temple." /According to the Bible, who was allowed in the holy place, the holy of holies? /Only the priests were allowed to enter the holy place. /Only the high priests were allowed to enter the holy of holies.

/If Nehemiah went to the holy place to save his life, he would have defied God's law. /Therefore, the enemies attempt to make us break the regulations and sin so that we would be destroyed.

/If Nehemiah entered the holy place so that he would live, what would have been his idol? /His own life would have become his idol. /He would have considered his life more important than God's word.

/Then, the devil's works would have taken place, and God's works would have failed.
/Nehemiah replied in verse 11. /"I will not go." /I am not a runaway. /I will not run away even if I am killed.

/Nehemiah overcame the temptation with such faith. /We must not run away even if our lives are threatened. /We must never hide. /We must not try and save our lives by defying the regulations of the law.

/Nehemiah overcame Shemaiah's temptation with such faith. /Nehemiah also overcame Shemaiah's temptation with God's word and calling. /We must stand firm on God's word. /It is important that we recognize our calling.

/Then we can overcome temptations. /When Nehemiah overcame temptations, God gave him grace of realization.

/Read verse 12. /I realized that God had not sent him, but that he had prophesied against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

/Nehemiah realized that God had not sent Shemaiah. /Nehemiah realized that Shemaiah was bribed to say what he did. /God brightened Nehemiah's spiritual eyes. /Our spiritual eyes will be brightened when we overcome temptations.

/We will realize all reasons. /Man's lies cannot be concealed. /It cannot be hidden. /There were many people who stood against Nehemiah.

/Verses 13-14. /He had been hired to intimidate me so that I would commit a sin by doing this, and then they would give me a bad name to discredit me. Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, because of what they have done; remember also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who have been trying to intimidate me.

/Here, there are Tobiah, Sanballat, and the prophetess Noadiah. /There were many false prophets in Nehemiah's time. /They were false prophets who accepted bribes. /There were approximately 400 false prophets in the time of King Ahab.

/In any generation, there are many false prophets and a few true prophets. /How did Nehemiah pray when he received Shemaiah's temptation?

/Verse 14. /Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, because of what they have done; remember also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who have been trying to intimidate me.

/How did Nehemiah pray when he received Shemaiah's temptation? /He prayed, "Remember...the prophets who have been trying to intimidate me." /How did Nehemiah pray when he received the temptation of the plain of Ono?

/Verse 9 says, "Now strengthen my hands." /Nehemiah prayed a lot. /He relied

completely on God. /He always prayed. /He always meditated.

/In verses 17-19, /there was the temptation of secret communication between the people of Judah and Tobiah.

/Verse 17. /Also, in those days the nobles of Judah were sending many letters to Tobiah, and replies from Tobiah kept coming to them.

/There was secret communication between the nobles of Judah and Tobiah.

/Verse 18. /For many in Judah were under oath to him, since he was son-in-law to Shecaniah son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam son of Berekiah.

/There was temptation through marriages with the enemies. /Who especially created a problem here? /They were the nobles of Judah. /This was a problem.

/Read 5:7. /I pondered them in my mind and then accused the nobles and officials. I told them, "You are exacting usury from your own countrymen!" So I called together a large meeting to deal with them

/The nobles and officials collected high interest. /They sold their own countrymen. /They did not fear God. /There were good nobles, /but there were also wicked men.

/Read 3:5. /The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa, but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors.

/The nobles would not put their shoulders to work under their supervisors. /Anyone who does not cooperate with God's work are pitiable people. /This is because God's work is always completed. /We must participate in God's work and cooperate.

/Verse 19. /Moreover, they kept reporting to me his good deeds and then telling him what I said. And Tobiah sent letters to intimidate me.

/Nehemiah said, "Tobiah sent letters to intimidate me." /We live in a generation like Nehemiah's time. /We encounter many temptations.

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/Nehemiah faced many temptations and there were works of the devil, /but the city wall was complete on the twenty-fifth of Elul /by God's mighty works. Verse 15. /In how many days did God allow them to complete the wall? /God allowed them to complete it in fifty-two days.

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/We must believe in this God, we must gain victory with faith.

/Here we will conclude the eighth lecture on Ezra and Nehemiah. /Thank you.