

Establishing The Kingdom (Nehemiah Chapter 2)

Sunday, September 15, 2024

10:15 AM

What does it mean to Establish The Kingdom of God?

Last week we began a new series through the book of Nehemiah entitled “Establishing His Kingdom” and tied our theme to Jesus words in Matthew 16

Matthew 16:13-19

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Before we move in to Chapter 2, I want to make clear that Establishing His Kingdom is not just about the outward work of building churches, or leading ministries, or evangelism, or giving to or being personally involved in Kingdom work. It can and does involve those things.

But first and foremost, Establishing His Kingdom takes place in our own hearts

You are Peter and on this Rock (*your personal recognition and confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of The Living God*), that's where I want to build my church, in your heart, and the gates of Hell (*The kingdom of darkness, the bondages of sin*) will not prevail (*stand up*) against it. He wants to establish His Kingdom in our hearts.

Luke 17:20-21 (NCV)

20 Some of the Pharisees asked Jesus, “When will the kingdom of God come?”

Jesus answered, “God’s kingdom is coming, but not in a way that you will be able to see with your eyes. 21 People will not say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ because God’s kingdom is within you.”

In describing this work of God Hebrews Chapter 8 quotes the words of the prophet Jeremiah

Jeremiah 31:31-34

31 “The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. 33 “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

The other thing I love about this scripture {Matthew 16}, and it's relation to the book of Nehemiah, is the word picture of two different kingdoms. God wants to tear down the gates of hell but he also wants to build up the walls (gates) of His kingdom in our hearts

Colossians 1:13-23

13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

So let’s keep both of these aspects of Establishing His Kingdom in mind as we continue our journey through the book of Nehemiah and let’s remember that before we can do the outward work of establishing His Kingdom in this world, we must allow The Holy Spirit to do the inward work of Establishing His Kingdom within our hearts

Last week we said that it begins with The FIRE being IGNITED or REIGNITED in our hearts

Of Passionate Concern

Of Confession and Repentance

Of Prayer and Fasting

*Prayer connects us with God... Fasting disconnects us from the things of this world.

Of Obedience (no matter how far away you may be)

Of Taking Action

Again the last words of chapter one are significant "I Was... Cupbearer to the King"

Contrasting the change in our hearts from that of being concerned about a different Kingdom to being concerned about the Kingdom of God

Nehemiah 2

2 In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before, 2 so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart."

I was very much afraid, 3 but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?"

Then I prayed to the God of heaven, 5 and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it."

6 Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

7 I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? 8 And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the royal park, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests. 9 So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me.

10 When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.

11 I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days 12 I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on.

13 By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. 14 Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through; 15 so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate. 16 The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.

17 Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." 18 I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me.

They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.

19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us. "What is this you are doing?" they asked. "Are you rebelling against the king?"

20 I answered them by saying, "The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it."

PROTECTING THE FIRE

- From DOUBT and FEAR

2 ...I was very much afraid,

- By TRUSTING God for the PROVISION of all that I need

4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?"

Then I prayed to the God of heaven,

7 I also said to him, “If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? 8 And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the royal park, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?” And because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests.

- From the RESISTANCE of the enemy

10 When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.

- Through times of WAITING

11 I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days

- From the DISCOURAGEMENT of others

11 I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days 12 I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on.

16 The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.

- While ASSESSING the SCOPE of the work to be done

13 By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. 14 Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King’s Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through; 15 so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate.

- While ACKNOWLEDGING the DIFFICULTIES that lie ahead
- By STARTING the work

17 Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire.

- By STARTING the work

17 ...Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.”

18 ... They replied, “Let us start rebuilding.” So they began this good work.

- By REMINDING ourselves and others about the TESTIMONIES of what God has already done

18 I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me.

- From The DISPARAGEMENT of the enemy

19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us. “What is this you are doing?” they asked. “Are you rebelling against the king?”

20 I answered them by saying, “The God of heaven will give us success.

The Horonites and [Ammonites](#) were two of the people groups God had driven from the Promised Land for the Israelites. Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem were regional governors serving under the king of Persia. Sanballat, called a Horonite, was probably from Horonaim, a city of Moab. Tobiah the Ammonite was governing an area east of the Jordan River. Geshem the Arab was most likely from the region south of Judah. Generations after Israel had first possessed the Promised Land, some of their old enemies were back, seeking to keep Jerusalem in ruins.

*In Hebrew the name is Sanballat ([Hebrew](#): סַנְבַּלֵּט). [Eberhard Schrader](#), cited in [Brown–Driver–Briggs](#), considered that the name in [Akkadian](#) was Sīn-uballit ([Akkadian](#): * 𒌆𒌆𒌆𒌆𒌆, 30.TI.LA) from the name of [the Sumerian moon god Sīn](#) meaning "Sīn gave life".*

One of the chief opponents of Nehemiah when he was building the walls of Jerusalem and carrying out his reforms among the Jews. "Sanballat," according to Sayce (in Hastings, "Dict. Bible," s.v.), is connected with the Assyrian "Sinballidh," and means "Sin has vivified."