

WHOSE REPORT WILL YOU BELIEVE

By Rev. Christine Meier

After the first of the year I sensed in my spirit we would be entering a time period as a nation which could have some similarities to what Nehemiah experienced when he went to rebuild Jerusalem. As the captivity of the Jews was coming to an end, the Lord moved upon him to return to that city from his palace job in Shushan. Nehemiah was a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 2:1). Since I hadn't read the book of Nehemiah in a while, I opened my Bible. While I was getting through the second chapter, the Lord started to show me the importance of believing what God says about us, not the negativity we sometimes hear. This also related to the work we are called to do. The goal of negative voices is to sidetrack us from the destiny God has for us. If that means we spend time internally beating ourselves up, well then, we have done the opposition's job for them. Lastly, I saw great similarity with what we are experiencing here in America surrounding the negativity concerning the work needed to get our country hiring again and back on track civically.

One thing Nehemiah was adamant about after he went back to Jerusalem and started to rebuild the wall surrounding the city, was that he wouldn't waste his time in negativity or listen to those spouting it. Let me share the back-story from this episode (Nehemiah 2:4-20). Jerusalem had been in ruins since many of the Jews had been hauled away as captives. They were removed over a twenty-one-year period of time. Those who were left were the poor, uneducated or those who had made compromises to live among the new inhabitants of what had formerly been Jewish-controlled land. The bulk of the people had been taken to the land of Babylon. Over seven decades, they spread out in Babylon, becoming prosperous. Some of them made their way to places of leadership. In Nehemiah we see his position as cupbearer had granted him moments of unfettered access to the king of the realm during that time period.

A previous group— led by the priests— notables like Zerubbabel, Joshua, son of Jozadak, as well as the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, son of Iddo, had gone back to Jerusalem earlier to rebuild. There were differences between the first group and Nehemiah's effort. The first group went back because King Cyrus of Persia initiated the expenditure. He granted them people and building supplies, as well as transit documents for the trip and the building effort. This group re-inhabited their cities, or made habitable what was still standing. They also desired to rebuild the altar and the Temple. It had been a large group which left Babylon to head back to

Jerusalem with the priests: 42,360 who could, for the most part, prove their genealogy. In addition, 7,337 were servants, 200 of these were singers (Ezra 2:64, 65).

Unfortunately, the same forces now trying to thwart Nehemiah had already sidetracked the first rebuilding effort. These forces were led by those who did not want to see the nation of Israel regrow strong roots in her land. They were able to stall the earlier effort through intermarriage, economic hardships and constant negativity through threats. Ezra 4:4-6: “Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, and hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.”

Throughout the years, names on the list to stop Jewish rebuilding may have changed, but the practices were still the same. Eventually a “hold” was issued to the Israelites’ rebuilding efforts based solely on the lie that the Jews would not pay tribute to the crown. It was the prophets and priests who received word from the Lord to continue to rebuild regardless of the command to stop building. In other words, the Lord basically said to ignore the threats and negativity and to keep on doing what it was that they had been called to do. When the negativity crowd wanted names and dates of who knew what when, all the Jews told them was the truth in the history of the matter, including the fact that the former King Cyrus had issued the order— and not only issued the order for the rebuilding, but gave them the temple artifacts as well as other necessities to rebuild. Wanting to stop the new government in Israel from forming by way of rebuilding, the negativity group decided to write King Darius to find out if King Cyrus ever granted an order to rebuild. So the Lord used the obstructionists’ own desire to stop the work to force the records to be opened so the truth would come out; therefore, allowing the Israelites to keep working.

Instead of the work stopping, Darius issues this order: “Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place. Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king’s goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered.....that they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons. Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his

house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this. And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter and destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed” (Ezra 6:7-12).

This decree hastened the work and the Temple was completed. As time went on, it became necessary for priests and other workers, called Levites, to do work inside the Temple. This exposed another systemic problem, which was going on right under their noses. As the years passed, Jewish heritage through intermarriage caused the people to refuse to separate themselves from the unclean worship practices evident in the surrounding culture. It was a necessity for the priests and Temple workers to remain clean and untainted by the corrupting forces of the culture trying to infiltrate it. God was already raising up a solution to this crisis. He called a priest by the name of Ezra to collect both priests and Temple workers who were genealogically, as well as spiritually pure to go back with him to Jerusalem. This was a second group of reformers and rebuilders. In similar fashion as Kings Cyrus and Darius, King Artaxerxes issues a decree for Ezra’s work, and gives a substantial amount of finances for the work to continue (Ezra 7:11-8:36). So Ezra is our second rebuilding expedition and Nehemiah becomes our third expedition.

As is so often the case with any reformer, Ezra had no idea how bad, endemic and systemic the problem was. For those of you who may not know the biblical history of why this is a problem, let me explain. It is through the Jewish nation that Messiah— whom Christians believe as Jesus Christ— came to us. It was imperative to keep the nation genealogically pure to match the promises given by God for this messiah. It was also spiritually imperative to keep the nation whole in its dedication to the Law of Moses to match biblical mandates for the redemption of mankind. As a side note— or more like a byproduct— by keeping Israel spiritually as well as genealogically pure, God would easily find a virgin from the correct genealogical line to bring Messiah forth from. If the nation had become unclean through either avenue, that promise of redemption written within the Bible since Adam fell, would have been in peril. Finding out that the princes as well as the priests have intermarried and become genealogically as well as spiritually impure, the solution to correct this “dis-ease” seemed insurmountable. Ezra hits his face to the floor and he spends days in fasting and prayer. After all, these are the exact same circumstances which sent the Jews into captivity seventy-plus years previous.

Months turn into years, more time lapses and our third reformer is raised up by the Lord. Nehemiah enters the scene when he finds out that the walls surrounding Jerusalem are broken and burnt and the people are in great distress. As previously mentioned, being cupbearer to King Artaxerxes gives him access to receive a mandate, documentation, orders as well as finances to go and rebuild the wall surrounding Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:2-9), just like the priests/prophets and Ezra before him had received.

The only difference now is the time which has passed, the continuing impact impurity has on the rulers among the Jews and the mandate to rebuild the walls, thereby rebuilding the city more thoroughly as opposed to just rebuilding the Temple and the worker-force needed to keep it ritually clean. What has not changed is the opposition to the rebuilding effort. In fact, if we look at the opposition closely, we see a more concerted effort to ignore the decree handed to Nehemiah than what we saw with either the priests or Ezra (Nehemiah 2:10). This causes Nehemiah to go under the cover of night fall to review the broken wall and the work he needed to accomplish. If he had gone during the day, there's no telling what the opposition would have done. Nehemiah now has to navigate the opposition in addition to those within his own heritage which don't want to see change. Even some of those who commit to working with him give him a hard time (Nehemiah 3:5).

In fact, since decades and decades have elapsed, those Jews who were of mixed heritage settled in Samaria, becoming a part of the group we see later in the four Gospels. It was this group that the principal architect of the opposition inflamed: "But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall" (Nehemiah 4:1-3).

What did Nehemiah do with these, as well as other accusations and threats? He prayed and he kept working. "Hear, O our God.....So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work" (Nehemiah 4:4, 6). It wasn't like things got that much better. In fact, it took quite a while for things to get done. The opposition planned a coup and the workers couldn't even take their clothes off to sleep at night, except to wash. They slept in the city and they worked side by side with those who carried sword, shield, spears

and bows. Then there was the infighting. As previously mentioned, the practices of immorality were rampant. One of those practices, which the Law of Moses strictly regulated, was how the brethren of Israel treated one another when debt was involved. “Then I consulted with myself, and rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which are sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer” (Nehemiah 5:7, 8). In fact, this same Nehemiah brokered a deal, restoring the land and title which had been taken from the people. He became their governor and refused to take the pay due for his work. He worked for free. He kept working for the people and building the wall in an effort to restore their national heritage.

As the building succeeded, Nehemiah’s enemies became desperate. They sent him letters four times to get him to meet with them, but he surmised that their goal was to murder him (Nehemiah 6:2). Finally, they sent a letter accusing Nehemiah that his ulterior motive was to make himself king, thereby rebelling against King Artaxerxes. What was the goal of the opposition? Nehemiah records it with these words: “For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands” (Nehemiah 6:9). They even sent one of Nehemiah’s friends feigning knowledge of a plot to kill Nehemiah, to try to convince him to lock himself up inside the Temple, thus desecrating it. All this was done in an effort to cause a controversy to undo his influence and title as governor (Nehemiah 6:10-13). Once again, the Lord gave Nehemiah insight to see that this “friend” had been hired by the opposition. Eventually, this restoration of the nation of Israel and the infrastructure, regulations and practices which undergirded it became the practices we see as the gospel story unfolds when Jesus comes on the scene.

According to the original agreement between himself and King Artaxerxes, Nehemiah made a trip back to Sushan. While away, things went awry again in Jerusalem. They let one of the opposition gain a place of prestige and power. They began to work on the Sabbath, and they started to marry outside of their heritage: “In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab; And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language, but according to the language of each people” (Nehemiah 13:23). Is Nehemiah being racist here? No. How do I know this? Jesus, Himself, spoke at least four languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin. This wasn’t about speaking other languages. It was imperative to maintain

the nation's identity. That meant they could learn other languages, but had to dialog and keep the national language alive. Again, this was necessary to see the promises of redemption come to pass for the entire world. As with the previous problems, we see Nehemiah and other leaders spearhead solutions to keep the nation on track. This episode in Jewish history, probably like no other except for the resettlement in 1948, kept the nation alive. Without these efforts of restoration, we probably would not have a nation called Israel in our modern time.

So what modern parallels can we draw? First and foremost, you have a destiny or a calling by God. There will always be forces to distract you and try to get you from fulfilling the very reason why you were born. As we see from this story, they are crafty and persistent. Barring outright violence, which this story does reveal, most of their effort is through words. This should not surprise us. It was a word that the serpent deposited in Eve's ears which caused her to sin. The solution to falling prey to the enemy of our soul's trap is three-fold: prayer, knowing God's written word and the strength to act or keep working. Remember that faith without works is dead (James 2:17). We have to remember that there are voices which will always tell us we are not good enough, strong enough, smart enough or able enough to do what it is God has gifted us to do. What we need to do is ignore them, keep doing what the Lord has commanded and then pray so we know more of what God's word says about us and our call, gifts or destiny. Reading the Bible every day, or hearing it as you travel to and from work, or some other avenue to get God's word into your spirit will go a long way toward knowing how to handle these voices of discontent. Prayer will help you know how to handle or be prepared to handle various attacks which will come your way. Remember how Nehemiah 'perceived' his supposed friend was really a plant hired by the opposition to ruin him? He didn't know that because he was smart. He knew it because God revealed it to him. These concepts apply to anyone, whether presidents or paupers, janitors or jewelers, street cleaners or secretaries. It matters very little whether you are a stay-at-home parent or a world traveler.

Lastly, there is a great lesson to learn here for nations, especially the one I am a citizen of— America. If your nation started a covenant understanding with the God of heaven and was birthed and founded with a covenant understanding in place, do not disobey the covenant. America has a non-sectarian covenant agreement in place with its citizens who have a religious covenant agreement with the God of heaven. So there is a dual understanding here. Nevertheless, even if your nation has no such history or understanding, there are still lessons related to national identity all countries should follow.

First, all bets are off for nations who have covenant in place. When they continuously disobey or disregard their agreement with God and each other based on Godly principles of liberty and freedom, they are making themselves ripe for a ‘carrying away.’ This may or may not involve standing armies. It certainly involves the loss of economic, civic and personal freedoms of both religious and economic natures. You can read the dynamics of that and the science behind it in my new book, ‘70 Years of American Captivity: The Polity of God, The Birth of a Nation and The Betrayal of Government.’ It is available on this site and on Amazon. In fact, to all readers who wish a free ebook, head over to the contact page, submit your email and Amazon will send you a free copy within days. This offer is in place as long as this article is up on our “Feature Article” tab. It ends when this article goes over to the “Archive” tab. I’m making this offer because I think it’s important for my fellow citizens of America and my fellow Christian citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven to understand all the dynamics of covenant as it relates to how we live among our secular and non-religious citizens. (FYI: You may have come here from a non-secure link, but you linked to this site, which is a securely linked site.)

We have to understand how important national identity is. In communistic, socialistic, fascistic and Islamic nations, national identity is co-opted for whatever ideology replaces it. Many might argue that Islamic nations are the original ideology of an area. I suppose any time we go back far enough, we can find ancient patterns of behavior. So how far back do we go? I believe that’s the wrong question to ask. The question we should be asking is: When did a nation begin to replace or abridge its citizens’ rights and freedoms? This is the turning point. The United States was the first nation on a wide-scale basis to convey rights to its citizens and make its citizens “The Sovereign.” What does that mean exactly? Well, conveying a “sovereign” status means self-government. A king was called a sovereign because he governed the nation. A nation is called a sovereign nation because it self-governs itself as opposed to another nation governing it. So the states united or USA, was the first nation to believe that its citizens were able to self-govern themselves. What other ideologies want to do is create havoc or a populous which can’t govern itself— sort of like a “nanny-state.” This justifies their desire to abridge the citizens’ rights of the nation they are taking over or infecting.

We are also the first nation to develop inalienable rights into a sacred trust for our citizenry. Inalienable rights are rights given by God and no one else. They cannot be taken away by anyone else either. The concept of inalienable rights come from the Reformation Movement of Christianity during the 1500s. Socialism desires to remove US citizens’ sovereignty by calling these rights ‘universal’ rights. But that

is exactly where the shift and robbery of your inalienable rights takes place. Under universal rights everybody has them and they can be taken away by a majority of a people in a country. Under inalienable rights, they cannot. They are sacred; given by God alone, they cannot be taken away by anyone either. You can lose them either through an act of criminal behavior, that's because you have broken the societal covenant agreement. You can exchange them because you seek the security and safety of a group. You can read all about this and other topics in the book I have previously mentioned, "70 Years of American Captivity."

Nehemiah shows us how the enemies of Israel's national identity worked. They targeted the people of liberty by accusation and bullying. They threatened them with the loss of their freedoms: religious, economic and civil. They also made a concerted effort to target the leaders promoting and spearheading national security, the security of the citizenry and the freedom of the citizens. We must understand that the enemies of a nation's identity are not always foreigners. We saw by Nehemiah's story that they were his friends as well as other citizens. The opposition always uses a "hook" to draw in a nation's citizens. Somewhat like a virus co-opts your own immune system to turn your cells into host cells for the virus. In Nehemiah's case it was intermarriage and money. Times have not changed. Money ruins more nations than war because fights over monetary issues usually lead to war. One group wants what another group has and decides to take it by force. We see this now in America. Taxes have strangled our citizens. When taxes were first initiated, we worked until January 22 to pay them. We now work until almost April 18th to do so. Illegal aliens are costing our citizens roughly nine billion dollars a year. That's \$3,000 per year per citizen, regardless of age. Larger families pay more. This does not include what criminal illegals do to citizens each year.

Socialism, or progressivism as it's called in America, is a foreign ideology which must do many things to co-opt American nationalism or sovereignty. It must do things economically, politically and socially. To get the nation's money it must cause chaos and crises through economic, political and social avenues. Economically this is done through taxes and regulations. Creating social upheaval costs money and keeps citizens in a less stable home environment. Politically, the citizenry can be made to believe a lie through a co-opted press. Education levels can be changed in an effort to have youth ignorant of the nation's true history, truth concerning economics and truth concerning social norms. Obviously, if a country's national identity and sovereignty is harnessed through its religion and that religion supports morality, then the religion or religions which support morality must be denigrated and oppressed. Lastly, changing the demographics of the population can

be done quicker by immigration. In 2015, the Obama administration brought in huge numbers of Muslim immigrants. This was in contradiction to the need of other religions wanting to emigrate because of persecution, since the Muslim nations Obama brought these people in from were the persecutors. Obama issued 832,000 green cards through the end of fiscal year 2014. So these numbers do not include 2015 or 2016. The countries are: Sudan, 15k; Indonesia, 17k; Syria, 18k; Lebanon 20k; Yemen 20k, Afghanistan 21k; Albania 24k; Morocco, 25k; Turkey 26k; Uzbekistan 30k; Somalia 37k; Egypt, 56k; Iran 85k; Bangladesh, 90k; Pakistan 102k; Iraq, 102k. All other Muslim nations combined totaled 119k immigrants who came here. You can Google Department of Homeland Security Yearbook of Immigration Statistics.

You might ask why this is a problem. Well, keep immigrating similar numbers like that, as was done with Obama for his eight-year term, and you dramatically change the identity of a nation, especially through its voting block. You get all three of your desired changes in a nation's identity. Since the money for these migrants must come from the Federal government, you create economic upheaval for a nation's citizens. Since these migrants have a very different religious affiliation than the regular citizens, you change social behavior and norms. Telling these migrants how beneficial one political party is for them from another, you convince them to vote for "your" party when they gain that right— or you can just convince the illegals to vote. Since they are already illegal, it matters very little that they are breaking the law. This truly is a numbers game. Once you reach a tipping point, the coffin is nailed and the nation is in captivity, whether there are standing armies involved or not.

All of this starts with one thing: Whose voice are you going to believe? Will you believe the report of the Lord evidenced within the Bible; or will you believe the media, Hollywood, liberal colleges, or the progressive politicians, from whatever party they identify with? This is not about racism or racial identity. It's not about a political party. The blood of Christ knows no national identity. It was freely given as redemption for all individuals from every tribe and nation of the world. Jesus loves our special customs, traditions of a Godly nature and languages. It was God who broke up the languages (Genesis 11:1-9). It was God who gave the nation of Israel holidays and monthly celebrations (Leviticus 23). It was God who initially gave varying tribes land in the book of Genesis. So the Bible is not racist, nor does it condone the subjugation of Jew, Greek, male, female, rich or poor (Galatians 3:26-29).

The patterns for the captivity of a nation or of individuals are easy to spot. They have not changed in generations: Accusations, bullying through protests or force, whether in communication or physically. They use lies, lies and more lies. Searching out the truth is not easy. It takes more effort to believe the truth than it does to receive a lie. It takes more effort to stand firm against lies. How do you stay strong when the “voices” start spouting lies? The prophet Isaiah starts to share the fantastic story of the Jewish Messiah. In fact, it seems impossible to believe, but this report promises redemption and deliverance for God’s people. Before Isaiah shares all the promises, he asks the people this question recorded in Isaiah 53:1: “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” In other words, whose voice are you going to listen to? Will you believe what God says about you? Will you believe the truth of who Jesus is? Will you believe the truth of how your nation was founded? Will you believe what God says about how to get free from the lies? When you and I believe the report of the LORD, that’s when His mighty arm of deliverance can be revealed to us. That’s when we can all be encouraged through faith to see the deliverance Jesus promises us. (All Bible quotes, as well as their punctuation, are from the King James Version.)