

“WHEN YOU HEAR BAD NEWS, WHAT IS YOUR 1st RESPONSE?”

I. INTRODUCTION

II. NEHEMIAH IS MADE AWARE OF THE DISMAL STATE OF JERUSALEM (1:1-4)

A. Nehemiah Hears Troubling News from Back Home (1:1-3)

1. “*In the words of Nehemiah*” inform us that this is more of a _____ written in Nehemiah’s own hand. (v. 1)
 - a. DATE: The month ‘*Chislev*’ is equivalent to our calendar months of late _____ and early _____; the 20th year of Artaxerxes’ reign was 445 BC.

 - b. SETTING: “*Shushan*” was a _____ palace or fortress of the Persian king.

2. It was probably just another routine day for Nehemiah when Hanani returned from a trip to Jerusalem and brought back a report regarding the homeland; it was about to _____ the _____ of his entire _____. (v. 2a)

* How should we take this phrase, “*one of my brethren*”?

3. Notice Nehemiah “*asked them*” about the details of their journey, i.e., even though it might be _____, he _____ to want to know the truth. (v. 2b)

* What is most likely the meaning behind the expression, “*the Jews who had escaped*”?

4. Nehemiah was not like some people who prefer *not* to know what's going on, because information might bring _____, yet he was interested in the current state of the city. (v. 3)
 - a. The news that he received informed him of the Jews' unsuccessful _____ to _____ Jerusalem's walls in 458 B.C. under Ezra. (Ezra 4:7-23).
 - b. He was also told that the city of Jerusalem was still in _____, only a remnant of people lived there, and they were in great _____ and just struggling to survive.

B. Nehemiah's Immediate Response to the Troubling News (1:4)

1. His immediate reaction could have been that of a _____: "It's _____ that they are in this situation, they should have done this or that and they wouldn't be in this mess."
2. Several things in v. 4 give us an indication of Nehemiah's true, inner character and what was really important to him...
 - a. Nehemiah's _____ suggests that his prestigious position, nor his luxurious living meant as much to him as the covenanted _____ people and the _____ of his God.
 - b. Nehemiah's _____ was an indication of his true _____, but also his utter _____ upon "*the God of heaven.*"

* How can you personally apply this truth in your own life?