

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS
"Part XXXIV: Nehemiah - Quality Leadership For Hard Times"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) Last week, the defense in the Whitewater case whose defendants were former associates of President Clinton, urged the jury in its closing arguments to weigh the testimony by a known criminal bringing the charges **versus** the input of President Bill Clinton!

In the end, the jury found the defendants **guilty** of fraud!

Since then, the Governor of Arkansas, though defending his innocence, has resigned from office.

Along with the Whitewater case and questions of morality, the President of our nation is under constant scrutiny for questions on CHARACTER! Where can we get quality leadership that is both gifted and impeccable in character to lead our nation today?!

(2) On May 23rd, the former head of Naval Operations, four star Admiral Boorda, put a revolver to his chest and took his own life. Why? He had worn military decorations with two little bronze "V"s on them indicating valor under combat fire on military engagements when in reality he was never under fire in those operations. He couldn't face the challenge of admitting publicly that he had not worn proper decorations, and took his own life, Newsweek, May 27, 1996, p. 26.

How is it that the leader of America's Naval Operations would be in such a predicament? How is it that he would take his own life for, what he claimed in his suicide note, was "an honest mistake?" If the mistake was honest, wouldn't it have been more honorable not only to admit it but to take one's lumps before the press?

(3) On the other hand, Robert McFarlane, former national-security adviser who tried to commit suicide over the Iran-contra issue responded to Admiral Boorda's death by saying that since Boorda had quit wearing the "V"s a **year** ago, the **media** leadership was wrong to pursue a story that could only **needlessly** tear him down, *Ibid.*, p. 31!

(4) We can add to these accounts case upon case of problem leadership in government and the workplace. A Sally Jesse Raphael Show this week focused on self-centered husbands who want to divorce their wives for getting heavier upon having their first child! **Where do we find quality leadership today, or how is it created?!**

(We turn to the sermon's "Need" section . . .)

Need: "As Paul foretold in 2 Tim. 3:1, these are hard times for leaders to oversee their marriages, families, businesses, churches or communities! Bad people are getting tougher to face, and good ones are often 'out of steam'! What's the answer? What is MY role?!"

- I. **After God's people failed in their world mission, were judged by captivity and later returned to Palestine, circumstances of weakness and sin in Palestine threatened God's whole program.**
 - A. Though God created the world and set man up as His deputy, sin deposed him, and Satan became ruler on earth, Gn. 1-5; 2 Cor. 4:4.
 - B. The Lord renewed history through the Noahic flood, Gen. 6:1-9:7.
 - C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod, began an apostasy opposing God's rule on earth, Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Rev. 12:1-3.
 - D. God thus chose Abraham to start a nation to check his sin, Gn. 12:1-3.
 - E. Yet, after many challenges en route, that nation failed to curb Nimrod's error, and God had to send it into captivity, Gen. 12:4-Dan.
 - F. When Israel was returned after discipline, frailty and evil so hampered national restoration that Israel's national existence was threatened:
 1. Though the temple was rebuilt with difficulty (Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, Esther), Jerusalem's wall lay in ruins, leaving the people at the mercy of military oppressors, Nehemiah 1:1-3.
 2. Also, surrounding Gentile powers were hostile, hindering the Jews from getting their nation reorganized as a state, cf. Ezra 4:1-24.
 3. With the city thus exposed, the people thereby demoralized, it was a matter of time and the restoration effort would fail, destroying any chance of national restoration and its fulfillment of Biblical prophecy re: Messiah's coming, cf. Z.P.E.B., v. Four, p. 404.
- II. **God thus positioned a quality leader, Nehemiah to lead Israel back from near extinction to statehood during hard times, cf. Dn. 9:25c!**
- III. **The WAY he did it exemplifies quality leadership in hard times:**
 - A. Step One - **Nehemiah got right with God.** He trusted Scripture and repented, relying on God for what he **knew** he **should** do, 1:5-11b.
 - B. Step Two - **Nehemiah developed HIMSELF**, Nehemiah 1:11c.
 1. As cupbearer to the king, Nehemiah was held in high esteem, being responsible to protect the king's life by first testing his food, *Ibid.*

2. In Nehemiah's case, the job was **especially** sensitive as Artaxerxes I had lost his father to murder, and gained the throne by force, Ibid.
 3. Besides, Nehemiah was a **captive**, so must have been of **sterling** character and achievement to have become the king's **cupbearer!**
 4. So, Nehemiah developed **himself** to become a useful tool for God!
- C. **Step Three - Nehemiah made God's eternal program his priority.** He dedicated himself to help in God's cause for Jerusalem's welfare above his comfortable occupation as the king's cupbearer, 1:1-4; 2:5.
- D. **Step Four - GOD then LED Nehemiah by GIVING him the IDEA of helping with Jerusalem's cause by rebuilding it,** 2:12b & 2:4-5!
- E. **Step Five - To maximize having success, Nehemiah planned each step toward attaining that goal BEFORE interacting with others:**
1. Nehemiah tried to get a positive response if the king asked about his project by planning an answer on what to include (the resources needed) and what to exclude (naming Jerusalem as it might hit a "nerve" with the king, **B.K.C., O.T.**, p. 676) , Neh. 1:11; 2:4-9.
 2. Harem intrigue allegedly afflicted this king, Ibid., **Z.P.E.B.**, p. 404, so **since** the **queen** was **present**, Nehemiah asked the king for letters of transit so **if** she informed on him it wouldn't matter, 2:6-8!
 3. **Before** rebuilding the wall, a **military defense** fixture, Nehemiah made a **covert** survey to plan **ahead** of **enemy** intelligence, 2:11-20.
 4. Next, he assigned work stations so the whole wall area could be built **all at once** to **shorten** the **time** enemies had to **stop** it, 3:1-32!
- F. **Step Six - When opposition arose, Nehemiah (a) stayed with the job, (b) prepared defenses** and **(c) prayed hard** to offset each threat, 4:1-7:4. In this way the wall was amazingly completed in **52 days!**
- G. **Step Seven - Following the military defense provision of the wall, Nehemiah led the people into INTERNAL renewal:** he had them registered and rededicated to obey Scripture. He resettled people in Jerusalem and assigned positions for governmental order, 11:1-13:14.
- IV. **The "thread of redemption" in Nehemiah is God's moving a cleansed, developed man into position to preserve His Abrahamic Covenant and rebuild Israel's capitol for the Messiah! (Gn. 12:1-3)**

Application: *The answer to the leadership vacuum for today's hard times is for one personally to (1) believe in Christ for salvation from sin (Jn. 3:16) and (2) fellowship with God via (a) confession of sins (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) rely on the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16ff) for (c) obeying Scripture, 1 Jn. 2:1-6. Then, (3) by God's enabling and leading, excel in God's CURRENT assignments and (4) GOD will (a) lead us on into NEW goals (b) or reassign us positions that fulfill His purposes and equip us to make a big difference for eternity!*

Lesson: *God fills leadership vacuums in His eternal plan with those who obey Him AND develop themselves in His enabling, 1 Tim. 3:5; 4:12-16.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the lesson . . .)

(1) In 1907, a Christian pastor wrote an article that was printed in the October 1907 issue of Moody Monthly. His concern was that people would become **definite** in their beliefs. Among other things he wrote, "If you have grown gray in the church, if you are an elder or pastor and have never received Jesus Christ as your sin bearer, do it--do it **now**. 'Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? . . . And in Thy name done many wonderful works?' only to hear the astounding words: 'I never knew you' (Matt. 7:22, 23). Get your salvation **definitely settled**."

We know this author better as C. I. Scofield, author of the Scofield Reference Bible! He pastored a church close to the current location of Dallas Theological Seminary and was instrumental in getting Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder of the institution, to start the school.

Scofield became a great spiritual leader whose works and influence still deeply affect us today. **However, few know that C. I. Scofield was an alcoholic who accepted Jesus as his Savior. He also never learned Greek and Hebrew, lacking the education to do so, but he worked so hard at understanding his King James Version Bible once he was saved that his notes formulated the Scofield Reference Bible, the forerunner for our current study Bibles which are a great help to many the world over!**

C. I. Scofield has affected a whole generation of Christians worldwide because he got right with God, and did his best by God's power and leading with what great limitations he had from his sinful past to develop himself as a useful tool for God.

That is the kind of leadership we need in our world today. We need -- God uses -- men and women who get right with Him and develop by God's power what they have going for them -- no matter what limitations they may now have -- into excellence for God's glory!