

A sunset scene with a large sun partially obscured by a horizontal band. The sky is filled with rays of light and a color gradient from blue to orange. The foreground shows silhouettes of trees and a body of water reflecting the sky.

2021

RENEW. REBUILD. REKINDLE.

Nehemiah 1:4

Neh. 1:4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *certain* days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,


5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.

7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.

8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, *If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: ...*

11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.



We have entered into the new year of 2021. A new year provides a wonderful time to “begin again” in many endeavors. From losing weight to reading the Bible through in a year, many “resolutions” pervade our plans for intentional improvement. Time will tell how determined we have been to make such changes.

Last year was most confusing and discouraging. This year is an opportunity to move past the past and *RENEW, REBUILD, and REKINDLE.*

By God's grace we will **renew our strength, rebuild our steadfastness, and rekindle our spirit.** That is our theme for 2021...

RENEW. REBUILD. REKINDLE.

This morning, we will consider how this theme will apply to our lives.

Lam. 5:21 Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; **renew our days as of old.**

Psa. 85:6 **Wilt thou not revive us again:** that **thy people may rejoice in thee?**

Hab. 3:2 O LORD, I have heard thy speech, *and* was afraid: **O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known;** in wrath remember mercy.

Nehemiah is an excellent example of one who renewed, rebuilt, and rekindled his life for God's glory. For the next few weeks we will consider the testimony of his life.

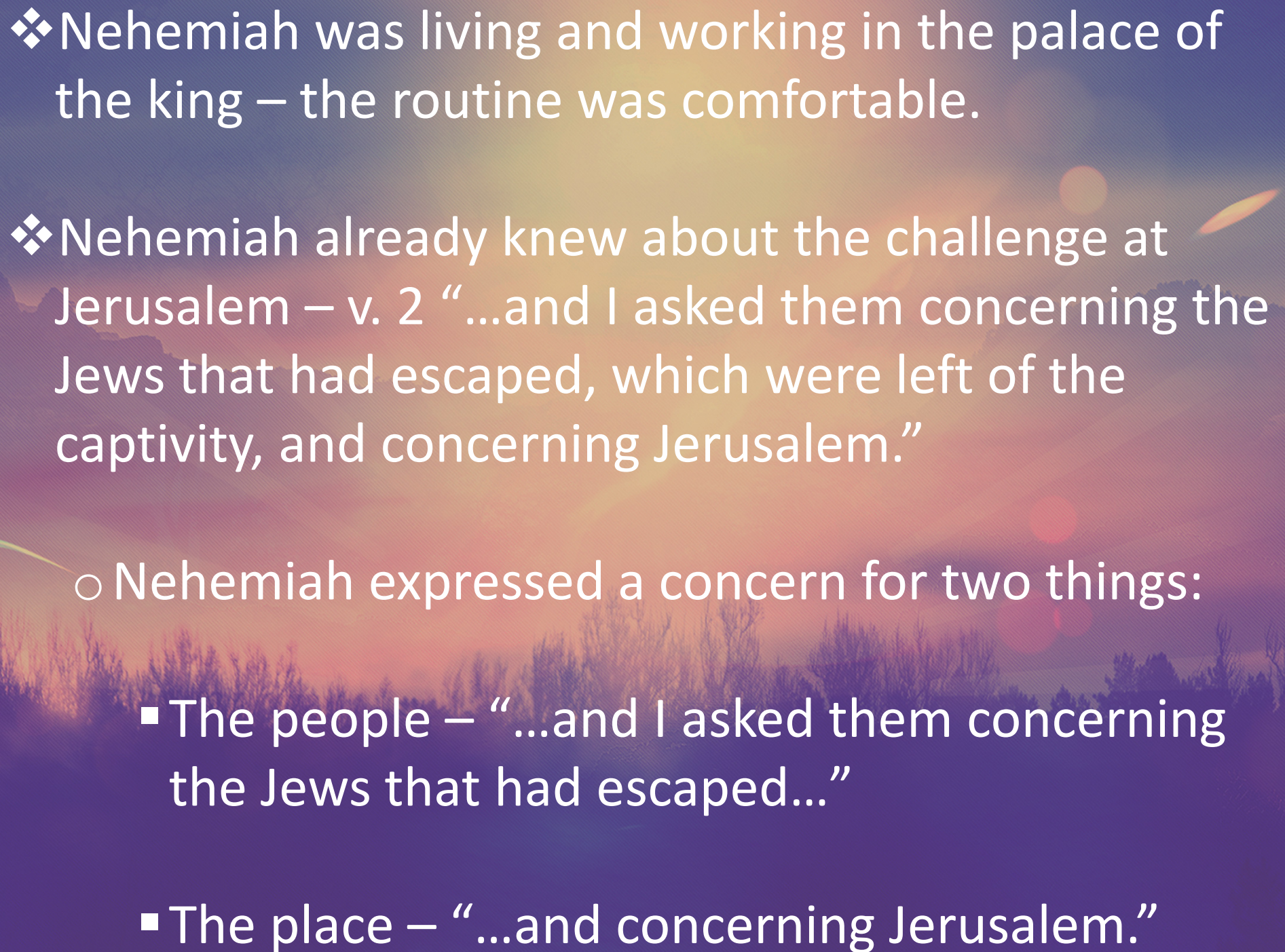
I. RENEWING: THE CONCERN

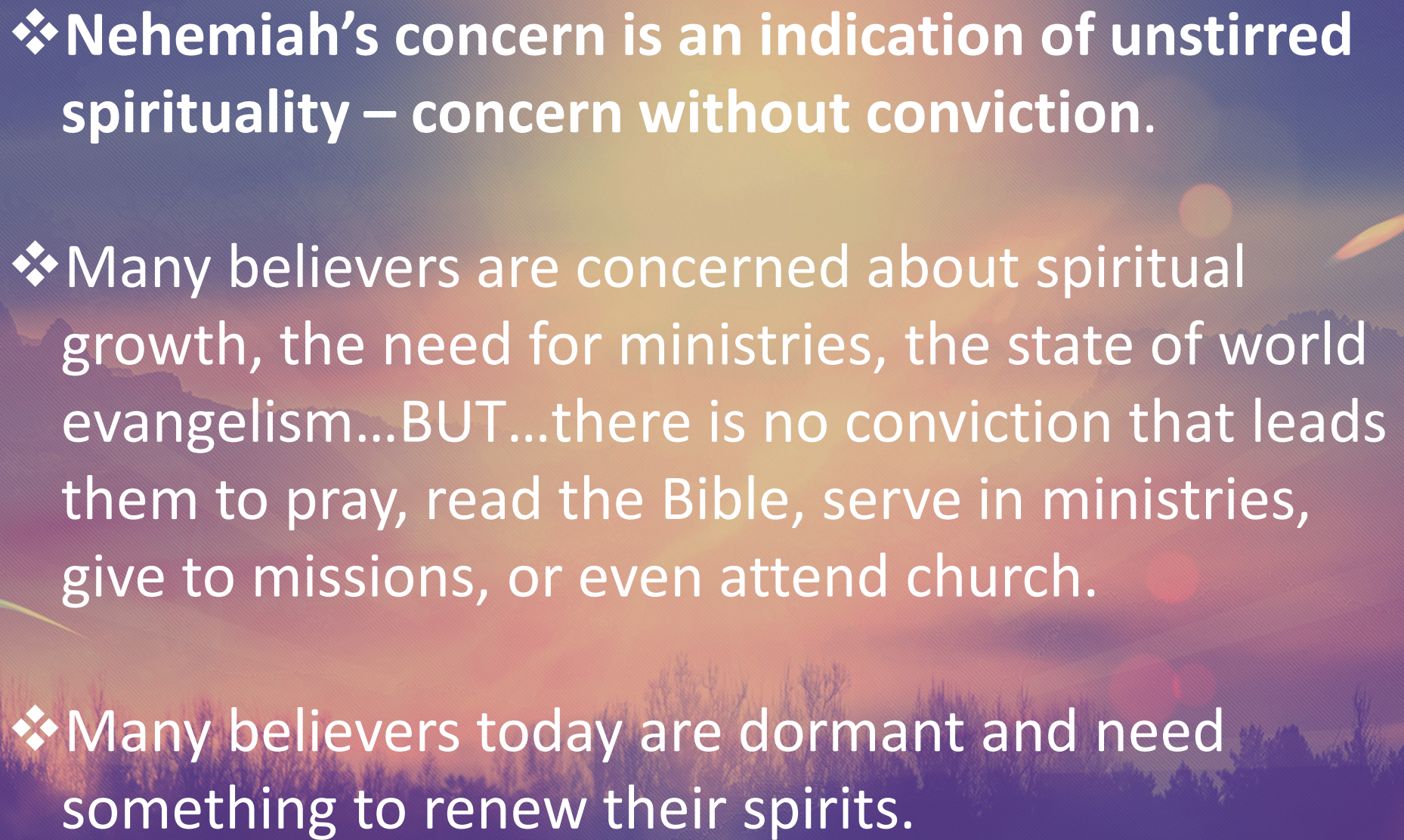
A. The Personal Conviction

1.The Interruption of the Routine

Neh. 1:2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and *certain* men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province *are* in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also *is* broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

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- ❖ Nehemiah was living and working in the palace of the king – the routine was comfortable.
 - ❖ Nehemiah already knew about the challenge at Jerusalem – v. 2 “...and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.”
 - Nehemiah expressed a concern for two things:
 - The people – “...and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped...”
 - The place – “...and concerning Jerusalem.”

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- ❖ **Nehemiah's concern is an indication of unstirred spirituality – concern without conviction.**
 - ❖ Many believers are concerned about spiritual growth, the need for ministries, the state of world evangelism...BUT...there is no conviction that leads them to pray, read the Bible, serve in ministries, give to missions, or even attend church.
 - ❖ Many believers today are dormant and need something to renew their spirits.

1 Thess. 5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

6 **Therefore let us not sleep, as *do others***; but let us watch and be sober.

❖ The report was grim – v. 3 “And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province *are* in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also *is* broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.”

○ Nehemiah learned about the conditions in Jerusalem, the need of his two concerns:

▪ The people – “...The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province *are* in great affliction and reproach...”

▪ The place – “...the wall of Jerusalem also *is* broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.”

❖ The Holy Spirit used the information to convict Nehemiah’s heart.

❖ Nehemiah’s routine in his “comfort zone” was about to be shaken forever.

2. The Ingredients for a Renewal

- ❖ Before anyone does anything of eternal value for the glory of God, the heart must be spiritually convicted to move from complacency to commitment.
- ❖ God initiates the conviction, but the believer is responsible to act upon on it.
- ❖ Nehemiah is a good example of a believer experiencing a renewed heart.

Neh. 1:4 And it came to pass, **when I heard these words,** that I sat down and wept, and **mourned *certain days,*** **and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,**

5 And said, **I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven,** the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, **that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.**

7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept **the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments**, which thou commandedst **thy servant Moses**.

8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, *If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:*

...

11 **O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant**, and to **the prayer of thy servants**, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, **thy servant** this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

❖ The pattern for a renewed spirit is as follows:

- The holy conviction by the Holy Spirit regarding God's concern;
- The humble submission to God and His will via prayer;
- The honest confession of sin;
- The honorable desire to be God's servant, to do His will.

❖ Consider David's example and his heart of repentance:

Psa. 51:1 **Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness:** according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and **cleanse me from my sin.**

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, **have I sinned**, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest. ...

10 Create in me **a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.** ...

12 **Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;** and uphold me *with thy* free spirit.

13 **Then** will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. ...

17 The sacrifices of God *are* **a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.**

18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.





❖ Note the order in Psa. 51:

1. Conviction, 51:1-2

2. Confession, 51:3-6

3. Cleansing, 51:7-12

4. Commitment, 51:13-19

❖ David, like Nehemiah, needed spiritual renewal. The path to renewal begins with conviction that leads to commitment.

Conclusion

Last year was a trying year. As we begin a new year, by God's grace let's focus on how we can **renew our strength, rebuild our steadfastness, and rekindle our spirit.**

1 Thess. 5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

8 But **let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.**