



---

# Campbell Chapel

---

Sermon by Bob Bradley



## The Wages of Sin is Death

Sunday, September 26, 2018

Bob Bradley

Nehemiah 1:1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

Nehemiah 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.

Nehemiah 1:3 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 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,

The thought I want you to keep in mind as we look at this is this, tonight. Sin—the Bible says the wages of sin is death. We know that. Don't we? We also know that we reap what we sow. If we sow wickedness then we are going to reap wickedness. If we sow sin then we are going to reap sin. If we sow rebellion or disobedience, whatever we sow in life; that is exactly what we are going to get. Here is what we do not get sometimes. We think it is just going to be for a day or a week or a month.

I probably said this here before. I know the gentleman meant well in what he was saying. He said, "If I want to do something that I know is wrong, if I just want to go out and sin; I will just go out and sin. When I get done doing it then I am going to ask God to forgive me. He was very ignorant of the Word of God. He is a good guy and no doubt, he has been saved. However, he did not know anything about the Word of God. You try to talk to people sometimes but you don't always get anywhere.

Sin—just because we repent today does not mean that the things we have sown, stopped today. Amen! I want you to think about that because that is important in this lesson.

Nehemiah is 700 miles away from Jerusalem. He was living in a winter retreat, if I understand things correctly. Down in a very warm climate. We know that he is the king's cupbearer. We know that he has some great responsibilities. We know that he has a great job. He was born in captivity. He was born in Babylon. However, something happened, when you read a little bit; it happened 161 years before this date in—we will be looking at Nehemiah and we are going to talk about this in a minute. Something happened. The people 161 years later are still reaping what they sowed.

161 years later. That generation that did the sinning have come and gone. They died. Do you know what? The sin that they sowed keeps on coming. The fruits of their sin keep on coming. The Bible will tell us... We know that Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem. We know that he came because God sent Him, God drew Him, and God brought him. He came to Jerusalem in 606 BC because the people had sinned against God. God had given them opportunity after opportunity. He sent prophets, priests, and leaders and warned them about this sin that if they did not quit their sin—Jeremiah made it very plain to them that they were going to spend 70 years in captivity. Do you know what they did not do? They did not straighten up. Therefore, God brought Nebuchadnezzar. We know that in 606, he begins his captivity. We know that he begins deporting people.

We know in 586 BC, that is 20 years later that Jerusalem was destroyed. Everything in it was torn down. It was gone.

Not only that—get this—in 538 BC, Zerubbabel, when you read the book of Ezra; he comes back. They are going to give them the opportunity, actually when in 536, 535, or 534 in there; he is going to be given the right to be able to come back to the land of Israel.

We know that in 539 the Babylon empire fell. We know that in 538 or 539, the Persians took over. We understand that.

We also know in 535, or in that range 535 to 538, when Zerubbabel gets the authority from the Persian ruler to come back to Jerusalem; we know that 50,000 came. We know that they worked for a while. They began to work on the temple in 535. They work a few years and the enemy raises his head. They quit working. For 15 or 20 years, they do nothing. They build their own houses.

As Joshie talked a few weeks ago, from the book of Haggai—I believe it was. They worked on their own lives. They built their own houses. They did everything. However, life was still yet falling apart. They were putting their money into (proverbial) bags with holes in them. There was a drought and nothing was going right.

We know that in probably somewhere around 520, they decided they needed to finish the temple. We know that in 515 they got the temple rebuilt. We know that they had a revival. If you read history, we know that Esther, in 476 became the queen of Persia. Do you remember that? ...She is a good read.

In 458, just a few years after Esther was queen, Ezra comes. Ezra comes to Jerusalem. He leads a small band of people back. Ezra is a priest and a prophet. He comes back and there is a small revival. Things go well.

Now what I am reading to you here in Nehemiah is in 445 BC. This is 161 years after all the issues started. No doubt, thousands of people had been born and thousands of people have died. A few people have come back into the land. The place is still yet a mess. They built a temple. They built a small temple. They had a revival for a short

time. They did some things but they continually were reaping the sin that had been sown over 161 years ago.

Listen. Sin keeps on giving. As long as we allow sin to dominate our lives, sin will keep on giving. The Bible tells us here that in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, that Nehemiah is there. He is the cupbearer. He has a great responsibility. He is the guy that tasted the king's food and the king's drink before he drank it so that some of his enemies, if they were trying to assassinate him then the cupbearer would die before the king would. If you read about cupbearers, they generally had a great relationship with the king. We know that Nehemiah does. When you read down here in verse 2, you are going to find out something that is going to change things. You are going to find out something that is going to be heard that is going to change some things. The Bible says that Hanani, one of my brethren...

Nehemiah 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.

So here is what had happened. Some of the folks that had come from Judah had come here unto where Nehemiah is at. The first thing he asked them—he did not ask them about the trip. He did not ask if they ate any good fish along the way. He did not ask them how much money they had or how... Do you know what he asked about? He said I want to know how things are at home.

Nehemiah 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.

Do you know what he wants to know? He wants to know how things were in Jerusalem. He wants to know that those few that had left and went back to Jerusalem; he wants to know how they are doing. He wants to know how Jerusalem is and how they are faring.

Get this. The majority of the people that were in Jerusalem. Nehemiah probably did not even know. Nehemiah, I don't know whether he had ever been to Jerusalem or not. Probably, he did not know a lot about all of that. Do you know what? There was something in his heart. There was something that was in his bosom. There was something that was on fire on the inside of him and he says, I want to know how my brothers are doing. I want to know about the city of my God; I want to know how it is doing. You see, he was concerned about that. Even though he was seven hundred miles away, and may have never visited the city, and may have not known half the people that were there or maybe nobody. I don't know how many he knew. He was concerned about people. He was concerned about the people that were there. He was concerned about the city itself.

Do you know what I thought today, as I was studying on this and had been studying, and thinking about it for a few days? *I wonder what it takes to get us concerned. I*

*really wonder in life what it takes to get us concerned about other people.* Other people that are in need, other people that we know as brothers and sisters in Christ that are going through disaster, and going through trouble, and going through problems; I wonder what it takes to get us stirred. I wonder what it takes to get us stirred and get us excited, energized and enthused when we hear what he hears.

The Bible says in verse 3...

Nehemiah 1:3 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.

He asks a question. He wants to know. They said unto him, "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. He asks a simply question. How are things? How are the people doing? Those that have left, those that escaped, those that have gone back home; how are they doing? How are things in Jerusalem? How are things going there? Do you know what? He had a longing for that place. He had a longing for that place.

Do we have a longing for heaven tonight? Do we have a longing to go to heaven tonight? Do we really have a longing? Does it stir our hearts when we think about going to heaven? Granny talked about that a while ago. That stirs my heart. Doesn't it you? That stirs me on the inside, when I think about where we are going to get to go one day. We may get to go today. That stirs me on the inside. Do you know what that does? It energizes me. Not only does that excite but that also alarms me because I know so many that are not ready to go.

In my family, they are dying. They are going to die lost. In your family and in this community and people who have sat in the pew in this church; it alarms me when we talk to them. They have no concern about Jesus coming. They have no concern about making things right with God. They have no concern about repenting of their sins and living a godly life. That concerns me. It did concern Nehemiah.

It concerned him to the point—do you know what he did? When he heard what was happening, when he heard they were in great affliction—these people were suffering. They were suffering. When you read the Bible, you will find out that there was a great drought going on at this time. It was a great economic issue. The economy was about the... People were suffering and there were no jobs. There was no money. The rich were oppressing the poor. There were all kinds of things going on. When Nehemiah heard that it alarmed him. It stirred something on the inside of him. We should be stirred today when we see people who are unsaved. When we see people, who are so near slipping out of this world, that should alarm us. That should get out attention.

He said they were in great affliction and they were in reproach. They are being reproached by their enemies. They are being mistreated. There is no wall there. It is

torn down. The gates are torn down. They are just an open prey. They are being reproached. They are being misused. They are being abused. They are in bad shape.

I can just imagine when Nehemiah hears that what is going on in his heart. I can just imagine how he is feeling. The walls are torn down. If you don't have any walls up, if you did not have any walls back then you were an open prey to the enemy. They could come and go. It would be like taking the doors and windows off of your house. Take them off and leave them off.

Do you know what could come? The bugs, the birds, the dogs and the thieves; they could come anytime. That is what the meaning here is that there is no wall around the city. That meant the enemies could come and go as they pleased.

The Bible says here the gates were burnt with fire. Not only are they being reproached, not only are they in great affliction, not only some of them are hungry and all kinds of stuff going on but they have no protection. There is nothing there. The walls are torn down. The gates are burnt with fire. They are in a horrible mess.

When we look at our world today—folks listen, I know we make all kinds of excuses as to why we don't do. I know we make all kinds of excuses why we say we can't. The real reason why we are not more evangelistic and the real that we don't work more, labor more, and pray more to try to get our families saved and come in is that we don't want to. We don't have time. We are so busy doing our own thing and our own stuff. We are working on stuff that is going to burn up. We are spending time on stuff that is going to burn up. All of our energy...stuff that does not matter. ...people are dying and they are going to slip out into eternity, unprepared to meet God. They are going to go to a lake of fire. Some of them is my family, some of them is yours. We can get alarmed and we can get excited about a lot of stuff. However, I don't know why we cannot get excited and alarmed about those that are dying unsaved.

Do you know what Nehemiah did? When he hears this the Bible says...

Nehemiah 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,

When he heard what the brethren that had just come from Jerusalem said, do you know what he did? "I sat down and wept..." How long has it been since you have cried for your loved ones? How long has it been since you have spent enough time in prayer, you were concerned enough about them...in prayer that you wept? Lord, I know they are dying. I know they are going to spend eternity in hell if they don't get saved. How long has it been? Have you ever done that. Have you ever got so concerned about your family that in your praying that you actually cried? Have you ever got that concerned? Now we can get concerned about a lot of stuff in life—I'm talking about stuff—the enemy has tricked us into believing that we don't need to get concerned about our family. We don't need to pray for our family. I have heard this a million times.

Well, if they are going to get saved, they are going to get saved. Do you know what that is? That is stupidity. If that is the case then what are we doing here? The old saying, "What is going to be is going to be." That is fatalism. Don't believe that. Friend, your prayers and my prayers can change things. Your prayers and my prayers—do you know what it will do? They can reach heaven.

That is exactly what Nehemiah is going to do. He is going to start knocking on the door of heaven. Do you know what he is going to do? He is not going to stop. He weeps. The Bible says here...

Nehemiah 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,

Sometimes in life, we think more of our automobiles than we do our families. We get more involved with just stuff that does not matter than we do our families that are dying unsaved.

Many years ago, I knew a family. They were a good family. These were good kids. However, they were more concerned about their little boy, 3, 4, or 5 years old, knowing all the players on a certain team and how many goals they had, how many points they scored—they were more concerned about all those things than they were teaching them and instructing them and living before them and with them about the things of God.

Listen. I can know every NASCAR, every person that ever drove a NASCAR, I can know everybody that ever threw a baseball, that has ever kicked a football or ever knocked a ball over a net; when I stand before Jesus, it is not going to matter. When your family stands before Jesus, it won't matter.

Do you know what is going to matter? Have you been washed in the blood? That is what is going to matter.

I thought about this today, when I heard some news today. It breaks my heart, it tears me up—do you know what I heard? "Well, that is just where we are at in society." Do you know what I say? I say bologna. I say we can do something about what is going on in society. We won't do anything as long as we sit with our head in the sand and our hands under our bottoms. As long as we sit there and do nothing, then nothing is going to change. Your children, my children, and a lot of other children are going to die unsaved and spend eternity in a lake of fire.

Nehemiah heard that they were in great affliction, that they were distressed, they were being reproached and he cried. He sat down and he cried. He mourned. Do you know what that means? That is a whole lot more than just crying. His insides were coming out. He was torn up.

Nehemiah 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,

Do you know what he did not do? He was not sitting there eating McDonald's French fries while he was crying and praying. The Bible says he was fasting. Do you know what that means? He wants God to hear him. God I'm putting everything else out. I don't care whether I eat, whether I drink; these people, Lord, are my concern. I am more concerned about my family and what is going on in Jerusalem.

Why would he be so concerned about Jerusalem? Did you ever think about that? Do you know why? Because the city of Jerusalem is where God said that He was going to put His name at. The city of Jerusalem is where the glory of God should have been. Amen! It should have been there, but He had gone. He's gone. The Lord, God had gone. Ichabod over the building; it is gone. Do you know why? It is because of sin. People lost interest. People were not concerned about worshipping God. They were concerned about doing their own thing and doing stuff they wanted to do.

Here is the thing, guys. He wept. He mourned. He fasted. And he prayed before the God of heaven. He did not call somebody on television. He did not call one of the guys on TV that says, you send me a hundred bucks and you will get a thousand. He did not do that. Do you know who he talked to? He began to knock on the door of heaven. Lord, I need you. Lord, my people needs you. The city of Jerusalem, Lord; they need you.

As you read on down through this story do you know what you are going to find out? He is praying. He is talking about how great God is in his prayers; the Lord God of heaven, the omnipotent one. You are the Almighty. You are the one in charge. Lord, you remember the covenant that you made? If we would live right and do right that you would bless us. However, if we would sin and you would scatter us all over the world, Lord. Do you remember that Lord? However, you also told us that if we repent that you would bring us back. Lord, do you remember that? He is praying that prayer to God. God already knows.

He also says this. This is something that we don't like. We can talk about how great God is and that He is. We don't have words to describe how great God is. Do you know what He does? He begins to repent. "Lord, we have sinned." He did not say, "Lord, they have sinned." He says, "Lord, we have sinned." He put himself right in the midst of all of them. He was not trying to act any better. He wasn't trying to exclude himself. He says, "Lord, we are the ones who have sinned."

Do you know what he wants? He wants the Lord to hear him. He wants the Lord to hear him. Do you know what he does? He prays for four months. He was getting ready to ask a heathen king that knew nothing about Jerusalem. He did not have anything to do with taking it because it was already taken when the Persians came. He is getting ready to ask a king that knew nothing about Jerusalem and probably did not

do anything about the God of heaven, he is getting ready to ask him. I want to go back and I want to build the wall. I want to clean this place up. I want you to finance it. That is what he is getting ready to do. He prays. He prays.

Do you know what we have? We have a God that when we knock on the door of heaven, He is listening. He is listening, tonight. The God of heaven is listening. He wants to hear from you this evening. He wants to hear from us. He wants to hear from us that our children, that our grandchildren, that our neighbors, that our family is dying lost. He wants to hear from us. Are you concerned? How long has it been since you have spent some time praying, and time weeping, and time mourning and time fasting. How long has it been? God is speaking. God is calling.

Come and pray—