

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Nehemiah: Pattern For Solutions In Spiritually Hard Times

A. Scriptural Prayer For Distressing Circumstances

(Nehemiah 1:1-2:8)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The condition that many people face today can be summed up in the word "distressed":

(1) Many Americans are distressed over their government: an Associated Press poll found that just "16 %," or "a fragment of Americans believe democracy is thriving in the U. S." (Steven Sloan and Thomas Beaumont, "Poll: Few say democracy working well," Republican-American, February 9, 2021, p. 9A)

(2) Many children are distressed over the pandemic: "Doctors" say some are "deliberately running into traffic" and "self-harming." ("Global rise in childhood mental health issues amid pandemic," *Ibid.*, 3/13/2021, p. 9A)

(3) Responses to last Sunday's sermon exposed ongoing stress we face over the COVID-19 vaccines: (a) we had a lot of positive feedback, (b) but some also voiced concern over a possible job loss or being barred from flying if they were not vaccinated. (c) One member asked if it might be "legalistic" to oppose Pfizer's and Moderna's vaccines, for evangelical radio station WIHS in Middletown, Connecticut [as do U. S. Catholic Bishops (Fred Gutler, "COVID-19 Vaccines and Fetal Tissue: The Science and Controversy Explained," 3/13/2021; newsweek.com)] endorses them, claiming they use the cell lines of a fetus aborted *long ago just to test* their vaccines while WIHS opposes Johnson & Johnson's vaccine for that company's use of fetal cell lines to *manufacture* its vaccine, *Ibid.* Then, the Pope endorses all three vaccines in spite of their link to abortion, alleging that COVID-19 poses "a 'grave danger'" to the public, *Ibid.*

(d) These discussions led me to do more research, and I found the story, "Catholic women issue statement opposing use of 'abortion tainted' vaccines." (3/9/2021; catholicnewsagency.com) It reported, "Eighty-six Catholic women from 25 countries," being "doctors, nurses, bioethics experts (etc.)," signed a statement that claimed, "(T)he vaccine candidates which reported using aborted fetal cells 'only during testing' [namely, Pfizer and Moderna] also made use of the HEK 293 [Human Embryonic Kidney - 293] cells 'as an integral part of the development of their mRNA candidates.'" To evaluate this claim, I checked the story's link to the signed statement and it in turn referenced its claim on Pfizer's and Moderna's use of fetal cells to develop their vaccines with the article by Daniel Wrapp, et al., "Cryo-EM structure of the 2019-nCoV spike in the prefusion confirmation," Science Magazine, 3/13/2020! I found the article online (science.sciencemag.org/content/367/6483/1260.full), and noted from its statement, "Knowing the atomic-level structure of the 2019-nCoV spike will allow for . . . efforts . . . for vaccine development" and the article's date that it was written before Pfizer and Moderna had produced their vaccines. This article reported, "We obtained .5 mg/liter of the recombinant prefusion-stabilized S ectodomain from FreeStyle [HEK] 293 cells . . ." and referenced this information to "Figure 1A," *Ibid.* The article gave 4 figures of the experiment, meaning the aborted fetal cell lines were used at the start of the initial stage of developing Pfizer's and Moderna's mRNA-based vaccines!

The 86 Catholic professional medical women from 25 countries are right: Pfizer and Moderna used aborted fetal cells in the initial stage of developing their vaccines! We have not been told the truth on this, and it's distressing!

Need: *So, we ask, "In facing distressing situations, how may we begin to function effectively?!"*

- I. When Nehemiah heard of the appalling state of his nation Israel, he was very distressed, Neh. 1:1-4a.**
- II. In accord with Scripture's directive, Nehemiah then prayed for God's intervention, Nehemiah 1:4b-10:**
 - A. God promised Israel in Deuteronomy 30:1-10 that if she realized in captivity that she had violated His Law so as to end up in captivity, the Lord would restore her if she confessed her sin unto the Lord.
 - B. Nehemiah thus prayed, confessing Israel's sin (Neh. 1:4b-9) and claiming God's promise of her restoration.
- III. Nehemiah then asked God to grant him an opportunity to appeal to the king to help Israel, Neh. 1:11:**
 - A. Nehemiah's request for God to give him a hearing with his king in Israel's behalf is based on Queen Esther's example, for her king had been Ahasuerus, the father of king Artaxerxes whom Nehemiah served (cf. Neh. 2:1; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Book of Ezra: Historical Background," p. 701)
 - B. Nehemiah like Esther had been elevated to a position of contact with the king (Neh. 1:11b with Esther 4:14), so he prayed for an opening with the king as had Esther, Nehemiah 1:11a. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 675)
- IV. God answered this prayer, giving Nehemiah an opportunity to ask Artaxerxes to help Israel, Neh. 2:1-8.**
- V. Nehemiah's prayer in view of God's plan of the ages looms immense in its importance (as follows):**
 - A. Artaxerxes' letters granting Nehemiah permission to rebuild Jerusalem comprise the decree predicted in Daniel 9:25 of the start of Daniel's 70 prophetic weeks of years, Neh. 2:5-8a; *Ibid.*, Ryrie, fn. to Neh. 2:7-9.

- B. Thus, the *timing* of God's fulfilling of the first 69 weeks that were to end with Messiah's Triumphant Entry just before Messiah was executed as per Daniel 9:25-26 had to be **precise** in that Messiah was also to be crucified on Passover just **after** the 69th week ended to fulfill Leviticus 23:4-8 as our Passover Lamb. (1 Cor. 5:7b)
- C. Thus, Nehemiah began to pray in the month Chislew (Nov.-Dec.) of Artaxerxes' 20th year, but it was **four months later**, in Nisan (March-April of 444 B. C.) when God **answered** his prayer that the 69 weeks of years might begin in order to fit the precise timeline required for Christ to fulfill Scripture in His First Advent!
- D. Since Christ fulfilled the **first 69** prophetic weeks of years **so LITERALLY**, we know that the **70th** prophetic week described in Daniel 9:27 will last **seven Hebrew years of 360 days each**, the **LITERAL seven-Hebrew-year Great Tribulation** that aligns **perfectly** with the prediction of that era in the **Book of Revelation!**
- E. Thus, **Nehemiah's four-month prayer effort** takes on **immense significance** in **God's plan of the ages!**

Lesson: *When facing distressful circumstances, Nehemiah's prayer in accord with Scripture was used of God to reveal His timetable for the very important fulfillment of God's Daniel 9 timetable for other Biblical events.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) In facing distressful circumstances in our era, may we pray in alignment with God's Biblically revealed will for us, trusting His blessing and significant USE of our prayers.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We view God's Biblical will on the issues noted in our introduction to know how to pray about them:

(1) On the nation's politics and government, (a) Revelation 3:21 with 7:17 predicted a Mini-Great Tribulation for our era with intrigue and oppression by leaders, what will cause people to seek answers and find them in Bible teaching churches. We should thus pray that today's troubled people might seek help as we believers stand ready to offer them Biblical solutions. [A recent event illustrates how this works: one of our members heard that some public school teachers she knew were distressed over the Climate Change issue they faced but could not handle due to ignorance. Our member sent them an email citing God's Genesis 8:22 promise that as long as the earth endures, there would be no catastrophic climate change. The teachers were highly relieved to learn of this promise!] (b) 1 Timothy 2:1-6 directs that we believers pray for all in authority that they might function in ways that let us disciple others.

(2) On the distress children face from the pandemic, (a) children need to believe in Christ for salvation that they might be indwelt by the Comforter, God the Holy Spirit, John 3:16; Romans 8:9b; John 14:16-18. (b) Then, children need to be taught Matthew 11:28-30, to come unto Christ if they labor and are heaven laden with burdens the adult world has placed on them that they might find rest to their souls! (c) We thus need to pray for God to give us opportunities to minister such truths to children in need who come our way that they might find rest to their souls!

(3) On the distress over the COVID-19 vaccines, Scripture guides us in ***spite of our not knowing all the facts:*** (a) Exodus 21:22-23 teaches that **any** abortion [any trimester] is murder, (b) Genesis 9:6 requires the death penalty for murder and (c) Genesis 9:5c reveals that **God** views all murder as the murder of a "brother," for all people are related to each other, Acts 17:26. (d) To apply these truths at the **personal** level, if someone murdered my fetal brother 49 years ago and in **any way** developed a vaccine using cells harvested from his body as occurred with Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (Ibid., Guterl), I could not accept that vaccine out of respect for my brother regardless how long ago he had been murdered! (e) If one argues that there is no longer an association between my brother's 49-year-old fetal cell lines and his 49-year-departed spirit, that I can then rightly take a vaccine developed by their use, Deuteronomy 21:22-23 teaches that even the body of a criminal who had been executed for a capital crime reflects on the quality of his spirit that had been in his body, that we must treat his dead body in accord with the quality of his departed spirit. Thus, the cell lines of my brother's fetus must be treated in accord with the quality of his spirit, and for me, using a vaccine that was produced from my fetal brother's cell lines **never** does justice to his **innocent** spirit that experienced a **brutal murder!** (f) As for the Pope's sanction of all three COVID-19 vaccines, Acts 5:29 in its context calls us to heed Scripture over men when they differ! The Scripture verses above taken together counter the stand of Pope Francis, so I heed Scripture over the pope. (g) As for the threat of a job loss or being banned from flying, if we obey God's Word, He will supply all we need to fulfill His calling for us, Hebrews 13:5-6.

[I had to apply this sermon's lesson myself! The discussions I had with members after last Sunday's morning service drove me to ask God in prayer for wisdom to handle their concerns, and He dramatically answered!]

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we pray in accord with God's Biblical will on every challenging issue we face, asking Him to grant us opportunities to minister to address these problems in alignment with His calling for us.