

# The Caller

A Weekly Newsletter of the Elizabethtown church of Christ

Vol. XXXXVI

April 19, 2020

No. 15

## Confidence Corner

**John F. Board**

In this week's *Confidence Corner* we want to examine some thoughts regarding the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. These two books of our English translation were at one time viewed as one book in the He-

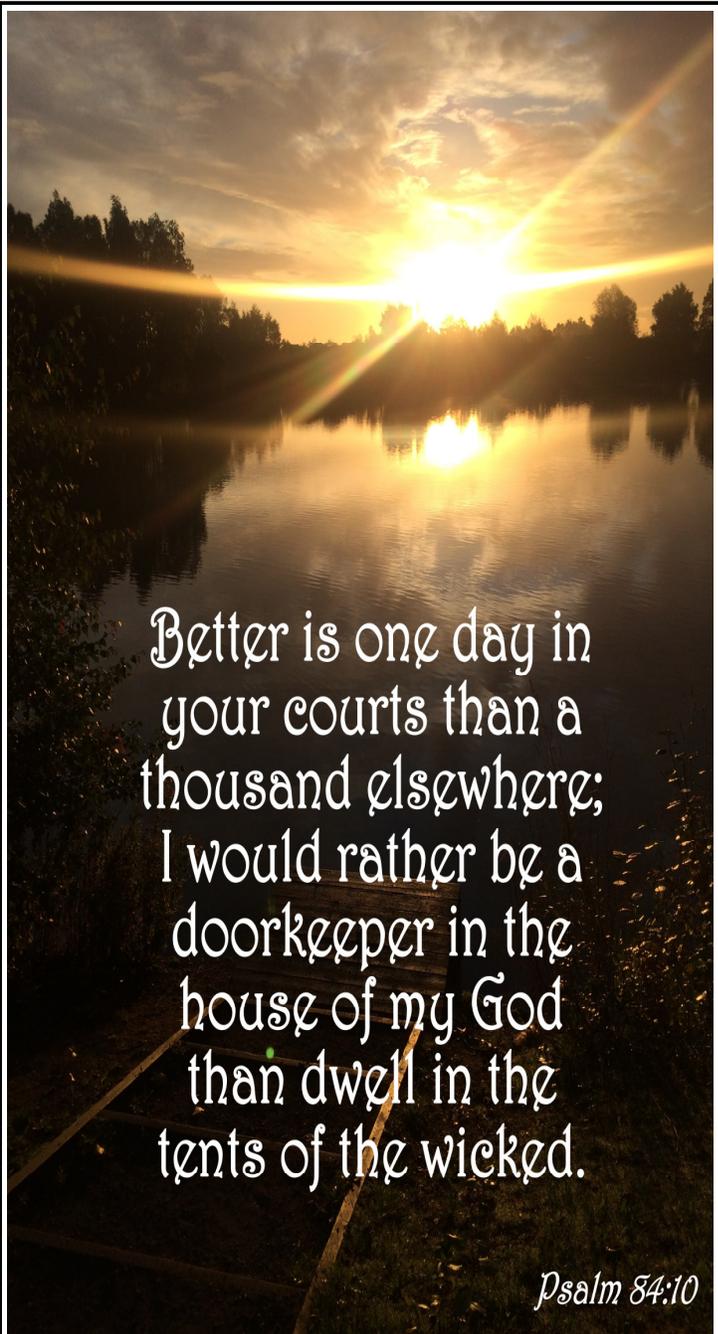
brew Bible. These books provide an inspired account of the return of the Jewish exiles from Babylonian captivity to their homeland of Jerusalem. In these books we read of the re-establishments of the worship of the Jews, as well as the rebuilding of the walls and the temple. They also record a sense of the re-establishment of the national life of the Jews as a nation.

Ezra ("help") was a priest whom God used to lead the people as they returned to their homeland. His record is a historical account though in keeping with Hebrew writings are not concerned with reporting a continuous chronological story. Esther is a book that should be studied in conjunction with Ezra and it provides an account of contemporary activities of the people who chose to remain in Persia. The prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are also contemporary to this general time period (Haggai and Zechariah more so in connection with the first return under Zerubbabel 536 B.C.).

Ezra led his group to Jerusalem in 457 B.C. The trip took 4 months. Nehemiah came with another group in 444 B.C. Ezra shows us how God uses men whom He chooses to give His people strength to overcome any opposition, regardless of the odds.

Nehemiah ("YHWH comforts") was the one who rebuilds Jerusalem as a fortified city (walls) and establishes civil authority in the land. Nehemiah is the Persian appointed governor of Jerusalem. Nehemiah is the "had a mind to work" book and eventually the walls were rebuilt despite fierce opposition. Nehemiah believe fully the God would provide for the rebuilding essential to His people.

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Better is one day in  
your courts than a  
thousand elsewhere;  
I would rather be a  
doorkeeper in the  
house of my God  
than dwell in the  
tents of the wicked.

*Psalm 84:10*

**Sunday's Sermon on Facebook Live**

**10:30am**

**A.M. — One Day Better Than a Thousand**

**Psalm 84:1-2**

## A Time To Rebuild

There have been times in the past when God's people faced a challenge to rebuild. In a small sense, we will need to rebuild when it becomes best for us to reassemble in person in our local facilities. We have learned that facilities are an aid. These beneficial buildings enable us the OPPORTUNITY to gather and worship God.

I have written before regarding the blessing of fellowship. How some years ago that for every 1600 people in the world there is 1 Christian. To be blessed to have around 200 people to meet and worship together in person provides a wonderful blessing. The blessedness of fellowship cannot be overstated. Of course, we have been worshipping together in our new way of assembling—through technology, but we all hopefully long to be together physically as well.

Lord willing, this Sunday we will examine this concept in our sermon. My prayer is there will be a revival of attendance at public face-to-face worship assemblies. We know what we had, and now that it has been "removed" from our lives, we, I pray will long to enjoy the blessings of physical fellowship with God and our fellow man. Until we resume in-person meetings, we will utilize the technology God has provided.

I think back to a time when the people of God were totally removed from their worship of God to which they were accustomed. The Israelites longed to be able to worship God but because of their sin and the carrying away into Babylonian captivity, such was not possible. The shock and shame they faced as captives was indeed a new unpleasant experience. Thrust into a land where they did not know the language, forced to wear new names reflecting the false deities of their captors, removed from the temple of YHWH was a devastating emotional time for the people of God.

Though our "removal from the Temple" in a figurative sense today (hindered from worshipping God as we are accustomed) is not a perfect parallel there might be some principles that we might use when it is time for us to "rebuild."

1. We pray our period of rebuilding in a spiritual sense will not be as long as the rebuilding of the Temple and Walls in Jerusalem. The people had lost their focus on what was to be the priority. The inspired events recorded by Ezra-Nehemiah (see also Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi) of this historical time period span from 536 B.C. to 432 B. C. (approximately 100 years).
2. We pray that after our "captivity" from the coronavirus we will have a strong focus on the importance of placing God and His desires above all else.
3. Unlike days of old, we are not told who God will use for his purposes. If God had not revealed that Cyrus would enable the people of Israel to return to Jerusalem, there would be more of a mystery. Today let's remember God is still in control. He still rules in the kingdoms of men! Who will be the Cyrus and Artaxerxes He chooses to use to accomplish His purpose today?

As in the days of old, we will need to follow God's revelation to restore and revive our wholehearted devotion to Him. No gimmicks will be needed. We will simply need to lead the way as followers of Christ to show that God reigns always—especially in our lives and in the Church.

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Elizabethtown, KY