

CLASS: SS2

SUBJECT: CRS

TOPIC: CONCERN FOR ONE'S NATION II

WEEK: 2

TERM: THIRD

NOTE: Make sure you have read 'Concern for the Nation I' for better understanding of this lesson. If not, refer to it – Week 9, 2nd term.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE NATION IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION (Ezra 4; 5:1-2; 6:13-22; Neh. 4:1-23)

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah have different account of the opposition to the efforts of Nehemiah, Zerubbabel and Ezra to rebuilding Jerusalem after its destruction and ruins. However, both books point to the discouragement and frustration the builders faced from the enemies to hindering the completion of the works they started.

In Ezra, the **Samaritans and some half Jews who were Israel's enemies** heard that the returned groups were building a temple to the Lord, they asked for permission to participate in the scheme. The request of the band of evil agitators was turned down by Zerubbabel on behalf of the chiefs of Israel. He told them publicly that they had no legitimate right to partner with the Jews in building the temple. These adversaries, the opposition group then resorted to the use of professional petition writers and cheap blackmail to sustain their evil and wicked plot to stop the temple work. In one of the petitions sent to king **Artaxerxes by Bislam, Mithredath, Tabeel and the rest** of their accomplice, they convinced the king who went through records and confirmed the allegation that Jerusalem had been a flash point for political agitation and civil unrest; if the Jews were allowed to finish rebuilding the walls and foundation of the city of Jerusalem, they would not pay tribute, custom or toll and that would affect the royal revenue. As a result, the king issued a decree and stopped the work on the temple in Jerusalem temporarily.

The work of the building the Temple resumed after the prophecy of **Haggai** and **Zachariah**, who prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the Lord. Again the enemies of the Jews (**Tattenai the governor and**

Shetharbozenai) intended to stop the work by writing to the King **Darius**. King Darius after checking the records confirmed that a decree was issued by King Cyrus for the rebuilding of a Temple to the God of the Jews. Then he gave the Jews permission to resume the work which was eventually completed and dedicated with pomp and pageantry by the Jews.

In the book of Nehemiah the Jews were threatened by an opposition group led by Sanballat who in the presence of his people and the Samaritans ridiculed the Jews by describing them **as feeble-minded who engaged themselves in an impossible task**. Tobiah the Ammonite said that the **wall** the Jews are rebuilding was so **fragile that if a fox would go on it, it would crumble**. Nehemiah, instead of engaging his enemies in verbal battle, prayed to God to judge them for ridiculing, despising and taunting His people. As the work progressed, the enemies, among who are: Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the Ashdodites got angry and planned secretly to attack the Jews at work to create confusion and disorganize them. When Nehemiah knew of the plot, he prayed to God and mounted protective guards with swords, spears and bows against their enemies day and night.

God frustrated the evil plans of the enemies and the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt eventually under the divine inspiration and concerned leadership of Nehemiah.

HOW WE CAN SHOW CONCERN TO OUR NATION-NIGERIA

1. To ensure the presence of peace, progress and economic development and advancement in the nation, every citizen, politicians and political office holders should not abuse their civic responsibility to the nation.
2. Every authority in Nigeria and the responsibility attached to it belong to God hence we should respect and honour the authority set over us. We are to be law abiding no matter who and what we are.
3. As Nigerian citizens, we have the responsibility of paying taxes, rates, levies, electricity, water and other utility bills promptly.
4. Anyone holding top public office of authority should use the position to be agent of positive economic and social development of the country.

5. We should participate in public enlightenment campaigns toward eradicating social ills like cultism, examination malpractices and illiteracy, the spread of communicable diseases, drug addition, homosexuality etc.
6. We should avoid gossip and rumour mongering.
7. We should not vandalize government property.
8. We should refrain from nepotism, favouritism, tribalism, and being religious fanatics.
9. We should not use his position of authority to compromise state security and anti-social behaviour.
10. We should champion the inculcation of good work ethics and morals as vehicles of re-awakening the mind.
11. We should join to salvage the situation wherever there is crisis in the nation.

ASSIGNMENT

List the enemies of the Jews in this lesson