

Nehemiah

Return,

Rebuild,

Revive

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Title of the Book

- Ezra-Nehemiah were originally one book in the Hebrew Bible
- “Nehemiah” means “comforted by the Lord (Yahweh)”

Historical Background

- Covers 12 years from the 20th year of Artaxerxes to the close of Old Testament revelation (444-432 BC)
- Nehemiah led the third return in 444
 - ~94 years after the first return
 - 13 years after the second return

Nehemiah, the Man

- Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer, or we might say the personal aide, of King Artaxerxes I (465–424 BC) at the royal city of Shushan (Susa)
 - Shushan, a winter capital for Persian kings, was about 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf in present day Iran
 - As cupbearer he occupied the closest position to the king (1:11)

Nehemiah, the Man

- He got the report that Jerusalem and the people were in danger of being overrun and destroyed (1:3)
 - The city walls and gates were still destroyed
 - The citizens had no defense against the enemy and their morale was low
- Nehemiah wept, mourned, fasted and prayed (1:4)

Nehemiah, the Man

- He prayed based on God's character (1:5-11)
 - Confessed the nation's sins (1:6-7)
 - Interceded for God's people based on God's promises to Israel (1:5, 8-10)
- Acted by seeking the king's permission to go to Judah (2:1-7)
- Planned the trip to Judah (2:7-10)

Nehemiah, the Man

- Inspected the situation in Jerusalem (2:11-16)
- Planned for action (2:17-20)
- Chose and assigned workers (ch. 3)
- Prayed (4:4-9)
- Set up an intelligence force and guards (4:9-13)

Nehemiah, the Man

- Armed the citizens and workers and set up a communications system (4:14-23)
- Encouraged the remnant (4:14)
- Stopped economic extortion (ch. 5)
- Did not fall to the propaganda, threats, intimidation and treachery of the enemies (chs. 4-6)

Nehemiah, the Man

- Completed the job in such a way that honored God (6:15-16)
- Organized guards against continued threats (7:1-3)
- Organized the citizens (ch. 7)
- Encouraged teaching of the Scriptures (ch. 8)

Key Words

- **Priest, priests, priestly, priesthood**
 - 47 times (2:16; 3:28; 9:34; 13:28-30)
- **Wall, 32 times (1:3; 2:17; 4:6; 6:15)**
- **Law/laws, 21 times**
 - 8:1-3, 7-9, 13-14, 18; 9:3, 13-14
- **Hand, hands, 18 times**
 - 1:10; 2:8, 18; 4:17; 6:9; 8:6

Key Phrase

- Remember me, my God
 - 5:19; 13:14, 22, 31

Verses to Remember

- 4:6
- 6:15-16 (September 21, 444 BC)
- 8:8, 10

Chapters to Remember

Chapters 8 & 9

- Reading and hearing God's Word from morning until midday (8:3)
- “Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God” (8:18)
- Reading God's Law, confessing and worshiping (ch. 9)

Overview Outline

- Chs. 1-2: Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem from Persia**
- Chs. 3-7: Nehemiah leads the reconstruction of Jerusalem's gates and wall**
- Chs. 8-13: Ezra & Nehemiah lead spiritual revival and reform**

Outline by Chapter

Ch. 1: News and prayer

Ch. 2: Return and assessing the walls

Ch. 3: Gates built and repaired

Ch. 4: Prayer, leadership, weapons

Ch. 5: Rebukes leaders' extortion

Ch. 6: Wall completed

Ch. 7: Zerubbabel's census

Outline by Chapter

Ch. 8: Ezra teaches the Law

Ch. 9: Repentance and praise

Ch. 10: Allegiance to the Law

Ch. 11: People who lived Jerusalem

Ch. 12: Census and dedication of the wall

Ch. 13: Priesthood reform, Sabbath,
marriage

Applications

- Does the Word of God direct my life?
 - Ezra taught God's Word and the people accepted it
- Does how I view the world come from the Scriptures or from the world system?
- What kind of leaders do I want in the U.S.? Do I choose and support leaders who give spiritual, political and military leadership based on the Scriptures?

Applications

- God uses people who have different abilities, personalities and gifts to do his work—and that includes each of us
- God cannot use me as he wishes if I am not true to him (13:4, 7)
- If I am not doing what I should, I hinder others who are doing good from doing all the good they can (13:8)

Personal Application

- May God give me a compassionate heart filled with strength and zeal to do God's will like that of Nehemiah

Trivia

In what chapter does Nehemiah pull out some people's hair?

Chapter 13 (v. 25)

Memory Verse Review ***(1 Kings—Ezra)***

- 1 Kings 22:14—“As the Lord lives...”
- 2 Kings 7:9—“We are not...”
- 1 Chron. 29:5b—“Who then...?”
- 2 Chron. 7:14—“If My people...”
- Ezra 7:10—“For Ezra...”

Memory Verse for Nehemiah

8:8

“So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading”