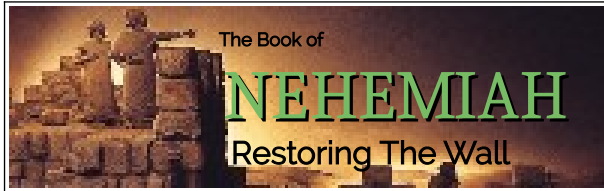


A TIME TO BUILD

Let us rise up and build ... Nehemiah 2:18



The Broken Wall
Nehemiah 1
Lesson 9

Background Information

Have you ever thought how the life of one person affects the lives of the others it touches? Times of trial require godly leadership. Nehemiah was a man that God used to shape a nation. His godly influence displayed courage, wisdom, faithfulness and leadership in the face of opposition and danger. He showed a nation how to face criticism, and opposition with courage. *"Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear."* Franklin D. Roosevelt

Jerusalem still lay in ruins from its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar 140 years earlier. A city that had its walls and gates broken down was entirely vulnerable to outside aggression. The exiles who heard the call to return and rebuild the city were unprepared to face the challenge that lay ahead of them. The returning Jews displayed spiritual lethargy and cold-hearted indifference toward God. It took a strong godly leader like Nehemiah to motivate the people to stand against the attacks and obey God's Word to rebuild. Nehemiah led the last of the three waves of returnees, with the intention of rebuilding the walls to protect the city.

Nehemiah occupied a prominent position in the emperor's court, he was the cupbearer to the king. He had direct access to the king and thus had great influence. Artaxerxes allowed the Jews to return to the land to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Rebuilding the walls was only part of the reconstruction needed among God's people. Even more necessary was the re-institution of the Law. Ezra the priest and scribe partnered with Nehemiah in order to teach the people God's law. The wall of the city would mean nothing without the wall of the Law surrounding the people.

Treasures of the Heart

Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.

Pr... 25:28

What does it say?

The first step is getting the lay of the land. Carefully observe the text looking to see where you might dig to find hidden treasure. Studying a narrative requires following the key characters and paying special attention to what God says and does. Mark your text looking for repeated words, contrasts or similarities. **Does a key verse stand out in each section?** Look for answers to: Who? What? When? Where? Why or How?

Nehemiah 1:1-3

1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah.

It came to pass in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel,
2 that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3 And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."

Digging Deeper

Dig deeper using other resources such as a dictionary, concordance, maps and cross-references. **Notate** where you found it to share with the group. Look for commands to obey or questions to be answered. **What does God want you to know about Himself?**

Something to think about when looking up a word or topic: *The principle of first mention teaches that the first time a word or phrase appears in Scripture often establishes a precedent, pattern, or biblical concept that occurs throughout the rest of the Bible. Be careful not to ignore the context.*

Nehemiah 1:4-11

4 So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

5 And I said: "I pray, Lord God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, 6 please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. 7 We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. 8 Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; 9 but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.' 10 Now these are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power, and by Your strong hand. 11 O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." For I was the king's cupbearer.

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What does it mean?

What lesson can I draw from my observations? Ask yourself, "What was the intended meaning of the original author?" Is there a command to obey, a warning to heed, or an example to follow or avoid? State each lesson in a simple sentence that you could share with someone else.

(aim for 10 words or less)

Nehemiah 1:1-4 _____

Nehemiah 1:4-11 _____

How can I apply it?

Ask yourself, "What course of action do I need to take to apply each lesson?" How should it change me? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions?

(aim for 10 words or less)

Nehemiah 1:1-4 _____

Nehemiah 1:4-11 _____

What did God say?

See if you can discover what God wants us to understand about His character and His ways? Which of His attributes is He displaying? When we are questioning the circumstances that surround us, understanding Who God is helps us trust Him when we don't see Him working. Simply state what God is trying to communicate about Himself **and how it affects your thinking**.

What words or phrases are repeated? Repeated words help us discover the main point.

Getting the point!

Discover the "Big Idea" of each section. The main point of the passage is like a topic sentence in a paragraph. See if you can boil down the meaning of each section into one or two words. This helps you fully understand what the author is trying to convey. (It's fun to alliterate if you want to try) Did you find the "Big Idea"

Nehemiah 1:1-4 _____

Nehemiah 1:4-11 _____

Title

State the main point of the entire passage in the form of a title.

Flex Your Muscles

From your title Can you discover a N.T. example of this O.T. truth?

Time to build

Take note of how Nehemiah prepared and planned. Ask yourself, how did he attack each challenge? How did it affect those who interacted with him? What building materials did he use? (prayer, confrontation, standing firm, waiting etc.) **What did you learn that can help you next time you meet an obstacle?**

Radiating His Truth

One man made a difference! God is still seeking men and women willing to sacrifice to do His work. Are you available?

Warren Wiersbe



Message Notes

Lined writing area for notes, consisting of 30 horizontal dashed lines.