



### Prayer in Nehemiah

Nehemiah is often used as an example of leadership, and rightfully so. Many of the traits and characteristics of Nehemiah would help leaders in various positions. One of the greatest traits about Nehemiah though is his habit of praying. Throughout the book which tells his story, we see prayer quite frequently. Nehemiah wasn't a man that simply said he trusted in God; he truly placed his trust in Him! That's seen in the

frequent use of prayer when Nehemiah faced various trials. When Nehemiah first heard about the plight of his kinsmen in Jerusalem, his first action was to pray. Chapter 1:5-11 records this great prayer, which in and of itself can teach us many lessons on prayer. In chapter 2, Nehemiah was questioned by the king as to why he looked sad. This could be a potentially dangerous situation. Upsetting the king or asking favors from him he didn't like could get a person in big trouble. Before Nehemiah responded, it says he prayed to the God of heaven. It may have been a short, quick prayer, but it was the right response! When enemies mocked and discouraged the work of rebuilding the wall, Nehemiah prayed to God for strength and triumph (4:4-5). In chapter 5:19, a short prayer is inserted in which Nehemiah requests God to remember him and his work for the people. He didn't look for praise from men, but sought to please God. In chapter six he prayed for strength (6:9) and concerning his enemies (6:14). And the closing chapter (13) contains repeated calls by Nehemiah for God to remember him. In fact, the final verse is a fitting capstone to the book and the story of Nehemiah: "Remember me, O my god, for good!" Whether we are leaders or not, we can all learn from Nehemiah's prayerfulness. Whatever our circumstances and whatever challenges lay before us, we can always find solace in praying to the almighty God!

### Questions

1. What did Nehemiah do in addition to praying when he first heard about the danger Jerusalem faced? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Nehemiah was cupbearer to which Persian king? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the first section of the wall that was rebuilt by the high priest Eliashib and the other priests? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Half of the servants worked on \_\_\_\_\_ while the other half held \_\_\_\_\_ while the wall was being built.
5. How many years was Nehemiah the governor of the land of Judah? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many days did it take to finish the building of the wall? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Who read the Law of Moses to the people who gathered in the square before the water gate? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What feast did the people celebrate after they heard the Law read? \_\_\_\_\_
9. The people living in the outlying villages cast lots to send \_\_\_\_\_ out of every \_\_\_\_\_ people to live in Jerusalem.
10. What reforms did Nehemiah make on his second return to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_



### Nehemiah

#### Rebuilding Walls and Restoring Faith

#### Overview

In 538 B.C. the Jews were allowed to return to their homeland and Jerusalem. While it took time, leadership, and encouragement, they rebuilt the city and the temple that had been destroyed by the Babylonians. Eighty years later Ezra led a second wave back to Jerusalem and he led religious restoration. Roughly 13 years later, there was still restoring to do. The walls of Jerusalem were in shambles, leaving the city exposed to enemies. Nehemiah—a Jew who served as cupbearer to the king of Persia, requested permission to return to Jerusalem to help his people. The king granted the request, and one of the greatest stories of leadership, perseverance, and trust in God ensued. Under Nehemiah's leadership, the people of Jerusalem rallied together and built the city's wall, despite serious threats from enemies, in an amazingly short time. The book of Nehemiah is not just about rebuilding a wall, however. It also continues the story of the spiritual rebuilding and restoration of God's people.

#### Suggested Reading Schedule

- Monday: Nehemiah 1-3
- Tuesday: Nehemiah 4-6
- Wednesday: Nehemiah 7-8
- Thursday: Nehemiah 9-11
- Friday: Nehemiah 12-13

#### Overcoming Discouragement and Persecution

The story of Nehemiah is a story of perseverance, bravery, and trust in God. All along the way, Nehemiah and the people he led faced danger and opposition. They had plenty of opportunities to throw in the towel or cower from the work, but they didn't. When Nehemiah began the project of rebuilding the city's walls, there were those who opposed the task. Neighboring people wanted to keep Jerusalem weak, and thus opposed this project which would clearly help the city. To discourage the work, they tried several ploys. First, they questioned the work (2:19). Often people try to cause doubt among God's people. Next they mocked the work (4:1-3). If they couldn't cause doubt, they'd try to cause a sense of shame and defeat. Then they began physically persecuting the work (4:7-11). They even attempted to kill Nehemiah at one point (6:1-2). When all that had failed, they tried to defame Nehemiah, but to no avail (6:5-7). Then they tried to deceive Nehemiah into wrongdoing (6:10-13), but once more they failed. Christians today can expect similar treatment. There will always be those who oppose the truth. They will try to make us doubt, they will mock us, and they may even persecute us. They will seek to defame us, and even try to get us to go along with their sin. Like Nehemiah, we must place our trust in God and just keep working for the Lord!

#### Outline of Nehemiah

The book of Nehemiah covers a period of roughly 19 years. It is divided into two main sections. The first portion of the book recount the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem. The second portion focuses on the spiritual rebuilding that took place under the leadership of Nehemiah and Ezra.

#### Rebuilding the Wall (Nehemiah 1-6)

*Nehemiah's Return to Jerusalem (1-2)*

*The Rebuilding of the City Wall (3-6)*

#### Restoration of the People (Nehemiah 7-13)

*The Renewal of the Covenant (7-10)*

*Obedience to the Covenant (11-13)*



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