



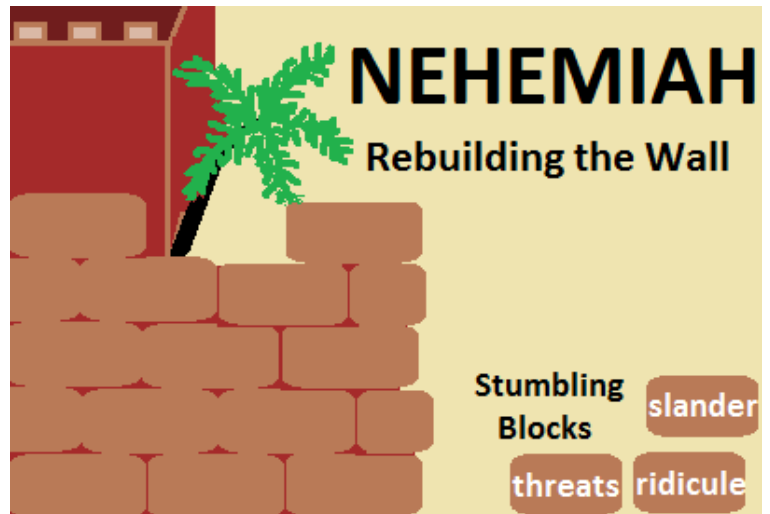
Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart.”

Course Text: Nehemiah

The book of Nehemiah starts about ten years or so after Ezra ends, or around 445 B.C. The book of Nehemiah covers a period of about fifteen or twenty years. It describes how the walls of Jerusalem are rebuilt and how Ezra and Nehemiah establish a new order for the returned exiles.

Nehemiah was a Jew but he had not gone with Zerubbabel or Ezra back to Judah. He was working for the King of Persia. His job was to serve the King Artaxerxes'

wine. That meant that he would pour the wine from the original container and bring it to the king. Once there, he would taste it, while the king watched, to assure the king, that it had not been poisoned. As the book opens, Nehemiah's brother, who had returned with the exiles, comes from Judah for a visit. This chart may help you with the context of this book.



The Kings of Persia

Date B.C	Bible Name	Bible Passage	Secular History Name
539-530	Cyrus	Isaiah 45, Daniel, Ezra 1-3	Cyrus
530-521	Ahasruerus	Ezra 4-6	Cambyses
521	Artaxerxes	Ezra 4:7-23	Pseudo Smerdis
521-486	Darius	Ezra 5,6	Darius the Great
486-465	Ahasruerus	Esther 1-10	Xerxes
464-423	Artaxerxes	Ezra 7-10, Nehemiah 1 - 13	Artaxerxes I

Read Nehemiah and answer the questions on the following pages.

Suggested methodology:

1. Let the students have a copy of the lesson well before the class meets. (Perhaps the previous meeting)
2. The students read the Bible book and answer the questions in this lesson before the group meets.
3. At the class meeting allow time for greetings and fellowship. (Save most of this for the end)
4. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
5. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
6. Discuss the questions on the page 9. Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers, when provided, are just one opinion; you may have a better answer. It might be good to establish the norm that only those who have actually read the book should discuss it aloud.
7. Discuss whatever other questions people have on their mind about the Nehemiah.
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)

Depending on the number of people, this class is expected to take about two hours.

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Read Nehemiah Chapters 1 to 4 and answer these questions.

CHAPTER I

Nehemiah's brother, Hanani, brings a poor report of the condition of Jerusalem. This touches Nehemiah's heart and he fasts and prays about the situation. He believes someone should do something about the problems there, and as he prays realizes, that someone is himself.

Read Nehemiah 1 and answer the following questions:

[1A] What had happened to the gates of Jerusalem? _____

[1B] In his prayer, did Nehemiah claim the Jews deserved God's help? _____

[1C] On what basis did he appeal for God's help? _____

CHAPTER II

When the King notices Nehemiah's sadness Nehemiah takes the opportunity to ask that the king authorize him to go work on rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. The king agrees and Nehemiah goes. The local officials are not happy about having someone from the capital trying to do anything good for the Jews. Nehemiah inspects the broken down walls and lays his plans in secret. Once he is ready, he enlists the aid of those needed for the work.

Read Nehemiah 2 and answer the following questions:

Nehemiah asks for two kinds of letters. What are they?

[2A] _____

[2B] _____



CHAPTER III

Nehemiah organizes the workers and assigns the places to work on the wall, starting with the gates.

Read Nehemiah 3 and answer the following question:

[3A] Who worked on the part of the wall between the tomb of David and the house of the mighty men? _____

CHAPTER IV

Some of the local government officials and the leaders of the Arabs, Ammonites, and Ashdodites, who had moved in while the Jews were in captivity, made fun of the work. When this discouragement did not work, and the wall began to take shape, they started making plans to attack Jerusalem. When Nehemiah heard this, he took steps to defend the city against attack.

Read Nehemiah 4 and answer the following questions:

What were the names of the two main spokesmen of the Jews' enemies.

[4A] _____ and [4B] _____

[4C] What did each of the workers wear on his side? _____

----- ANSWERS -----

[1A] What had happened to the gates of Jerusalem? They had been burned Neh 1:3

[1B] In his prayer, did Nehemiah claim the Jews deserved God's help? No Neh 1:6-7

[1C] On what basis did he appeal for God's help? God's promises Neh 1:8-9

[2A] Letters to the governors of the provinces in between for safe passage. Neh 2:7

[2B] A letter to the manager of the King's forest for permission to cut lumber for the wall. Neh 2:8

[3A] Who worked on the part of the wall between the tomb of David and the house of the mighty men?

Nehemiah the son of Azbuk Neh 3:16. This is not the author of this book, who was the son of Hachaliah. Nehemiah the son of Azbuk may have been the Nehemiah mentioned in Ezra 2:2.

What were the names of the two main spokesmen of the Jews' enemies?

[4A] Sanballat Neh 4:1 and [4B] Tobiah Neh 4:3

[4C] What did each of the workers wear on his side? A sword Neh 4:18

Some additional notes about Nehemiah: <http://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-Nehemiah.html>

Brief Summary: Nehemiah was a Hebrew in Persia when the word reached him that the Temple in Jerusalem was being reconstructed. He grew anxious knowing there was no wall to protect the city. Nehemiah invited God to use him to save the city. God answered his prayer by softening the heart of the Persian king, Artaxerxes, who gave not only his blessing, but also supplies to be used in the project. Nehemiah is given permission by the king to return to Jerusalem, where he is made governor.

In spite of opposition and accusations the wall was built and the enemies silenced. The people, inspired by Nehemiah, give tithes of much money, supplies and manpower to complete the wall in a remarkable 52 days, despite much opposition. This united effort is short-lived, however, because Jerusalem falls back into apostasy when Nehemiah leaves for a while. After 12 years he returned to find the walls strong but the people weak. He set about the task of teaching the people morality and he didn't mince words. "I argued with those people, put curses on them, hit some of them and pulled out their hair" (13:25). He reestablishes true worship through prayer and by encouraging the people to revival by reading and adhering to the Word of God.

Practical Application: Nehemiah led the Israelites into a respect and love for the text of Scripture. Nehemiah, because of his love for God and his desire to see God honored and glorified, led the Israelites towards the faith and obedience God had desired for them for so long. In the same way, Christians are to love and revere the truths of Scripture, commit them to memory, meditate on them day and night, and turn to them for the fulfillment of every spiritual need. Second Timothy 3:16 tells us, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." If we expect to experience the spiritual revival of the Israelites (Nehemiah 8:1-8), we must begin with God's Word.

Each of us ought to have genuine compassion for others who have spiritual or physical hurts. To feel compassion, yet do nothing to help, is unfounded biblically. At times we may have to give up our own comfort in order to minister properly to others. We must totally believe in a cause before we will give our time or money to it with the right heart. When we allow God to minister through us, even unbelievers will know it is God's work.

Read Nehemiah Chapters 5 to 9 and answer these questions.

CHAPTER V

The people working on the walls and their families began to experience some hardships because of the time it was taking away from their regular work. They were going into debt to meet their expenses. Nehemiah appealed to the people who were loaning money and foreclosing on the workers to stop and they agreed. He also used his office to help.

Read Nehemiah 5 and answer the following questions:

[5A] How did Nehemiah feel when he heard of he abuses of the lenders?

[5B] How long was Nehemiah governor as described in this chapter? _____

CHAPTER VI

Nehemiah's enemies tried to trick him into coming to an ambush. They threatened to tell lies about him to the king. They had spies try to get him to act contrary to God's will. None of it worked. The wall was finished.

Read Nehemiah 6 and answer the following question:

[6A] Who was the spy that tried to trick Nehemiah? _____

CHAPTER VII

Appointments to office. A census of those who came with Zerubbabel. A record of temple giving. Read Nehemiah 7 and answer the following question:

[7A] How much money did the Nehemiah give to the temple treasury?

CHAPTER VIII

Ezra reads the law of Moses to the people. The Feast of Booths is celebrated.

Read Nehemiah 8 and answer the following questions:

[8A] What are the two offices held by Ezra?
_____ and _____

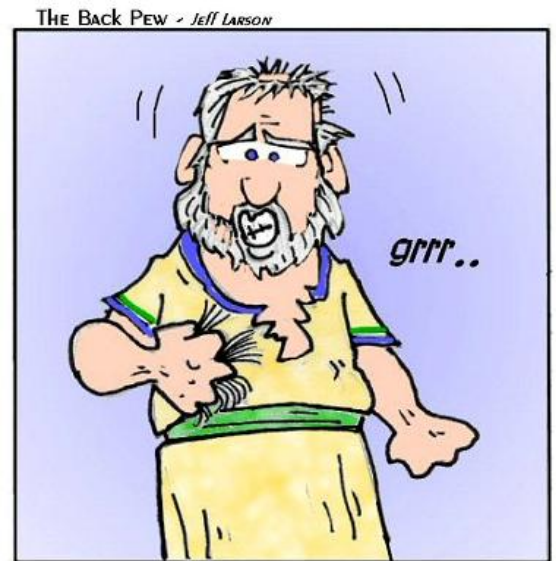
[8B] How long does the Feast of Booths last?

CHAPTER IX

God's law is read, the people confess their sins, and worship the Lord. The specific words of praise of some of the Levites is recorded here. They make a covenant with God and sign it.

Read Nehemiah 9 and answer the following question:

[9A] How long did they read the law of the Lord? _____



After Ezra learned the people were doing wrong.. He angrily tore his robe, pulled out hair from his head and beard. It was a HOLY TANTRUM. **Ezra 9:1-4**

----- ANSWERS -----

[5A] How did Nehemiah feel when he heard of the abuses of the lenders? He was very angry. Neh 5:6

[5B] How long was Nehemiah governor as described in this chapter? 12 years Neh 5:14

[6A] Who was the spy that tried to trick Nehemiah? Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel Neh 6:10

[7A] How much money did the Nehemiah give to the temple treasury? 1,000 gold drachmas Neh 7:70

[8A] What are the two offices held by Ezra? Priest and scribe Neh 8:1-2

[8B] How long does the Feast of Booths last? 8 days Neh 8:18

[9A] How long did they read the law of the Lord? Fourth of the day. Neh 9:3

Some additional notes on Nehemiah from : <http://www.gotquestions.org/life-Nehemiah.html>

Ezra and Nehemiah were contemporaries, and they both wrote about the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which occurred many years after its destruction by the Babylonians, led by Nebuchadnezzar. Ezra wrote about the rebuilding of the temple under Zerubbabel, while Nehemiah wrote concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls. From ancient times, the cities located in the Middle East were surrounded by stone walls with gates that were guarded for the protection of the citizens. The important men of each city would gather at the gate where they would conduct the business of the city, share important information, or just pass the time of day.

Nehemiah's account begins in 445 B.C., and this date is important because the prophet Daniel, a contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah, wrote the "70 weeks of years" prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27) based on a very specific date—March 15, 445 B.C. This date is crucial to the beginning of the prophecy; it kicks off the start of the timeframe, which ends with the second coming of Jesus Christ. This prophecy was written long before Jesus came the first time, but it continues through those years leading up to His being "cut off." It gives details about the antichrist, how he will come onto the world scene, and how he will move against Israel in his final assault on God and His people.

Daniel's prophecy is found in Daniel 9:25: "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble." Little did Nehemiah know that he was fulfilling the prophecy written by Daniel, but this faithful servant, who was also captive in Babylon at the time, begins his writings with intercessory prayer for his people, Israel, just as Daniel constantly prayed on their behalf, beseeching God to have mercy on them and return them to their homeland. Nehemiah listed specific dates, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in order that there might be a written record as to the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem.

Read Nehemiah Chapters 10 to 13 and answer these questions.

CHAPTER X

The signers of the covenant are listed. The obligations of the covenant are described. Read Nehemiah 10 and answer the following questions:

[10A] What is the marriage restriction of the covenant. _____

[10B] Where are the first fruits to be taken? _____

CHAPTER XI

The people go to their homes. Certain officers are appointed. Read Nehemiah 11 and answer the following question:

[11A] How many of the people lived in Jerusalem? _____

CHAPTER XII

The priests and Levites who have the duty and privilege of serving in the temple are listed. There is a celebration. Two choirs march around the top of the wall singing and then come together at the temple to complete the celebration.

Read Nehemiah 12 and answer the following question:

[12A] What were they celebrating? _____

CHAPTER XIII

Perhaps because of the commitment he had made in or for some other reason Nehemiah left Jerusalem and went back the capital of the empire. He came back to Judah and found everything going wrong. He took steps to get it corrected.

Read Nehemiah 13 and answer the following questions:

[13A] What did Nehemiah do to Tobiah?



Nehemiah found the people breaking what other three things they had agreed to in the covenant.

[13B] _____

[13C] _____

[13D] _____

----- ANSWERS -----

[10A] What is the marriage restriction of the covenant. They are only to marry each other. Neh 10:30

[10B] Where are the first fruits to be taken? To the house of the Lord Neh 10:35

[11A] How many of the people lived in Jerusalem? 1 in 10. Neh 11.1

[12A] What were they celebrating? The completion of the wall Neh 12:27

[13A] What did Nehemiah do to Tobiah? Threw his things out Neh 13:8

Nehemiah found the people breaking what other three things they had agreed to in the covenant.

[13B] Bringing offerings and tithes into the Lord's house Neh 13:10-14

[13C] Keeping the Sabbath Neh 13:15-22

[13D] Not marrying foreigners Neh 13:23-28

Some additional notes on Nehemiah from : <http://www.gotquestions.org/life-Nehemiah.html>

Before he asked the king's permission to rebuild Jerusalem's walls, Nehemiah prayed, and God granted his request. As he was leaving Babylon, he met some Arab men who mocked him for what he was about to do. Nehemiah 2:20 records his statement, which stands even today as a testament to who has the right to the city known as Jerusalem: "I answered them by saying, 'The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it.'"

Nehemiah continued in his quest to rebuild Jerusalem. God provided all the necessary workers, and the building began. However, they were not without enemies, those who desired to stop the rebuilding. But God intervened as He had done with Moses (Exodus 14:14). Nehemiah 4:20 records, "Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!" This was God's pre-ordained plan to bring His people out of bondage and back into their land to worship in the temple once again.

We can learn from the life of Nehemiah valuable lessons in restoring and maintaining a relationship with God. As the people returned to the rebuilt city, the first order of business was to make certain that they understood the Law of Moses. So Ezra, a priest, spent many hours reading the Law before the assembly, making sure they understood what God desired. Nehemiah 8:18 records what should be part of every believer's life, the daily reading of God's Word: "Day after day, from the first day to the last, Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God. They celebrated the feast for seven days, and on the eighth day, in accordance with the regulation, there was an assembly."

Nehemiah stands as a testament to faithfulness and perseverance. He lived far away from his home, yet he never gave up hope that someday he would return to it. He spent most of his life in exile in a pagan land, yet he never wavered in his faith and trust in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was a prayer warrior, putting everything before the Lord in prayer, interceding on behalf of his people, and he was rewarded for his diligence and perseverance. Nehemiah cared so much for his people that he never gave up the hope of their restoration, not only to their homeland, but to the God that first called their forefather, Abraham, out of the same area and made a covenant with him, one which Nehemiah believed would stand forever.

(1) Many have had experiences similar to Nehemiah's in chapter I. They become concerned about a problem, and when they pray, they discover their concern is a message from God to get involved in the solution to the problem. Has something like this ever happened to you? If so, please describe it? If not, have you ever fasted and prayed about something? If so, what happened? If you have never fasted and prayed, why not?

Think & Pray _____

(2) Many see in Nehemiah a "type" or foreshadowing of Jesus Christ. Nehemiah came from a distant capital, where he sat with the emperor, like Jesus came from distant Heaven and the throne room of God the Father. Nehemiah and Jesus both established new nations; Judah and the Church. They both had forerunners that began the work; Ezra and John the Baptist. When Nehemiah left to go back to the emperor things fell into disarray, but he came back, and straightened things out. Jesus ascended to the Father, but when He comes back, He will straighten things out. Do you agree with "type" or "foreshadowing" idea? Why, or why not?

Think & Pray _____

(3) Which verse or passage would you select to memorize from Nehemiah? Why?

Think & Pray _____

(4) How can the lessons of Nehemiah be applied to our own life?

Think & Pray _____

(5) If someone asked you what Nehemiah was about what would you say?

Think & Pray _____

If you have any questions about Nehemiah, please discuss them with your classmates.

----- ANSWERS -----

(1) **Prayer & Action** I found myself complaining one day that there was not enough activities for the youth in the church we were attending at the time. I realized that was a bad thing to do and started praying instead. Before long I was involved in youth ministry. So, turn your complaints into prayers, and God will turn your prayers into solutions.

(2) **Foreshadowing of Jesus Christ** I think looking for types of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament is fun and faith encouraging. I believe there are dozens of them and that they can be found in every Old Testament book. We have an entire series of courses built on this concept called the Road to Emmaus Series. It is based on what Jesus said to the disciples on the road to the village of Emmaus. Luke 24:27 "Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." (See also 1st Corinthians 10:1-13) We have several courses complete and plan to eventually have a course for each book in the Bible.

Some additional notes about Nehemiah: <http://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-Nehemiah.html>
"Nehemiah was a man of prayer and he prayed passionately for his people (Nehemiah 1). His zealous intercession for God's people foreshadows our great Intercessor, Jesus Christ, who prayed fervently for His people in His high-priestly prayer in John 17. Both Nehemiah and Jesus had a burning love for God's people which they poured out in prayer to God, interceding for them before the throne."

(3) **Verse to Remember:** I like two, the model prayer in Neh 1:11, because it is good to use before job interviews, court appearances & such like, as well as Neh 8:10 because it ends in the profound statement: "... for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Nehemiah 1:11 "O Lord, I beseech You, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name, and make Your servant successful today and grant him compassion before this man."

Nehemiah 8:10 Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

(4) **Life Lesson** I have always been inspired by the story of them building the wall in the face of so much opposition. It was truly the hand of God. They use that passage in the movie "Facing the Giants," which is one of my favorites. It reminds me of some of the secular proverbs like "Just do it," and "Just keep on keeping on." Nothing is impossible if God is in it.

(5) **Nehemiah** Nehemiah is the last book of history of God's people in the Old Testament. It describes how the walls of Jerusalem are rebuilt and how Ezra and Nehemiah establish a new order for the returned exiles. The power of God is demonstrated once again through and for His people. I'm so glad I'm one of His people.