

The book of



chapters

1-2

## Day 1

1. The book of Nehemiah continues the story of the Israelites return to their homeland. Israel had been rebellious, despite the warnings of the prophets, they refused to repent. Because of their rebellion, the entire nation went into captivity for seventy years. At the end of God's appointed time, the Lord put it on King Cyrus' heart to grant permission that any who desired to return to Jerusalem could go and rebuild their temple. The book of Ezra described the return of the people in two separate events. The first was under the leadership of Zerubbabel (538 BC) and the second under the direction of Ezra (458 BC). A little over a decade later Nehemiah, the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, receives a report concerning the city of Jerusalem. Read Nehemiah 1-2 at least twice and then begin the study guide.

If you would like to see a quick fly-over of the entire book checkout Bible Project Ezra-Nehemiah on YouVersion Bible App. (8:41 minute video)

2. What date is noted in Nehemiah 1:1, "in the \_\_\_\_\_ year" This is a reference to the years of which Persian king? (Nehemiah 2:1)

3. Where is Nehemiah when the book opens?

4. Who came to see Nehemiah?

5. These men would have been welcome visitors for a man like Nehemiah. They had been to the land of Judah and would have had firsthand knowledge of the conditions there. What might have been some of Nehemiah's questions that day?

6. Specifically, what news was shared with Nehemiah?

7. It has been 70+ years since the first Israelites returned to their homeland. The temple construction has been completed for over 50 years. How do you believe Nehemiah pictured life in Jerusalem?

What was Nehemiah's response to the news he received?

8. Think of the last time you heard distressing news. Even if it was not something going on in your part of the world, what effect did this news have on you emotionally?

9. We all can have a heavy heart from time to time. Sadness and tears are a very normal response to distressing news. It is what we do next that reveals our focus and our character. What did Nehemiah do? (Nehemiah 1: 4)

He \_\_\_\_\_

He \_\_\_\_\_

He \_\_\_\_\_

He \_\_\_\_\_

Day 2

10. It is imperative for us to get to know the character of our God. An intimate relationship with Him is not only a joy for our day but a necessity when we do receive distressing news. According to verse 5, what did Nehemiah know about his God?

What firm foundational truth did he depend on?

11. Define the word "covenant." This is the Hebrew word *Beriyth*.

12. There are different types of covenants mentioned in the Bible. There are covenants between men. There are covenants between God and His people, Israel. And there is a covenant between God and Believers written about in the New Testament. Covenants between men do not always stand the test of time. Can you think of a covenant God has failed to keep?

13. The Israelites followed the law given to Moses and brought their sacrifices and offerings to the temple. God would see their faith and cleanse them so they could once again enjoy his favor. But the law was unable to change hearts, so it was a continual problem. Read Romans 3:19-20 and Romans 7:7. The law of Moses had a very important purpose; what was the purpose of the law?

14. Read Hebrews 7:22, Romans 6:23; John 1:29. Why is the New Covenant better than the first covenant?

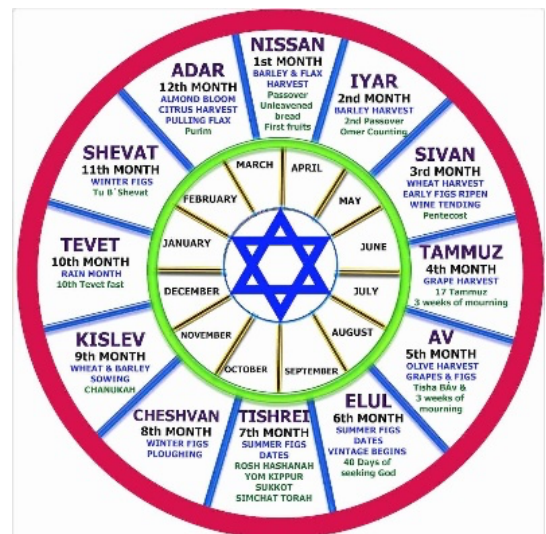
15. Having a good understanding of God’s covenant is basic for true faith. Read Hebrews 11:1, 1 Peter 1:3, and Romans 15:13. When we experience God’s covenant relationship, what do we receive?

16. Now let’s take a few minutes to look at the prayer of this godly leader. This is the first of several prayers in the book of Nehemiah. I love listening to strong believers pray. Their prayers are heartfelt and faith building. What were Nehemiah’s requests in verse 6-11?

17. Using the Jewish calendar below, approximately how long was Nehemiah grieved over the news of Jerusalem?

(Nehemiah 1:1, 2:1) What do you believe Nehemiah was doing during this period?

We would save ourselves much pain if we took a lesson here and not get in a rush. It is always a good idea to take the time to talk to God and wait to hear his plan.



Day 3

21. In Nehemiah 1:8-10, Nehemiah directs attention back to the days of Moses. God had given them very clear instructions; obedience will bring God's blessings and disobedience will bring correction. The verses Nehemiah quoted should have been very familiar to the Israelites. He quoted from Leviticus 26:33, Deuteronomy 30:4-5, and Deuteronomy 9:29.

Who is Nehemiah talking to?

What is his reminder? (Nehemiah 1:10)

22. The truth is all hearts tend to wander. What effect might a reminder of God's word, his promises, and his judgements have on a wandering heart?

23. Fill in the blanks. (Nehemiah 1:11 NIV) "Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who \_\_\_\_\_ your name. Give your servant success today by granting him \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of this man."

I was cupbearer to the king.

What was Nehemiah's specific request?

24. Read 1 John 3:1, and 1 John 5:13-15. What has been lavished on all who follow Jesus?

What do Believers know that gives great confidence?

25. What are you asking God for today? Be as specific as you feel comfortable writing down.



26. Has God placed a difficult (perhaps even seemingly impossible) task on your heart?

27. What will it require for you to be successful accomplishing all God has called you to do?

28. What was Nehemiah's position in service to the king?

29. What character qualities would be necessary to have this position of service?

30. List some of your God given assignments.

**Day 4**

31. In Nehemiah 2, the scene changes. Nehemiah is no longer with his friends praying. Where is he?

32. Even when we are sad and upset about something, we seldom have the option of crawling back into bed. The truth is, that would not be helpful anyway. Nehemiah went back to his duties, but he was still upset. After reading Nehemiah 2:1-2, what do you believe had been his attitude previously as he carried out his daily tasks?

33. Were you surprised by the words of this godly man to this Gentile king? (Nehemiah 2:3)

34. Do you believe this was simply a gracious salutation or did he mean the words he was saying?



35. This is a good place to pause and consider the importance of our words. Read each verse and then write a comment.

Proverbs 16:24

Proverbs 12:18

Luke 6:45

I have heard people apologize for sharp words by saying something like, “Oh, I’m sorry. I did not mean what I just said.” Considering the verses we have just read, how should we choose our words?

36. Read Proverbs 21:23, James 1:26 and 3:5; Psalm 34:13; Ephesians 4:29, Matthew 12:36. What did you learn about choosing words to say?

37. Read Galatians 5:22-25. What do our words reveal about our walk of faith?

38. In Nehemiah 2:2 what was the king’s question to Nehemiah?

39. Nehemiah 2:2 said, Nehemiah was “much afraid” when the king asked his question.

What might this imply about King Artaxerxes character?

40. Did you smile when you read the end of verse 4?

There was no time for some long prayer for favor, but it did not mean he would not pray. There is always time seek God’s help. What was Nehemiah’s request of the king?

Nehemiah began his reply with well wishes for the king.

Again, do you believe he is simply trying to endear himself to the king or did this man mean the words he said?





41. Godly men and women do not try to manipulate to get their way. You can trust their words. Are you a person who means what you say?

42. In Nehemiah 2:4, we see a key to finding success in time of need. What kind of reputation do you believe Nehemiah has in his service to the king?

43. The king has a few logistical questions for Nehemiah in verse 6, what were they?

44. Was Nehemiah asking the king to free him permanently from his responsibilities?

45. Read Nehemiah 2:8 again. Why did the king grant Nehemiah's request?

46. Would you say the favor of God is on you?  
Share in your group an experience of seeing God's favor on you.

**Day 5**

47. In Nehemiah 2:9, we see the king went above and beyond merely allowing Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem. What did he give him?

48. As is usually the case, not everyone is happy. Who was disturbed by the news that the welfare of the Israelites was of importance to anyone, especially King Artaxerxes?

What were the names of those disturbed by Nehemiah's presence?



49. After Nehemiah's long journey to Jerusalem, he rested for 3 days, just as Ezra had when he arrived. This was a long and tiring journey. Let's look at Nehemiah's clandestine operation. Nehemiah takes a core group with him during the night. What was the first step in this huge assignment they would be undertaking?

50. When we have an important assignment, it would serve us well to start by scoping the situation and finding the right key people. Let's pay close attention to the way Nehemiah carried out his assignment.

He sought God's favor. Nehemiah 1:5-11

He chose the right people for his core group. Nehemiah 2:12

He carefully saw for himself the magnitude of the problem. Nehemiah 2:12-15

He collected and analyzed the data. Nehemiah 2:17a

He spoke words of hope. Nehemiah 2:17b-18

Do you believe following these steps would help you successfully carry out your God given assignments?

51. Nehemiah shared the details of the problem with the officials of Jerusalem. In verse 17, he encourages them to join in the work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. What facts did he share with them?

52. Before one man even had the time to pick up a tool, what happened in verse 19?

Did this surprise you?

53. Not only were they ridiculed, which probably could have been overlooked, but Nehemiah's motives were called into question as well. These words could plant negativity and seeds of doubt if not addressed. What were they accused of by these three troublemakers?



54. Opposition is growing against the work. Write out the complete names given for these three troublemakers.

a.

b.

c.

55. What did you learn about the nationality of these three men?

Read Nehemiah 2:20, what part were these men to have in the rebuilding of the walls?

There are a variety of reasons others feel the liberty to give unsolicited advice and criticism. We do not have time to go into all of them today. Does unsolicited advice and criticism cause you stress?

How do you respond?

56. Can you recall a time you gave someone a bit of unsolicited advice? Was it appreciated?

Be honest with yourself for just a few minutes, what was your motive?



57. Knowing the truth about those who oppose or ridicule us does not make them go away, but it can lessen their ability to discourage us. Think about those who oppose or ridicule you for something God has called you to do. Does knowing it is really none of their business help you stand strong and continue in obedience?

What must we remember if we are to continue obediently following God's plan?

58. What does Nehemiah share with his opposition to assure them all their threats are idle and useless?

59. What might be a good response for us when we experience negative feedback or unsolicited advice?

How important is our inner conversation at this point?

Who are we accountable to?

See Nehemiah's answer in verse 20 "The \_\_\_\_\_ will give us success. We \_\_\_\_\_ servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have \_\_\_\_\_ share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it."



# Biblical References

## Day 2

### **Question 13 - Romans 3:19-20**

<sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup> Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

### **Romans 7:7**

What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."

### **Question 14 - Hebrews 7:22**

<sup>22</sup> Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant.

### **Romans 6:23**

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **John 1:29**

<sup>29</sup> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

### **Question 15 - Hebrews 11:1**

<sup>1</sup> Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

### **Peter 1:3**

<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

### **Romans 15:13**

<sup>13</sup> May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **Question 21 - Leviticus 26:33**

<sup>33</sup> I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins.

## Day 3

### **Deuteronomy 30:4-5**

<sup>4</sup> Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. <sup>5</sup> He will bring you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors.

### **Deuteronomy 9:29**

<sup>29</sup> But they are your people, your inheritance that you brought out by your great power and your outstretched arm."

### **Question 24 - 1 John 3:1**

<sup>1</sup>See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

### **1 John 5:13-15**

<sup>13</sup>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. <sup>14</sup>This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. <sup>15</sup>And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.



### **Question 35 - Proverbs 16:24**

“Kind words are like honey - sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.”

### **Proverbs 12:18**

The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

### **Luke 6:45**

A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

### **Question 36- Proverbs 21:23**

Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity.

### **James 1:26**

Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.

### **James 3:5**

Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.

### **Psalms 34:13**

Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies.

### **Ephesians 4:29**

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

### **Matthew 12:36**

“But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an account for it in the day of judgement.”

### **Question 37 - Galatians 5:22-25**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup>Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup>Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.