

## **Studying the Book of Nehemiah**

Why study the Book of Nehemiah? The Book of Nehemiah describes the role of Nehemiah as a faithful leader who can be compared to Joshua, guiding the returned exiles to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and re-dedicate their lives to God. Nehemiah was a man of prayer, wholly devoted to God and was committed to having God's people obey His covenants and worship Him in faith and truth.

The Book of Nehemiah was likely written mostly by Ezra, with the assistance of Nehemiah and completed by a later writer or editor. It covers the years 445 to 425 BC and is the last written record of the OT before what is known as the 400 years of silence by God between the OT and the beginning of the NT. The Hebrew Bible combines Ezra and Nehemiah into one book as these writings give an account of the 're-conquest' of the promised land by the returning exiles who looked forward to a renewed relationship with God.

### **Basic Outline of Nehemiah**

The Land of God Remembered: 1:1-2:20

The Walls of Jerusalem Rebuilt: 3:1-6:19

The People of God Renewed: 7:1-13:31

Themes of Nehemiah: (1) Being faithful to God's word and to prayer; (2) Being committed to rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem; (3) Trusting God to overcome opposition to achieve His purposes.

### **Brief Summary of Nehemiah.**

The Book of Nehemiah opens with Nehemiah, who was a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia, hearing of the dreadful conditions of the city of Jerusalem. Nehemiah prayed to God, confessing the sins of the Israelites and seeking God's direction regarding the city of Jerusalem. Nehemiah, after more prayer, asked king Artaxerxes if he (Nehemiah) could go to Jerusalem to rebuild it. Artaxerxes granted his request and Nehemiah along with many others travelled to Jerusalem and soon began the task of rebuilding the walls of the city. Amidst much opposition, the walls of the city were rebuilt.

Nehemiah who was governor in the land of Judah, also dealt with the oppression of the poor Jewish families by rich Jews who had taken away their land and enslaved their families, due to the exacting of impossibly high rates of interest on loans given to these poor people. Under Nehemiah's direction and admonition, the poor had their land returned to them along with the monies their rich oppressors had exacted from them. Nehemiah also had to deal with recurring opposition and plots against him by the enemies of the Jews.

Following the completion of the walls of Jerusalem, chapters 1-7, the leaders of the returned exiles, Ezra, Nehemiah and the Levites gave instruction to the people regarding living in accordance with the word of God. The Feast of Booths was celebrated, and the people confessed their sins and dedicated their lives to God. The walls of Jerusalem were dedicated to God and people were appointed to various roles in ministry to God. The final chapter of Nehemiah describes the situation of the people and the priesthood during the days when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem for a second term as governor. Nehemiah had to put things back in their rightful order as many had neglected the word and worship of God.

Some see a direct comparison with Nehemiah and Joshua. Refer to the introduction to Nehemiah, in the *Moody Bible Commentary*, Moody Publishers. 2014.

### **Verses to memorize from the Book of Nehemiah, (ESV).**

1:4 As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

1:11 O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.

8:10 Then he said to them, “Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

13:14 Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for his service.

### **Resources for studying the book of Nehemiah.**

See the article on how to study the Bible for suggestions on the method of Bible study and recommended resources to obtain. Suggested commentaries and studies are listed below for a more extensive study. Some are available on-line in a pdf format.

One Hour – One Book

Scroll down to video on Nehemiah.

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSrCJNW5eUWQMyVw\\_2VqW\\_w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSrCJNW5eUWQMyVw_2VqW_w)

### **Commentaries**

Breneman, Mervin. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. New American Commentary, Broadman & Holman, 1993.

Constable, Thomas. *Notes on Nehemiah*, latest edition. Online at Plano Bible Chapel.

Getz, Gene A. *Nehemiah*. The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Victor, Cook Communications, 2004.

Kidner, F. Derek. *Ezra and Nehemiah*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Inter-Varsity, 1979.

Laney, J. Carl. *Ezra and Nehemiah*. Everyman's Bible Commentary series. Moody Press, 1982.

Luck, G. Coleman. *Ezra and Nehemiah*. Moody press, 1961.

O’Neal, Bryan. *Nehemiah*. The Moody Bible Commentary. Moody Publishers. 2014.

Rata, Tiberius. *Ezra & Nehemiah: A Mentor Commentary*. Mentor. 2010.

Yamauchi, Edwin. *Ezra, Nehemiah*. The Expositor’s Bible Commentary. Vol 4. Zondervan, 1988.

### **Studies**

Barber, Cyril. *Nehemiah and the Dynamics of Effective Leadership*. Loizeaux Brothers, 1976.

Campbell, Donald K. *Nehemiah: Man in Charge*. Scripture Press Publications, Victor Books, 1979.

Chisholm, Robert B., Jr. *Interpreting the Historical Books: An Exegetical Handbook*. Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis series. Kregel Publications, 2006.

Dyer, Charles H., and Eugene H. Merrill. *Nelson's Old Testament Survey*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001.

Hanna, Kenneth G. *From Moses to Malachi: Exploring the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. CrossBooks, 2014.

Harrison, Roland K. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969.

Howard, David M., Jr. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books*. Moody Press, 1993.

Merrill, Eugene. H. *A Theology of Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther*. In *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*. Moody Press, 1991.