

NEHEMIAH

Lesson 1 - Chapter 1

The Book of Nehemiah begins fifteen years after the Book of Ezra ends, about one thousand years after the time of Moses and four hundred years before the birth of Christ. Jerusalem had been conquered by Babylon, but after seventy years of captivity in Babylon the Jews were given the opportunity to return to their homeland. Out of 2-3 million Jews, only 50,000 chose to return to the Promised Land and, in the days of Ezra, they rebuilt the temple, but then the work stopped. Now we come to Nehemiah, a cupbearer to the Persian king. This book begins with Nehemiah hearing devastating news about his homeland and goes on to tell us of his reaction. As you study these chapters you will see how God enabled Nehemiah to face the monumental task of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem.

Always begin your study with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to open your understanding to God's Word and to give you a heart and mind ready to receive all that God has for you in this chapter.

Memory Verse – This week's memory verse is 2 Chronicles 7:14.

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Key Word(s)

Read through the entire chapter, looking for words or themes that are repeated. Make note of those words and their significance here.

Read Nehemiah 1:1- 4.

1. Who is the author of this book?
2. How did he describe himself in:
 - a. Nehemiah 1:1
 - b. Nehemiah 1:11
3. What news did Hanani bring?

4. According to Nehemiah 1:3, what happened to the:

- a. walls of Jerusalem
- b. gates of Jerusalem

5. From verse 4, we see that Nehemiah took the news of Jerusalem to heart. What did he do?

6. We can see from his response the depth of Nehemiah's pain over the news he received. What does this show you about his character?

Read Nehemiah 1:5-11.

This prayer of Nehemiah's is a powerful prayer and we can learn much from it. In order to get the most out of it we will look at the sections separately.

Consider Nehemiah 1:5.

1. Nehemiah began his prayer with praise. Consider the first phrase of his prayer below. Underline each word describing God.

LORD God of heaven, O great and awesome God...

Now consider each of these words as you write their meaning below.

- a. LORD (notice this is all caps, which has a different meaning than Lord)
- b. God of heaven
- c. great
- d. awesome

2. Nehemiah goes on in his prayer describing the Lord by what He does, using aspects of His character, with his words, “*You who keep Your covenant and mercy*”. Read the scriptures below and write what you find that confirms Nehemiah’s words.

a. Exodus 34:6-7

b. Deuteronomy 7:9

c. Isaiah 54:10

3. Now think about how you approach God in your prayers. Do you consider how worthy He is of worship and respect? Do you consider that you are approaching a *great and awesome God*? Take some time to think of some words you might use to describe God, then write how you might open in prayer with worship and respect.

4. It is also good for us to notice the rest of Nehemiah 1:5, as he describes the ones who receive that promise of covenant and mercy. Notice the underlined words from verse below. How do the scriptures given apply to this verse?

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,

a. Look again at Deuteronomy 7:9

b. John 14:15

Keep these verses in mind when we go on to read of the sins Nehemiah will confess in verse 7.

Consider Nehemiah 1:6.

1. What words in this verse show us how much Nehemiah prayed?

a. What does James 5:16 say about prayer that applies to Nehemiah’s prayer?

b. Can you remember a situation that brought you to this kind of prayer? Write what you recall of how and why you prayed, as well as God's response.

2. In Nehemiah 1:6, who was he praying for?

3. Whose sin was he confessing?

Consider Nehemiah 1:7.

1. In verse 7 Nehemiah lists specific sins they had committed. Write them here.

2. What did God ask of the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 10:12-13?

Consider Nehemiah 1:8-9.

1. According to verse 8, what caused God to scatter the Israelites among the nations?

2. What things in verse 9 did God require of the people to bring them back to the Promised Land?

3. What was God's promise to them if they did these things?

4. God is faithful to keep His promises. What do you see about God's promises in the following scriptures?

a. 1 Kings 8:56

b. 2 Corinthians 1:20

5. When we see God's mercy on the children of Israel who had sinned and turned against Him, we can see hope for the backslider. Write a definition for "backslide".

6. Read the following scriptures, then write what God has said he will do and what the backslider needs to do from each.

a. Jeremiah 3:12-14

b. Hosea 14:1-4

7. How does James 5:19-20 encourage each of us to reach out to a backslider?

Consider Nehemiah 1:10-11.

1. In Nehemiah 1:10 he speaks of "*Your people whom You have redeemed...*" From Deuteronomy 9:26, write about the event to which he is referring.

2. What request does he make in Nehemiah 1:11?

a. Who is "*your servant*"?

b. Who does "*this man*" refer to?

In closing...

1. Consider our memory verse, 2 Chronicles 7:14. What four things does God require of His people before He can forgive their sins and heal their land?

a.

b.

c.

d.

2. From Nehemiah 1:4-7, how did Nehemiah meet these requirements?

3. Think about all you have learned about Nehemiah in this lesson. What characteristics do you see in him that you would like to see in your own life?

4. We can look at Nehemiah's prayer and see aspects that would enrich our own prayer life. From his prayer in verses 4-11, write what you see that applies to each of the following aspects of prayer.

a. Preparation (verse 4)

b. Adoration (verse 5)

c. Confession (verses 6-7)

d. Request (verse 11)

5. What have you learned from Nehemiah's prayer that you would like to remember in your own prayers?

Memory Verse

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14