

Bible Reading Notes  
**Nehemiah**

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## Nehemiah 1

The restoration of Israel to the Promised Land was a process. The people have returned, and the temple has been rebuilt. But the walls of Jerusalem have still not been restored.

**1:1** – December 446, about 12 years after Ezra arrived in Jerusalem.

**1:8** – **commanded your servant Moses** – He is referring to Deuteronomy 30:1-4, where the Lord promised he would restore his people after they came to repentance. It is always appropriate to pray back Scripture to the Lord.

## Nehemiah 2

**2:1** – It is now April. Nehemiah has been praying and planning for four months.

**2:6-8** – Because Nehemiah had given the issue thought and planning, he was able to give the king a definite time frame and a list of his needs.

**2:8** – **good hand of my God** – Like Ezra, Nehemiah recognized the hand of God in his success (v. 18).

## Nehemiah 3

**3** – This chapter gives the list of those who participated in the building program. With the exception of some nobles (v. 5), there is widespread support for Nehemiah's plan.

**3:23** – **opposite their house** – Nehemiah's plan was for those by the wall to be assigned the section closest to their home, giving them an incentive to build that section well (vv. 28-30).

## Nehemiah 4

Whenever the church is doing the work it is called to do, there will be opposition. Chapters 4ff give examples of opposition Nehemiah faced in the rebuilding project.

**4:1** – **Sanballat** – He was the governor of Samaria and was opposed to anything that would strengthen Jerusalem and the Jews. He was the leader of the opposition.

**4:9** – When faced with opposition, the response of God’s people is to pray and to continue the work.

## Nehemiah 5

**5** – Chapter 4 was an external threat to the work of finishing the wall. Chapter 5 is an internal threat to stopping the work.

**5:1-5** – The immediate crisis was a financial one. Many Jews were unable to support themselves or pay their taxes. They had been forced to mortgage their property and sell their children into slavery to pay off their economic debt.

**5:14-19** – Nehemiah sought to set an example and did not tax the people to provide for his food allowance and other expenses.

## Nehemiah 6

**6:1-3** – Another means that Satan uses to impede the work of God is to send us distractions that will divert us from doing important work for things that may seem urgent but are unimportant.

**6:10-19** – As was seen in chapters 4-5, the external threat of Sanballat is followed by an internal threat of Jews who had commitments to Tobiah and were opposed to Nehemiah.

## Nehemiah 7

7:5ff – The purpose of this genealogy will be made clear in chapter 11 when Nehemiah is seeking to repopulate Jerusalem.

7:5ff – This genealogy is almost identical to the one in Ezra 2.

## Nehemiah 8

8:2 – **Law** – This likely refers to the book of Deuteronomy.

8:8 – This is the role of the pastor to the congregation – to read God’s Word and then explain and apply it.

8:9 – **wept** – The reading of the law caused Israel to be grieved as they recognized their sin.

8:14 – **written in the law** – This was given to Israel in Leviticus 23.

8:17 – There had been other celebrations of the Feast of Booths since Joshua. The author must mean that some aspect of the celebration (such as joy) was not as evident in the previous feasts.

## Nehemiah 9

9:1 – It is now later in the same month as chapter 8 - October 31, 445.

9:6ff – The priests and Levites who have led Israel to understand the Law of God, now lead them in a prayer of repentance.

9:6-25 – The prayer recounts the many ways that the Lord had blessed his people.

9:26 – **Nevertheless** – In spite of all the Lord’s blessings, Israel rebelled against the Lord and his law.

9:31 – **Nevertheless** – In spite of Israel’s rebellion, the Lord still showed his mercy and grace to them.

9:38 – **firm covenant** – Israel will make a covenant renewal with the Lord as a sign of their genuine repentance.

## Nehemiah 10

**10:1-27** – These are the names of the leaders of Israel who signed the covenant as representatives of the people.

**10:28-39** – The obligations of the covenant are spelled out here. They reflect the particular sins that Israel had been engaging in and show the fruit of genuine repentance.

## Nehemiah 11

**11:1** – This gives us the context for the census that was ordered in chapter 7.

**11:2** – **blessed all the men** – Because Jerusalem was still very devastated in many areas, it was not an ideal place to live. The ten percent of the population who was willing to live there, was making a sacrifice to do so.

## Nehemiah 12

**12** – The completion of the wall was a time for setting right many administrative matters in Jerusalem, especially at the temple.

**12:1-26** – An accounting of the priests and Levites that had returned from exile to perform their duties since Cyrus issued the edict allowing the Jews to return.

**12:27-43** – The wall is dedicated in a large public service filled with musicians and singers.

**12:44** – So that the priests and Levites would be supported financially, the appointment of those who would collect and distribute funds was determined.

## Nehemiah 13

13 – After 12 years as governor, Nehemiah returned to the king. He later went back to Jerusalem for a second term. Upon his return he discovered that many previous reforms had to be reinstated. The reforms Nehemiah instituted at this time were the things the Jews had covenanted to do in Nehemiah 10.

13:1 – This is a reference to Deuteronomy 23:3-5.