

Nehemiah – Chapter 1
Discussion and Study Guide

Setting – Nehemiah came to Jerusalem around 445 BC for the purpose of rebuilding the walls and helping to re-establish this great city. He came there about 13 years after the Priest Ezra had returned. Nehemiah would have been a contemporary of the prophet Malachi.

The city of Jerusalem was still in ruins from being conquered by the Babylonians. Only a remnant remained along with a few who had returned. With no walls or gates, the city and the National of Israel would have constantly been in danger from its neighbors.

Questions for thought and discussion –

- 1) What is significant about a city with no walls or gates? What does it say about the worth, value, and identity of that city?
- 2) Apply this idea (city without walls/protection) to a person. What does a person without walls or a city look like? How are they in great trouble or danger? What might be considered a disgrace?
- 3) The first things we see Nehemiah do upon the report is sit, weep, mourn, fast, and pray. What is significant about him “sitting”? What is our normal inclination when faced with trouble or a challenge? How might Nehemiah’s approach be more beneficial/effective?
- 4) **Verses 5-11 record Nehemiah’s prayer. Read this carefully a number of times before responding below.**
- 5) The first part of his prayer deals with confessing and acknowledging who God is and praying that his prayer will be heard. Why would this type of confessional opening be important in prayer? How does it impact our mindset, heart, and humility as we approach God?
- 6) We see in the middle of verse 6 and in verse 7 that he confesses the sin of Israel. Why does this matter? Why would he include it here?
- 7) He takes time to “remind” God of his promises. It seems odd that he would feel compelled to remind the creator of things promised. Why would he do this? Is it possible that it might be more for Nehemiah than for God? How so?

- 8) There are parallel's between his prayer and the way Moses prayed. Both were praying for a people that had walked away from God. Read verses 8 and 9 and then read Deuteronomy 4:27, 28:64, 30:1-5, and Exodus 32:11. What are these parallel's?
- 9) Read verse 11. What specifically is Nehemiah praying for? Who is "this man" that he wants to have success in front of?
- 10) The cupbearer was an important advisor to the King. What risks would Nehemiah be facing if he approaches the King about this? What would the "success" be?

Personal Application:

Think about your own prayer life and how you address God. What could you learn from Nehemiah's prayer that you could include to help prepare your heart and know what to ask for? If needed use the space below to write out some thoughts and this week, use this to guide your prayers.