

# NEHEMIAH

Author: possibly Ezra or Nehemiah

Date: 444 - 432 B.C.

Nehemiah, a contemporary of Ezra and a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes I in the Persian palace, led the third and final return to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile. Granted permission by the Persian king to return to his homeland, Nehemiah challenged his countrymen to rebuild the shattered walls of Jerusalem. The book is easily divided into two sections: the rebuilding of the wall (chapters 1-6) and the restoration of the people (chapters 7-13). This book is classified as a book of history in the Old Testament.

In spite of all opposition, the task of rebuilding the city wall was completed in 52 days. By contrast, the task of reviving and reforming the people of God demanded years of Nehemiah's life and leadership.

Nehemiah served twice as governor of Judah. As governor, he helped bring about physical and political restoration. He also led the people in moral reform. Nehemiah was man of prayer, faith, humility, integrity, patriotism, courage, energy and unselfishness. He was a great leader, organizer and motivator.

Nehemiah teaches us an important principle about rebuilding our communities and transforming our culture. Faith, prayer, preparation and training are all crucial but then action must be taken. Opposition will come. Perseverance and determination cannot waver.

**Key verses:** *"The wall was completed in 52 days, on the twenty-fifth day of the month Ellul. When all our enemies heard this, all the surrounding nations were intimidated and lost their confidence, for they realized that this task had been accomplished by our God" 6:15-16. "Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength" (8:10b).*

## OUTLINE

- I. The Rebuilding of Jerusalem's Wall (Chapters 1-6)
  - A. The Prayer of Nehemiah Concerning Jerusalem (1:1-11)
  - B. The Planning of Nehemiah Concerning Jerusalem (2:1-20)
  - C. The Work of Nehemiah Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem (3:1-32)
  - D. Opposition to the Building of the Walls (4:1-23)
  - E. The conflict of the Jewish People within Jerusalem (5:1-19)
  - F. Renewed Opposition to the Building of the Walls (6:1-19)
- II. The Restoration of the Jewish Community in Jerusalem (Chapters 7-13)
  - A. The Registry of the People (7:1-73)
  - B. Revival under Ezra (8:1 – 10:39)
  - C. The Repopulation of Jerusalem (11:1 – 12:26)
  - D. The Dedication of Jerusalem's Walls (12:27-47)
  - E. The Restoration of the People (13:1-31)

**Application:** God desires His people to be united and trained to do His work. As we recognize great needs in our communities, God can give us the vision and desire to "build" or "rebuild." With that vision, we can help mobilize others to pray and to put together an action plan. Prayer and action go hand in hand, but we should start with prayer.