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## The Chapters of Nehemiah

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# Nehemiah

## SECTION OUTLINE ONE (NEHEMIAH 1-3)

After hearing about Jerusalem's situation, Nehemiah confesses his people's sins to God. He receives permission from King Artaxerxes to go to Jerusalem to repair the wall. After Nehemiah arrives and inspects the wall, he begins the repairs. Those who worked on various portions of the gates and wall are recorded.

### I. THE REPORT (1:1-11)

- A. Learning about the wall (1:1-3): Nehemiah is told about the sad situation in Jerusalem. The wall of the city has been torn down, and the gates have been burned.
- B. Lamenting over the wall (1:4-11): Nehemiah is deeply saddened, and he mourns and fasts. He prays to the Lord about the following:
  - 1. Israel's plight (1:4-7): God's people have disobeyed his laws and are suffering the penalty.
  - 2. God's promise (1:8-10): If the people repent, the Lord has promised to restore them.
  - 3. Nehemiah's petition (1:11): Nehemiah prays that the Lord will cause the king to grant his request to return to Jerusalem.

### II. THE REQUEST (2:1-10)

- A. The petition to the king (2:1-5): Nehemiah asks King Artaxerxes for a leave of absence so that he might return and rebuild Jerusalem.
- B. The permission from the king (2:6-10): Artaxerxes not only permits Nehemiah to go, he also agrees to help finance the project! Nehemiah travels to Jerusalem, despite the protests of a couple of non-Jews named Sanballat and Tobiah.

### III. THE REVIEW (2:11-20): Nehemiah inspects the wall and makes a recommendation to the leaders.

- A. Nehemiah's examination (2:11-16): Nehemiah conducts a nighttime survey to inspect Jerusalem's wall.
- B. Nehemiah's exhortation (2:17-20)
  - 1. The report (2:17): Nehemiah calls a meeting of the Jewish leaders and informs them of the terrible condition of the city's wall.
  - 2. The recommendation (2:17-18): Nehemiah urges the leaders to begin the task of rebuilding the wall.
  - 3. The response (2:18): The leaders cry out, "Good! Let's rebuild the wall!"
  - 4. The ridicule (2:19): Sanballat, Tobiah, and an Arab named Geshem scoff at Nehemiah's plan, seeing it as rebellion against the king.
  - 5. The rebuke (2:20): Nehemiah assures the three men that the wall will indeed be rebuilt without their help.

### IV. THE REPAIRS (3:1-32): The work is divided up by the 10 various gates, each assigned to certain leaders.

- A. The Sheep Gate (3:1-2)
- B. The Fish Gate (3:3-5)
- C. The Old City Gate (3:6-12)
- D. The Valley Gate (3:13)
- E. The Dung Gate (3:14)
- F. The Fountain Gate (3:15-25)
- G. The Water Gate (3:25-27)
- H. The Horse Gate (3:28)
- I. The East Gate (3:29-30)

J. The Inspection Gate (3:31-32)

**SECTION OUTLINE TWO (NEHEMIAH 4-6)**

The enemies ridicule and threaten the wall builders, but Nehemiah posts guards to protect them. He also eases the financial burdens of the people by convincing the lenders not to repossess their property. The enemies resume their opposition, but the wall is completed.

- I. THE TROUBLES (4:1-6:14): As the Jews rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, they encounter various struggles along the way.
- A. Ridicule (4:1-6)
    - 1. The pagans' scorn (4:1-3): Sanballat and Tobiah, enemies of the Jews, mocked at the Jews' efforts to rebuild their wall.
    - 2. The prophet's supplication (4:4-5): Nehemiah prays to the Lord, asking him to punish the enemies for opposing the work.
    - 3. The people's straining (4:6): After intense effort, the workers rebuild the wall to half its original height.
  - B. Conspiracy (4:7-9)
    - 1. The plot (4:7-8): Sanballat and Tobiah try to stop the work by making plans to lead an army against Jerusalem.
    - 2. The prayers (4:9): The Jews pray and post a 24-hour guard.
  - C. Discouragement (4:10): Some of the Jews become discouraged about the amount of rubble that must be cleared away.
  - D. Intimidation (4:11-23)
    - 1. The craftiness of the enemy (4:11-12): The enemies of the Jews make plans to swoop down upon them and kill them.
    - 2. The challenge of the prophet (4:13-14): Nehemiah places armed guards in exposed areas and encourages the Jews to trust in the Lord.
    - 3. The commitment of the workers (4:15-23): Nehemiah divides the workers in half. One half stands guard while the other half works. They labor from sunrise to sunset, being ever vigilant.
  - E. Internal strife (5:1-19)
    - 1. The ruthlessness (5:1-5): During difficult times some of the wealthier Jews loan money to the poorer Jews and charge interest. When they cannot repay the loan, their property is repossessed, and they become slaves to the wealthy Jews.
    - 2. The reprimand (5:6-11): At a public hearing Nehemiah demands that the wealthier Jews restore what they have taken from the poor.
    - 3. The repentance (5:12-13): The wealthy Jews agree and do what Nehemiah demands.
    - 4. The role model (5:14-19): Nehemiah is an excellent example for those in positions of authority or influence.
      - a. What he does not do (5:14-16): Nehemiah refuses to accept any salary during his 12 years as governor of Judah.
      - b. What he does do (5:17-19): Nehemiah regularly feeds 150 Jewish officials at his own expense.
  - F. Ruse (6:1-4): Four times Sanballat and Geshem attempt to meet with Nehemiah so they could harm him. Realizing their evil plot, Nehemiah refuses each time, saying his work is too important to stop.
  - G. Slander (6:5-9): Sanballat and Geshem show Nehemiah a letter to King Artaxerxes that claims Nehemiah and the Jews plan to rebel.
  - H. Treachery (6:10-14): The enemy uses a prophet named Shemaiah to try to persuade Nehemiah to seek refuge inside the Temple. Nehemiah sees through the scheme to intimidate and discredit him, and he refuses.
- II. THE TRIUMPH (6:15-19): Despite the many obstacles, the Jews complete the wall in 52 days! The Jews' enemies are fearful, realizing that this project had indeed been done with God's help.

**SECTION OUTLINE THREE (NEHEMIAH 7-10)**

Nehemiah takes a census of the exiles who returned. Ezra reads the Book of the Law to the people,

who then celebrate the Festival of Shelters. The Book of the Law is read aloud again, and some Levites lead the people in a prayer of confession, reviewing God's dealings with his people. The people make a written oath to obey the Lord.

- I. THE CITY OF GOD (7:1-3): Nehemiah assigns his brother Hanani to govern Jerusalem, and he assigns a faithful man named Hananiah to command the fortress.
- II. THE PEOPLE OF GOD (7:4-73): Nehemiah takes a census of all the exiles who have returned to Jerusalem and Judah.
  - A. The names (7:4-65)
    1. The 12 key leaders (7:5-7)
    2. The clan leaders (7:8-38)
    3. The priests (7:39-42, 63-65)
      - a. Those with genealogical records (7:39-42)
      - b. Those without genealogical records (7:63-65)
    4. The Levites (7:43)
    5. The singers (7:44)
    6. The gatekeepers (7:45)
    7. The Temple servants (7:46-56)
    8. The descendants of Solomon's officials (7:57-60)
    9. Families without genealogical records (7:61-62)
  - B. The numbers (7:66-73)
    1. The count (7:66-69): A total of 49,942 individuals return. They brought 8,136 animals with them.
    2. The contributions (7:70-73): Some of the leaders give expensive gifts to help finance the work.
- III. THE WORD OF GOD (8:1-12)
  - A. The communication (8:1-6): Ezra stands on a wooden platform in front of the Water Gate and reads the Book of the Law to the people.
  - B. The clarification (8:7-8): As Ezra reads, the Levites explain the meaning of the passage being read.
  - C. The celebration (8:9-12): The people weep as they listen to the law, but Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Levites tell them to rejoice since it is a sacred day. They instruct the people to celebrate and feast together.
- IV. THE FESTIVAL OF GOD (8:13-18): Ezra, the priests, and the Levites study the law and realize the Lord has called the people to observe the Festival of Shelters. So the people build temporary shelters with cut branches and live there during the Festival.
- V. THE CONFESSION TO GOD (9:1-38): The Book of the Law is read before the people again; the people confess their sins and worship God.
  - A. The laity (9:1-3): The people dress in sackcloth and put dust on their heads as they confess their sins to God.
  - B. The Levites (9:4-38): The leaders of the Levites lead the people in prayer and recount God's faithfulness and Israel's unfaithfulness throughout history.
    1. From Abraham to Moses (9:7-8): The Lord called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldeans and made a covenant with him, promising to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan.
    2. From Moses to Joshua (9:9-23)
      - a. God's faithfulness (9:9-15, 19-23)
        - (1) He delivered them from Egypt (9:9-11).
        - (2) He led them day and night in the wilderness (9:12, 19).
        - (3) He taught them his laws at Mount Sinai (9:13-14).
        - (4) He provided food and water for them (9:15, 20).
        - (5) He provided for all their needs (9:21).
        - (6) He gave them victory over their enemies (9:22-23).
      - b. Israel's unfaithfulness (9:16-18)

- (1) They refused to obey God; therefore he wouldn't let them enter the Promised Land (9:16-17).
- (2) They worshiped a calf idol (9:18).
- 3. From Joshua to the judges (9:24-26)
  - a. God's faithfulness (9:24-25): God subdued the enemies of the Israelites.
  - b. Israel's unfaithfulness (9:26): The Israelites disobeyed God, killing his prophets and committing terrible blasphemies.
- 4. From the judges to Ezra and Nehemiah (9:27-31): God allowed the Israelites' enemies to conquer them because of their repeated sin.
- 5. At the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (9:32-38)
  - a. The Levites' plea (9:32-37): The Levites implore God to extend mercy upon his sinful people.
  - b. The Levites' promise (9:38): The Levites attest that the leaders of God's people are making a solemn written promise to obey God.

- VI. THE VOW TO GOD (10:1-39): A special document is written up and signed by the leaders of the people.
- A. The parties (10:1-28): The document is signed by Nehemiah, the priests, the Levites, the political leaders, the gatekeepers, the singers, the Temple servants, and others.
  - B. The promises (10:29-39): The document records six promises the people made to God.
    - 1. They will not intermarry with non-Jews (10:30).
    - 2. They will obey all the Sabbath laws (10:31).
    - 3. They will take care of the Temple (10:32, 34, 39).
    - 4. They will observe all the sacred festivals (10:33).
    - 5. They will dedicate to the Lord the firstborn of their sons and animals (10:36).
    - 6. They will pay their tithes (10:35, 37-38).

#### **SECTION OUTLINE FOUR (NEHEMIAH 11-13)**

One tenth of the people from Judah and Benjamin resettle in Jerusalem. Many of the residents of Jerusalem are listed. The priests and Levites who returned with Zerubbabel are listed. The wall of Jerusalem is dedicated with a great ceremony. Nehemiah's various reforms are given.

- I. THE RESETTLING OF THE CITIES (11:1 -36)
  - A. Those living in Jerusalem (11:1-24): Many people are relocated to Jerusalem to repopulate the city with others besides the leaders.
    - 1. How they are selected (11:1-2)
      - a. Some are selected by the casting of lots (11:1).
      - b. Some volunteer to relocate (11:2).
    - 2. Who is selected (11:3-24): A list of the leaders who relocate to Jerusalem is given.
      - a. The provincial officials (11:3-9)
      - b. The priests and others (11:10-24)
  - B. Those living in Judah and Benjamin (11:25-36): Various cities that the people of Judah and Benjamin inhabit are listed.
- II. THE RETURNING OF THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES (12:1-26): Priests and Levites who returned from exile with Zerubbabel and Jeshua the high priest are listed.
- III. THE REJOICING OF THE PEOPLE (12:27-47): Jerusalem's newly completed wall is dedicated with a glorious celebration!
  - A. The music (12:27-30): All the Levitical musicians throughout the land assemble by the wall in Jerusalem.
  - B. The marching (12:31-43): Nehemiah divides the musicians and other leaders into two choirs; they are to march on the wall in opposite directions, praising God as they walk.
  - C. The ministers (12:44-47): Nehemiah selects certain men to be in charge of the storerooms.
- IV. THE REFORMS OF NEHEMIAH (13:1-31): Nehemiah records several reforms he instituted as he

encountered various problems.

- A. The separation (13:1-3): When the people discover that the Law of Moses forbids Ammonites and Moabites from entering the assembly of God, all people of mixed ancestry are immediately expelled.
- B. The confrontations (13:4-31): On at least five occasions, Nehemiah sternly rebukes certain individuals.
  - 1. Eliashib (13:4-9): Eliashib the priest is in charge of the Temple storerooms; he is also a relative of Tobiah, one of Nehemiah's opponents. Eliashib had provided Tobiah with a room in the Temple courtyards. When Nehemiah discovers this, he throws out Tobiah's belongings and orders the room to be purified.
  - 2. The Levites (13:10-14): Because the Levites are not receiving the tithes due them, they neglect their Temple duties and work for pay. Nehemiah recalls them to their duties, and the people of Judah support them once again.
  - 3. Those who profane the Sabbath (13:15-22)
    - a. The sin (13:15-18): Merchants are entering and exiting through the gates of Jerusalem to conduct business on the Sabbath, just like on any other day.
    - b. The solution (13:19-22): Nehemiah orders the gates closed during the Sabbath.
  - 4. Those who married pagan women (13:23-27): Nehemiah encounters men who had married pagan women. After Nehemiah curses and beats them, the men agree to never allow their children to marry pagan spouses.
  - 5. Sanballat's son-in-law (13:28-31): When Nehemiah discovers that one of the priests married the daughter of Sanballat, he drives him out of the Temple.