



World Christian Fellowship

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NEHEMIAH

PRAY, PREPARE, PROCEED: A Journey of Faith and Fellowship

Embarking on a journey of spiritual growth and fellowship can be as rewarding as it is transformative. This guide will help you navigate through meaningful experiences that are designed to enhance your connection with both your faith and fellowship. The schedule for Easter camp 2025 is crafted to ensure a balance of worship, learning, and fun. Let's dive into what each day has to offer you.

Session 4

Prayer and Confidence in the Midst of Chaos.

Nehemiah 2:9-20,



“The chief danger of the Church today is that it is trying to get on the same side as the world, instead of turning the world upside down. Our Master expects us to accomplish results, even if they bring opposition and conflict. Anything is better than compromise, apathy, and paralysis. God, give to us an intense cry for the old-time power of the Gospel and the Holy Ghost! ”

~ A. B. Simpson

Overview

After four months of praying and planning, not to mention, journeying for two months to Jerusalem, Nehemiah finally arrived in Judah.

Clearly the task was daunting and the opposition intense. Yet, instead of launching immediately into construction or calling a meeting for Jewish leaders to discuss this building project, Nehemiah spends time with the Lord, assessing the situation first-hand.

Nehemiah's actions reveal not only his character, but they also provide some important principles for all those who wish to be used mightily by the Lord.

Nehemiah's Arrival to Jerusalem.



Nehemiah 2:9-20,

Identification of the Task and Recognizing the Opposition.

V 9-10, *Then I went to the governors in the region beyond the River, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. ¹⁰ When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of it, they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel.*

The military entourage that Artaxerxes extended for this project would have created a great scene. It certainly indicated the King's approval of Nehemiah. This military presence would have also deterred any threat of a local uprising against this King's cupbearer.

Both men possessed great influence and power. They will serve as antagonists throughout Nehemiah's time in the land.

"Sanballat the Horonite" - He serves as the prime opponent of Nehemiah.

The Babylonian meaning of his name is "Sin (the moon god) gives life". The reference to "Horonite" may indicate a town by the name of Horonaim in southern Moab.

A Moabite origin of Sanballat, in conjunction with Tobiah's Ammonite heritage.

Also, would shed light on **Nehemiah 13:1**.

Deuteronomy 23:3-6, *“An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord forever, ⁴ because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. ⁵ Nevertheless the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam, but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you. ⁶ You shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all your days forever.*

All Moabites and Ammonites are prohibited from entering the congregation of the Lord.

According to historical and archaeological records, **Sanballat** served as **governor of Samaria** during this timeframe.



The Samaritans most likely originated from a group of Jews left behind after the fall of the northern Kingdom of Israel. Jews who married other people groups who arrived to the land.

(2 Kings 17).

“Tobiah the Ammonite servant”

The term “servant” could be critical, as Tobiah appears to serve in some leadership role in conjunction with Sanballat.

The Ammonites originated from an incestuous relationship between Lot and his younger daughter.

Genesis 19:36-38, *Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. ³⁷The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. ³⁸And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon to this day.*

This people group continually served as an enemy of Israel throughout the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 23:4, *because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.*

Evaluation of the Task and Assessing the Situation.

V 11-16, *So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days. ¹²Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; nor was there any*

animal with me, except the one on which I rode. ¹³ And I went out by night through the Valley Gate to the Serpent Well and the Refuse Gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were burned with fire. ¹⁴ Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal under me to pass. ¹⁵ So I went up in the night by the valley, and viewed the wall; then I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. ¹⁶ And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the others who did the work.

At least six months had passed since Nehemiah heard the news concerning the state of Jerusalem (e.g., four months before he approaches Artaxerxes and two months traveling to Judah).

During that time span, much prayer and planning had transpired. And yet, Nehemiah was still cautious and calculated when he arrives to the Holy City. He does not rush into action upon arriving.

Rather, he dedicates several days to assess first-hand the situation.

Above and beyond his sound tactics, however, was the conviction that basically the project was not his. It was from God and 'for Jerusalem' not from Nehemiah nor his prestige"

Secrecy was vital for the following reasons:

1. Opposition to the building of the wall had already existed in the past (Ezra 4),
2. Present hostility existed (e.g., Sanballat and Tobiah), and
3. Even distrust and a lack of allegiance existed among some of the residents of Jerusalem.

Similar to **Moses, Elijah, and even Jesus**, time in private with the Lord is vital to ministry.

The anvil upon which God moulds His leaders is silence and solitude. For it is during these interludes that God forges the qualities, thoughts, and character of a true leader.

V 13-15, And I went out by night through the Valley Gate to the Serpent Well and the Refuse Gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were burned with fire. ¹⁴ Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal under me to pass. ¹⁵ So I went up in the night by the valley, and viewed the wall; then I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned.



Since several of the names in this passage are unknown, scholars have debated the path that Nehemiah took.

However, most likely, he travelled from the west side of the city, around the southern end, and then to the eastern side. Along this ridge of the Kidron Valley, Nehemiah would have proceeded by foot because of the huge rubble. From there, he would return to the west side via the north side of the Temple mount.

Regardless which direction Nehemiah travelled around the city, the job was enormous.

The circuit of the walls was more than a mile, their width was three to four feet thick, and they towered approximately 15 to 20 feet high. Nor should one forget that these walls had laid in ruin for approximately 150 years!

V 16, *And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the others who did the work.*

Nehemiah was extremely cautious not to let anyone know where he had been or what he was assessing.

Motivation for the Task and Securing Full Participation.

V 17-18, *Then I said to them, "You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach." ¹⁸ And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me.*

Nehemiah's all-nighter had confirmed what was relayed to him in **1:3**.

Whereupon he finally addresses the people. In so doing, Nehemiah asks for two things:

1. They recognize there is a serious problem; and
2. They need to join him in rebuilding the city.

What is Nehemiah's ultimate reason for rebuilding the walls?

Psalm 48:1-3, *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised In the city of our God, In His holy mountain. ² Beautiful in elevation, The joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion on the sides of the north,*

The city of the great King. ³ God is in her palaces; He is known as her refuge.



Three times Nehemiah identifies with the people (e.g., “we” and “us”).

Nehemiah “points first to the Lord’s favor as the cause for their change in fortune (**2:8 and Ezra 7:6**), and only secondly to the king as God’s instrument”

“Good project”

The project is good because it originates from a good God.

Defending the Task and Responding to Opposition.

V 19-20, *But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they laughed at us and despised us, and said, “What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?” ²⁰ So I answered them, and said to them, “The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His*

servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem.”

A third opponent is now added, “Geshem the Arabian”. Not only is Israel faced with opposition from the north and the east, but they also now encounter disapproval from the south and southeast.

Jerusalem was virtually surrounded by powerful opposition that could possibly dissuade the heart of King Artaxerxes and strike fear in anyone who might assist Nehemiah.

While the situation may seem out of control, Nehemiah operates under the control of the Spirit. There is no retaliation. Nor is there any foreign diplomacy.

Instead, Nehemiah evokes the Lord’s name in His ability to see that the task is completed. Nehemiah’s response denies his opponents any civic, legal, and cultic rights to Jerusalem.

“His emphasis, however, is positive: come what may, ‘we . . . will start to rebuild’.”

One commentator writes, “Nehemiah in reply does not even bother to refute the disloyalty charge.

Instead, he goes to the heart of the matter. Those who maintain the cause of God will prosper”

Intersect

Faced with enormous “walls” a project or a relationship which seems irreparable then look to the Lord.

Nehemiah’s hope was not ultimately in the King’s resources, his own engineering prowess, or the willing work force of the residents of Jerusalem. Instead, Nehemiah’s hope rested confidently in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!

Psalm 33:13-22, *The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. ¹⁴From the place of His dwelling He looks On all the inhabitants of the earth; ¹⁵He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works. ¹⁶No king is saved by the multitude of an army; A mighty man is not delivered by great strength. ¹⁷A horse is a vain hope for safety; Neither shall it deliver any by its great strength. ¹⁸Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, On those who hope in His mercy, ¹⁹To deliver their soul from death, And to keep them alive in famine. ²⁰Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. ²¹For our heart shall rejoice in Him, Because we have trusted in His holy name. ²²Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, Just as we hope in You.*



a horse is a vain hope
for deliverance

If you are faced with ongoing opposition, then turn it over to the Lord. Let the Lord handle your enemies. After all, if you are doing His will, then their attacks are ultimately an affront to the Lord and His reputation.



*He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.*

Psalm 91:4

Psalm 91:1-10, *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. ²I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust." ³Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence. ⁴He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. ⁵You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day, ⁶Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. ⁷A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you. ⁸Only with your eyes shall you look, And see the reward of the wicked. ⁹Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place, ¹⁰No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;*

Based upon our study, you may want to spend some additional time this week interacting with the following:

Ultimately, Nehemiah's opposition did not stem from the Ammonites and Samaritans.

Instead, his enemy was Satan. And yet, Nehemiah did not waver, nor did he compromise. He stood securely in knowing that the Lord's hand was upon his life.

Such truths are very applicable for us.

We as Bible-believing evangelical Christians are locked in a battle. This is not a friendly gentleman's discussion. It is a life and death conflict between the spiritual hosts of wickedness and those who claim the name of Christ.

But do we really believe that we are in a life and death battle?

Do we really believe that the part we play in the battle has consequences for whether or not men and women will spend eternity in hell?

Or whether or not those who do live will live in a climate of moral perversion and degradation?

Sadly, we must say that very few in the evangelical world have acted as if these things are true.

Where is the clear voice speaking to the crucial issues of the day with distinctively biblical, Christian answers?

With tears we must say it is not there and that a large segment of the evangelical world has become seduced by the world spirit of this present age.

More than this, we can expect the future to be a further disaster if the evangelical world does not take a stand for biblical truth and morality in the full spectrum of life.

Spend some time this week reflecting on Schaeffer's words.

Are there any areas in your life that you have let down your spiritual guard, turned a blind eye, or simply compromised for convenience's sake?

Recommit these areas of your life to the Lord.



“Show me a person focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ—never tiring of learning about Him, thinking about Him, boasting of Him, speaking about and for and to Him, thrilled and entranced with His perfections and beauty, finding ways to serve and exalt Him, tirelessly exploring ways to spend and be spent for Him, growing in character to be more and more like Him—and I will show you a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit.” ~ Dan Phillips