



**THE BOOK  
OF  
NEHEMIAH**

.....

ERWIN KURTH

**LIVING WAY**  
BIBLE STUDY

Living Way Bible Study, Inc. is an auxiliary of the Pacific Southwest District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). All studies are written and/or edited by LCMS pastors. We have been providing studies to churches throughout the U.S. and Canada since 1982.

As a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that relies solely on freewill donations, additional donations are much appreciated and enable us to continue to produce and promote the study of God's Word.

Copyright © 1982, 2014

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without permission from Living Way Bible Study, Inc.



## WELCOME TO LIVING WAY BIBLE STUDY

Thank you for your order! It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit will use this study to help you grow in your knowledge and appreciation of our God and His Word. *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* 2 Peter 3:18

All studies have the same basic format, using an effective four-step approach for Bible study. Please see the following pages for additional information on these four steps, as well as helpful hints for facilitating these studies.

These studies are available by email (pdf-file) or snail-mail (hard copy). For a suggested donation of \$1-per-lesson within a study (e.g., 23-lesson study of John is \$23) you receive an original of the study, from which you are then free to make copies for your class. Please honor our copyright of these materials.

If you have any questions or comments on this study or any part of it, please contact us. We are always eager to hear from "our students" and appreciate your comments.

•••••

*May God bless you as you  
walk in His Living Way!*

•••••

Living Way Bible Study, Inc.

info4LWBS@aol.com

www.livingwaybiblestudy.org

 facebook.com/livingwaybiblestudy

*“I’m looking forward to our study that your ministry has blessed us with ... Your study allows one to go as deep as time permits or give the simplest most direct answer ... providing materials for us to become proficient in His living and active Word.”*

**FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
SEQUIM, WA



## LWBS FOUR-STEP METHOD

Living Way Bible Study suggests this four-step method:

- 1. PERSONAL* – The student prays for guidance from the Holy Spirit and answers the Personal Application (P.A.) questions at home using only the Bible (no commentaries).
- 2. SMALL GROUPS* – The class meets for an opening and divides into small groups of 8–10 people. The small group leader guides the group through the P.A. questions, encouraging each to share their answers and discuss further as time allows.
- 3. THE MESSAGE* – The lecture or message is given by a pastor or layperson who has researched the material and presents the study, giving personal insight and augmenting, but not duplicating, the author's comments.
- 4. THE NARRATIVE* – The author's comments or narrative, along with the P.A. questions for the next lesson, are given out at the end of the class. At the next class meeting, before answering the P.A. questions, the small groups may choose to review the author's comments of the last lesson, and share what each has highlighted as meaningful or important.

**Each lesson should be stapled together according to the number of the lesson in the right-hand corner of the page.** The P.A. questions for the next week should be attached after the author's narrative for the current week, as they will be the home study for the next class session.

The first meeting of the class is an introduction to the study. Since the members of the small groups have no P.A. questions to discuss at the first meeting, they may use the time to get acquainted or to tell what they hope to receive by studying this course. At the first meeting, the lecturer presents background information about the course, using the Introduction lesson as a guide.

With this four-step method the student has the opportunity to study the particular section of Scripture covered by the lesson from four different approaches. This emphasizes the Bible text and gives the student an understanding and ownership for each section studied.

*“Our group leaders are very pleased with the additional background information that is provided with Living Way courses.”*

**ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
STRYKER, OH

*“Your studies are excellent and we look forward to each study we undertake.”*

**LAKESIDE COMMUNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)**  
OLYMPIA, WA

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

## AUTHOR INFORMATION

Erwin Kurth	i	Further Condemnation – Nehemiah 5:9-10	22
Bibliography	ii	Bold Steps Must be Taken – Nehemiah 5:11-13	22

## INTRODUCTION

The Principal Leaders	1	Assurance Made Doubly Sure – Nehemiah 5:12b-13	23
Personal Application – Nehemiah 1:1-2:10	3	Serving God and People – Nehemiah 5:14-19	23

## NEHEMIAH 1:1-2:10

### LESSON 1

Bad News Arrives – Nehemiah 1:1-3	5	Personal Application – Nehemiah 6:1-7:73	24
Nehemiah Becomes Emotionally Involved – Nehemiah 1:4	5		
Prayers for Forgiveness and Help – Nehemiah 1:5-11	6		
First Things First – Nehemiah 1:11b	6		
The King Grants Nehemiah Leave of Absence			
Nehemiah 2:1-8	6		
Personal Application – Nehemiah 2:11 - 3:32	8		

## NEHEMIAH 2:11 - 3:32

### LESSON 2

Nehemiah Inspects the Ruined Walls – Nehemiah 2:11-15	11	NEHEMIAH 6:1-7:73	
The Slogan: “Let Us Rise Up and Build”		LESSON 6	
Nehemiah 2:16-18	12	Various Tactics Are Employed – Nehemiah 6:1-9	26
“All in Favor, Say Aye” – Nehemiah 2:17-18	12	The Employment of Rumors – Nehemiah 6:5-9	27
Opposition Begins to Show Its Ugly Face		Another Attempt to Discredit Nehemiah	
Nehemiah 2:19-20	12	Nehemiah 6:10-14	27
Nehemiah 3	12	Mission Accomplished – Nehemiah 6:15-19	28
Workloads Assigned – Nehemiah 3:1-32	13	Tobiah Persists but Fails – Nehemiah 6:17-19	28
Personal Application – Nehemiah 4:1-23	14	Last Minute Arrangements and Appointments	

## NEHEMIAH 4:1-23

### LESSON 3

Ridicule Is Heaped upon the Workers – Nehemiah 4:1-3	16	Nehemiah 7:1-3	28
Nehemiah Seeks Help Outside Himself – Nehemiah 4:4-6	17	Keep Your Eyes Open – Nehemiah 7:4	28
Nehemiah Arranges a Defense – Nehemiah 4:7-15	17	Census Taken. Old Registry Discovered	
No Let-Up in Work and Watchfulness – Nehemiah 4:16-23	18	Nehemiah 7:5-72	28
Personal Application – Nehemiah 5:1-19	19	Free at Last – Nehemiah 7:73	29

## NEHEMIAH 5:1-19

### LESSON 4

The Poor Are Victimized by Loan Sharks – Nehemiah 5:1-5	21	Personal Application – Nehemiah 8	30
A Modern Question	22		
Nehemiah Denounces the Greed of the Loan Sharks			
Nehemiah 5:6-8a	22		

## NEHEMIAH 8

### LESSON 7

Sequence of Events – A Quick Review	32
Open-Air Bible Classes – Nehemiah 8:1-8	33
Ezra’s Stand	33
The Setting	33
Observing the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths	
Nehemiah 8:9-18	34
Personal Application – Nehemiah 9:1-10:39	35

## NEHEMIAH 9:1-10:39

### LESSON 8

Contrasting Activities – Nehemiah 9:1-5	38
Prayer and Praise, Confession and Commitment	
Nehemiah 9:5b-38	39
The Oft-Recurring Constellation	
Nehemiah 9:16-37	39
“This Time We’ll Keep Our Part of the Covenant”	
Nehemiah 9:38	40
Nehemiah 10	40
Detailed Observances Are Now Enumerated	



THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Nehemiah 10:30-39	40
Personal Application – Nehemiah 11 & 12	41

## NEHEMIAH 11 & 12

## LESSON 9

Overview – Nehemiah 11 & 12	43
Jerusalem’s Population: Too Thin for Safety’s Sake	
Nehemiah 11:1-3	44
Preparations for Dedication of the Wall of Jerusalem	
Nehemiah 12:27-30	44
Two Processions on the Wall – Nehemiah 12:31-39	44
Ceremonial Sacrifices and Praise	
Nehemiah 12:40-43	45
Appointment of Temple Officials – Nehemiah 12:44-47	45
Personal Application – Nehemiah 13	46

## NEHEMIAH 13

## LESSON 10

Nehemiah Concludes His Reforms – Nehemiah 13:1-3	48
Deterioration During Nehemiah’s Absence	
Nehemiah 13:4-5	49
A Misalliance – Nehemiah 13:6-7	49
Nehemiah Cleans House – Nehemiah 13:8-14	49
Action Against the Desecration of the Sabbath Day	
Nehemiah 13:15-22	49
Nehemiah Decries the Desecration of the Sabbath	
Nehemiah 13:15-18	50
Nehemiah Takes Firm Action – Nehemiah 13:19-22	50
Intermarriages Are Again Forbidden	
Nehemiah 13:23-31	50
As Priests, So People – Nehemiah 13:29-31	51

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

# AUTHOR INFORMATION

Erwin Kurth

---

LWBS Courses: *The Gospel According to Matthew (co-author)*

*The Gospel According to Mark*

*The Gospel According to Luke (co-author)*

*The Acts of the Apostles*

*The Book of Ezra*

*The Book of Esther*

*The Book of Job*

*The Book of Proverbs*

*The Book of Ecclesiastes*

*The Song of Solomon*

Graduated from Concordia Seminary – 1922

Sixty-six years in the ministry with the LCMS

Areas of particular interest: Christian Stewardship and Bible Study. Conducted seminars and workshops in the U.S. and Canada on How to Run a Successful Every-member Canvas

The Kurth-Zehnder Plan is still available in book form

Attended Biblical Seminary in New York City, NY

Fostered intensive Bible study and taught Bible study classes wherever he served as Pastor. These include LCMS churches in Montana; Nebraska; Minnesota; Brooklyn, NY; Ft. Wayne, IN; Detroit, MI and California

Conferred the Doctor of Divinity Degree from Concordia Seminary – 1960

Guest speaker on the International Lutheran Hour

Served as part-time Bible instructor at Christ College Irvine, in Irvine, CA

Author of *Catechetical Helps* (Concordia Publishing House)

His life companion, Esther Pfothauer Kurth, has supported his ministry typing much of his longhand script

Our beloved author, Dr. Kurth, was called home to be with the Lord on October 22, 1989 at the age of 91 years.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## The Book of Nehemiah

.....

*The Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV, Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society*

*The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, ESV, copyright ©2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers*

*King James Version*

*The Liberty Bible*

*Concordia Self-Study Bible*

*Walter R. Roehrs*

• • •

*“The chief message of the book of Nehemiah is: ‘The joy of the Lord is your strength’ (8:10); not ‘Strength through Gladness’ (Kraft durch Freude) but strength through joy in the Lord.”*

• • •

**E**xciting events in Jewish history, during the last half of the 6th century and the first half of the 5th century B.C. are recorded in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah — perhaps originally one scroll or book.

An extraordinary event is recorded also in the book of Esther. King Xerxes (NIV) or Ahasuerus (KJV) chose a Jewish maiden for his queen and she succeeded in persuading him to save her people from a pogrom (massacre).

The other Persian monarchs with whom Jewish history in the above-mentioned 100-year period were closely linked were: Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes.

Cyrus, founder and first king of the Persian Empire (538 B.C.), permitted captives of the Babylonian aggression, whoever desired, to return to their respective homeland. Among the Jews, many — 50,000 in the first march of freedom — availed themselves of the opportunity. Many others, however, preferred to stay put because they had become economically well-anchored.

All told, three expeditions of liberated Jews made their way back to where their ancestors were buried, namely, the southern portion of Palestine, i.e., the land of Judah and Benjamin, with Jerusalem as the focal point.

#### **THE PRINCIPAL LEADERS**

##### **1. Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and Sheshbazzar**

These accomplished the building of the temple, commonly referred to as Zerubbabel's Temple, in contradistinction to Solomon's Temple which was the first, and Herod's Temple which was the third. The second temple was completed in 515 B.C. See Ezra, chapters 1-6.

## 2. Ezra

Fifty-seven years later, in 458 B.C., Ezra, priest, scribe, and teacher of the Law, led a company of about 2,000 followers out of the Babylonian Captivity. His main purpose in visiting his repatriated brethren in Judea was to counteract the growing practice of mixed marriages. He was rather successful in this endeavor. See Ezra, chapters 7-10.

Mission accomplished! “Presumably, Ezra then returned to Babylonia and resumed his former duties. He may have been recalled to the Persian court after the commission in Judah expired. At any rate, all attempts to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem during this interval remained unsuccessful” (Walter R. Roehrs). See Ezra 4:6-23.

## 3. Nehemiah

Nehemiah, cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, led a third expedition from the captivity to Jerusalem. He was aided by Ezra who had led the second expedition twelve years earlier. These two, priest and layman, certainly must have hit it off well. An affinity of soul existed between them.

When Nehemiah received the doleful news concerning the dangers to which his compatriots in Jerusalem were exposed, and their insufficient knowledge of religious principles to live by, he determined to come to their aid; provided a leave of absence was granted by Artaxerxes. Two things had to be done for sure: the city had to be fortified by rebuilding the walls and gates, and the people had to be strengthened spiritually by a knowledge of, and obedience to, the will of God as expressed in the Scriptures.

Both Ezra and Nehemiah worked together in behalf of the physical and spiritual well-being of their compatriots in Judea. Nehemiah, a dedicated layman and construction genius, succeeded in getting the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt in 52 days. Ezra, scribe, priest, and teacher of the law, concentrated on grounding the people in the will of God as set forth in the Scriptures.

We are now ready to study the remarkable job done by Nehemiah in reconstructing the walls within 52 days, and how Ezra imparted to the members of the open-air Bible classes knowledge of the will of Jehovah Lord, as transmitted through His servant Moses.

The chief message of the book of Nehemiah is: “The joy of the *Lord* is your strength” (8:10); not “Strength through Gladness” (Kraft durch Freude) but strength through joy in the Lord.

**PERSONAL APPLICATION – NEHEMIAH 1:1-2:10**

*Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit before you study your Bible and fill in the spaces below. Learn by doing. Search the Scriptures. Find out for yourself what answers the Bible provides.*

Nehemiah 1:1-3

1. The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, in three forays (606-587 B.C.) against the two southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin, had destroyed Solomon’s Temple, crumpled the city walls and gates, and thus exposed the residents of Jerusalem to marauders from outside the city. In the early reign of the Persian King, Artaxerxes, a concerted attempt to repair the damages was done. Why did that venture fail? (Ezra 4:11-23)
  
2. In a later period of Artaxerxes’ reign (the twentieth year of his kingship - 2:1), the controversial subject of fortifying Jerusalem came again to the fore. Under the guidance of God and the assurance of Nehemiah that Israel indeed was loyal to the crown, the king had a change of heart, though it took him four months to reach a decision, i.e., to permit Nehemiah to superintend the reconstruction of the defenses of Jerusalem. Who apprized Nehemiah of the situation and what was the message they gave him?

Nehemiah 1:4-11

3. How did Nehemiah react to the doleful news brought to him?
  
4. In his prayer to the great and awesome God, Nehemiah brought to remembrance the “covenant of love,” on the basis of which the Sovereign Lord would deal favorably with His Chosen People. What was the core of that covenant of love?
  
5. How did Nehemiah express his own guiltiness, and that of Israel, before the Lord?
  
6. What were the conditions of the covenant made by God with His people through Moses?
  
7. What special plea did Nehemiah make to God for favorable action?
  
8. What specific request did Nehemiah make concerning the king’s attitude toward him?
  
9. Who was “this man” or the king? (Darius, Xerxes, Artaxerxes)



10. Do you infer from the words "I was cupbearer to the king" that Nehemiah was a priest or a layman?

---

Nehemiah 2:1-10

11. Nehemiah was so confident in the efficacy of his prayer that he probably felt the king would grant him a leave of absence that day. However, he had to wait four months. How long was the wait?

Starting (1:1)

---

to (2:1)

---

12. What had the king's attitude been in the early part of his reign toward the Jews' rebuilding of the walls and gates? (Ezra 4:18-23)

---

13. How had the time of waiting for the king's decision affected the appearance of the cupbearer?

---

14. When the king asked in effect, "What's bothering you, Nehemiah?" what response did Nehemiah make?

---

15. What did Nehemiah do before he responded to the king's second question?

---

16. The king was sharp enough to know that Nehemiah's answer implied a further definitive beseechment. What was Nehemiah's forthright petition?

---

17. When the king granted the solicitation, Nehemiah felt emboldened to solicit two additional favors. What were they?

---

18. Who were the two governors; one over Samaria; the other over Transjordan and what was their reaction to the king's letters which Nehemiah brought?

---

19. Share with your group a time in your life when you had to wait for a decision or a prayer to be answered. How did the waiting affect your countenance and your behavior?

---

PRAYERS FOR FORGIVENESS AND HELP NEHEMIAH 1:5-11	6
FIRST THINGS FIRST – NEHEMIAH 1:11B	6
THE KING GRANTS NEHEMIAH LEAVE OF ABSENCE NEHEMIAH 2:1-8	6
PERSONAL APPLICATION – NEHEMIAH 2:11 - 3:32	8



*“Nehemiah brought these matters before God in prayer, counting on His tender mercies to act favorably towards Israel.”*



**BAD NEWS ARRIVES**

*NEHEMIAH 1:1-3*

“No news is good news.” Maybe that’s what Nehemiah fancied or hoped as he moved about in the wine cellar of the summer palace at Susa selecting the vintage which he thought Artaxerxes might like best with his evening meal.

Nehemiah was gravely disillusioned, however, when his brother plus traveling companions arrived from Jerusalem. His brother, Hanani, reported conditions were bad in Jerusalem. The city walls were broken down and the gates burned with fire.

Marauders had a field day after sundown, absconding with whatever was worth having and not nailed down. The Jewish returnees lived in constant fear. If only the walls and gates of the city were rebuilt, what protection that would afford against the perils and dangers of the night. A vain hope indeed! Pure wishful thinking! Attempts had been made previously to provide such safety, but to no avail. See Ezra 4:1-23. The only option left was to learn to live with trouble and with fear.

**NEHEMIAH BECOMES EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED**

*NEHEMIAH 1:4*

When Nehemiah heard of the sad plight of the people of Israel, his emotional equilibrium went awry. He sat down and wept. For some days he mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven (1:4, NIV).

## PRAYERS FOR FORGIVENESS AND HELP

### NEHEMIAH 1:5-11

Nehemiah poured out his soul in a confession of guilt, both his own and that of his fellow Israelites. The sacred pact between the Sovereign Lord and His Chosen People had been broken by the party of the second part.

The covenanted mercies were grounded on reciprocity: God could be counted on to do His part and, surely, the people had to do theirs. Out of gratitude they were to render obedience to “the great and awesome God”; otherwise, they would be dispersed to the ends of the earth (1:5-7). And that is exactly what happened, as Nehemiah recounted in his prayer. But now, if they turned their eyes once again to God, listened to His instruction, and faithfully carried out His will, the Lord would gather the scattered ones from the farthest horizon and bring them back to Mount Zion (1:8-9). This mountain is described in Psalm 48:2: “Beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King.”

Nehemiah brought these matters before God in prayer, counting on His tender mercies to act favorably towards Israel. “They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name” (1:10-11, NIV).

## FIRST THINGS FIRST

### NEHEMIAH 1:11B

The first step to be taken was to gain the consent of Artaxerxes for Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem; next, to provide safety for the people in rebuilding the walls; and then, after that, to reindoctrinate them in knowing and doing God’s will. To conclude his prayer with a specific request: “Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man [Artaxerxes]. I was cupbearer to the king” (1:11b).

## THE KING GRANTS NEHEMIAH

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

#### NEHEMIAH 2:1-8

The Lord heard Nehemiah’s prayer and he answered it, not “today” as Nehemiah hoped; but four months later, from “the month of Kislev” (1:1) to “the month of Nisan” (2:1). Why the delay? We do not know exactly.

It was Nehemiah’s good fortune to be the cupbearer or wine steward in the royal palace. It provided regular access to the king. His routine of duties was to select vintage wine, open the wineskin in clear view of the monarch, drink a portion himself to assure the king there was no poison in it, and then fill and, no doubt, refill the king’s ornate goblet.

Maybe a few pleasantries were exchanged between them concerning the fruit of the vine; the year when the grapes were harvested, the sugar content, the region where grown, even such nicety as whether grown on the north or south side of the hill and other curious talk in which wine connoisseurs delight to engage, and with surprising accuracy, too.

It is within the range of possibility that, on one or more occasions, Artaxerxes engaged in political talk with Nehemiah. This was to get his reaction, for instance, to the accusation made against the Jewish people in Jerusalem, and the alleged reason why they were so eager to reconstruct the city walls and gates. The formal accusation read: “Furthermore, the king should know that if this city is built and its walls are restored, no more taxes, tribute or duty will be paid, and the royal revenues will suffer... We inform the king that if this city is built and its walls are restored, you will be left with nothing in Trans-Euphrates” (Ezra 4:13, 16). “What response would Nehemiah care to make?” the king might have asked.

This subject might have been aerated from time to time, over a four month period, until Nehemiah felt with a degree of trepidation, of course, that the king was inclined to accept his declaration of Jewish loyalty to the crown.

One day, the moment of truth arrived when the king asked him, “Nehemiah, what’s troubling you? Outwardly, you appear to be in fine fettle but, inwardly, a cankerworm seems to be gnawing at your vitals. Since you are not ill, this can be nothing but sadness of the heart.”

Nehemiah was quick to confess, as he was very much afraid, but said to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?” (2:3).

“Come, come now,” the king replied. “You want something from me, don’t you? Level with me. What is it you want?”

It is now or never, thought Nehemiah. This seemed the propitious time to verbalize his request. After sending an ejaculatory prayer heavenward, Nehemiah bluntly, but respectfully stated, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it” (2:4b-5).

The king was favorably impressed. The queen, sitting beside him, presumably nodded her assent. The king went on to say, “I can’t get along without you, Nehemiah, not for a lengthy period of time. How long will your journey take and when will you get back?” Nehemiah suggested a reasonable length of absence and the king was satisfied. The queen, too, was delighted.

Greatly encouraged by the king’s ready compliance, Nehemiah made bold to request two additional favors: 1) a military escort, and, 2) a directive to the chief forester to supply him with timber needed for the reconstruction work and for a shelter, “the residence I will occupy” (2:7-9).

Everything worked out as planned, except that Sanballat, formerly of Samaria and an implacable foe of Nehemiah, together with Tobiah, probably governor of Transjordan, “were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites” (2:10).

But Nehemiah, that remarkable layman, was not distraught “because,” as he trustingly confided, “the gracious hand of my God was upon me” (2:8b).

## PERSONAL APPLICATION – NEHEMIAH 2:11 - 3:32

*O Holy Spirit, enlighten me with Your gifts as I proceed to study the book of Nehemiah. Help me to understand what the text says, what it means, and what it means to me. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.*

Nehemiah 2:11-20

1. Nehemiah arrived safely in Jerusalem under military escort after a four-month trek from Babylonia. List some of the things these travelers might have done during their first three days in Jerusalem.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  2. Why was Nehemiah able, without being spied upon, to examine by night the rundown condition of Jerusalem?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  3. Describe Nehemiah's committee and their means of transportation in inspecting the walls.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  4. The group could not possibly have examined all the walls of Jerusalem in one night. From 2:13-15, list the gates and areas they viewed and by which gate they returned.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  5. The walls and gates Nehemiah observed were in a deplorable state. What difficulty, for instance, did he encounter at one spot?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  6. Why did no one check up on what Nehemiah was doing?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  7. Nehemiah called a public meeting and there disclosed his plans. Give three reasons he gave for rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How did the people respond to his challenge?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Relate how you could use the example of Nehemiah when facing a challenge in your life.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  9. Two foreign rulers were displeased that a man had come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. Now a third ruler, "chieftain of the desert tribes in northern Arabia," joins them. Give their names.  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Why did the three antagonistic rulers believe the project could be stopped inasmuch as Artaxerxes was still king of the Persians? (Ezra 4:18-23)

---



---

Nehemiah 3:1-32

12. People who had little or no experience in building lent a helping hand in the reconstruction of the walls. List their occupations.

3:1	3:8	3:12
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
3:17	3:22	3:26
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
3:31-32		

13. The blueprints indicated where each working unit was to operate. Give the phrases that indicate the close proximity of the workers.

---



---

14. Not everyone participated in the building project. Who declined to do so? (3:5)

---



---

15. What four principal parts had to receive special attention in repairing the gates? (3:3, 6)

16. What particular names were applied to the following gates:  
the one through which sheep were driven for sacrificial offerings?

3:1

---

the one located near the fish market?

3:3

---

the one which offered a fine view of the valley?

3:13

---

the one through which trash and garbage were carted and burned in the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna)?

3:14

---

the one near the king's garden?

3:15

---

17. The building operations, in spite of opposition, were completed within fifty-two days (6:15). Who was the organizing genius functioning under the kindness of God?

Was he a priest or a layman? (1:11b)

---

18. Recall a building project (perhaps the building of a new church) in which you worked side by side with others. Relate incidents that happened and tell if they brought you into a closer relationship.
-

THE SLOGAN: "LET US RISE UP AND BUILD"	
NEHEMIAH 2:16-18	12
"ALL IN FAVOR, SAY AYE" – NEHEMIAH 2:17-18	12
OPPOSITION BEGINS TO SHOW ITS UGLY FACE	
NEHEMIAH 2:19-20	12
NEHEMIAH 3	12
WORKLOADS ASSIGNED – NEHEMIAH 3:1-32	13
PERSONAL APPLICATION – NEHEMIAH 4:1-23	14

● ● ● ● ●

*God's people will not falter. They will forge  
ahead with might and strength.*

● ● ● ● ●

**NEHEMIAH INSPECTS THE RUINED WALLS**

*NEHEMIAH 2:11-15*

The escort of soldiers and cavalry brought Nehemiah safely to Jerusalem. They were tired after the four-month trek from Babylonia. They needed time to recuperate, wash a few things, get settled, and catch up on sleep. A three-day rest was granted them.

Nehemiah decided to make an inspection tour by night of the southern wall and gates. He chose a few construction engineers to accompany him. Mind you, he told no one what God had put in his heart to do for Jerusalem. The small band of inspectors traveled light. No pack animals were allowed to be in the nocturnal train; only Nehemiah had a mount (2:12).

They proceeded cautiously from gate to gate. At one spot, the rubble was so thick the mount could not get through. That was at the King's Pool, the Pool of Siloam.

At any rate, Nehemiah had seen enough. As a genius at organizing, he knew what to do. The workload had to be parceled out and each group was to be held responsible for clearing away the debris and repairing its assigned section of the wall. No more, no less, either. Having gotten the information he wanted and knowing what plan to follow, he turned back and re-entered the city through the Valley Gate (2:13-15).



Note: The same principle applies to church work. If you do your part, great or small, together with others, you will succeed in advancing the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. This will surely happen because “the hand of our God is upon us.”

Remember, too, the common saying, “If a problem is difficult, time is required to solve it. If it is impossible, more time is needed.”

#### **THE SLOGAN: “LET US RISE UP AND BUILD”**

*NEHEMIAH 2:16-18*

The upper class, as well as the rank and file of people, did not have the faintest idea what Nehemiah was up to. “The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work” (2:16).

#### **“ALL IN FAVOR, SAY AYE”**

*NEHEMIAH 2:17-18*

Now when the inspection tour was ended, Nehemiah was ready to disclose his plans. He called a mass meeting and said, in effect, to the assembly, “You know as well as I do that we’ve got to bring about a change. The city is unsafe to live in. The walls are in shambles and the gates have been burned with fire. Please don’t remind me, I know perfectly well that a previous attempt was made to fortify Jerusalem and failed miserably (Ezra 4:18-23). I also know that when the attempt was made the same Artaxerxes, who sits on the throne today, ordered the reconstruction work stopped” (Ezra 4:21).

“Naturally, you want to know why I think the work will succeed this time. I’ll tell you why. The Lord is on our side, the gracious hand of my God has been upon me. King Artaxerxes, too, was moved to act in behalf of our people. After four months, he reached an unswerving decision. So he granted me leave of absence to rebuild the city where my fathers are buried. Not only that, but he also supplied me with a military escort. Moreover, he directed the chief forester of the region to give me all the timber I needed to rebuild the gates, and even to build a

house to shelter me during my stay here. With God and the king on our side, we shall succeed.”

“Let us rise up and build? What say you, men?” The assembly was galvanized. With one accord they shouted, “Let us start rebuilding.” So they began the good work (2:17-18).

#### **OPPOSITION BEGINS TO SHOW ITS UGLY FACE**

*NEHEMIAH 2:19-20*

A new opponent to Israel’s plan is now introduced, an Arab by the name of Geshem, “chieftain of desert tribes in northern Arabia” (Roehrs). He was on friendly terms with the Persians and did not hesitate to join Sanballat and Tobiah in ridiculing the Jewish intentions: “King Artaxerxes will interpret your actions, as he did once before, as rebellion against the monarchy.”

Nehemiah retorted, “The God of heaven will give us success. We, His servants, will proceed with confidence. What interest have you ever shown in bettering conditions in Jerusalem? None, whatsoever. What historic right do you have to the capital of our nation, Jerusalem, the holy city, where stood the temple of Solomon, where now stands the temple of Zerubbabel? This is the city of our God. Don’t hinder us in our plans. We are under the mandate of our Great King.”

#### *NEHEMIAH 3*

Persons who had little or no experience as carpenters or stonemasons lent a helping hand, such as:

- the high priest with his fellow priests, 3:1,
- the son of one of the perfume-makers (apothecaries, KJV), 3:8,
- the daughters of Shallum, 3:12,
- the Levites, assistants to the priests, 3:17,
- the priests, men of the plain, i.e., the Jordan

Valley, 3:22,

- the Temple Servants, 3:26; Ezra 8:20,
- the goldsmiths and the merchants, 3:32.

### WORKLOADS ASSIGNED

#### *NEHEMIAH 3:1-32*

The section which the priests were to rebuild is mentioned first because it was nearest the temple. The sheep, intended for sacrifice, were driven through what is appropriately termed “the Sheep Gate.”

The blueprints indicated where each working unit was to operate, namely, “next to him...next to them.” Those directions are given fifteen times in 3:2-12, 17, and 19. For variety’s sake, a different phraseology is then used: “after him...after them,” occurring sixteen times (3:16-31). Check this for yourselves.

Not all the famous and rich participated in the building project. For reasons of their own, the nobles of Tekoa “would not stoop to serve their Lord” (3:5).

It was no small matter, for instance, to repair the gates. Beams had to be laid, doors set, locks affixed, and transverse bars properly placed so that the doors could not be opened from the outside (3:3, 6, 13-15). In all, ten gates are mentioned, some of them bearing recognizable names, such as:

- the Sheep Gate, through which the sheep destined for sacrificial offerings were brought, 3:1;
- the Fish Gate, located near the fish market, 3:3;
- the Valley Gate, granting a view of the valley, 3:13;
- the Dung Gate, through which trash and garbage were taken and burned in the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna), 3:14;

- the Gate of the Fountain, a pool near the King’s Garden, 3:15;

- the names of five other gates are given, but these cannot be readily identified.

### “SO FAR, SO GOOD”

The building project got off to a good start and continued moving forward with great strides. Confidence in the Lord gave the leaders and people willing hands; the former received honorable mention in this chapter. No opposition had yet been displayed, but it was bound to come.

However, God’s people will not falter. They will forge ahead with might and strength, knowing that the “King’s business required haste.” In fact, they will accomplish the “impossible,” completing the fortification of Jerusalem in record time: fifty-two days (6:15).

All of which shows the organizing genius of this dedicated layman, Nehemiah, under the benevolence of the mighty and merciful Lord.