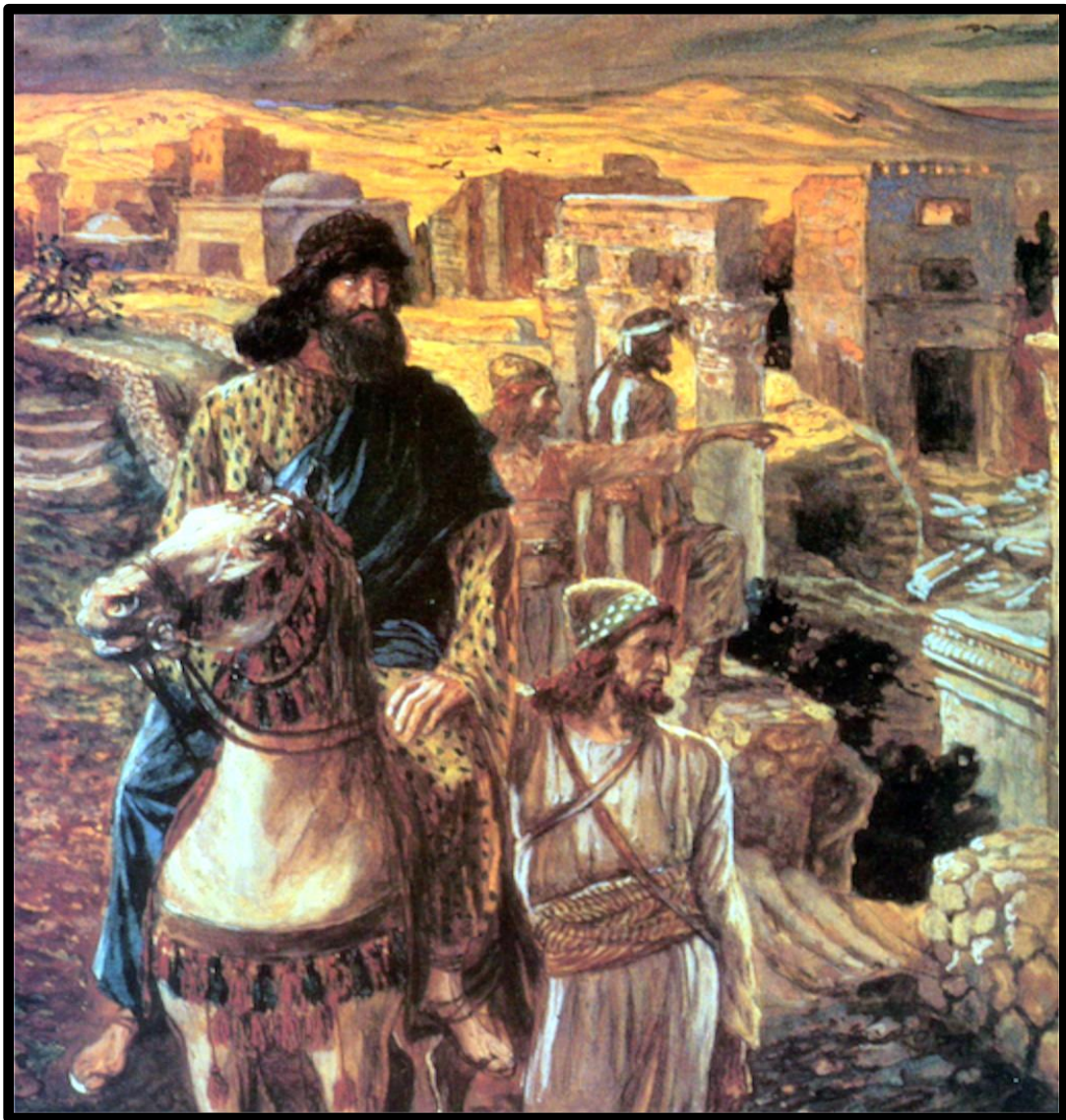


**LIVING GODS WILL**

**Vessel of God**

**NEHEMIAH**



**Nehemiah sees the rubble in Jerusalem by Tissot**

**Born:** Babylon

**Died:** Unknown

**Nehemiah** was the **Governor** of Jerusalem during wall reconstruction.

**Nehemiah** supervised the repairs to the walls of Jerusalem.

**Nehemiah** trusted **God** and **prayed** continually.

**Nehemiah** was a **great leader** and he encouraged the people.

The name **Nehemiah** means **Yahweh** has comforted. Before we even begin reading the book of **Nehemiah**, the name reveals that the words will bring comfort.

**Nehemiah** offers hope and much more. This book guides us on how to overcome troubles and trust in **God** while showing **Nehemiah's** prayer life, leadership, and faithfulness.

The book opens with news of the dire condition of the wall surrounding **Jerusalem**, the city of **God**. **Nehemiah** is far from Jerusalem. He's a slave for a foreign king in **Persia in 444 BC**. He prays fervently and continually.

He's not a spiritual leader or prophet. His fasting and praying triggers changes. He ends up the **governor** of Jerusalem and supervises the repairs. Through the process of restoring and dedicating the wall we glean many lessons from **Nehemiah** on prayer, leadership, overcoming enemies, restoring hearts, integrity, and holiness.

### **A Man who Understood the Importance of the Call**

The repair of the wall and recommitment of the people is the last recorded history in the Old Testament. A remnant of the Israelites had returned **70 years** earlier and rebuilt the temple, but without walls, the city remained vulnerable to attack.

People living in a city without a solid wall remained defenseless and humiliated. Rebuilding the walls signaled **God** once again blessed His people. A good wall also gave the people a sense of security and community.

**Nehemiah** wept when he heard the news of the broken wall and burned gates. He knew that the lack of repairing the wall showed people feared men and not **God**. Receiving the bad news became a call for **Nehemiah**, a challenge to bring change that would glorify **God**.

**Consider how God is calling you to make a difference and be willing to accept the challenge.**

## **A Man of prayer**

**Nehemiah** showed us how to pray to **God** and listen for his answers. In chapter one he spent a long time in prayer from the heart with fasting.

He glorified **God** with listing the Lord's attributes. He confessed sins of the people. He trusted **God's** promises to **Moses** to restore the people. He asked for success before **King Artaxerxes**. Once the king asked **Nehemiah** what made him look sad, **Nehemiah** said a quick prayer before responding.

In chapter two, **God** put a plan in **Nehemiah's** mind (**v12**), and he told the people that **God's** hand had been favorable to him (**v18**). This brought results as the people began working and completed the work in **52 days**.

His prayers continued through the book and reflected his obedience and heart relationship with **God**. Like **Nehemiah**, we can open our heart in prayer, observe blessings that show **God's** favor on us, and listen with both our mind and heart.

## **Patient and Hopeful**

**Nehemiah** exhibited patience. He prayed for four months before **God** answered his first prayer (**1:1,2:1**). He took his time once he arrived in Jerusalem before disclosing his plan to the people. He patiently kept reminding the people to trust **God** and that **God** would fight for them and help them.

He exemplifies **Isaiah 40:31** that **those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength**.

**Nehemiah** believed **God** would use him to get the wall rebuilt. He never tried to attack his enemies, but trusted **God** would deal with them (**6:14**). In our fast paced, instant delivery world, we should slow down and wait on **God's** timing.

He recognized **God's** blessings and favor (**2:8, 18**) and shared the news with the people to give them hope.

**We bring hope when we share how God has worked in our lives.**

## **A Prepared Planner**

**Nehemiah** acted with wisdom. When the king asked how he could help, **Nehemiah** shared that he wanted to go to Jerusalem and listed letters he needed along the journey to obtain supplies. He took the letters signed by the king and picked up the supplies along the journey. He arrived in Jerusalem equipped for the work. **God** put a plan in **Nehemiah's** mind (**2:12**).

Once in Jerusalem **Nehemiah** waited three days without announcing his presence or reason for coming. He then secretly inspected the damage at night. The plan included teamwork, persistence, and cooperation, plus trust in **God**.

**We should take time to make careful plans and listen to God's guidance.**

### **A Great Leader Who Inspired Workers**

**Nehemiah** spoke to all the people and inspired them to work. He shared the favor the king gave and how **God's** hand had been with him and that motivated the people. They responded by going to work immediately. **Nehemiah** broke them into teams of families to work on the various sections of the wall. He was also prayerfully prepared when outside opposition began.

**Nehemiah** had worked for King Artaxerxes long enough to gain wisdom about leadership. He set a goal to rebuild and he succeeded. He organized workers, delegated the work, administered, and rose up to any challenge. He also fed 150 Jews and officials daily without using his allowance as governor.

A great leader is also a servant and understands the people he leads. Leaders provide encouragement as **Nehemiah** did continually when he stated they were doing a great work.

### **No Obstacles Stopped His Work**

Each time enemies bullied them, **Nehemiah** prayed. He stated that **God** would fight for them. The main enemies lived around the city and didn't want the wall rebuilt.

Enemies tried various tactics, but **Nehemiah** stood firm. They ridiculed and bullied (4:1-6), but **Nehemiah** prayed, ignored them, and the work continued.

Enemies threatened to attack, so the people prayed and set up guards (4:8-15). **Nehemiah** reminded the people to trust **God** and paired the workers so one worked while the other stood by, armed to fight. **Nehemiah** also set up a signal of a trumpet call, so they could rally together and trust **God** to fight for them (4:16-23).

Enemies tried to make **Nehemiah** compromise by drawing him outside the city where they could harm him, and then they tried to lure him to meet in the temple to compromise his faith. **Nehemiah** saw through their ploys and refused the meetings. He stated that he was doing a great work (6:2-4).

Next, the enemies tried to slander and shame **Nehemiah** with a report they would send to the king. **Nehemiah** replied that they had invented things and then he prayed to **God** for strength. He refused to meet in the temple because he was not worthy to go there. He was not a priest (6:5-12).

**Nehemiah** overcame all the opposition and the people rebuilt the wall that laid in ruins for 70 years, in 52 days.

**We should look at obstacles as challenges to press on and trust God.**

## A Man of Integrity

**Nehemiah** remained a man of integrity. He quietly worked for King Artaxerxes as **drink bearer**. That meant tasting each drink to be sure it contained no poison. **Nehemiah** was prepared to die for the king and yet recognized **God** as sovereign. He showed respect for the earthly king when he politely stated his requests.

He never caved in to fear. He always obeyed **God**. He humbly remained the secular leader and had the priests read the Word. He stood with the priests and scribes and people to listen to the reading of the law and then the prayer of confession of the people.

His name was on the sealed document of the Covenant (**10:1**). He directed the leaders and choir to go on top of the wall. He joined with the leaders, choir, and people to parade on the wall. He stood at the House of **God** for the dedication of the wall and celebration (**12:27-43**).

**Nehemiah** kept his promise to return to King Artaxerxes and then returned to Jerusalem (**13:6**). When he discovered that some leaders had let an evil enemy have a room in the courts of the **Lord**, **Nehemiah** threw them out and restored the workers in the house of **God**.

He also stopped people from working on the Sabbath, and commended the Levites to purify themselves and perform their duties (**13:8-22, 30**). He purified the people according to **God's** laws. He paid attention to his actions and focused on pleasing **God**.

**We too should live a life of integrity and that happens when we stay connected to God.**

## Desired Restored Hearts and Relationships

**Nehemiah** assembled the people when he heard of fighting within (**5:1-13**). He scolded the people for not walking in the fear of **God** (**5:9**) and taking advantage of their own people. He set new rules and settled the issues. The people responded and praised **God** (**5:13**).

**Nehemiah's** concern for the people's hearts shows in the opening prayer of chapter one, when he stated that we, the people, acted corruptly and disobeyed **God's** laws (**1:7**). In that prayer he asked for restoration of the nation of Israel and for **God** to keep the promise to bring the Israelites back to Jerusalem, if they would return to **God**.

After completing the wall, **Nehemiah** worked with **Ezra**, the priest to reconnect the people with **God**. Our prayers should include our desire to stay close to **God** and to help build healthy relationships.



## Led People to Make a New Commitment to God

**Nehemiah** stated that **God** put a plan in his heart to assemble the people by families and that led to **Ezra**, the priest reading the Law of **Moses** aloud (**7:5**). The people wept when they listened, but **Nehemiah** told them to rejoice and reminded them that **God** is their strength (**8:9**).

As a leader, **Nehemiah** looked to the welfare of their people and not just the condition of the city. Gathering people by family groups reminds us that families are the backbone of a nation. **Nehemiah** had families work on the wall together and then assemble together to hear the reading of the **God's** Word.

**God** is always happy to have us turn back to him and recommit our lives. We should share our faith and encourage our family members to be faithful to **God**.

## Wholly Focused on God

Throughout the book we see a man wholly focused on **God**. His example shines through the ages to inspire us to follow **God** closely. He never took credit for himself but gave the glory to **God**.

**Nehemiah's** prayer life reflected a believer who trusted **God**. When they completed the wall he stated that the surrounding nations recognized that **God** had helped them (**6:15-16**). Several times **Nehemiah** asked **God** to remember him for good. He desired to please **God** and willingly wanted **God** to observe him and be with him.

**Nehemiah** understood the consequences of both holiness and turning away from **God**. When he rebuked the people for profaning the Sabbath he also reminded them that their troubles came from not being holy (**13:17-18**).

The plea to be remembered for good is reflected in the words of Jesus regarding servants who wisely used talents given them (**Matthew 25**) that state "**Well done good and faithful servant.**" Let's follow **Nehemiah's** example and live a life worthy of **God's** praise.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

**Nehemiah 2:20** 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."

**Nehemiah 4:20** Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.

**Nehemiah 8:9** And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.



**Nehemiah Jerusalem by Gustave Dore**