

The Life and Times of Nehemiah



**Preparation Workbook for
INTERMEDIATES
2009 Manitoulin Youth Camp**

Dear Youth Camp Scholar,

Before you know it, school will be over, summer will have arrived, and Youth Camp will be here, Lord willing. We are happy to hear you are registered for the Youth Camp this summer, and we want to let you know about the studies that are planned for you.

The Youth Camp this year will be based on the book of Nehemiah. An important part of the success of our studies will be the pre-camp assignments you complete before coming to Manitoulin. Your personal study will consist of the enclosed workbook. Please begin working on it this week!

Although these studies are in preparation for this year's Youth Camp, they will teach you Bible study principles that will be extremely helpful in your future Bible studies. Even if for some reason you cannot come to Youth Camp in July, we are confident you will find you have benefited from this pre-camp study.

We are really looking forward to working with you in our classes on Nehemiah at Manitoulin. Please try to get started on the workbook in the next few days. We would also like to thank you in advance for the time and effort you will be putting into this study. We sincerely hope you will find it both fun and educational.

If at any time you have questions about your workbook assignments, please ask your parents for permission to call Aunt Cheryl at (905) 336-5393 for help.

Lord willing, we look forward to seeing you at Youth Camp this year and hearing about your Bible studies in Nehemiah.

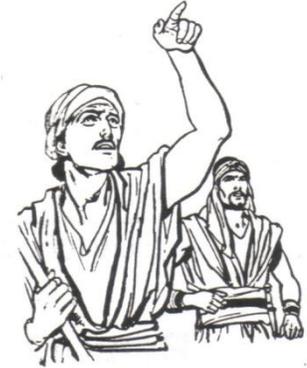
With love,

Your teachers Uncle Peter Dulis and Aunt Cheryl Robinson

NEHEMIAH - A MAN OF ACTION

Lots of people see a problem and say, "Isn't that a shame! Why doesn't someone do something?!"

Nehemiah decided to act. With God's help, Nehemiah singlehandedly gained the king's approval, raised the money, led a group of people and soldiers on a long trip to Jerusalem, and once there organized the effort, overcame the opposition, and kept going until the job was done.



Nehemiah's life is an example that shows the difference one person can make. He gave up a comfortable situation to struggle with problems and hardships in the service of God.

As you study Nehemiah's life, watch him in action -- and then examine your life and decide to be a person like Nehemiah, someone on whom God can depend to do what needs to be done.

I. Introduction

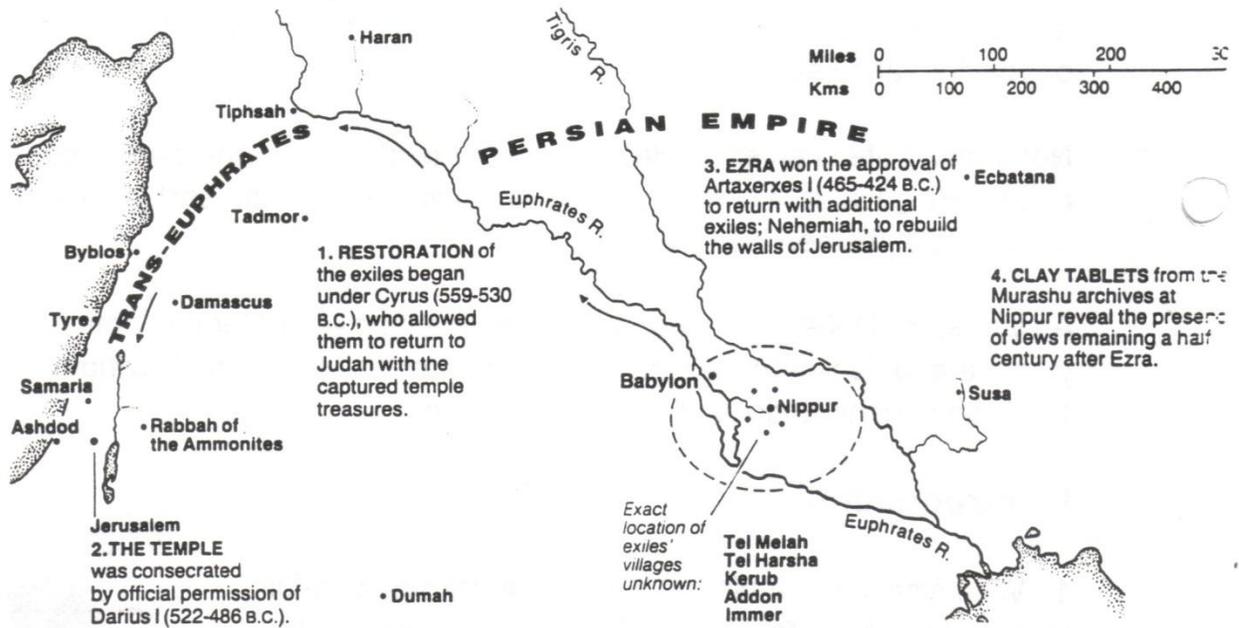
1. Who else in the Bible left a life of money and comfort to do a difficult job for God? (Think of lots of examples. Hint: see Heb. 11:24, 25, and Acts 22:3, 9:15, 16 for two examples) Give references.

2. Nehemiah was not the first leader to bring a group of Jews exiled in Babylon back to Jerusalem. Who ordered the first group back, and who was their leader? (See Ezra 1:2, 3, 7, 8 11 -- Sheshbazzar is the Persian name for Zerubbabel) _____

3. Who led the next group of people to Jerusalem? (Ezra 7:6-8)

How long did it take them to get from Babylon to Jerusalem? (Ezra 7:9)

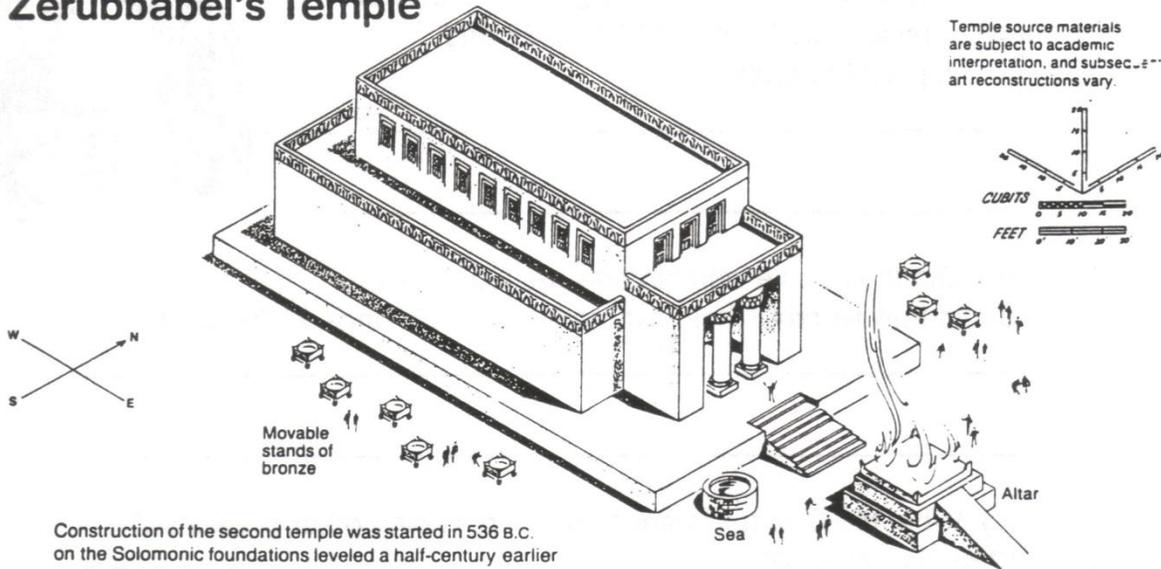
Return from Exile



4. When the first group returned under Zerubbabel, what did they decide to build first? (Ezra 3: 2, 3) Why do you think that they made this choice?

What did they build next? Why? (Ezra 4:1)

Zerubbabel's Temple



Construction of the second temple was started in 536 B.C. on the Solomonic foundations leveled a half-century earlier by the Babylonians. People who remembered the earlier temple wept at the comparison (Ezr 3:12). Not until 516 B.C., the 6th year of the Persian emperor Darius I (522-486), was the temple finally completed at the urging of Haggai and Zechariah (Ezr 6:13-15).

Archaeological evidence confirms that the Persian period in Palestine was a comparatively impoverished one in terms of material culture. Later Aramaic documents from Elephantine in Upper Egypt illustrate the official process of gaining permission to construct a Jewish place of worship, and the opposition engendered by the presence of various foes during this period.

Of the temple and its construction, little is known. Among the few contemporary buildings, the Persian palace at Lachish and the Tobiad monument at Iraq el-Amir may be compared in terms of technique.

Unlike the more famous structures razed in 586 B.C. and A.D. 70, the temple begun by Zerubbabel suffered no major hostile destruction, but was gradually repaired and reconstructed over a long period. Eventually it was replaced entirely by Herod's magnificent edifice.

5. The problems Ezra and Nehemiah faced started in Ezra 4:1-5. What did the people already living in the land ask to do? (Ezra 4:2)

6. What did Zerubbabel and Jeshua, the leaders, answer them? (Ezra 4:3)

7. Why do you think that they gave this answer?

(a) First look at 2 Kings 17:24-26, 28 and explain why it was important to the new people who moved to Israel to worship the God of Israel.

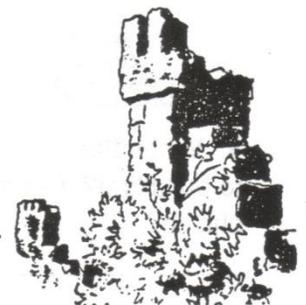
(b) Did the people worship *only* the God of Israel, or did they worship their own gods also? (2 Kings 17:29, 32, 41)

(c) What did God tell Israel about worshipping other gods also? (2 Kings 17:35-39)

(d) When working on projects, especially ones relating to God, what type of people should we pick to work with? (Hint: see 2 Cor. 6:14-18)

(e) Thought Question: Give at least one example of a problem you could have if you are trying to work with someone who doesn't believe in God or want to obey His rules.

(f) Now give an answer to the question, why wouldn't Zerubbabel and Jeshua let the people of the land help them?



8. When the people of the land got their answer, what did they do?
(Ezra 4:4, 5)

9. Thought Question: Why do you think they got so mad? Do you think they felt left out and so wanted to get back at Zerubbabel? Do you think that they were pretending to want to be helpful when they really didn't want Zerubbabel and the others to be successful? (A hint is given in Ezra 4:1)

10. Thought Question: Why didn't God make it easy for the people who returned to the land? God wanted them to return, He wanted them to do the rebuilding. He could have had the others say, "OK, we're happy you're here. We'll let you do it your own way. But if you need anything or we can help you in any way, just let us know. Welcome back!"
(Hint: See Acts 14:22, 2 Tim. 2:12, 1 Pet. 5:10, Heb. 5:8)

11. The foundations of the temple were set in Ezra 3:10, but it was not finished until much later. That is because the enemies sent letters to the king, and the king sent a letter back stopping the work. What was the name of the king that stopped the work? (Ezra 4:23) _____

When did the work begin again? (Ezra 4:24). _____

When was the temple finished? (Ezra 6:15) _____

What feast did they celebrate when they dedicated the temple?
(Ezra 6:16-19) _____.

12. Ezra and Nehemiah were different types of people, but God had a purpose for both of them. Why did Ezra come back to Jerusalem? (Ezra 7:10)

The King gave Ezra money. What was he supposed to buy, and why? (Ezra 7:17, 18)



II. NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 1

Read Nehemiah chapter 1 in your Bible.

1. Who is telling the story in this book? (v.1) _____

Where is he? _____

What other important events happened in this place? (Hint: Esther 1:2)

When it says, (v. 1) "in the twentieth year," when does the "twenty" count from? (Hint: see Ezra 2:1)

2. When Nehemiah's brother Hanani came to see him with some other Israelites, what did Nehemiah want to know about? (1:2)

What answer did Hanani give to Nehemiah? (1:3)

3. Hanani was Nehemiah's brother. They had a common interest, the welfare of God's people. What are some of the advantages of having family members who share the same beliefs?

Notice what Nehemiah and his brother were interested in and enjoyed talking about. When you talk to your family and friends, what do you talk about? Is it about the Bible readings, or how near the kingdom is, or how God is working in your life? Or is it about TV shows, computer games, sports teams, or food? What should we be interested in? What should we talk about?

4. Why do you think that Nehemiah didn't have up-to-date information about Jerusalem? (Hint: see answer to #3 in Introduction)

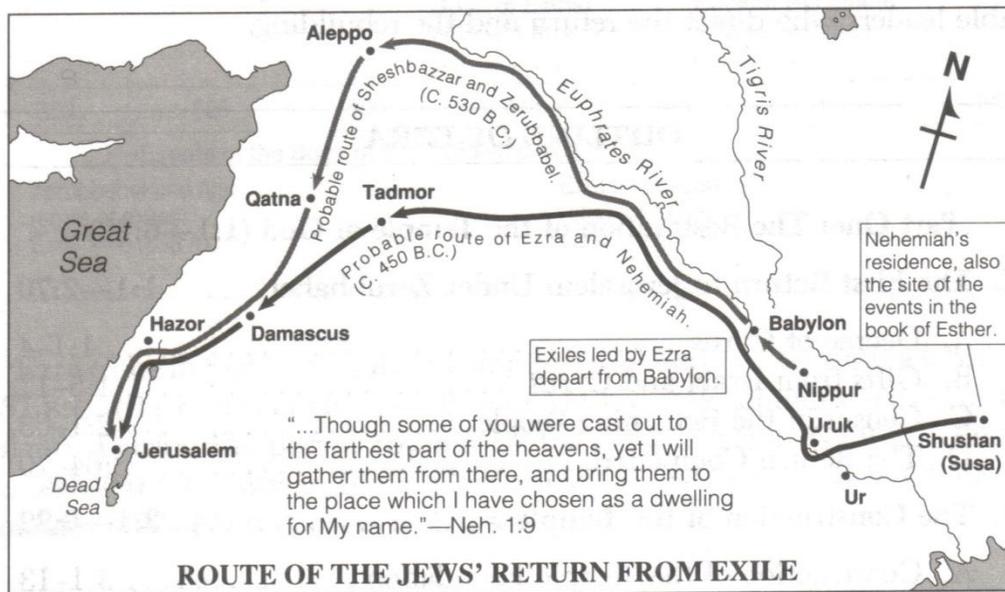
5. Nehemiah was concerned about Jerusalem because it was the capital of Israel. But the city was important for another reason. What was it? (Hint: see Deut. 12:5, 2 Chron. 7:12, 16)

Why were the walls so important? What kinds of problems would a city have with no walls? (Hint: Think of Jericho and Joshua)

Explain how Proverbs 25:28 shows the importance of walls:



6. On the map, circle where Nehemiah was and where Jerusalem is:



7. How did Nehemiah feel after he heard the news? (v. 4)

Thought Question: Why do you think that he was so upset?

8. Jesus tells us, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:21) If we get more upset over losing a toy or money than over damage to the meeting room or troubles people are having preaching about God, then our treasure is not the right kind. What kinds of things should we treasure? Explain. (See Luke 12:21, 29-34)

What sort of things did Jesus weep over? (Luke 19:41-44)

9. What was the first action Nehemiah took? (Neh. 1:4b) (4b = last part of verse)

Write out the part of James 5:16 that shows that what Nehemiah did can help a lot:

What does it mean to fast?

Do you think that we should fast today?

10. Nehemiah takes a whole verse to address God, rather than something short such as "O God in heaven." Why do you think he made it so long? What does it show about Nehemiah's attitude toward God? Explain. (1:5)

11. In verse 6 Nehemiah asks God to hear his prayer. Why does he say this? Doesn't God "hear" everything? Doesn't God hear all prayers? Explain. (Hint: Prov. 15:29; Ps. 66:18, Prov. 28:9; Isa. 59:2; John 9:31)

12. Nehemiah in verse 6 confesses the sins of his fathers and of Israel. Why do you think that Nehemiah did this? (Hint: see Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple 2 Chron. 6:34-39)

13. In Nehemiah's prayer, what sins does he confess? (Verse 7)

14. Nehemiah says, "we have dealt very corruptly against thee." Do you think that Nehemiah was a great sinner and had not obeyed God? Explain what you think he meant by this.

15. What are some examples of righteous people confessing to the sins of the people, even when they personally were not very sinful? (One example, see Dan. 9:4, 5, 10, 11)

16. Who had no sins, but yet took upon himself our sins and died?

17. Imagine you and some friends are practicing in the hallway waiting for the gym to open when the ball hits the light and breaks it.

Do you consider you are at fault? _____

Would you blame only the last person who had the ball?

How would you feel about the situation?

18. Nehemiah's prayer quotes many scriptures. Look in the centre margin of a reference Bible and find at least two quotes that Nehemiah makes from other parts of scripture. Write them out here:

19. A prayer like Nehemiah's that is heartfelt can help make things clear in our mind. (1) We understand the problem more clearly because we have told God about it. (2) We are aware and open to God's great power to help. (3) We see more clearly the job we have to do. By the end of the prayer, Nehemiah knew what action he had to take. What do you think Nehemiah was asking God for help with? (See verse 11)

20. What does Nehemiah's prayer tell us about Nehemiah and his character?

21. What was Nehemiah's job? (1:11)

22. Find out more about this job, its privileges and responsibilities. Write a brief explanation: (Hint: look in a Bible Dictionary or other reference book)



23. When problems arise or someone needs help, often people say how sorry they are but do nothing. Look at James 2:15, 16 and explain how good wishes do not solve problems:

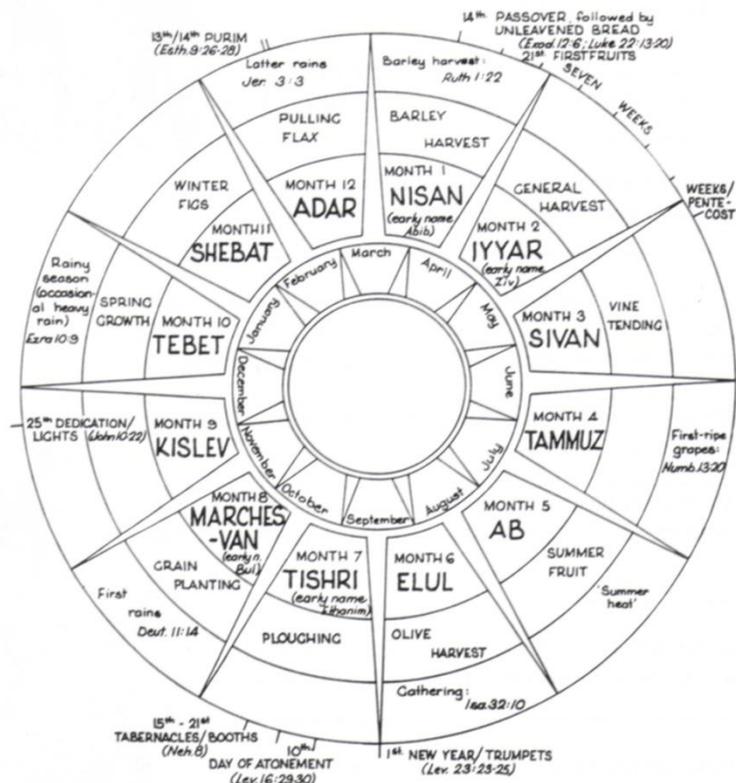
24. Nehemiah did more than just feel sorry. Give an example of how you could do something to help in a difficult situation -- when others might just feel sorry.

25. Nehemiah was planning to ask someone in the world for a favour, a favour Nehemiah wanted because of his belief in God. Have you ever had to ask for that type of favour -- for example from a coach when a game is supposed to be played on a Sunday? Write down an example in your life where this has or might come up:

How do you feel about asking for this type of favour?



CALENDAR IN ANCIENT ISRAEL



THE BIBLE TELLS ABOUT HAVING INITIATIVE



Nehemiah Starts to Help Jerusalem

Nehemiah was a Hebrew who had the important job of “cupbearer” to the Persian king.



Nehemiah 1:3—2:18

“SURVIVED” MEANS DIDN’T DIE.



“Those [of our people] who survived . . . are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.”

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I . . . prayed before the God of heaven. . . .

I had not been sad in his [the king’s] presence before; so the king asked me, “Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart.”

I was very much afraid, but I 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?”

The king said to me, “What is it you want?”

Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king . . . , let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it.”

Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, “How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?” It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

“MY FATHERS” MEANS ALL THE ANCESTORS, THE PEOPLE IN HIS FAMILY WHO LIVED LONG BEFORE HE DID.



Draw a line to the right ending and then finish each sentence.

1. When Nehemiah was sad, he _____
 prayed
 laughed
 sang songs
2. When the King saw that Nehemiah was sad _____
 he was angry with him
 he didn't notice
 he asked him to tell him why
3. Nehemiah was very sad because _____

4. The King knew Nehemiah was sad because _____



THE BIBLE TELLS ABOUT HAVING INITIATIVE

Nehemiah Starts to Help Jerusalem

(Nehemiah 1:2—2:18)

"SAFE CONDUCT" MEANS PROTECTED TRAVELING THROUGH THAT COUNTRY.



I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates . . . and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?"

And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests. So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me. . . .

I went to Jerusalem. . . . I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. . . .

By night I went out . . . , examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates. . . . 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.

Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me.

"DISGRACE" MEANS THEY LOST THE HONOR AND RESPECT OTHERS GAVE THEM.



They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.

Nehemiah had the job of "cupbearer" for the King in Susa, a city about 800 miles away from Jerusalem.  **Draw a line on the map to show the way Nehemiah might have traveled on his trip.**



INITIATIVE AND NEHEMIAH



Read about Nehemiah's initiative in your Bible in Nehemiah 1 and 2

Write the missing words in the puzzle, then in the story.

(The words in bold are words that show initiative.) The first one is done for you.

| | |
|-----------|--------|
| began | burned |
| Jerusalem | do |
| king | help |
| letters | prayed |
| rebuild | timber |
| Nehemiah | asked |

WORD BOX:

NEHEMIAH'S INITIATIVE TOOK HIM A VERY LONG DISTANCE.



I WONDER IF HE HAD TO HOP. WERE THERE ANY WATER HOLES ON THE WAY?

1 _____ was very sad when he heard that the gates of Jerusalem had been 2 _____. Nehemiah 3 _____ to God for several days. The 4 _____ asked Nehemiah why he was so sad. The queen was sitting beside the king. Nehemiah 5 _____ the king to let him go to the city of 6 _____ to 7 _____ the walls and gates. The King said Nehemiah could go and 8 _____ that. The king gave him 9 _____ to the nearby Governors to ask for safe passage and for 10 _____ from the forest to help in building the city gate, the city walls, and a house for Nehemiah to live in. When Nehemiah got to Jerusalem, he inspected the wall to see what needed to be done. Nehemiah asked the people to 11 _____ rebuild the wall and they 12 _____ the good work.

III. NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 2

Read Nehemiah 2:1-8

1. Look up a Jewish calendar (See the end chapter 1 questions). Find out how much time has passed since chapter 1. (Chisleu = Kislev)

2. What in this verse suggests that Nehemiah planned to show his sadness on this day? (v. 1)

3. When the king noticed Nehemiah's sadness, what was Nehemiah's reaction? _____ See Esther 4:2 -- what was the rule about those who were sad entering the king's gate?

What sometimes happened to servants who displeased the king? (Gen. 40:2)

What other Bible character risked unlawfully entering the king's presence after praying and fasting for God's help? (Esther 4:16)

4. Nehemiah had thought ahead what he would say to the king. (v. 2) What was the king's answer?

What did Nehemiah do first before answering the king? (v. 4) How long do you think it took him to do this?

What does this indicate to you about when or where you can pray to God?

5. What did Nehemiah want to do? (v. 5)

How did the king show his approval?

When Nehemiah set him a time, how long did he ask for? (Compare 2:1 with 13:6)

Who do you think the queen might have been? (Esther 2:8)

6. What two things had Nehemiah carefully thought of in advance to ask the king for? (v. 7, 8)



Nehemiah had prayed before he asked the king about going to Judah. Then, when the king said yes, Nehemiah asked for more. Sometimes when we have needs we hesitate to ask the right people for help because we are afraid to approach them. Not Nehemiah! He asked the king because the king could help him the most. The king was interested in helping Nehemiah. Important people may be more interested and approachable than we think. God's answers to prayer may come as a result of our asking others.

Notice Nehemiah carefully presented his plans to the king, having prayed for help in advance. What other Bible characters made a good impression on a foreign king? (Hint: two examples, Gen. 41:33-36, Dan. 1:20) Do you think they prayed first? Explain why.

What reason did Nehemiah give as to why the king gave him what he wanted? (v. 8)

Read Nehemiah 2:9-20

7. Who did Nehemiah say had given him the idea to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem? (v. 12)

8. The king helped Nehemiah by giving him an impressive arrival in the area. How does the king do this? (v. 9)

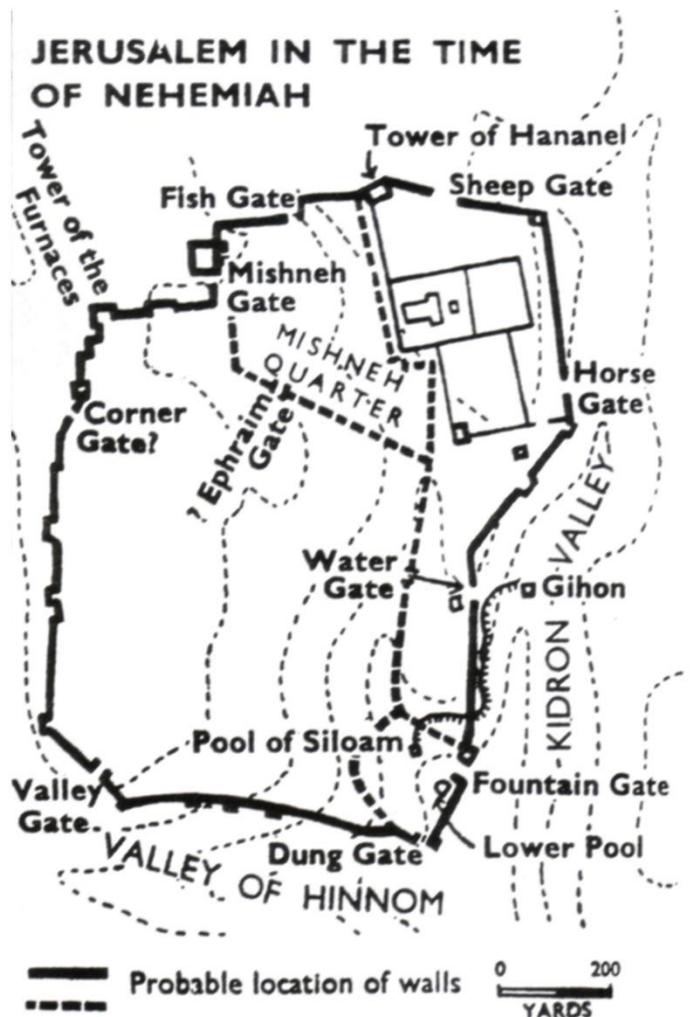
What important job had the king given Nehemiah? (See 5:14)

9. Who were the enemies of the children of Israel in the land? (v. 10, 19)

How did they feel about the arrival of Nehemiah? (v. 10)

10. Before Nehemiah announced his plans, what did he do? (v.12-16)

On the map, draw the route Nehemiah took around the city:



11. Why do you think that Nehemiah so carefully researched what he wanted to do before presenting his plan?

12. Notice Nehemiah's approach when he talked to the people. First, he explained the problem. What was the problem? (v. 17)

Then he explained the plan. What was the plan? (v. 17)

Then he gave a reason why they would benefit. What reason? (v. 17)

Lastly, he showed them that God was blessing this effort. (v. 18)
What did he tell them that showed this?

13. How did the people respond? (v. 18)

14. What did the enemies think of the plan?

Why do you think they didn't like it?

What charges against Nehemiah do they make? (v. 19)

How does Nehemiah answer them? (v. 20)



Nehemiah's Secret Plan

Ezra 4; Nehemiah 1—2

Check one or more correct answers for each of the following statements.

1. Nehemiah was
 - a) a royal official who lived in Susa.
 - b) a man who did not love God.
 - c) the king's butler.
2. When Nehemiah's brother visited
 - a) he told Nehemiah good news about Jerusalem.
 - b) he told Nehemiah the Jews were having problems with the Samaritans.
 - c) he said the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt.
3. The Samaritans convinced the Persian officials that
 - a) the Jews would attack them.
 - b) the Jews would not pay their taxes.
 - c) the Jews should be allowed to rebuild Jerusalem.
4. When Nehemiah heard the news his brother gave him he
 - a) was happy.
 - b) cried.
 - c) fasted and prayed.
5. One day when he was serving the king, Nehemiah
 - a) looked sad.
 - b) was afraid of the king.
 - c) prayed to God.
6. Nehemiah asked the king for
 - a) gold and silver.
 - b) permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city.
 - c) letters to the governors asking for lumber and other supplies.
7. The king responded to Nehemiah by
 - a) throwing him out of the palace.
 - b) giving Nehemiah all he asked for.
 - c) becoming angry and shouting at Nehemiah.
8. When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem he
 - a) told everyone of his plans.
 - b) took a midnight inspection tour of the wall.
 - c) cried when he saw the walls in ruins.

9. Nehemiah told the leaders of Judah

- ___a) "Let's rebuild the walls of Jerusalem."
- ___b) "Let's end this disgraceful situation."
- ___c) how God had been with him and how the king had helped him.

10. The leaders of the Jews said to Nehemiah

- ___a) "You're right! It's hopeless."
- ___b) "Let's rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. We will be glad to help."
- ___c) "Oh, go back to your king and your easy life. We didn't ask for your help."

What Would You Do?

The Bible stories show that being untruthful can be done by what we say and by what we do. What would you do if you found yourself in these situations?

1. Jake saw Chad slip a package of gum into his pocket. He knew Chad planned to walk out of the store without paying for the gum. He knew that if he reported Chad, Chad would be suspended from the sixth-grade basketball team and he was the star player. Their school wanted to win the city championship, and the team had a good chance, but not without Chad. What would you do?

2. Jane knew her older brother Todd was going to the movies with his friends but had told his parents he was going to a Sunday school party. She knew Todd

had lied because their parents didn't approve of the movie. Should she tell her parents and make Todd furious with her? Or let him go and suffer the consequences if his parents discovered his lie? What would you do?

Nehemiah's Plan of Action

Nehemiah was so sad when he heard about Jerusalem that he mourned for several days by fasting and praying. But then he moved into action. Write his plans on the lines. If you have trouble try reading each word backwards.

1. Deyarp ot dog.

2. Ekops ot eht gnik.

3. Edam terces snalp.

4. Deripsni eht hsiwej sredeael.

A Verse to Remember

Colossians 3:17

Everything you do or say should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus.

IV. NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 3

1. Which group of people were lazy and wouldn't help? (v. 5)
_____ In an ecclesia, there are different jobs that must be done, and some are not as pleasant, such as cleaning bathrooms. Do you think that speaking brethren or arranging brethren should say they are too important for that job? Explain.

What example did Jesus give, and what does it teach us? Explain.
(John 13:14, 15)

2. Girls helped with the work as well as the men and boys. Prove it!
(You find the verse)

3. In doing the work of the Lord, how does Baruch's attitude show what our attitude should be? (v. 20)

4. Verse 28 shows many people also were building a section near their home. What would be the benefit of this as far as:

(a) saving time? _____

(b) family involvement? _____

If you were building the wall next to your house, and everyone would know who did that section, what kind of job would you do? How would you feel about the project afterwards when you have done a good job and people admire your work?



5. Some people worked on two portions. Give one example from v. 4 & 21 _____ What other job had he done when Ezra returned that showed his trustworthiness? (Ezra 8:33)

Who is another two-portion person? (v. 4 & 30) _____

He was the son of someone very important. Who was his father, and how is his father important?

(1 Chron. 3:19) _____

However, he later made a big mistake. What was it? (Neh. 6:17, 18)

Perhaps he lacked spiritual insight. How does Neh. 6:19 suggest that he had trouble knowing who was the wolf in sheep's clothing?

After that, what good thing did he do? (Neh. 9:38, 10:7)

Who is another two-portion group is in v. 5 & 27: _____

Why do you think they had two portions?

6. How many gates of Jerusalem are mentioned in this chapter? _____
Look up in a Bible dictionary or encyclopedia and see if you can find out how the gates might have been constructed.
Draw a sketch of what a gate may have looked like.

7. There are two gates not mentioned in this chapter. Read Neh. 12:39 and write down the two “missing” gates:

V. NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 4

Nehemiah had problems! Big problems! Problems from enemies outside, and problems among those who were supposed to be his friends. Why didn't Nehemiah give up and go home, back to the comforts of the Persian palace? How would you feel if you were Nehemiah, working all day doing heavy labour in hot, dry, dusty conditions, while the people of the world laugh and make fun of you, try to kill you if you aren't looking, and your helpers are complaining and giving up.

God did not lessen the difficulties because Nehemiah was doing God's work. Nehemiah had faith, prayed to God, and then acted. He got the job done. Watch how Nehemiah reacts in the next two chapters as the problems come up and he deals with them.

ENEMY OPPOSITION

Read Nehemiah 4:1-6

1. Sanballat was the governor of Samaria, to the north of Jerusalem. Look up his name in a Bible dictionary for any suggestions why he was so against Nehemiah.

What forces did he control? (v. 2)

2. How did Sanballat make fun of the work? (v. 2, 3)

Give some examples of how you might be laughed at by people in the world, such as going to meeting instead of hockey on Sundays, or spending time at a Bible School.

3. What does Nehemiah do about Sanballat's mocking? (v. 4, 5)

4. Nehemiah asks God for bad things to happen to these men. Is this the right attitude when we have the examples of Jesus and Stephen who asked God to forgive those who were killing them? (Before answering, look at Psa. 139:21,22, Ps. 28:3-6; Matt. 23:33; 2 Thess. 1:6-9) Explain.

If you were working on a big project, and some kids tried to push you around and make fun of you, what would you be tempted to do?

When we feel the need to teach someone a lesson or get back at them, what Bible principles should we remember?

Look up Heb. 10:30-31 and write out the parts that apply. Explain what it means:

5. Did the enemies succeed in stopping the work? Why not? (v. 6)

Read Nehemiah 4:7-9

6. What did the enemies decide to do next? (v. 7, 8)

7. Nehemiah and the people did two things. What are they? (v. 9)

Nehemiah is a wonderful example of how to solve problems. Pray to God for help, and then do everything you can yourself. God doesn't bless laziness. Why? (See Prov. 21:25, 24:30-34)

Write out Proverbs 16:9b:

God may guide our steps, but we have to move our feet!
Ask your parents to help you fill in the blanks of this wise old saying:

The Lord _____ those who _____ themselves.

Give some examples of what could happen in your camp group if you and your counselors are lazy.



Read Nehemiah 4:10-23

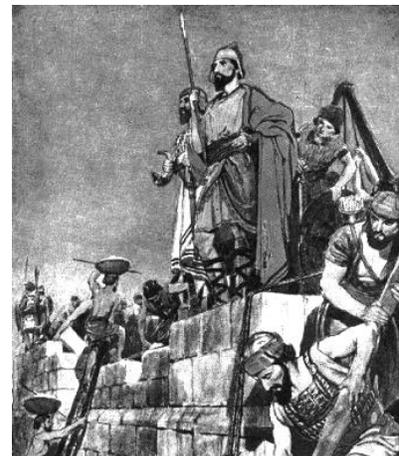
The work was tiring because there was so much garbage (rubble, rocks, burnt wood, weeds) that had to be removed (mostly by hand) before the actual building and repair could be done. Also, the workers sleeping at their homes in the villages outside the city heard about the threats of the enemies and feared for their lives. No wonder they got discouraged--was a wall worth getting killed for? Besides, it was too big a job, too hard, it would never get done.

8. Nehemiah did three things to counteract the problem. (v. 13, 14)

- (1) He grouped the people by _____ in the _____ places behind the wall and on the _____ places.
- (2) The people had _____ with them
- (3) Nehemiah said to them: _____

9. To whom does Nehemiah give credit for the enemies' retreat? (v. 15)
Why?

10. From that time forward, what did Nehemiah do to defend Jerusalem? (v. 16-18)



11. Because the workers were spread out along the wall, the enemies could make lightning raids on small numbers of workers and kill them easily. How did Nehemiah prepare for this possibility? (v. 19-20)

12. In spite of all his preparation, on whose power and protection was Nehemiah relying? (v. 20) _____

13. Did they work a normal 8 hour day as is common in our times? (v. 21) _____ Considering it was summer, how long do you think they worked each day? _____

14. Nehemiah solved the problem of workmen returning home at night and hearing rumours. What was his solution? (v. 22)

How did this help protect the city?

15. Verse 23 shows the dedication of the workers. Explain.

VI. NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 5

THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN

Another problem burst upon Nehemiah, a problem that had been hidden. Poor Jews had been forced to borrow money from their richer countrymen for food because of the famine and the heavy taxation. Now they were working long days on the walls and were unable to earn money by farming. And the rich moneylenders were taking the children of the poor into slavery, selling them, and also taking over their lands and vineyards because payments on the debts had stopped.

The people were desperate! How could they afford to continue to work on the wall? What would Nehemiah do now?

Read Nehemiah 5:1-5

1. Who is crying out? _____

Who are they crying out against? _____

2. What two things did the people say they had spent all their money on?
(v. 3, 4) _____

3. What two things did the people do to get more money? (v. 4, 5)

4. What reason did they give to explain why they had no power to stop what was happening to them? (v. 3-5)



5. What had the Jewish nobles been doing to the poor Jews they were lending money to? (v. 7)

6. Thought question: Do you think the people were right to complain against the Jewish nobles? Why?

Could there be times in your life when you will have to complain against people in our ecclesia? If so, under what circumstances?

7. God's concern for the poor is found in almost every book of the Bible. What are some of the rules God made in the law to protect the poor? (See Ex. 22:22-27, Lev. 25:35-37; Deut. 14:28-29, 15:7-11)

NEHEMIAH HANDLES THE PROBLEM

Read Nehemiah 5:6-13

8. From verses 1-5, what did Nehemiah do FIRST when he became aware of the ecclesial problem?

9. After Nehemiah heard what the people had to say, how did he feel? (v. 6)

10. Before accusing the nobles, what did he do next? (v. 7)

11. The nobles and rulers were rich and powerful. How did Nehemiah set the stage so that they would feel obligated to do what is right when Nehemiah rebuked them? (v. 7)

12. What reason does Nehemiah give as to why the nobles should not have sold their fellow Jews? (v. 8 -- try another translation)

13. What two major demands did Nehemiah make of the nobles?
(v. 10, 11)

14. In verse 12 Nehemiah has the nobles swear an oath in front of the priests that the nobles will honour their commitment. Why do you think Nehemiah did this?

Can you think of a similar situation in Jeremiah's time? What happened then? (Jer. 34:13-17)

15. Nehemiah also puts a curse on anyone who does not keep his promise. What is the curse? (v. 13)

Did the people keep the promise? _____

THE NOBLES' REACTION

16. How did the nobles react when Nehemiah publicly criticized them?
(v. 8)

17. What did they say when they heard Nehemiah's demands? (v. 12)

18. Thought question: Do you think it would have been easy for the nobles to give back fields, vineyards, orchards, houses, money, grain, wine, oil, and slaves? Why?

19. Do you think the nobles reacted in the right way when they found out that they had been doing wrong? Explain.

How should you respond when your parents, teachers or friends tell you about a mistake you have been making?



NEHEMIAH'S CHARACTER

Read Nehemiah 5:14-19

20. What two reasons does Nehemiah give as to why he did not eat the food allowance of the governor while he was governor? (v. 15, 18)

21. Also, what did he and his servants **not** do while working on the wall?
(v. 16)

22. Make a list of all the people Nehemiah fed and how much they ate.
(v. 17, 18)

Nehemiah's mealtime habits demonstrate what Christian virtue?
(Rom. 12:13, Heb. 13:2, 1 Pet. 4:9)

VII. NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 6

Sanballat and Tobiah were getting desperate. The wall was almost complete, and everything they had tried to stop its construction had failed. They tried new approaches. They tried to lure Nehemiah to an ambush (v. 2) They attacked Nehemiah's character by spreading false rumours (v. 6) trying to scare him. They hired a false prophet to try to get Nehemiah to discredit himself (v. 12). They sent letters to scare him (v. 19).

When opposition builds up against us or the work we are doing, it is tempting to pray to God, "Get me out of this situation!" Instead, Nehemiah prayed, "Strengthen my hands." When we pray for strength, God always answers.

Read Nehemiah 6:1-9

1. Find out the distance from Jerusalem to the plain of Ono. _____

Why do you think that Sanballat really wanted to meet with Nehemiah?

2. What was Nehemiah's answer? (v. 3)

Notice this answer does not reveal Nehemiah's suspicions. If he had suggested they were trying to trap him, they might have acted on it.

3. How many times did they try this trick? _____

4. Letters to the governor were supposed to be sealed. But Sanballat left it open--an insult to Nehemiah. Being open meant that everyone would find out what was in the letter. It might *force* Nehemiah to a meeting. Of what did Sanballat accuse Nehemiah? (Two things, v. 6, 7)

5. How did this discourage the people? (v. 9) What might the king do if he believed the rumour were true?

When did these adversaries use this technique previously? (Ezra 4:12-13)
Did it work? (Ezra 4:21)

What other Bible characters had false rumours spread about them?

6. How did Nehemiah handle this problem? (v. 9)

7. Why do you think that Nehemiah went to God about everything?

Who else went to God in prayer about everything, and so no one could find any fault in him? (One example: Dan. 6:4, 10)

How would your life be improved if you followed this example?

Read Nehemiah 6:10-14

8. Evidently a number of prophets did not support Nehemiah. How do we know this? Explain. (v. 10, 12, 14)

9. What was the message Shemaiah gave Nehemiah?

10. According to the law, would it have been all right for Nehemiah to go into the temple to hide? Hint: He was not a priest. (See Num. 18:7, 22)

11. Why did the prophet give Nehemiah a false message? (v. 12)

Can you think of any other instances where prophets gave false messages? (One example: Jer. 23:16. There are lots of others.)

12. Thought question: Do you think this could happen today? Why or why not?

13. What did Nehemiah do after he answered Shemaiah? (v. 14)

Read Nehemiah 6:15-19

14. How long did it take to finish the walls of Jerusalem? Was this fast or slow? (v. 15)

15. How did the enemies react to the news that the wall was built? (v. 16)

16. How important was Nehemiah to the rebuilding of the wall?
_____. Who does Nehemiah give credit to for the rebuilding of the wall? (v. 16) Why?

Write out Psalm 127:1 and explain how it applies to the building of the wall:

17. Why do you think that the nobles were so interested in sending letters to Tobiah? (v. 17-19) (Hint: One reason is in v. 18. However, remember also what happened in Neh. 5:9-13. Do you think the nobles liked Nehemiah very well after that?) Explain.

18. Who was Meshullam the son of Berechiah? (Look up in concordance, or refer to the chapter 3 questions)

19. Thought question: What do you think could have led Meshullam to allow his daughter to marry the son of Tobiah? (Try and come up with a list of possible reasons)

20. What did the law of Moses have to say about marriages between Israelites and the inhabitants of the land? (Deut. 7:3, 4)

21. What usually happened when these marriages occurred? Give examples. (One example: 1 Kings 11:1-11, or 1 Kings 16:31)

22. Can similar problems occur today? Give examples.

23. What can be done to prevent problems like this?

Fun with Numbers

Use Nehemiah 7:66-69 to answer the questions:

1. How many exiles returned to Jerusalem?

2. How many servants traveled along? _____
3. How many musicians? _____
4. How many horses did they take to Jerusalem? _____
5. How many mules? _____
6. How many camels? _____
7. How many donkeys? _____

God's Laws

Ezra was an important person to Israel. He helped the people to understand what they had done wrong and to understand how God wanted them to live again. He taught them God's laws. What were God's laws? To find the answer circle the first letter and then every third one. Write your answer on the line.

T A E H B C E J L T T M E X L N O C C D F
O J M M T S M Y Z A L M N N O D A B M M
T E E L N A M T E S S O

VIII. Nehemiah Chapters 7 to 13

Building People in Jerusalem

Read Nehemiah 7:1-4

1. After the wall was finished, it was important to guard the city and make sure it was run properly. What arrangements did Nehemiah make in verses 1 and 3?

2. What qualifications was Nehemiah looking for in leaders? (v. 2)

3. Who are the people on the list that is in chapter 7? (v. 5, 6)

Read Nehemiah 8:1-8

4. Why do you think that Nehemiah and Ezra arranged in read the Scriptures to the people in Jerusalem?

5. Where did the people gather for the reading of the Scriptures?

How long did Ezra read on the first day? (v. 3)

How many days did he read? (v. 18) _____

6. How did the people react? (v. 3, 5, 6)

What arrangements were made so that the people would be sure to understand the message of God? (v. 8)

7. Thought question: Do you think that it would be a good idea to run our Bible Schools like this one? Especially the part about the people standing up to hear the word of God from daybreak until noon? Explain.

Read Nehemiah 8:9-18

8. Why do you think the people wept when they heard the words of the law? (v. 9)

9. When the people wept, what did Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites tell them? (v. 9, 10, 11)

10. How did they celebrate? (v. 12)



11. What did they do in observing the Feast of Tabernacles that had not been done since the days of Joshua? (v.17) (see also Lev. 23:42, 43)

The **JERUSALEM BIBLE** SCHOOL.

1 BLOWING OF TRUMPETS.

2

- * They gathered as one man
- * Law read morning - midday

- * people mourn, rejoice
- * send portions, feast

3

4

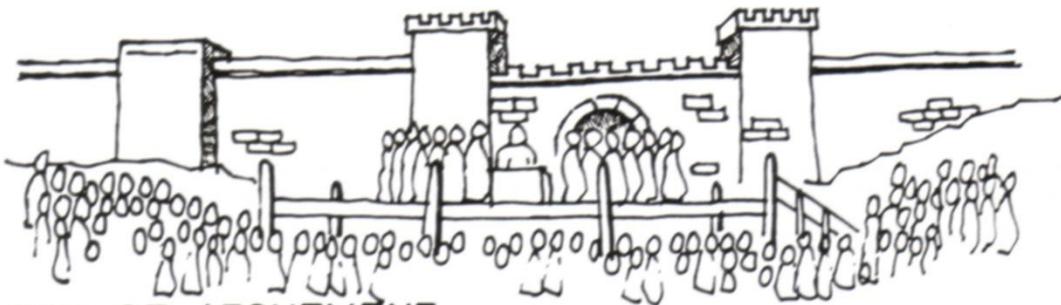
5

6

7

8

9



10 DAY OF ATONEMENT.

11

"ALL THE PEOPLE WENT THEIR WAY REJOICING BECAUSE
THEY HAD UNDERSTOOD THE WORDS DECLARED UNTO THEM"

12

13

14

15 FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

- A SABBATH

16

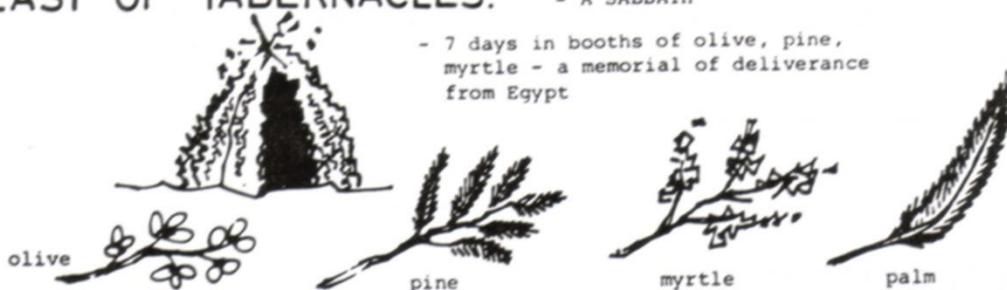
17

18

19

20

21



- 7 days in booths of olive, pine,
myrtle - a memorial of deliverance
from Egypt

22

SOLEMN ASSEMBLY.

- A SABBATH

"THERE WAS VERY GREAT REJOICING"

Read Nehemiah 9:1-6

12. After learning from the law of God what God requires, the people felt they needed to repent and rededicate themselves to God. What did they do? (v. 1-3)

13. Who led the congregation in their confession to God?

14. The rest of chapter 9 is a summary of the history of Israel, confessing their sins and praising God. In verse 38, what did they make?

15. Chapter 10 lists those that were sealed in the covenant, and the provisions of the covenant. Look over chapter 10 and write down at least 3 things the people said that they would do.

Read Nehemiah 11:1,2

16. How did they decide who would live in the city of Jerusalem?

Read Nehemiah 12:27-31, 38-40, 43

17. After the wall was finished, what sort of celebration did they have?
(v. 27)

18. Nehemiah split the princes of Israel into two companies. What did these two companies of people do?

19. After the two companies rejoined, what happened? (v. 43, 43)

Read Nehemiah chapter 13

20. Describe the four problems that Nehemiah found when he returned from Babylon to Jerusalem.

21. Describe how Nehemiah dealt with each of these problems.

Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem



Nehemiah 2—7, 12

Illustrate how Nehemiah and the Jews rebuilt the wall around the city of Jerusalem. Each stone has a reference and space to illustrate what event took place in that reference.

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 9. Nehemiah 12:40, 43 | | |
| 6. Nehemiah 5:17 | 7. Nehemiah 6:15 | 8. Nehemiah 12:31, 38 |
| 4. Nehemiah 4:1-3 | | 5. Nehemiah 4:16-23 |
| 1. Nehemiah 2:3-6 | 2. Nehemiah 2:11-15 | 3. Nehemiah 3 |

