

Nehemiah: Not Just another Building Project

Introduction

Ray C. Stedman: Ezra and Nehemiah are _____ book in the Hebrew Bible.

Ray C. Stedman: Nehemiah is the story of the _____ of the walls of Jerusalem. This book is also the story of the restoring of a people from ruin and despair to a new walk with God.

Schedule

Week 1 = _____, Chapter 1

Weeks 5-6 = Consecration, Chapters 7-12

Week 2 = _____, Chapters 2-3

Week 7 = Cleansing, Chapter 13

Weeks 3-4 = Conflict, Chapters 4-6

Who, What, Where, When

Who: Nehemiah

What: David Guzik: When the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem, they deported almost everyone from the city and the region—for some seventy years, Jerusalem was a ghost town. . . . But after 70 years of captivity in Babylon, they were given the opportunity to return to their homeland. . . . But they did return, and in the days of Ezra, they rebuilt the temple. But . . . the walls of the city of Jerusalem were still in rubble. . . . No one thought this obstacle could be overcome, so the walls lay in ruin and the people stayed in trouble.

Where: Shushan and Jerusalem

When: +/- 450 BC (Herodotus, Hippocrates, Plato, and Socrates were all on the scene at this time)

Nehemiah 1 (NKJV)

1 The words of Nehemiah [Jehovah comforts] the son of Hachaliah.

It came to pass in the month of Chislev [the ninth month ~ Nov/Dec], in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan [lily—the book of _____ occurs in Shushan] the citadel [palace], **2** that Hanani [gracious] one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity [the remnant], and concerning Jerusalem.

Josh Hunt: Godly people, at times, _____ for trouble

3 And they said to me, “The survivors [the remnant] who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach [taunted]. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned [burned and left desolate] with fire.”

4 So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept [to weep bitterly], **and mourned for many days;** [Terry Bolden: This would be the equivalent of us being _____.]

Stuart Lightsey: The wall is like the fish in Jonah. It is a big part of the story, but not the whole story. The issue that has to get treated is the disobedience/_____ of the people.

I was fasting [abstained from food] **and praying** [interceded: prayed on behalf of someone else] **before** [the face of] **the God of heaven.**

Amy Prater: There are so many things, eternal things, going on around me worth mourning, and fasting, and praying over, yet I don't.

Josh Hunt: What kinds of situations move you as the situation in Jerusalem moved Nehemiah?

5 And I said: "I pray, LORD [Yahweh] **God of heaven, O great and awesome** [fearful, awe-inspiring] **God, You who keep** [guard] **Your covenant and mercy** [chesed] **with those who love You and observe Your commandments,** **6 please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear** [grant, agree to] **the prayer of Your servant which I pray** [intercede] **before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins** ['missing the _____' or 'making a wrong turn'] **of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. 7 We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept** [guarded] **the commandments** [things _____ to be done], **the statutes** [_____ or boundaries], **nor the ordinances** [judicial _____] **which You commanded Your servant Moses. 8 Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; 9 but if you return** [turn back] **to Me, and keep** [guard] **My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out** [thrown out, banished] **to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them** [lead them in, carry them in, bring it to pass] **to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling** [settling down place] **for My name** [name, reputation, fame, glory].' **10 Now these are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed** [ransomed] **by Your great power, and by Your strong hand. 11 O Lord** [Adonai], **I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire** [delight] **to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper** [succeed] **this day** [Are you comfortable asking God for _____?], **I pray, and grant him mercy** [compassion] **in the sight of this man."**

For I was the king's cupbearer [literally, 'one who gave him to _____'].

Ray C. Stedman: Closing Prayer: Thank you, Father, for this wonderfully practical book which sets out a safe guideline to recovery and usefulness. Thank you that when we fall and go astray to any degree, you do not leave us there; you make a way back. We pray that many today will be determined to begin where Nehemiah began: to tell the whole story in your ear and thus begin the process of recovery. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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Nehemiah 2 (NKJV)

1 And it came to pass in the month of Nisan [the first month ~ March/April, four months after **Nehemiah 1**], in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, *when wine was before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad [disagreeable, unpleasant] in his presence before.* **2** Therefore the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart.”

So I became dreadfully afraid, **3** and said to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad [a different Hebrew word—this one means to tremble], *when the city, the place of my fathers’ tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned [devoured] with fire?*”

4 Then the king said to me, “What do you request [seek, desire]?”

So I prayed [interceded] to the God of heaven [_____ prayer]. **5** And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send [stretch out] me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.”

6 Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), “How long will your journey be? And when will you return?” So it pleased [literally, ‘with a happy face’] the king to send [stretch out] me; and I set [designated] him a time.

7 Furthermore I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, let letters be given to me for the governors of the region beyond the River, that they must permit me to pass through till I come to Judah [planning for the _____], **8** and a letter to Asaph [gatherer] the keeper [ward/protector] of the king’s forest [park, enclosed garden], that he must give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which pertains to the temple, for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy [planning for the _____].” And the king granted them to me according to the good hand of my God upon me.

Josh Hunt: Has lack of planning ever cost you? Who has a story?

9 Then I went [_____ miles from Shushan to Jerusalem] **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 [strength] **the Horonite and Tobiah** [Jehovah is good] **the Ammonite official heard of it, they were deeply disturbed** [trembled/quivered] **that a man had come to seek** [to seek in order to find] **the well-being of the children of Israel.**

Ray C. Stedman: Immediately courage is needed. Whenever a man like Nehemiah says, "I will arise and build," Satan always says, "Then I will arise and _____."

11 So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days. 12 Then 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 [fountain of the jackal] **and the Refuse Gate, and viewed** [examined] **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** [standing place] **for the animal under me to pass. 15 So I went up in the night by the valley, and viewed** [examined] **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** [one born free], **the officials** [governors or their subordinates], **or the others who did the work.**

David Guzik: We deceive ourselves if we only look to what is good. But Nehemiah teaches us by example—we must look at the broken down towers, and carefully study what is wrong—but only if we have the heart, the prayer, the vision, the passion to be used of God to _____ it right.

17 Then I said to them, "You see the distress [unhappiness—same word used to describe Nehemiah's face] **that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come** [walk with me] **and let us build** [rebuild] **the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach** [an object of scorn]." **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.**

So they said, "Let us rise up and build [rebuild]." **Then they set** [strengthened, made rigid/firm] **their hands to this good work.**

19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem [rain] **the Arab heard of it, they laughed** [mocked] **at us and despised us, and said, "What is this thing** [speech] **that you are doing** [making]? **Will you rebel against the king?"**

20 So I answered [turned my speech to] **them, and said to them, "The God of heaven Himself will prosper us** [make us successful]; **therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage** [territory, portion] **or right** [righteousness] **or memorial in Jerusalem."**

Nehemiah 3 (NKJV)

In **Nehemiah 3**, Nehemiah sets out to _____ **for posterity and the official records the names and accomplishments of the people who worked on the wall** (Warren Wiersbe).

Ray C. Stedman: As we compass the walls of Jerusalem, each gate instructs us of the part of our life which needs to be watched, and rebuilt, and repaired.

1 Then Eliashib [God restores] the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests and built the Sheep Gate; they consecrated [set it apart as holy] it and hung [set up] its doors. They built as far as the Tower of the Hundred, and consecrated it, then as far as the Tower of Hananel [God has favored]. **2** Next to Eliashib [God restores] the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur [mindful] the son of Imri [eloquent] built.

3 Also the sons of Hassenaah [thorny] built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and bars. **4** And next to them Meremoth [elevations] the son of Urijah [Jehovah is my light], the son of Koz [thorn], made repairs. Next to them Meshullam [friend] the son of Berechiah [Jehovah blesses], the son of Meshezabel [God delivers], made repairs [made it stronger]. Next to them Zadok [righteous] the son of Baana [in the affliction] made repairs. **5** Next to them the Tekoites [trumpet blast] made repairs; but their nobles did not put [lead, carry, bring] their shoulders to the work of their Lord.

6 Moreover Jehoiada [Jehovah knows] the son of Paseah [limper] and Meshullam [friend] the son of Besodeiah [with the counsel/in the secret of Jehovah] repaired the Old [storage] Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors, with its bolts and bars. **7** And next to them Melatiah [Jehovah delivered] the Gibeonite [little hill; hilly], Jadon [thankful] the Meronothite [joyful shouter], the men of Gibeon [hill city] and Mizpah [watchtower], repaired the residence of the governor of the region beyond the River. **8** Next to him Uzziel [my strength is God] the son of Harhaiah [fear of Jehovah], one of the goldsmiths [refiners], made repairs. Also next to him Hananiah [God has favored], one of the perfumers [ointment-maker], made repairs [David Guzik: These men were not trained for this kind of work! The most important ability in the work of the Lord is _____]; and they fortified [repaired] Jerusalem as far as the Broad [Wide] Wall. **9** And next to them Rephaiah [healed of Jehovah] the son of Hur [hole], leader of half the district of Jerusalem, made repairs. **10** Next to them Jedaiah [praised of Jehovah] the son of Harumaph [split-nose] made repairs in front of his house. And next to him Hattush [assembled] the son of Hashabniah [whom Jehovah regards] made repairs.

11 Malchijah [my king is Jehovah] the son of Harim [dedicated] and Hashub [considerate] the son of Pahath-Moab [pit of Moab] repaired another section [_____ measure], as well as the Tower of the Ovens [fire pots]. **12** And next to him was Shallum [retribution] the son of Hallohesh [whisperer], leader of half the district of Jerusalem; he and his daughters made repairs.

13 Hanun [gracious] and the inhabitants of Zanoah [cast off] repaired the Valley Gate. They built it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and repaired a thousand cubits [slightly more than ____ mile] of the wall as far as the Refuse [dung] Gate.

14 Malchijah [my king is Jehovah] the son of Rechab [rider], leader of the district of Beth Haccerem [house of the vineyard], repaired the Refuse [dung] Gate [the gate through which the city got rid of its _____]; he built it and hung its doors with its bolts and bars.

15 Shallum [retribution] the son of Col-Hozeh [all-seeing], leader of the district of Mizpah [watchtower], repaired the Fountain Gate; he built it, covered [roofed—the _____ gate that this was done to] it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and repaired the wall of the Pool of Shelah [sent] by the King's Garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David. **16** After him Nehemiah [Jehovah comforts] the son of Azbuk [strong devastation], leader of half the district of Beth Zur [house of the rock], made repairs as far as the place in front of the tombs of David, to the man-made pool, and as far as the House of the Mighty [Strong].

17 After him the Levites, under Rehum [compassion] the son of Bani [built], made repairs. Next to him Hashabiah [Jehovah has considered], leader of half the district of Keilah [fortress], made repairs for his district [literally, in his 'round']. 18 After him their brethren, under Bavai [my goings] the son of Henadad [favor of Hadad], leader of the other half of the district of Keilah [fortress], made repairs. 19 And next to him Ezer [treasure] the son of Jeshua [he is saved], the leader of Mizpah [watchtower], repaired another section [_____ measure] in front of the Ascent [going up] to the Armory at the buttress [corner post]. 20 After him Baruch [blessed] the son of Zabbai [pure] carefully [burningly] repaired the other section [_____ measure], from the buttress [corner post] to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. 21 After him Meremoth [elevations] the son of Urijah [Jehovah is my light], the son of Koz [thorn], repaired another section [_____ measure], from the door of the house of Eliashib to the end of the house of Eliashib.

22 And after him the priests, the men of the plain, made repairs. 23 After him Benjamin [son of the right hand] and Hasshub [considerate] made repairs opposite their house. After them Azariah [Jehovah has helped] the son of Maaseiah [work of Jehovah], the son of Ananiah [Jehovah clouds], made repairs by his house. 24 After him Binnui [built up] the son of Henadad [favor of Hadad] repaired another section [_____ measure], from the house of Azariah [Jehovah has helped] to the buttress [corner post], even as far as the corner. 25 Palal [judge] the son of Uzai [I shall have my sprinklings] made repairs opposite the buttress [corner post], and on the tower which projects from the king's upper house that was by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah [Jehovah has ransomed] the son of Parosh [flea] made repairs.

26 Moreover the Nethinim [helpers] who dwelt in Ophel made repairs as far as the place in front of the Water Gate toward the east, and on the projecting tower. [The Water Gate needed ____ repair] 27 After them the Tekoites [trumpet blast] repaired another section [_____ measure], next to the great projecting [sticking out] tower, and as far as the wall of Ophel [hill].

28 Beyond the Horse Gate [The gate where the horses would enter the city] the priests made repairs, each in front of his own house. 29 After them Zadok [righteous] the son of Immer [he hath said] made repairs in front of his own house. After him Shemaiah [heard by Jehovah] the son of Shechaniah [dweller in Jehovah], the keeper [guard] of the East Gate [the gate through which many believe Jesus will return], made repairs. 30 After him Hananiah [God has favored] the son of Shelemiah [repaid by Jehovah], and Hanun [gracious], the sixth son of Zalaph [wound], repaired another section [_____ measure]. After him Meshullam [friend] the son of Berechiah [Jehovah blesses] made repairs in front of his dwelling [room]. 31 After him Malchijah [my king is Jehovah], one of the goldsmiths [literally, the goldsmith's son], made repairs as far as the house of the Nethinim and of the merchants [traders], in front of the Miphkad [command/inspection] Gate, and as far as the upper room [roof chamber] at the corner. 32 And between the upper room [roof chamber] at the corner, as far as the Sheep Gate, the goldsmiths [smelters] and the merchants [traders] made repairs.

Ray C. Stedman: The important truth that emerges is that this is God's design for _____. God has placed us all strategically where he wants us to be. Your neighborhood, office, or home is where your ministry should be. That is why God put you there.

Ray C. Stedman: Closing Prayer: Thank you, our Father, for this great truth. We pray that the Spirit of grace will make these gates real to us. Point out those areas that need to be worked on in our lives that we may enter into the full security and safety that you have for us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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Nehemiah 4

1 But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious [scorched] and very indignant, and mocked [derided] the Jews. **2** And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, “What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify [repair] themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive [quicken] the stones from the heaps of rubbish—stones that are burned?” [the _____ were burned, not the walls]

3 Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, “Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall.”

Nehemiah begins to pray. **4** Hear, O our God, for we are despised [held in contempt, see [Psalm 79:12](#)]; turn their reproach [taunts, scorn] on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity! **5** Do not cover [conceal] their iniquity [guilt], and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have provoked You to anger before the builders. [Nehemiah ends praying]

Was it OK for Nehemiah to pray this way?

6 So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together [bound] up to half its height [they are halfway through with the wall], for the people had a mind [_____, resolution, courage] to work.

7 Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored [healed] and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very [exceedingly] angry, **8** and all of them conspired [bound] together to come and attack [wage war] Jerusalem and create confusion [disturbances, wandering]. **9** Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch [caused to stand firm, appointed, ordained, established] against them [in their face] day and night.

Matthew Henry: If we think to secure ourselves by prayer only, without watchfulness, we are slothful and tempt God; if by watchfulness, without prayer, we are proud and slight God; and, either way, we forfeit his protection.

10 Then Judah [praised] **said**, “**The strength of the laborers** [burden-bearers] **is failing** [stumbling], **and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall.**”

11 And our adversaries [hard _____] **said**, “**They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill** [murder] **them and cause the work** [business] **to cease** [fail].”

12 So it was, when the Jews who dwelt near them came, that they told us ten times [Hebrew for ‘_____’, see **Genesis 31:7, 41; Numbers 14:22; Job 19:3**], “**From whatever place you turn, they will be upon us.**”

13 Therefore I positioned men behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings [bare spots]; **and I set the people** [caused the people to stand] **according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows.** **14 And I looked** [inspected], **and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people**, “**Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome** [fearful; **John Wesley: You think your enemies are great and terrible. But what are they in comparison of God? Especially in opposition to Him?**], **and fight** [engage in war] **for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.**”

15 And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had brought [broke, frustrated, split] **their plot to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work.** [**David Guzik: Defending against the attack was not the victory; the people of God would not be at peace and security until the wall was rebuilt. Getting on with the work is the _____!**] **16 So it was, from that time on, that half of my servants** [boys, youths] **worked at construction, while the other half held** [displayed] **the spears, the shields, the bows, and wore armor; and the leaders** [princes] **were behind all the house of Judah.** **17 Those who built** [rebuilt] **on the wall, and those who carried** [sustained] **burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held** [displayed] **a weapon.** **18 Every one of the builders had his sword girded** [tied] **at his side** [hips] **as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet** [shofar, ram’s horn] **was beside me.**

Matthew Henry: We watch always against our spiritual enemies, and not expect that our warfare will be accomplished till our _____ is.

19 Then I said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, “**The work** [business] **is great** [numerous] **and extensive** [broad], **and we are separated** [divided] **far from one another on the wall.** **20 Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet** [shofar, ram’s horn], **rally** [assemble] **to us there. Our God will fight** [wage war] **for us.**”

21 So we labored in the work [business], **and half of the men held the spears from daybreak until the stars appeared.** **22 At the same time I also said to the people**, “**Let each man and his servant** [boys, youths] **stay at night in Jerusalem, that they may be our guard** [watch] **by night and a working party** [business] **by day.**” **23 So neither I, my brethren, my servants** [boys, youths], **nor the men of the guard** [watch] **who followed me took off our clothes, except that everyone took them off for washing** [_____].

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Nehemiah 5

1 And there was a great outcry of the people and their wives [women are not usually mentioned like this] against their Jewish brethren. **2** For there were those who said, “We, our sons, and our daughters are many; therefore let us get grain [wheat, grain, corn], that we may eat and live.”

3 There were also some who said, “We have mortgaged our lands and vineyards and houses, that we might buy grain [wheat, grain, corn] because of the famine [hunger].” [They complain about what they brought on themselves: see [Haggai 1:6-11](#), [Ezra 10:9](#), and [Malachi 3:9-10](#).]

4 There were also those who said, “We have borrowed [Hebrew word means to _____] money [silver] for the king’s tax on our lands and vineyards. **5** Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and indeed we are forcing [bonding] our sons and our daughters to be slaves [[Exodus 21:7](#)], and some of our daughters have been brought into slavery [been subdued]. *It is not in our power [hand] to redeem them, for other men have our lands and vineyards.”* So far in Nehemiah 5, who is working? _____

6 And I became very [exceedingly] angry [burned] when I heard their outcry and these words. **7** After serious thought [consideration in my mind/heart], I rebuked [contended with] the nobles [those born free] and rulers, and said to them, “Each of you is exacting usury [charging _____] from his brother [a direct violation of [Deuteronomy 23:19-20](#)].” So I called [appointed] a great assembly against them. **8** And I said to them, “According to our ability [sufficiency] we have redeemed [bought] our Jewish brethren who were sold to the nations. Now indeed, will you even sell your brethren? Or should they be sold to us?”

Then they were silenced [deaf] and found nothing to say. **9** Then I said, “What you are doing [speaking] is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach [taunting] of the nations, our enemies? **10** I also, with my brethren and my servants [boys, youths], am lending them money [silver] and grain [wheat, grain, corn]. Please, let us stop [abandon] this usury [charging interest]! **11** Restore [pay back] now to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, also a hundredth [the custom of the day was to require payment each month, so this would amount to _____% yearly interest] of the money [silver] and the grain [wheat, grain, corn], the new [fresh] wine and the oil [fresh oil, shining oil], that you have charged them.”

12 So they said, “We will restore it [pay it back], and will require [seek, ask, _____] nothing from them; we will do as you say.”

Then I called the priests, and required [caused] an oath from them that they would do according to this promise [speech]. **13** Then I shook [literally, showed the emptiness] out the fold of my garment [probably a pocket] and said, “So may God shake out each man from his house, and from his property [literally, anything gained from working], who does not perform [raise up] this promise [speech]. Even thus may he be shaken out and emptied.”

And all the assembly [congregation] said, “Amen!” and praised the LORD. Then the people did according to this promise [speech].

14 Moreover, from the time that I was appointed [commissioned] to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor’s provisions [food]. **15** But the former governors who were before me laid burdens on the people, and took [snatched] from them bread [food] and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even their servants [boys, youths] bore rule [domineered, lorded] over the people, but I did not do so, because of the fear of God. **16** Indeed, I also continued [strengthened in] the work [business] on this wall, and we did not buy any land. All my servants [boys, youths] were gathered [collected, assembled] there for the work [business].

17 And at my table were one hundred and fifty Jews and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations around us [see [Isaiah 32:8](#), [Romans 12:13](#)]. **18** Now that which was prepared [done] daily was one ox and six choice [specially selected] sheep. Also fowl were prepared for me, and once every ten days an abundance of all kinds of wine. Yet in spite of this I did not demand [seek, ask, desire] the governor’s provisions [food], because the bondage [labor, service] was heavy on this people. [David Guzik: Nehemiah not only did not _____ when he could have; he _____ when he didn't have to.] **19** Remember me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.

Nehemiah 6

1 Now it happened when Sanballat [strength], Tobiah [Jehovah is good], Geshem [rain] the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks [gaps] left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), **2** that Sanballat and Geshem sent [stretched out] to me, saying, “Come [Walk out], let us meet together [unified] among the villages in the plain of Ono [vigorous; an obvious _____].” But they thought to do me harm [evil].

3 So I sent [stretched out] messengers to them, saying, “I am doing a great work [business], so that I cannot come down [_____ (to your level)]—see [Ecclesiastes 9:10](#). Why should the work [business] cease [rest] while I leave [abandon, relax] it and go down [sink] to you?”

4 But they sent [stretched out] me this message [speech] four times, and I answered [returned] them in the same manner [speech].

5 Then Sanballat sent [stretched out] his servant [boys, youth] to me as before [speech], the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. **6** In it was written: It is reported [heard] among the nations, and Geshem says, that you and the Jews plan [devise] to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors [speech], you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king. **7** And you have also appointed [caused to stand firm] prophets [spokesmen, speakers] to proclaim [cry out] concerning you at Jerusalem,

saying, **“There is a king in Judah!”** Now these matters [speech] **will be reported to the king. So come** [walk out], **therefore, and let us consult** [deliberate, counsel] **together** [in union, in a united way].

8 Then I sent [stretched out] **to him, saying, “No such things** [speech] **as you say are being done, but you invent** [devise] **them in your own heart.”**

9 For they all were trying to make us afraid [terrified], **saying, “Their hands will be weakened** [sunk] **in the work, and it will not be done.”**

Now therefore, O God, strengthen [firm up] **my hands. Josh Hunt: The best answer to opposition is to**
_____ **working**

10 Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah [heard by Jehovah] **the son of Delaiah** [Jehovah has drawn], **the son of Mehetabel** [favored of God], **who was a secret informer** [restrained, shut up]; **and he said, “Let us meet together** [by appointment] **in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill** [murder, destroy] **you; indeed, at night they will come to kill** [murder, destroy] **you.”**

11 And I said, “Should such a man as I flee [run away]? **And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!”** [Nehemiah knew that **Numbers 18:7** did not allow for this.]

12 Then I perceived [recognized, discerned] **that God had not sent** [stretched out] **him at all** [2 **Corinthians 11:13-15, Matthew 7:15**], **but that he pronounced this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him** [Now there is a full-fledged _____]. **13 For this reason he was hired, that I should be afraid and act that way and sin** [miss the path, go the wrong way], **so that they might have cause for an evil** [bad] **report** [reputation, name], **that they might reproach** [defy, taunt] **me.**

14 My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works [deeds, not the word for business], **and the prophetess** [spokeswoman] **Noadiah** [meeting with Jehovah] **and the rest of the prophets** [spokesmen—how many were there?] **who would have made me afraid** [terrified].

Ray C. Stedman: Life is a _____ from beginning to end.

15 So the wall was finished [complete, at peace] **on the twenty-fifth day of Elul** [the sixth month ~ August/September], **in fifty-two days. 16 And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw** [inspecting] **these things, that they were very** [exceedingly] **disheartened** [cast down] **in their own eyes; for they perceived** [recognized, discerned] **that this work** [business] **was done by our God.** [The result of faithfulness is a _____ God.]

17 Also in those days the nobles [those born free] **of Judah sent** [walked] **many letters to Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came to them. 18 For many in Judah were pledged to him** [literally, an _____], **because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah** [dweller with Jehovah] **the son of Arah** [traveler], **and his son Jehohanan** [Jehovah is graced] **had married the daughter of Meshullam** [friend] **the son of Berechiah** [Jehovah blesses]. **19 Also they reported his good deeds** [pleasantness] **before me, and reported my words** [speech] **to him. Tobiah sent** [stretched out] **letters to frighten** [terrify] **me.**

Ray C. Stedman: Closing Prayer: Our Father, strengthen us to act like Nehemiah of old and stand against the pressures of our day. Help us to be men and women who _____ live according to what we profess. We ask in Jesus’ name. Amen

Nehemiah: Not Just another Building Project

Introduction

Overview

Ray C. Stedman: Nehemiah is the story of the _____ of the walls of Jerusalem. This book is also the story of the restoring of a people from ruin and despair to a new walk with God.

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Nehemiah 7

1 Then it was, when the wall was built [rebuilt] and I had hung [stood up] the doors, when the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, **2** that I gave the charge of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani [gracious], and Hananiah [God has favored] the leader of the citadel, for he was a faithful [firm] man and feared God more than many.

David Guzik: Nehemiah wasn't in this for _____ glory.

3 And I said to them, "Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and while they stand guard, let them shut and bar [take hold of] the doors; and appoint [cause to stand] guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, one at his watch station and another in front of his own house."

4 Now the city was large and spacious [broad], but the people in it were few [little], and the houses were not rebuilt. **5** Then my God put it into my heart [Adam Clarke: With this good man every good thing was of _____.] to gather the nobles [those born free], the rulers, and the people, that they might be registered by genealogy [enrolled]. And I found a register [book] of the genealogy of those who had come up in the first return, and found written in it:

6 These are the people of the province who came back from the captivity, of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away [exile, captive], and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah [praised], everyone to his city.

David Guzik: This list flows beautifully after the completion of the work, because it reminds us that the work was really all about these _____

Note: We'll skip **Nehemiah 7:7-60, 62-63**

61 And these were the ones who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but they could not identify [_____ in showing] their father's house nor their lineage, whether they were of Israel:

64 These sought [looked for] their listing [registration] among those who were registered by genealogy [enrolled], but it was not found; therefore they were excluded from the priesthood as defiled [desecrated, polluted]. **65** And the governor said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things [set apart things] till a priest could consult with the Urim [lights] and Thummim [perfection].

66 Altogether the whole assembly was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, **67** besides their male and female servants [slaves], of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred and forty-five men and women singers. **68** Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five, **69** their camels four hundred and thirty-five, and donkeys six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

70 And some of the heads [chiefs] of the fathers' houses gave to the work [business]. The governor gave to the treasury one thousand gold drachmas [a gold coin], fifty basins [vessels], and five hundred and thirty priestly garments [tunics—undergarments]. **71** Some of the heads of the fathers' houses gave to the treasury of the work twenty thousand gold drachmas, and two thousand two hundred silver minas. **72** And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand gold drachmas, two thousand silver minas, and sixty-seven priestly garments.

They had given of their time to build the walls and their talents to do the work and now they give their treasures to fund the _____

73 So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the Nethinim, and all Israel dwelt in their cities. When the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities.

Nehemiah 8

1 Now all the people gathered together [assembled] as one man in the open square [street] that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra [help] the scribe to bring [carry] the Book of the Law [_____] of Moses [drawn], which the LORD had commanded Israel [Deuteronomy 31:10]. **2** So Ezra the priest brought the Law before [in the face of] the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. **3** Then he read [called out] from it in the open square [street] that was in front of the Water Gate from morning [light—indicating the dawn] until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

4 So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform [tower] of wood which they had made for the purpose [speech]; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah [gift of Jehovah], Shema [hear], Anaiah [Jehovah has answered], Urijah [Jehovah is my light], Hilkiah [my portion is Jehovah], and Maaseiah [work of Jehovah]; and at his left hand Pedaiah [Jehovah has ransomed], Mishael [who is what God is?], Malchijah [my king is Jehovah], Hashum [rich], Hashbadana [considerate judge], Zechariah [Jehovah remembers], and Meshullam [friend]. **5** And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. **6** And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God.

Then all the people answered [shouted], **“Amen, Amen!”** while lifting up their hands. **And they bowed their heads and worshiped** [bowed down to the ground] **the LORD with their faces** [literally, _____] **to the ground.**

7 Also Jeshua [he is saved], **Bani** [built], **Sherebiah** [Jehovah has scorched], **Jamin** [right hand], **Akkub** [insidious (treacherous, trying to trap)], **Shabbethai** [sabbatical], **Hodijah** [my majesty is Jehovah], **Maaseiah** [work of Jehovah], **Kelita** [crippled], **Azariah** [Jehovah has helped], **Jozabad** [Jehovah has endowed (financed)], **Hanan** [he is merciful], **Pelaiah** [Jehovah does wonders], **and the Levites, helped the people to understand** [understand, teach] **the Law; and the people stood in their place.** **8 So they read** [called out] **distinctly** [to separate, to be distinctly declared] **from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave** [set] **the sense** [insight, understanding], **and helped them to understand** [to _____ to understand, give understanding, teach] **the reading.**

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 [set apart] **to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep.”** For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.

10 Then he said to them, “Go your way [live], **eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send** [stretch out] **portions to those for whom nothing is prepared** [fixed]; **for this day is holy** [set apart] **to our Lord. Do not sorrow** [be pained], **for the joy** [gladness] **of the LORD is your strength** [protection, safety].”

11 So the Levites quieted [caused to be quiet] **all the people, saying, “Be still** [quiet], **for the day is holy** [set apart]; **do not be grieved** [pained].” **12 And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send** [send off, shoot] **portions and rejoice greatly** [intensely], **because they understood the words** [speech] **that were declared to them.**

There were _____ holidays in the seventh month

13 Now on the second day the heads [chiefs] **of the fathers’ houses of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered** [assembled] **to Ezra the scribe, in order to understand** [consider, to give attention to] **the words of the Law.** **14 And they found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell** [sit, stay] **in booths** [temporary shelters] **during the feast** [festival] **of the seventh month,** **15 and that they should announce** [sound out] **and proclaim** [voice] **in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, “Go out to the mountain, and bring** [carry in] **olive branches** [leaves], **branches of oil** [fat] **trees, myrtle branches** [leaves], **palm branches** [leaves], **and branches** [leaves] **of leafy** [dense] **trees, to make booths** [temporary shelters], **as it is written.”**

16 Then the people went out and brought [carried] **them and made themselves booths** [temporary shelters], **each one on the roof of his house** [houses at that time had flat roofs], **or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim** [double ash heap]. **17 So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua** [he is saved] **the son of Nun** [fish, posterity] **until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness** [exceedingly abundant joy]. **18 Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read** [called out] **from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner** [ordinance].

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Nehemiah 9

1 Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads. 2 Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves [set themselves apart] from all foreigners; and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities [perversity, depravity] of their fathers [David Guzik: This was especially important in Israel, where there was a tradition of glorifying their _____]. 3 And they stood up in their place [literally, in the standing place] and read [called out] from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for one-fourth of the day [three hours]; and for another fourth [three hours] they confessed and worshipped [bowed down to] the LORD their God.

Nehemiah 9:4-38 is a prayer of repentance

Nehemiah 9:33 gives us a great example of confession

33 However You are just in all that has befallen us; [David Guzik: God is _____]

For You have dealt faithfully,

But we have done wickedly. [David Guzik: and we are _____]

Nehemiah 10

1 Now those who placed their seal on the document were: Nehemiah the governor, the son of Hacaliah,

Nehemiah 10:1b-8 describes the priests who signed

Nehemiah 10:9-13 describes the Levites who signed

Nehemiah 10:14-27 describes the civil leaders who signed

28 Now the rest of the people—the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the Nethinim [temple slaves], **and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law** [Torah] **of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone who had knowledge and understanding** [discernment]— **29 these joined** [strengthened, supported] **with their brethren, their nobles** [not the normal word for nobles in Nehemiah, this word means great ones], **and entered into a curse** [swearing] **and an oath** [curse] **to walk** [live] **in God’s Law** [Torah], **which was given** [provided] **by** [the hand of] **Moses the servant** [slave] **of God, and to observe** [keep, guard, protect] **and do** [accomplish, make] **all the commandments of the LORD** [Yahweh] **our Lord** [Adonai], **and His ordinances** [judgments] **and His statutes** [limits]: **30 We would not give our daughters as wives to the peoples of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons; 31 if the peoples of the land brought** [carry in] **wares or any grain** [grain or corn] **to sell on the Sabbath day, we would not buy it from them on the Sabbath, or on a holy** [set apart] **day; and we would forego** [abandon] **the seventh year’s produce and the exacting** [load, burden] **of every debt** [hand]. [See [Exodus 23:10-11](#) and [Leviticus 25:18-22](#)]

David Guzik: This was a covenant to only make _____ in ways that were obedient and glorifying to God . . . What a challenge for us today!

32 Also we made [stood up, appointed] **ordinances** [commandments] **for ourselves, to exact from ourselves yearly one-third of a shekel for the service** [labor, work] **of the house of our God: 33 for the showbread** [literally, ‘bread in a row’], **for the regular** [perpetual, continuous] **grain offering** [gift], **for the regular** [perpetual, continuous] **burnt offering of the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the set feasts** [appointed times]; **for the holy** [set apart] **things, for the sin offerings to make atonement** [covering, pacify] **for Israel, and all the work** [business] **of the house of our God. [Matthew Henry: We must not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well] 34 We cast** [threw, let drop] **lots** [pebbles] **among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for bringing the wood offering** [there is no wood offering mentioned in Scripture] **into the house of our God, according to our fathers’ houses, at the appointed times year by year, to burn** [consume] **on the altar of the LORD** [Yahweh] **our God as it is written in the Law** [Torah].

35 And we made ordinances to bring the firstfruits [first to come up] **of our ground and the firstfruits** [first to come up] **of all fruit of all trees, year by year, to the house of the LORD; 36 to bring the firstborn of our sons and our cattle** [all domestic animals], **as it is written in the Law** [Torah], **and the firstborn of our herds** [cattle] **and our flocks** [sheep and goats], **to the house of our God, to the priests who minister** [serve] **in the house of our God; 37 to bring the firstfruits** [first, best, chief] **of our dough, our offerings** [contributions], **the fruit from all kinds of trees, the new wine and oil** [fresh oil], **to the priests, to the storerooms of the house of our God; and to bring** [give] **the tithes** [tenth part] **of our land to the Levites, for the Levites should receive the tithes in all our farming communities** [cities of our labor]. **38 And the priest, the descendant of Aaron** [light bringer], **shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive** [take up] **tithes; and the Levites shall bring up a tenth of the tithes** [tenth parts, see [Numbers 18:26](#)] **to the house of our God, to the rooms of the storehouse** [treasure house].

39 For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering [contribution] **of the grain** [wheat, grain, corn], **of the new wine and the oil** [fresh oil], **to the storerooms where the articles** [vessels, implements, utensils] **of the sanctuary** [holy place] **are, where the priests who minister** [serve] **and the gatekeepers and the singers are; and we will not neglect** [abandon, depart] **the house of our God.**

Nehemiah 11

Nehemiah _____ Jerusalem

1 Now the leaders [princes, chiefs, rulers, officials] **of the people dwelt** [remained] **at Jerusalem; the rest of the people cast** [threw, let drop] **lots** [pebbles] **to bring one out of ten to dwell** [remain] **in Jerusalem, the holy** [set apart] **city, and nine-tenths were to dwell in other cities.** [A draft was a common practice among people of this relative time--Syracuse and Rome were both populated this way] **2 And the people blessed** [praised, saluted] **all the men who willingly offered** [volunteered] **themselves to dwell** [remain] **at Jerusalem.**

Nehemiah 11:3-9 talks about the leaders

Nehemiah 11:10-14 talks about the priests

Nehemiah 11:15-18 talks about the Levites (divided up into two groups: those who cared for the outside ministry and those who were the musicians and singers)

Nehemiah 11:19 talks about the gatekeepers

Nehemiah 11:20-24 talks about the miscellaneous _____ as assigned--the trouble-shooters

23 For it was the king's command concerning them that a certain portion [financial support] **should be for the singers, a quota** [speech] **day by day. 24 Pethahiah the son of Meshezabel, of the children of Zerah the son of Judah, was the king's deputy in all matters** [speech] **concerning the people.**

Nehemiah 11:25-35 talks about the various cities and villages around Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 12

Nehemiah 12:1-11 talks about priests and Levites in Zerubbabel's day

1 Now these are the priests and the Levites who came up with Zerubbabel [from _____ to Jerusalem] **the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua** [Ray C. Stedman: Zerubbabel [a priest] **led the first return from captivity in Babylon to Jerusalem in 538 B.C., almost 100 years earlier than Nehemiah's day. Nehemiah is looking back at these men who led that procession.]:**

Nehemiah 12:12-21 talks about priests in Joiakim's day

Nehemiah 12:22-26 talks about the Levites during Darius' day

Nehemiah 12:27-47 talks about the dedication of the wall

27 Now at the dedication [consecration] **of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out** [to seek to find, to demand] **the Levites in all their places** [posts], **to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate** [do the work] **the dedication** [consecration] **with gladness** [pleasure], **both with thanksgivings** [confessions, praise, thanksgivings] **and singing** [lyrical songs], **with cymbals and stringed instruments** [harp, lute, guitar] **and harps** [lyre, harp]. **28 And the sons of the singers gathered** [assembled] **together from the countryside** [round] **around Jerusalem, from the villages** [settlements, towns] **of the Netophathites** [droppings], **29 from the house of Gilgal, and from the fields of Geba and Azmaveth; for the singers had built** [rebuilt]

themselves villages [settlements, towns] **all around Jerusalem. 30 Then the priests and Levites purified themselves, and purified** [cleansed, purified] **the people, the gates, and the wall.**

31 So I brought the leaders [princes, leaders, officials] **of Judah up on the wall, and appointed** [caused to stand] **two large thanksgiving choirs** [confessions, praise, thanksgivings--the word ' _____ ' is not present in the Hebrew here or anywhere else in **Nehemiah 12**]. **One went** [proceeded] **to the right hand on the wall toward the Refuse** [Dung] **Gate. 32 After** [following] **them went** [walked] **Hoshaiah and half of the leaders** [princes, leaders, officials] **of Judah, 33 and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, 34 Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, 35 and some of the priests' sons with trumpets—Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph, 36 and his brethren, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani, with the musical** [lyrical song] **instruments** [vessels, implements, utensils] **of David the man of God. And Ezra the scribe** [recorder] **went before them** [in their face--Ezra _____ them]. **37 By the Fountain Gate, in front of them, they went up the stairs of the City of David, on the stairway** [incline] **of the wall, beyond the house of David, as far as the Water Gate eastward.**

38 The other [second] **thanksgiving choir** [confessions, praise, thanksgivings] **went the opposite** [in front of them] **way, and I was behind** [following--Nehemiah brought up the _____] **them with half of the people on the wall, going past the Tower of the Ovens as far as the Broad Wall, 39 and above the Gate of Ephraim, above the Old** [Storage] **Gate, above the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel, the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate; and they stopped** [stood] **by the Gate of the Prison** [referred to in **Nehemiah 3** as the command/inspection gate].

40 So the two thanksgiving choirs [confessions, praise, thanksgivings] **stood in the house of God, likewise I and the half of the rulers** [subordinate rulers] **with me; 41 and the priests, Eliakim, Maaseiah, Minjamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; 42 also Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. The singers sang loudly** [literally, 'sang to cause people to hear'] **with Jezrahiah the director** [commissioner, deputy, officer].

43 Also that day they offered [killed] **great sacrifices, and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great** [intense] **joy; the women and the children also rejoiced, so that the joy** [gladness, pleasure] **of Jerusalem was heard afar off** [from a distance].

44 And at the same time some [men] **were appointed over the rooms of the storehouse** [treasures] **for the offerings** [contribution], **the firstfruits** [first, best, chief], **and the tithes** [tenth parts], **to gather into them from the fields of the cities the portions specified by the Law** [Torah] **for the priests and Levites; for Judah rejoiced** [had joy, was glad] **over the priests and Levites who ministered** [took a stand]. **45 Both the singers and the gatekeepers kept** [watched, guarded] **the charge** [watch, office] **of their God and the charge** [watch, office] **of the purification** [cleansing], **according to the command of David and Solomon his son. 46 For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chiefs** [heads] **of the singers, and songs** [lyrical songs] **of praise and thanksgiving** [confessions, praise, thanksgivings] **to God. 47 In the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah all Israel gave the portions for the singers and the gatekeepers, a portion** [speech] **for each day. They also consecrated** [set apart] **holy things for the Levites, and the Levites consecrated** [set apart] **them for the children of Aaron.**

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Nehemiah 13

1 On that day they read from the Book of Moses in the hearing [ear] of the people, and in it was found written that no Ammonite [tribal] or Moabite [of his father; Ammon and Moab were the sons that a drunken Lot had with his _____ after leaving Sodom] should ever come into the assembly [congregation] of God, 2 because they had not met [confronted] the children of Israel with bread [bread, foot, grain] and water, but hired Balaam [not of the people] against them to curse them. However, our God turned [overthrew, transformed] the curse into a blessing [blessing, present, treaty of peace]. 3 So it was, when they had heard the Law [Torah], that they separated [divided, separated] all the mixed multitude [in English it means a weaving and is the term for _____ extensions] from Israel.

_____ reform

4 Now before [in the face of] this, Eliashib [God restores] the priest, having authority over the storerooms of the house of our God, was allied with [near, had a personal relationship with] Tobiah [Jehovah is good]. 5 And he had prepared [fashioned] for him a large room, where previously they had stored the grain offerings [sacrifices, grain offerings, meat offerings], the frankincense [white resin burned as fragrant incense], the articles [vessels, implements, utensils], the tithes [tenths] of grain [wheat, grain, corn], the new [fresh] wine and [new] oil, which were commanded to be given to the Levites and singers and gatekeepers, and the offerings [contributions] for the priests. 6 But during all this I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon [confusion, mixture] I had returned to the king. Then after certain days I obtained leave [asked for a leave of absence] from the king, 7 and I came to Jerusalem and discovered [discerned] the evil that Eliashib had done [prepared, fashioned] for Tobiah, in preparing [fashioning] a room for him in the courts of the house of God. 8 And it grieved [trembled, quivered] me bitterly [exceedingly]; therefore I threw [hurled, cast out] all the household goods [vessels, implements, utensils] of Tobiah out [into the street] of the room. 9 Then I commanded [spoke to] them to cleanse [clean, purify] the rooms; and I brought [caused to bring] back into them the articles [vessels, implements, utensils] of the house of God, with the grain offering [sacrifices, grain offerings, meat offerings] and the frankincense.

Ray C. Stedman: This story pictures the way these false forces can invade our lives and take up rooms in the very temple of our spirit, polluting and destroying us in the process.

 reform

10 I also realized [discerned] **that the portions for the Levites had not been given them; for each of the Levites and the singers who did the work** [business] **had gone back** [run quickly away] **to his field** [land].

11 So I contended [strove] **with the rulers, and said, “Why is the house of God forsaken** [left]?” **And I gathered them together and set them** [caused them to stand, appointed] **in their place. 12 Then all Judah brought** [caused to be brought in] **the tithe** [tenth] **of the grain** [wheat, grain, corn] **and the new** [fresh] **wine and the** [fresh] **oil to the storehouse. 13 And I appointed as treasurers** [storers-up] **over the storehouse Shelemiah** [repaid by Jehovah] **the priest and Zadok** [righteous] **the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah** [Jehovah has ransomed]; **and next to them** [at their side] **was Hanan** [he is merciful] **the son of Zaccur** [mindful], **the son of Mattaniah** [gift of Jehovah]; **for they were considered** [calculated to be, considered to be, computed to be] **faithful** [established, firm], **and their task was to distribute** [divide up, apportion, share] **to their brethren.**

14 Remember [Recall] **me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe** [blot] **out my good deeds** [chesed, goodness, kindness, faithfulness] **that I have done** [accomplished, fashioned] **for the house of my God, and for its services** [watch, guard]!

 reform

15 In those days I saw [inspected] **people in Judah treading** [marching] **wine presses** [vats] **on the Sabbath, and bringing** [carrying] **in sheaves** [heaps, piles], **and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens** [loads], **which they brought** [caused to be brought] **into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned** [protested against, bore witness against] **them about the day on which they were selling provisions** [food supplies]. **16 Men of Tyre** [to distress] **dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods** [merchandise], **and sold them on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.**

17 Then I contended [strove] **with the nobles** [those born free] **of Judah, and said to them, “What evil thing** [speech] **is this that you do** [fashion, accomplish], **by which you profane** [treat as common, make plain] **the Sabbath day? 18 Did not your fathers do** [fashion, accomplish] **thus, and did not our God bring** [carry in] **all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added** [increased, repeated] **wrath** [anger, heat] **on Israel by profaning** [treating as common, making plain] **the Sabbath.”**

19 So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be [grew] **dark before** [in the face of] **the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut** [closed], **and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted** [caused to stand] **some of my servants** [boys, youths] **at the gates, so that no burdens** [loads] **would be brought in** [enter in] **on the Sabbath day. 20 Now the merchants** [traders] **and sellers of all kinds of wares** [sales] **lodged** [spent the night] **outside Jerusalem once or twice.**

21 Then I warned [protested against, bore witness against] **them, and said to them, “Why do you spend the night around the wall? If you do so** [repeat] **again, I will lay** [stretch out] **hands on you!” From that time on they came no more on the Sabbath. 22 And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse** [purify] **themselves, and that they should go and guard** [protect, watch] **the gates, to sanctify** [set apart] **the Sabbath day.**

Remember [Recall] **me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare** [have compassion, pity] **me according to the greatness** [abundance] **of Your mercy** [chesed, goodness, kindness, faithfulness]!

 reform

23 In those days I also saw [observed] **Jews who had married women of Ashdod** [I will spoil], **Ammon** [tribal], **and Moab** [of his father]. **24** And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and could not speak [recognize, understand] **the language of Judah** [which was Hebrew], **but spoke according to the language** [tongue] **of one or the other people.**

25 So I contended [strove] **with them and cursed** [literally, 'I pronounced them cursed'; to make little of them, to make them despicable] **them, struck** [hit] **some of them and pulled out their hair** [literally, polished their heads; **John Wesley: Baldness was a _____, and token of slavery and sorrow**], **and made them swear** [oath] **by God, saying, "You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take** [carry] **their daughters for your sons or yourselves** [quoting **Deuteronomy 7:3**]. **26** **Did not Solomon** [peace] **king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made** [appointed, assigned] **him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan** [foreign, alien (from the root word meaning calamity, disaster, misfortune)] **women caused even him to sin** [the root of Old Testament word for sin is based in the concept of 'missing the way' or making a wrong turn]. **27** **Should we then hear of your doing** [fashioning, making] **all this great evil, transgressing** [acting unfaithfully] **against our God by marrying** [marrying by causing a place to live to be created for them] **pagan** [foreign, alien (from the root word meaning calamity, disaster, misfortune)] **women?"**

28 **And one of the sons of Joiada** [Jehovah knows], **the son of Eliashib** [God restores] **the high priest, was a son-in-law of Sanballat** [strength] **the Horonite** [a direct violation of **Leviticus 21:14-15**]; **therefore I drove him** [caused him to flee] **from me.**

29 **Remember** [Recall] **them, O my God, because they have defiled** [the root word means desecrated or polluted and is used in **Nehemiah 7:64**] **the priesthood and the covenant** [legal alliance by cutting] **of the priesthood and the Levites.**

30 **Thus I cleansed** [purified] **them of everything pagan** [foreign, alien (but from a different root than the word in **Nehemiah 13:26**)]. **I also assigned** [appointed, ordained] **duties** [guards, watches] **to the priests and the Levites, each** [every man] **to his service** [work, business], **31** **and to bringing the wood offering and the firstfruits at appointed** [fixed] **times.**

Remember [Recall] **me, O my God, for good** [pleasantness, agreeableness, benefit]!

David Guzik: The law . . . is . . . powerless to stop _____. Only the grace of God, alive and flowing in our lives, can give us the power to truly overcome sin.

So, what was Nehemiah about?