
INTRO

Building a Firm
FOUNDATION



NEHEMIAH: *Intro*

Week 1 | Casey Sheffield

Eras of Scripture

Creation Era

Genesis 1:1-11:26

- Creation- Everything Good
- The Fall
 - Sin, shame and death entered the world
 - Promise of a Seed that would crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15)
 - Curse
 - First Sacrifice: Blood of the innocent shed to cover the guilty (Genesis 3:21)
- Cain & Abel
- The Flood: “When the Lord saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time, the Lord regretted that He had made man on the earth, and He was deeply grieved... Noah, however, found favor with the Lord.” (Genesis 6:5-6;8)
- Tower of Babel

Patriarch Era

Genesis 11:27-31-50:26, Job

- Abraham
 - God promises Abraham: an heir, a land and a nation that will be a blessing to all the families of the earth
 - Cutting of covenant
 - God tells Abraham His people will be enslaved for 400yrs. and then return to the land of Canaan

- Isaac
- Jacob
- Joseph

Exodus Era

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

- Joseph-Famine in the land. Abraham's descendants go to Egypt. 400 years passed. A pharaoh rose up who did not know Joseph. The people of God became so great pharaoh was worried they would overthrow him so he enslaved God's people and killed their baby boys.
- Moses- Israelite boy raised as an Egyptian. Deliverer of God's People.
- Passover- Death has already come to the house through a substitute lamb
- Wilderness-Wandered for 40 years because their lack of trust and disobedience
- 10 Commandments/Laws Given by God to Moses for God's People
-This includes: instructions about future kings, blessings and cursings
- Tabernacle- Portable tent where God would meet with His people.

Conquest Era

Joshua

- Joshua
- Battle of Jericho
- Rahab
- Israelites enter the Promised Land
- Division of the land among the 12 tribes

Judges Era

Judges, Ruth

- 12 Judges: They were Military Leaders
 - Deborah
 - Samuel: Israel's final Judge
- 7 Sin Cycles
 - Sin: Everyone did what was right in their own eyes
 - Oppression: Because of their rebellion the people experienced oppression
 - Cry out to God: The people of God would repent
 - Deliverance: God would raise up a Judge
 - Peace: As long as the people obeyed God there was peace in the land
 - Repeat: As soon as the Judge died the people would go back to their sinful ways
- Ruth & Boaz
- Cry for a King:
 - God's People cried out for a King.
 - They wanted to be like other nations.

Kingdom Era

1 & 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes

- Saul:
 - The people's choice
 - He looked like a king: Handsome, tall, wealthy
 - Pleased the people
- David
 - God's choice
 - He had the heart of a king
 - Pleased God
- Solomon
 - The Inherited choice
 - He had the wisdom of a king
 - Tried to please God but ended up pleasing himself (married 700 wives who turn his heart away from God)

- Construction of the Temple

Divided Kingdom Era

1 & 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah

- Kingdom of Israel divides into 2 nations: Northern Kingdom and Southern Kingdom
- Northern Kingdom (Israel):
 - 10 Tribes ruled by Jeroboam (Solomon's General)
 - Builds own place of worship
 - No good kings
 - Taken captive 1st by Assyria
- Southern Kingdom (Judah):
 - 2 Tribes ruled by Rehoboam (Solomon's Son)
 - Jerusalem and the temple
 - Four good kings: Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah
 - Taken captive 2nd by Babylon
- Prophets
 - Warn God's people about the consequences of their sin (mainly idolatry and disobedience).
 - Remind God's people of the coming of the Seed—Jesus the Messiah
- Israel taken captive by Assyria

Captivity Era

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Lamentations, Obadiah

- Judah taken captive by Babylon in 3 waves
 - Prophets: Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah
 - 1st wave: Daniel with the court officials
 - 2nd wave: Ezekiel with the Exiles
 - 3rd wave: The Temple is destroyed, more people are taken captives, Jeremiah remains with the remnant
- God always had a prophet speaking truth to His people

Return Era

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, possibly Joel

- The Jews Return to Isreal
 - The people of Judah (the Jews) return after being in Babylon for 70 years
- 3 waves of return:
 - 538 BC
 - 458 BC
 - 445 BC
- 3 Leaders:
 - Zerubbabel
 - Ezra
 - Nehemiah
- 3 Rebuildings:
 - The altar and the Temple (Zerubbabel)
 - The people's knowledge of the Book of Law (Ezra)
 - The walls (Nehemiah)
- 4 Prophets:
 - Haggai
 - Zechariah
 - Malachi
 - Joel

**Adapted from Chronological Bible Teaching*



NEHEMIAH: *Chapter 1*

Week 1 | June Dixon

I want to be a Nehemiah

Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem in 445 B.C., about 13 years after Ezra had returned there. He was a great leader whom God used to pull off a phenomenal feat. He instilled a vision in God's remnant in Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city. In spite of much opposition and numerous hurdles, they accomplished the task all right--in just 52 days. Now that is motivation! The temple had been rebuilt for about 70 years, but the walls that Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed in 586 B.C. were still in ruins, leaving the city defenseless against enemy attacks. As we saw in Ezra 4:11-23, an attempt at rebuilding the walls had been made a few years before. But when some Samaritans and other pagan residents of the land had complained, Artaxerxes issued a decree to stop the project.

So, let's jump in. In chapter 1, we are going to see Nehemiah's unique PREFACE, His PRAYER, and His POSITION.

I. HIS PREFACE (vs. 1-4)

Nehemiah dates his activity.

Nehemiah wrote his memoir or diary.

He was not a priest or prophet. He was a government official working in a foreign king's palace. The fact that Nehemiah called this his memoir tells us that he was not just writing history. He was giving us his personal testimony

If I were to write a memoir, what would it say about my relationship with God? Would it say I knew God well enough to notice what broke His heart? Did I give God the credit for what he accomplished? Does my life show that I persevered when opposition came? Nehemiah is worth imitating and that's the first reason I want to be a Nehemiah. **Nehemiah's heart was captured by what mattered to God**—and then God used him to do something far greater than he could have accomplished on his own.

Hanani was either a biological brother or a close Jewish relative. Nehemiah immediately asked: “How are the Jews... and how is Jerusalem?” He was told that things were not going well...

Look at the three problems he mentions:

1. The people are suffering. They are in great trouble and disgrace.
2. The wall is broken down. This means vulnerability.
3. The gates are burned. Gates represented security, justice (leaders met there), and civic order.

Now, notice Nehemiah’s immediate response.

He sat down and wept. He wept because something precious to God was lying in ruins. Jerusalem represented God’s people and God’s name. So when Nehemiah heard that its walls were broken and its people were living in disgrace, he wept over the news. This is the beginning of a burden. He COULD NOT just ‘move on’.

What else does he do? He prepares himself to go to the Lord! He Mourns and he Fasts. He is saying: “This matters more than my comfort.” --

His mourning was God-centered. The news stopped him. He sat down. He wept.

And he mourned for days. There are times when something touches us so deeply that we can’t simply move on to the next thing.

He didn’t immediately start making a plan. Nehemiah allowed himself to feel the weight of the situation before God. He fasted. This is particularly significant. Fasting is one way biblical people expressed: grief, repentance, dependence upon God, urgency in seeking God. Nehemiah’s fasting was saying, in effect: “This situation is so serious that I am setting aside normal physical needs to seek God.”

But here’s the good part, the beautiful part: his mourning became prayer. It went to God. That’s tremendously important. Nehemiah didn’t suppress his grief. He didn’t deny it. He didn’t pretend everything was fine. But he also didn’t allow grief to become hopelessness. He took his grief into God’s presence.

I want to be a Nehemiah who allows God to break my heart. In Nehemiah 1:4, he wept, mourned, fasted and prayed. He did not rush past the pain. He allowed himself to feel the weight of what had happened. For us, we shouldn’t be afraid of godly grief. Sometimes God

gives us a burden because he intends to use that burden to move us towards action. So we pray, “Lord, don’t let me become so comfortable that I can look at brokenness and feel nothing.”

I want to be a Nehemiah who takes my burden to God first. Nehemiah heard the news and he prayed. He didn’t organize a committee. He didn’t complain. He didn’t blame someone. He didn’t announce the solution. He went to God. We do too and pray, “Lord, teach me to make prayer my first response rather than my last resort.”

II. HIS PRAYER

Before rebuilding walls, Nehemiah begins with spiritual rebuilding. This is a major theme of Nehemiah: Prayer preceded action. Nehemiah always went to the Lord first because he knew that no one but the Lord could solve his problem.

So let’s look at what he prayed: Verses 5-10

The parts of His Prayer

- a. First, he acknowledged who God was. His prayer begins with worship. “O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps his covenant of unfailing love...” He reminds himself of God’s greatness before presenting his request. His mourning became adoration.

I want to be a Nehemiah who knows who God is. Nehemiah’s prayer in verse five begins “O, Lord God of Heaven, the great and awesome God”. So I pray. “Lord, when my problems become big, help me remember how big you are.”

- b. His tears became personal confession. One of the most striking parts of the prayer was this: “I and my family have sinned.” He acknowledged that he was just as guilty and just as capable of horrendous sin as anyone else. Before asking God to fix circumstances, believers should ask if there is anything spiritually broken that needs confessing.

I want to be a Nehemiah who confesses sin honestly as in verses 6 and 7. He said, “I confess that we have sinned against you. Yes, even my own family and I have sinned.” So I pray Lord, keep me from being more concerned about everyone else’s sin than I am about my own.”

- c. Confession led to Thanksgiving. Because of his knowledge of Israel's history, he was able to remember God's covenant promises. He remembered God's promise of restoration. He believed God's promises—and he was THANKFUL.

I want to be a Nehemiah who knows God's word and holds God to his promises as in verses 8 and 9. Please notice in vv.8–9 one of the critical aspects of our prayer. Do you notice that Nehemiah prays God's promises back to Him. He is essentially saying: "Lord, You said You would restore Your people if they return to You." This comes from passages like: Deuteronomy 30. We Pray Scripture back to God Not because God forgets—but because it shows faith in His promises.

I want to be a Nehemiah who remembers that I belong to God as in verse 10. Nehemiah said the people You rescued by Your great power and strong hand are Your servants. Nehemiah sees Israel as God's people. I, too, belong to Christ. My life isn't ultimately about building my kingdom, it's about being available for His kingdom.

- d. Now, in chapter 2 we will see the last aspect of his prayer—Supplication or intercession. Instead, he asked God to let him be part of the answer.

III. HIS POSITION (vs. 11b)

Look at Nehemiah's position in court and why that matters.

The office of Cupbearer sounds lowly to us today. But was extremely important in ancient societies and today would be considered Chief of Staff. Nehemiah had access to power. He was with the king at least for every meal. The king trusted Nehemiah knowing that if Nehemiah didn't want to be poisoned, he would take pains to ensure that everyone with access to the king's cup would be trustworthy and faithful.

Nehemiah was a successful man. But he left his position to build a wall and lead a series of religious reforms that would greatly influence the Jewish nation all the way to the time of Christ.

I want to be a Nehemiah who is willing to be sent. In verse 11 Nehemiah is prayed for God to give him favor with the king because he knows he's going to have to act. So essentially he said, "Lord, here I am, use me." We pray the same.

I want to be a Nehemiah who is willing to risk his comfort for God's purposes. Nehemiah was the king's cup bearer. But he was willing to leave that comfort because Jerusalem

mattered more to him than his comfortable position. That's a challenge to us as we pray, "Lord, don't let my comfort become more important to me than your calling."

One final statement pulls all of chapter one together. **I want to be a Nehemiah who is available.** Nehemiah heard; he cared; he wept; he fasted, he prayed, and he confessed. He remembered God's promises. He became willing to go. Are we willing? Nehemiah didn't just pray for Jerusalem to be restored; he was willing to become part of God's answer.

WEEK 1

NEHEMIAH:

Chapter 1

GIVE EAR, O LORD, TO MY PRAYER; AND GIVE HEED TO THE VOICE OF MY
SUPPLICATIONS! IN THE DAY OF MY TROUBLE I SHALL CALL UPON YOU,
FOR YOU WILL ANSWER ME.

Psalms 86:6-7 NASB



Day One

NEHEMIAH 1



GROUNDWORK |

PRAY | *Begin your time of study with prayer.*

Ask the Lord to quiet your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to guide you as you study God's Word.

READ | *Read the following text for your time of study.*

Nehemiah, Chapter 1

Write down any key verse(s):

OBSERVE | *Observe what the passage says.*

Some questions to consider as you make observations are—

- What is the main Idea?

- Are there any repeated words or phrases?

- Who is the author and who is the author writing to?

- As you think of the book as a memoir or a diary, what do you see as Nehemiah's main focus?

Write down what you observe from the text:

APPLY | *Apply it to your life.*

Some questions to consider as you make applications are—

- What does this passage teach us about God or His character?

- What does this passage teach about man and how does it apply to my life today?

- Are there any areas in my life that this text particularly applies to? If so, how?

- What is God speaking to me after reading this passage of Scripture?

- What changes do I need to make after reading this passage of Scripture?

Write down anything the Lord reveals to you from the truth of His Word:



BUILDING BLOCK |

What is the one truth you want to remember from today's reading of Chapter 1?



FIRM FOUNDATION |

Spend a few moments in prayer before the Lord. If there was a verse from the passage that spoke to you, pray that verse back to the Lord. Ask Him to specifically recall to your heart and mind anything you just read that He wants to teach you. Write anything He reveals to you below:



Day Two

NEHEMIAH 1

The Prologue



GROUNDWORK |

PRAY | *Begin your time of study with prayer.*

Ask the Lord to quiet your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to guide you as you study God's Word.

READ | *Read the following text for your time of study.*

Nehemiah, Chapter 1:1-4

Write down any key verse(s):

OBSERVE | *Observe what the passage says.*

Some questions to consider as you make observations are—

- What is the main idea in these verses?

- What kind of book is Nehemiah writing?

- What makes a memoir different from a historical recounting of facts?

- Are there any repeated words or phrases?

- Where is Nehemiah when he pens this part of his memoir?

- What is Nehemiah's response when he gets his brother's news?

Write down what you observe from the text:

APPLY | *Apply it to your life.*

Some questions to consider as you make applications are—

- What does this passage teach us about God or His character?

- What does this passage teach about man and how does it apply to my life today?

- Are there any areas in my life that this text particularly applies to? If so, how?

- What is God speaking to me after reading this passage of Scripture?

- What changes do I need to make after reading this passage of Scripture?

Write down anything the Lord reveals to you from the truth of His Word:



BUILDING BLOCK |

What is the one truth you want to remember from today's reading of Chapter 1? Would you agree that the great truth from today's reading might be that we see exactly what is burdening Nehemiah? His heart centers on God's own people; They mattered to him because they mattered to God.



FIRM FOUNDATION |

Spend a few moments in prayer before the Lord. If there was a verse from the passage that spoke to you, pray that verse back to the Lord. Ask Him to specifically recall to your heart and mind anything you just read that He wants to teach you. Re-read verse 4. Meditate on it as it should apply to the disasters that may be occurring in your life. As you pray this verse back to the Lord, you want to include verses like 1 Peter 5:7; Psalm 34:18; Psalm 62:8; or Romans. 8:28. Write anything He reveals to you below:



Day Three

NEHEMIAH 1

His Prayer



GROUNDWORK |

PRAY | *Begin your time of study with prayer.*

Ask the Lord to quiet your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to guide you as you study God's Word.

READ | *Read the following text for your time of study.*

Nehemiah, Chapter 1:5-11

Write down any key verse(s) that speak to you:

OBSERVE | *Observe what the passage says.*

Some questions to consider as you make observations are—

- Nehemiah seems to be using the same pattern of prayer many people use when praying—ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. Count the action verbs in verse 6 that point to Adoration. How many did you find?

- What does Nehemiah confess? Was he guilty? What types of things do we confess in our own daily prayers?

- Does knowing your own past history lead you to thanksgiving in your prayers? Can you think of any examples that you would use as a springboard to thanksgiving?

- As you think of the book as a memoir or a diary, what do you see as Nehemiah's main focus?

Write down what you observe from the text:

APPLY | *Apply it to your life.*

Some questions to consider as you make applications are—

- What does this passage teach us about God or His character?

- What does this passage teach about man and how does it apply to my life today?

- Are there any areas in my life that this text particularly applies to? If so, how?

- What is God speaking to me after reading this passage of Scripture?

- What changes do I need to make after reading this passage of Scripture?

Write down anything the Lord reveals to you from the truth of His Word:



BUILDING BLOCK |

What is the one truth you want to remember from today's reading?



FIRM FOUNDATION |

Spend a few moments using the ACTS (ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) pattern in prayer to the Lord. If there was a verse from the passage that spoke to you, pray that verse back to the Lord. Ask Him to specifically recall to your heart and mind anything you just read that He wants to teach you. Write anything He reveals to you below:



Day Four

NEHEMIAH 1

His Position



GROUNDWORK |

PRAY | *Begin your time of study with prayer.*

Ask the Lord to quiet your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to guide you as you study God's Word.

READ | *Read the following text for your time of study.*

Nehemiah, Chapter 1:11

What key words do you see?

OBSERVE | *Observe what the passage says.*

Some questions to consider as you make observations are—

What specifically does Nehemiah ask of the Lord?

What does he ask God to listen to?

What answer is he looking for?

What is Nehemiah's position in the King's court?

Write down what you observe from the text:

APPLY | *Apply it to your life.*

Some questions to consider as you make applications are—

- Note that Nehemiah is not so much asking for personal success as he is asking for the success of God's work.
- We know that God hears our prayers, but Nehemiah asks God to hear his prayer anyway. Read Ps. 86:6. Nehemiah knew that God heard his prayer but we see that this completes

his posture of complete dependence. By humbling himself and repeating his plea for God to listen is acknowledging that he is aware that his human success is entirely dependent on God's divine favor. Nehemiah had an important position in the King's court but is willing to leave it. Does your prayer life indicate your willingness to be a part of His plan or asking Him to be a part of your plan? Do you reiterate this in your supplications to the Lord.

Write down anything the Lord reveals to you from the truth of His Word:



BUILDING BLOCK |

What is the one truth you want to remember from today's reading of verse 11?



FIRM FOUNDATION |

Spend a few moments in prayer before the Lord. If this verse spoke to you, pray that verse back to the Lord. Ask Him to specifically recall to your heart and mind anything you just read that He wants to teach you. Write anything He reveals to you below:
