

Build Again: The Book of Nehemiah

Bible Study: Chapter 1

Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church
1710 Carey St. Joliet, IL 60433 | P 815.727.7162 | mtolivejoliet.org
Rev. Wendell Martin, Pastor

Setting

- When: Between 445-432 B.C.
- Where: _____ led the first return to Jerusalem in 538 B.C. In 458, Ezra led the second return. Finally, in _____, _____ returned with the third group of exiles to rebuild the city walls.¹

Purpose

The book of Nehemiah (meaning “the Lord comforts”) is a story of God’s _____ to the nation of _____ (approximately 445 BC) in spite of their disobedience and sins as they return from exile to the city of Jerusalem. It narrates Nehemiah’s journey of leadership (from cupbearer to the king turned governor) through opposition and conflict, the eventual rebuilding of the wall in Jerusalem, and the Israelites’ communal life together afterward.

The book records Nehemiah’s tender heart toward God and God’s people, and his sacrificial efforts to care for them during a volatile time of corruption, opposition, and challenging circumstances. Nehemiah is an example of a godly leader who is attuned to the spirit of God, led by the mission of God, and proactive to meet the physical and spiritual conditions of God’s people.²

¹ Publishers, Tyndale House. NLT Life Application Study Bible, Second Edition (p. 1604). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

² The Big Idea Companion for Preaching and Teaching (p. 181). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

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Key People in Chapter 1

- **Nehemiah:** Personal name meaning “Yah _____ or _____;” Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah, is the main character in the book that bears his name. He was a contemporary of Ezra and Malachi, Socrates in Greece (470–399 b.c.), and only a few decades later than Gautama Buddha in India (560–480 b.c.) and Confucius in China (551–479 b.c.). Nehemiah held the distinguished position of cupbearer to the king (1:11). This was an office of trust; tasting the king’s wine and food, the cupbearer stood between the king and death. That Nehemiah, a Jew and a captive, served this Gentile king in such a strategic capacity was an unusual credit and honor to this man of strong character.³
- **Hanani:** Personal name meaning “_____” or a shortened form of “_____ is _____.” Nehemiah’s _____ who reported the poor conditions in Jerusalem to him while Nehemiah was still in Persia (Neh. 1:2). Nehemiah placed him in charge of the military protection of the restored Jerusalem (Neh. 7:2).⁴
- **King Artaxerxes:** Nehemiah served as _____ to Artaxerxes (Neh. 2:1), and the king proved sensitive to Nehemiah’s mood (Neh. 2:2). He granted

³ Martin, D. C. (2003). [Nehemiah](#). In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (pp. 1182–1183). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

⁴ Brand, C., Draper, C., England, A., Bond, S., Clendenen, E. R., & Butler, T. C. (Eds.). (2003). [Hanani](#). In *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 711). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

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- Nehemiah's request to go to Judah (Neh. 2:5–6), making him _____ of Judah (Neh. 5:14).

Key Terms in Nehemiah Chapter 1

- **Chislev (or Chisleu):** This corresponded very nearly to our month of _____.⁵
- **Susa:** Winter capital of the ancient _____. The territory is now in modern Iran. Cyrus made Susa a capital city along with Ecbatana and Babylon. When Alexander the Great captured Susa, he found a large treasure that he confiscated. Archaeologists have excavated Susa largely around four areas: the royal palace, the acropolis, the royal city, and an artisan tell. Some believe Susa to be the place where Queen Esther and King Ahasuerus ruled.⁶
- **Judah:** The _____ part of the _____. After the rule of Solomon, God's people split into two nations: Israel and Judah. Judah tended to have leaders who were more obedient to God. The capital of Judah was Jerusalem.⁷

⁵ Freeman, James M. "Nehemiah." *An Illustrated Reference to the Manners & Customs of the Bible*, Whitaker House, New Kensington, PA, 1996, pp. 201–201.

⁶ Brand, C., Draper, C., England, A., Bond, S., Clendenen, E. R., & Butler, T. C. (Eds.). (2003). [Susa](#). In *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 1542). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

⁷ Mason, Eric. *Nehemiah For You: Strength to Build for God (God's Word For You)* (p. 199). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

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- **Cupbearer:** High-ranking official in the courts of ancient Near Eastern kings. The cupbearer was responsible for serving _____ at the _____ table and protecting the king from _____. The cupbearer was often taken into the king's confidence and had no small amount of influence on the king's decisions.⁸

⁸ Brand, C., Draper, C., England, A., Bond, S., Clendenen, E. R., & Butler, T. C. (Eds.). (2003). [Cupbearer](#). In *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 373). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.