

# REBUILD

Date: 11.3.24 | Title: Rebuilding the City Wall | Scripture: Nehemiah 1-7

## LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

### Middle School Students

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus.  
God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.  
God wants us to live for His glory.  
God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.  
Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies and promises.

### High School Students

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus.  
God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.  
God wants us to live for His glory.  
God is a righteous judge.  
God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.  
Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies and promises.  
Jesus gave His life for us on the cross and He is the only way for salvation.



MEMORY  
VERSE

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." Lamentations 3:22-24

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## BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Due to Judah's disobedience and refusal to repent, the judgment outlined in Deuteronomy 28 was fulfilled. In 587/586 BC, the Babylonians invaded Judah, destroyed Jerusalem, and exiled most of the population to Babylon. However, in 539 BC, the Persians overthrew the Babylonians and inherited control of Judah and its exiles. In 538 BC, King Cyrus of Persia issued a decree allowing the exiles to return to their homeland, marking the end of captivity and the long-awaited return to the Promised Land. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah recount the exiles' return and their struggle to rebuild Jerusalem, the temple, and their society.

The book of Nehemiah approaches many of the same themes found in Ezra but from a different angle. While Ezra focuses on rebuilding the temple and its furnishings, Nehemiah's focus is on rebuilding Jerusalem's walls and gates. God empowered Nehemiah to complete the task in a miraculously short period, despite hostile opposition from several regional powers.

The return to Judah happened in three major waves. The first wave, led by Zerubbabel in 538 BC after Cyrus' decree, concentrated on rebuilding the temple. Opposition halted construction temporarily, but prophets Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the people to resume work, and the temple was completed in 515 BC (Ezra 6:13-15). The second wave, led by the priest Ezra, came in 458 BC (Ezra 7-10). While many Jews had returned to Jerusalem by then, reestablishing the city and, more importantly, the temple-centered worship of God was a long-term process. In 445 BC, Nehemiah led the third wave as governor, tasked with rebuilding the city walls. He found Jerusalem in ruins, with the temple in disrepair and the walls broken down with gaps. Nehemiah was sent by God to lead the people in this critical mission.

Nehemiah joined Ezra in trying to restore proper obedience to God's commands, particularly regarding keeping the Sabbath. While Nehemiah succeeded in rebuilding the walls and gates, both he and Ezra faced challenges in bringing the people back to the right worship of God. The exile had purged the people of idolatry, but problems like social injustice and religious ritualism persisted, and Nehemiah and Ezra struggled to address them.

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## BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

While Nehemiah was serving as the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia, his brother, Hanani, visited him with troubling news from Jerusalem: “The survivors... are in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are burned” (Nehemiah 1:1-3). Upon hearing this, Nehemiah wept, fasted, and prayed, interpreting the state of Jerusalem as a sign of Israel’s sin against God. He confessed the nation’s failure to keep God’s commands, recalling Moses’ warning that exile would come if Israel disobeyed, but that God would show mercy if they repented (1:5-9).

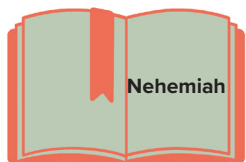
After days of fasting and prayer, Nehemiah sought God’s help in receiving favor from the king (1:5-11). As cupbearer, Nehemiah had access to the king and used his position to request leave to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. When Nehemiah appeared before the king, looking troubled, the king asked why. Nehemiah explained the situation in Jerusalem and, after a silent prayer, asked for permission to return and rebuild. The king granted his request and even provided letters for safe passage and resources (2:1-8). When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, he surveyed the damage in secret. After three days, he revealed his mission to the local leaders, explaining that the king had granted him permission to rebuild the city. Inspired by Nehemiah’s leadership, the people began working together to repair the walls and gates (2:11-3:32). Despite the enthusiasm, they faced intense opposition from local leaders like Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, who mocked the Jews and accused them of rebelling against the king (4:1-3). Nehemiah responded confidently, declaring that God would grant them success (4:4-6). The rebuilding effort continued despite the opposition, and the community worked together in a unified effort, with each group repairing a different section of the wall. However, the constant threat of attack weighed heavily on the people. Nehemiah stationed guards at vulnerable points along the wall and encouraged the people: “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes” (4:14).

Nehemiah’s leadership was crucial in keeping the people motivated. They prayed for God’s protection and continued working with one hand while holding weapons with the other (4:16-18). Despite repeated attempts by Sanballat and others to sabotage the project, Nehemiah stayed focused, refusing to meet with them or be swayed by their threats (6:1-9). His trust in God and unwavering determination allowed the walls to be completed in just 52 days—a feat that amazed even their enemies, who recognized that the work had been done with God’s help (6:15-16).

After the walls were rebuilt, Nehemiah organized the city’s defenses and began the process of reestablishing Jerusalem’s social and religious life. With the city secure, he appointed leaders and sought to restore the people’s commitment to God (7:1-5).

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## LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY



**Tell the story:** Use the Background Info for Leaders or The Message Bible summary of scripture to help tell today's story. "Get ready" in the Jesus Storybook Bible tells the story of God's people returning from slavery found in Nehemiah 8-10, Malachi 1, 3, and 4 and Ezra 7. This story covers parts of our lessons for the next several weeks.

**TELL  
THE  
STORY**



Israel's rejection of God and His commands led them into exile in Babylon for 70 years, yet God was merciful and continued to be with His people, promising that they would return to their homeland. Eventually, King Cyrus of Persia took over Babylon and God's people were freed from exile. Their home had been destroyed, as sin's consequences resulted in the destruction of their city. God continued to be faithful to His people and was going to rebuild what sin had destroyed. Some of God's people went home to Judah, but some of them stayed in Babylon. Nehemiah stayed and worked for the king of Persia.

Read directly from Scripture, use the message, or the summary provided in the lesson

One day, some men came from Judah. Nehemiah asked, "How are God's people in Jerusalem?" The men had bad news: "The people are in trouble. The walls around Jerusalem are broken down, and the gates are burned down."

Nehemiah sat down and cried. Then he spent time praying and fasting. The king noticed Nehemiah and asked, "What's wrong? Why are you sad?" Nehemiah was afraid; no one was supposed to be sad around the king. Nehemiah said, "The city where my ancestors are from is in ruins."

Re-Tell

The Bible  
Story

Put the events in order, draw a comic strip, build it with blocks or playdough, act it out, etc...

The king sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem. Nehemiah led the people to start rebuilding the walls and gates. The workers put in doors, bolts, and bars. They cut stones and lifted them into place on the wall, and they filled in gaps and holes. All around the city, people worked side by side. Soon the wall was half as tall as it had once been!

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Not everyone was happy that Jerusalem's walls were being rebuilt. Some men who lived nearby made a plan to attack them and stop their work. God's people prayed and chose men to guard the walls all day and all night, but the people were discouraged.

Nehemiah reminded the people that God was with them. "Don't be afraid," he said. "God is great and powerful! Be ready. If our enemies attack us, God will fight for us!" Enemies could threaten God's people, but they could not make God's people stop building. Their enemies were not in charge of rebuilding the wall; God was!

God's people went back to work. Some stood guard with weapons, and others worked on the wall. Some men worked with one hand and held a weapon with the other. They were always ready to fight, just in case.

Nehemiah was a wise and good leader for God's people. In just 52 days, the wall was complete. The gates were repaired, and the wall was restored. The city was ready for more of God's people to come home. When all of Jerusalem's enemies heard that the wall had been rebuilt, they were afraid because they knew God was with His people.

Nehemiah led the people to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem to protect them from their enemies. Jesus came to protect us from our greatest enemies, sin and death. He died on the cross and rose from the dead to rescue everyone who trusts in Him.

**Re-tell the Bible Story:** Have students re-tell the story as best they can.

**Attributes of God:** Determine the characteristics of God that we see in today's story. How can knowing these characteristics of God to be true, change the way we live in Christ?

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**“Storying” Questions:** As you ask these questions, have your students find the answers in the actual verses of scripture instead of recalling them from your re-telling of the story. We always want to encourage all of our students to go directly to God’s Word over a commentary on or summary of scripture. Use the Bible Study Bookmark Questions as well as these questions to help students understand the text:

- 1. Describe how the Israelites ended up in exile. How long were they there? How were they released?**
- 2. What did the people attempt to accomplish as they arrived back in Jerusalem? Why was this important?**
- 3. How were their plans thwarted? How did Nehemiah and the people respond?**
- 4. How was the response taken by their enemies? How was God honored in the response?**
- 5. Does trusting God mean we sit back and wait? Why not? Nehemiah trusted the Lord to accomplish the rebuilding of the wall, but he didn’t sit back and do nothing. Faith calls us to act upon what we believe. We can trust God and be reminded that He is faithful to help us follow Him in obedience.**
- 6. What does it mean that God restores our relationship with Him?**
- 7. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?**
- 8. What does this story teach me about myself?**
- 9. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?**
- 10. Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?**
- 11. How does this story help me live on mission better?**

# REBUILD

## ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

**ATTENTIVE** - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

**COMPASSIONATE** - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

**CREATOR** - God made everything. He is uncreated.

**DELIVERER** - God rescues and saves his children.

**ETERNAL** - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

**FAITHFUL** - God always keeps his promises.

**GENEROUS** - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

**GLORIOUS** - God displays His greatness and worth.

**GOOD** - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

**HOLY** - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

**IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING** - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

**INCOMPREHENSIBLE** - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

**INFINITE** - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

**JEALOUS** - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

**JUST** - god is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

**LOVING** - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

**MERCIFUL** - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

**OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY** - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

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## ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

**OMNIPRESENT** - God is fully present everywhere.

**OMNISCIENT** - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

**PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING** - God is untiring and bears with His children.

**PROVIDER** - God meets the needs of his children.

**REFUGE** - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

**RIGHTEOUS** - God is always good and right.

**SELF-EXISTENT** - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

**SELF-SUFFICIENT** - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

**SOVEREIGN** - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

**TRANSCENDENT** - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

**TRUTHFUL** - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

**WISE** - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

**WORTHY** - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

**WRATHFUL** - God hates all unrighteousness.



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## PRAYER PROMPTS

God You are sovereign! We know You are in control and Your plans and faithfulness will not waver! Thank You for sending Jesus to rescue us from sin and death. Help us share the good news of the Gospel with others.

## IF TIME ALLOWS:

Help the students in your group practice memorizing the books of the Bible:

- Torah: Genesis-Deuteronomy
- History: Joshua-Esther
- Poetry: Job-Song of Solomon
- Major Prophets: Isaiah-Daniel
- Minor Prophets: Hosea-Malachi
- Gospels: Matthew-John
- Paul's Letters: Romans-Philemon
- General Letters: Hebrews-Revelation

## MISSIONS EMPHASIS:

For the months of November and December Creek Families will be collecting money for the Lottie Moon Christmas offering. Encourage your class to collect money in the jars we will pass out today at the end of service. Students can donate with their families as they arrive, or you can go together as a class on the way back to the Worship Center at the end of SS. Money can be donated each week, or at the end of December.

## REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

Work on memorizing this weeks verse with the students in your group. You can use the first letter of each word in the verse to help with this. For example, the unit verse would look like this:

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## Application Questions

### LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

### LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

### LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?

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## Application Questions

### LOOK OUTWARD

- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and in the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

### LOOK FORWARD

- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?