

## NEHEMIAH

*God works through men to accomplish His redemptive plan.*



THE STORY: NEHEMIAH 1

MONDAY

## Nehemiah was aroused to pray

Nehemiah was aroused to pray – The walls of Jerusalem, originally destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, remained broken even though the altar and temple were rebuilt. Because the walls were broken, the city was open to attack. Once again, God aroused a man to accomplish His redemptive plan. This time the man was Nehemiah. After hearing about the walls, Nehemiah mourned, prayed, and fasted for days.

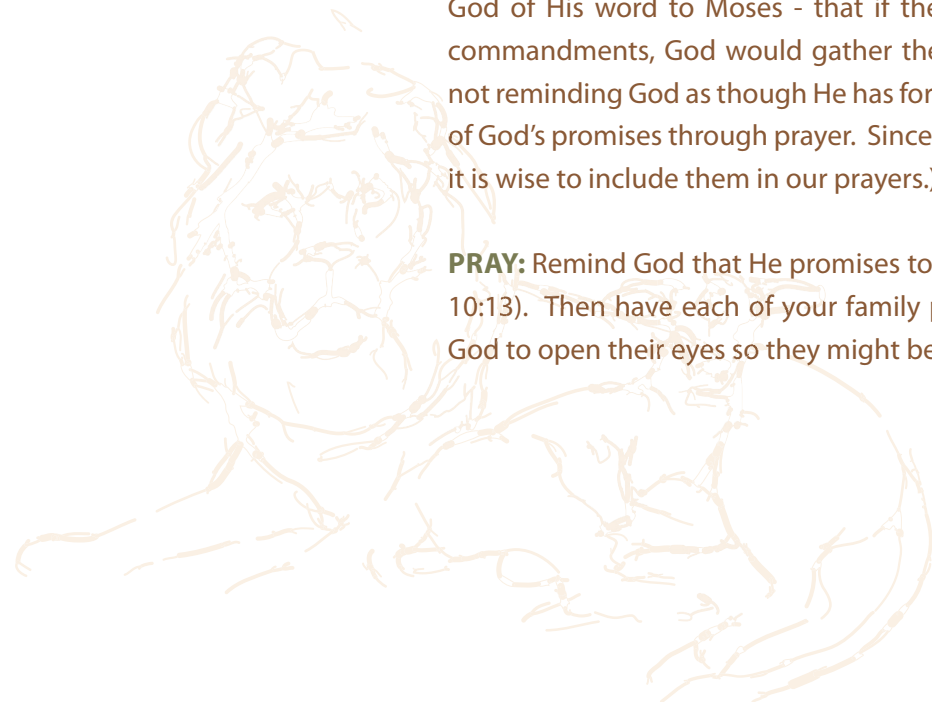
What we have in chapter one is likely the consolidation of Nehemiah's prayer.

Nehemiah repented for the sins of Israel and asked God for favor. But what could one man do? If he is the right man, God's man, he can do much. Nothing would stop the plan of God. Nehemiah, we learn, was the cupbearer to the King! Earlier we learned that God moved the heart of King Cyrus, and later, the heart of King Darius. Here, God selected another king to use for His purposes. King Artaxerxes would be used to bless the work of restoring Jerusalem.

**TALK ABOUT IT:** How do we know from this passage that Nehemiah came to the Lord with a spirit of humility? (Nehemiah started his prayers by first confessing the sins of Israel. Nehemiah understood that God's judgments were just.)

How did Nehemiah remind God of His promises in his prayer? (Nehemiah reminded God of His word to Moses - that if the people return to the Lord and keep His commandments, God would gather them again and dwell among them. We are not reminding God as though He has forgotten. Rather, we are reminding ourselves of God's promises through prayer. Since God is always faithful to keep His promises, it is wise to include them in our prayers.)

**PRAY:** Remind God that He promises to save all those who call upon Him (Romans 10:13). Then have each of your family pray a short prayer where they each invite God to open their eyes so they might believe in Jesus with their whole heart.





## God gave Nehemiah favor with the king

God gave Nehemiah favor with the king – The king could see that Nehemiah was sad, so he asked what was wrong. Though Nehemiah was afraid, God gave him grace to bring an explanation to the king. God gave him boldness to make very detailed requests to rebuild the city. Why should a king grant such an expensive request from his cupbearer of all people? There is no need for us to speculate – we are given the answer at the end of Nehemiah 1:8: “And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.”

The work of rebuilding the walls was not the crazy idea of a lone cupbearer. It was work directed by God (Nehemiah 2:11). Nehemiah began immediately with a covert inspection of the walls at night. After the inspection he motivated the people with the testimony of what God had done through the king. Sanballat, governor of Samaria to the north and Tobiah, an Ammonite official, first mocked the wall building effort. Later, when they heard the work of rebuilding was going well and that the gaps were being closed, they hatched a plot to stop the work (Nehemiah 4:7-8). The people of God posted guards and prayed for protection against these adversaries day and night (Nehemiah 4:9).

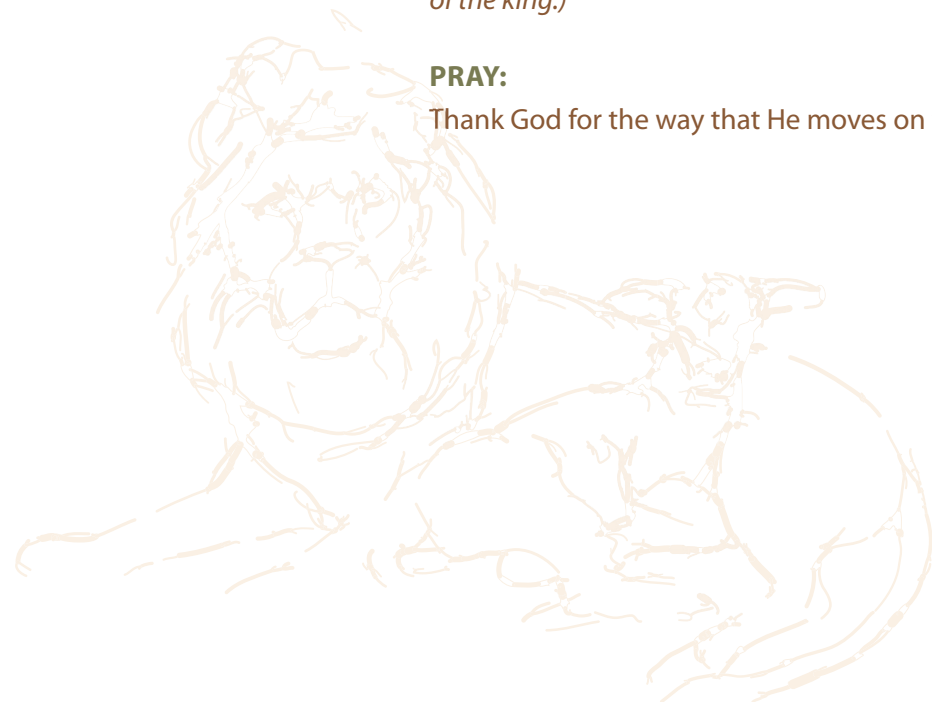
### TALK ABOUT IT:

Was it just good luck that the man who was burdened to pray for Jerusalem was the cupbearer to the king? *(No. Nothing is just luck. God placed Nehemiah in this position to be used of God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.)*

What did Nehemiah do before answering the king’s request in verse 4? *(Nehemiah prayed to God. Nehemiah understood that it was the Lord who could move on the heart of the king.)*

### PRAY:

Thank God for the way that He moves on the hearts of men to accomplish His plan.





## Where is Jesus?

One day Jesus would visit the restored city of Jerusalem. Although the people of Israel rebelled against God, God had a plan to redeem His people through Jesus Christ.

Part of that plan was to restore the walls of the city of Jerusalem. Jesus was crucified just outside those city walls. Jesus would have walked through the Judgment Gate in the wall that led to Golgotha, also called the Place of the Skull, where He gave His life for the atonement of our sins.

### TALK ABOUT IT:

Why were so many families willing to repair the walls around where they lived? *(The walls protected the city from their enemies. The faster a family repaired the walls, the safer they were from any attack.)*

Why was it so important to God's plan to repair the city and the walls of Jerusalem? *(Jerusalem would be the city in which Jesus would minister and be crucified.)*

### PRAY:

Thank the Father for sending His Son to walk on the streets of Jerusalem and then walk the road to Calvary where He was crucified for our sins.



## The rebuilding continued in faith, despite opposition

The rebuilding continued in faith, despite opposition – Sanballat received word that God had frustrated his plan. From that day on, the work of rebuilding continued, half the servants worked on the wall while the other half stood with bows, spears, and shields, and armor to protect the city and workers. With each stone put in place, the city became easier to defend. Those who carried supplies also carried spears. They worked with one hand and had a spear in the other (Nehemiah 4:15-20). The work continued until the entire wall was finished. In chapter 6 we read,

So the wall was finished ... and when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God. (Nehemiah 6:16)

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

Who frustrated the plan of Sanballat? *(God frustrated Sanballat's plan. Nothing was going to stop the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Even though the people put the stones in place, God was rebuilding the walls.)*

What did Nehemiah do to defeat the plans of Sanballat? *(Nehemiah stationed people with swords, spears, and bows at the lowest places in the wall. Then, rather than simply trust those weapons, Nehemiah reminded the people of the Lord, who is great and awesome. This is evidence that Nehemiah did not place his trust in weapons alone.)*

**PRAY:**

Ask for God's help in the challenges faced each day. Though God requires us to work, we do so knowing that our God is with us. He is great and awesome!



THE STORY: ZECHARIAH 3:6-10

FRIDAY

## On the road to Emmaus.

The promised "Branch" that God will give His people is none other than Jesus.

This title of branch appears again in Zechariah 6:12. It is actually a proper name and was first used by Isaiah as a name for the Messiah (Isaiah 4:2). Jeremiah uses the name to describe the descendant of David who would take the throne (Jeremiah 23:5 and 33:15-16).

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

Why is Jesus called a branch? *(God promised that a shoot off the stump of Jesse would bear fruit. When a tree is cut down, often the stump remains alive and sends out a shoot which becomes a branch that can grow a whole new tree. Though Jesse and David died, the stump remained alive, and out of it came Jesus!)*

What does God say he will do in a single day? *(He will remove the sin of the land.)*

How did that happen? *(This happened the day Jesus hung upon the cross and uttered the words, "It is finished." The wrath of God for the sin of man was poured out completely. God removed the sins of the past, those of the present, and those of the future as well. It is an amazing thing to think that Jesus took the penalty for all of our sin. Now, those who trust in Christ stand righteous in Him!)*

**PRAY:**

Thank God for removing the sin of the land in a single day through the sacrifice of the righteous Branch, Jesus Christ.