

Discovery of Calling: Prayer and Purpose

Nehemiah 1



Week One

inTro



Read This Week's Passage:
Nehemiah 1

STAYING BEHIND

The Babylonian army had conquered Judah as well as the majority of the then-known world, bringing captives to its capital city. After the death of its king Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon fell to the rising Medo-Persian Empire. Their more lenient government allowed exiles to return to their homelands. The book of Ezra (which was once bound together with the book of Nehemiah) recalls this edict and describes the progression of the Judean reconstruction. At this time, we find Nehemiah did not return back to his homeland. Instead, he served in the royal courts of Susa.

The books of Ezra, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and possibly others, also called post-exilic, take place after the Babylonian invasion of Judah and the Babylonian Exile. Be mindful that these books do not appear in chronological order. By the time of Nehemiah, reconstruction and rebuilding had already occurred in Jerusalem, but due to opposition and internal conflicts, the work was not finished.

In the opening of the account of the book, Nehemiah is found to be in the Medo-Persian winter citadel palace of Shushan, or Susa (the same place as the Ahasuerus's great feast in Esther 1 and the vision of Daniel 8). The year is the twentieth into the reign of King Artaxerxes and the month is Chisleu, around November-December. Though these background details seem unimportant, they are crucial in understanding the narrative and extracting principles of leadership for our individual spheres.



Write out Nehemiah 1 from the translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out Nehemiah 1:4–11. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, outline it, or mind map the chapter.



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you



Draw Arrows to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases



Memorize your favorite verse. Write it out multiple times to help memorization.

What is your prayer life like?
What promises can you claim for situations in your life? Do you have a vision for your role in God's work?



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After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?



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How do the following verses relate to the primary passage?

Ezra 4:4–24

Leviticus 26:27–45

2 Chronicles 6:26–39



What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Nehemiah 1?

Review your memorized verse from Nehemiah 1.



Meditate on Nehemiah 1 again and look for Jesus in the passage.



What parallels do you see between Nehemiah's intercession and Christ's intercession?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?



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Review your memory verse.
How does it apply to your
life this week?



As you have studied this
week, what personal
applications have you been
convicted of in your life?

What are practical applications
you must make in your school,
family, workplace, and church?



Read more inSight from the
Spirit of Prophecy at
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inQUIRE

Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



What are some burdens that God is putting on your heart?

What walls are breaking down around you now and need to be repaired?

What are some human needs around you that you are being called to serve?

How can we place more care, concern, and investment into humanity as Nehemiah did for his people who were so far away?

What palatial luxuries are we encompassed with?

What is your life burden?

What is your life passion?

What is your life calling?

Do these three intersect? Why, or why not?