

PRECEPT
UPON
PRECEPT®

Nehemiah

REBUILDING, REVIVAL, AND
RESTORATION OF THE
PEOPLE OF GOD

PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT®
NEHEMIAH
REBUILDING, REVIVAL, AND RESTORATION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

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HELPFUL STUDY TOOLS

ARTHUR, KAY; ARTHUR, DAVID; DE LACY, PETE

The New How to Study Your Bible

Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2010

The New Inductive Study Bible

Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2000

Hebrew Word Study Tools

(The following is a list of helpful Hebrew Word Study Tools:)

HARRIS, R. LAIRD; ARCHER, GLEASON L. JR.; WALTKE, BRUCE K.

Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1980

RICHARDS, LAWRENCE O.

Expository Dictionary of Bible Words

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985

RECOMMENDED COMMENTARIES

GAEBELEIN, FRANK E.

The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 4, 1, 2 Kings, 1, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishers, 1992

WALVOORD, JOHN F., ZUCK, ROY B., AND DALLAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures

Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983-c1985

CARSON, D. A.

The New Bible Commentary

Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994

KEIL, C. F., DELITZSCH, F.

Commentary on the Old Testament

Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002

RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE

Logos Bible Software

Powerful search engines and up to 4,000 electronic Bible study resources (commentaries, lexicons, Bible dictionaries etc.) make it fast and easy to do simple and complex searches of multiple sources, then pull materials together for orderly presentation—excellent for word and topical studies based on English or original Hebrew and Greek. Available at www.logos.com.

LESSON ONE

Chapters One and Two

THIS LESSON INCORPORATES The following located in the Appendix:
Observation Worksheets of Nehemiah 1–2
“Nehemiah the Man”
“The Times of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther”
“Nehemiah at a Glance”
“The Jewish Calendar”
Cross-references

The Power of One

Is it possible for one person to make a difference?

As much as your heart wants to say “yes,” your mind is probably saying, “No, not really. The problems are too large and too complex to be addressed and changed by just one person.”

Friend, if that’s what you are thinking, you are going to love this study of the book called Nehemiah. In the next few weeks you will see that God can take one individual and make a difference.

The power of one.

One person following hard after the one true God.

One individual making a difference.

DAY ONE

1. As you begin this study, it’s important to remember to start each day with prayer. Why? Because the words you are about to study are God’s Words. He is the author of every book of the Bible. Men wrote what God breathed (2 Timothy 3:16)!

Therefore, as you read, develop the habit of asking God—by His Spirit—to teach you what He has written and preserved all these millennia. Nehemiah, like all books, has a specific purpose. Its words are to be learned, understood, and applied to our lives.

Not only did God the Father say it, but Jesus also confirmed it that we live by “every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4).

2. When you study a book of the Bible, it is important to identify the type of literature you are reading to help you interpret it correctly. Read the first chapter of Nehemiah to familiarize yourself with the way this book begins.

In the Appendix you’ll find **Observation Worksheets**. For those of you new to Precept Upon Precept inductive studies, an **Observation Worksheet** is a printout of an entire book, chapter by chapter. It is double-spaced and has wide margins for easy reading and marking. It’s a worksheet you can mess up.

When you finish, think about the type of literature you read. What does Nehemiah seem to be? Does it sound like history, poetry, wisdom literature, or prophecy?

3. Nehemiah, as you can see, is part of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is filled with history and prophecy. Whenever you study a historical book of the Bible, it is important to look at people, events, timing, and outcomes. This is what history is all about!

When you read history, you must ask **the 5 Ws and H**: who, what, when, where, why, and how. If you look for answers to these questions when you read Nehemiah 1, you’ll discover the setting and purpose of the book. While every text won’t answer all 5 W and H questions, you’ll want to find out which ones are answered.

Let’s begin with **Who**. As you probably observed, Nehemiah is front and center in this chapter—the main **who**. What does God want us to know about him? Does He give us insight into 5 W and H questions with respect to this person?

- a. Read through Nehemiah 1 and mark every reference to *Nehemiah*. Include pronouns (*my, I, me*) and synonyms (for example “your servant” in verse 6). Choose a color for Nehemiah. Colors are more quickly identifiable.

Some of us do our observations in our Bible since we want to have our Bibles marked in this way. The *NISB (New Inductive Study Bible)* is especially designed for this and really is the only true inductive study Bible because it doesn’t run a commentary on the text; rather, it teaches you how to discover truth for yourself, book by book.

Why don't you finish your study today by talking with the Sovereign Ruler of the universe about what you've learned.

DAY
TWO

1. Today we're going to dig deeper into the details of the 5 Ws and H of this first chapter of Nehemiah. Undoubtedly you saw some of them as you made your list on Nehemiah.

2. Let's begin with **when** and **where**.

a. **When** is Nehemiah 1 happening? _____

As you observe the text—discovering what it says—you need to watch for the “**when**” of things. We recommend that you put a green circle over every reference to time, or words that show a sequence of time, such as *then*, *after*, etc. By the way, there is a perforated **Key Word Bookmark** on the back of your Precept book. One side has suggested markings for observing the Bible in general, while the other is for marking specific words in Nehemiah which we will explain later.

b. Does the text tell you any “**wheres**”? Where Nehemiah is? _____

Where Nehemiah's brother and the men came from? _____

Mark anything that tells you *where* by double underlining it in green. Then, if you don't know where the place is, see if you can locate it on the map.



3. Now let's look for a **what**. According to chapter 1, **what** is the situation in Jerusalem?
4. **How** does Nehemiah respond to the news from Jerusalem? You've already seen it by marking Nehemiah, haven't you? And who does Nehemiah turn to when he gets this news about Jerusalem?
5. Now let's mark references to another **Who**—*the Lord God*. By the way, when studying the Bible in general, don't feel obligated to mark every reference to God as too many markings can be confusing. Mark the essential ones—truths that reveal who God is or that tell you something you didn't know about God.
However, in Nehemiah 1, we suggest you mark every reference to *the Lord God*, including all pronouns and synonyms. Use a color like yellow, or if you want a suggestion for a symbol, see the Key Word Bookmark.
6. Look at the references to the Lord God that you marked. On a separate sheet of paper or in the margin of your worksheet make a list of what you learn. This is the way you get to know God and understand His holiness and His ways. This is how you develop a biblical theology on the Person of God! Go for it!
7. Finally, as you read chapter 1, did you notice any important repeated words like *prayer* and *sin*? They are repeated and key to understanding the meaning of the text, aren't they?
 - a. We call these key words. **Key words** are important repeated words that help unlock the meaning of the text. It is good to mark key words and their synonyms and pronouns with distinctive colors and/or symbols.
 - b. Mark the references to *prayer* and to *sin* distinctively. Also mark synonyms like "said" for *prayer* in verse 5 and "acted very corruptly" in verse 7 for *sin*. See the front of the bookmark for marking suggestions. Put these two key words along with *Nehemiah* on the back of your Key Word Bookmark with the markings you will use throughout this course.
 - c. In the margin of your Observation Worksheet, write "prayer" and list what the text tells you about prayer. Then do the same for "sin." Don't add a thing—just get down the facts!

- d. Now, when making lists on *prayer* and *sin*, did you notice who is being prayed for and why? Mark references to these people, including pronouns. Then list what you learn about these people from marking the references. You can make this list on your Observation Worksheet or record it below.
- e. Did Nehemiah pray anything for himself individually? If so, what? And what did he mean by it?
8. Interesting, isn't it? We will explore it more tomorrow. Bring today to a close by reflecting on what you learned from marking the references to prayer. You are going to see many more as you continue your study. However, for today, did you learn anything about the role prayer played in Nehemiah's life and how he prayed?

By the way, Beloved (as God calls you in verses 1 and 3 of Jude), we want you to know that our hearts are filled with rejoicing at the thought of not only what God is going to teach you, but also the difference it can make in your life and then in the lives of those you reach out to and urge to follow Jesus Christ—to become His disciple.

DAY
THREE

Let's get back to Nehemiah 1 as there is more to see and understand. This first chapter is the setting for what follows, so you need to know it well. By knowing it, you will grow and become more and more like the Son of Man, the Son of God, who truly lived by every word of God.

1. After you pray for God's help in studying His Word, read through Nehemiah 1 again, this time aloud. Reading aloud helps Scripture go deeper, penetrating, as Hebrews 4:12 says, the joints and marrow of your being, judging the thoughts and intentions of your heart.

When you finish reading through the chapter, review your lists from yesterday. What did you record about the people? What did Nehemiah pray?

Did you notice that Nehemiah asked the Lord God of heaven to be attentive to his prayer and to remember "the word" the Lord commanded them?

2. You need to understand what that "word" was. Let's let Scripture interpret Scripture. In his prayer Nehemiah is reaching back to the Torah, the first five books of the Law, the statutes, commandments, and ordinances the nation of Israel was to live by—and the covenant God made with them. Nehemiah is asking God to stand by His Word.
 - a. Deuteronomy is the last book of the Law. In its final chapters God tells Israel of the blessings that obedience brings and the curses disobedience brings. This is part of the covenant of the Law. Did you notice the mention of **covenant** in 1:5? Everything God does is based on covenant. A covenant is a solemn binding agreement—sometimes made by passing through the pieces of the flesh of a sacrificed animal. Because of its importance, we suggest you always mark *covenant*. See your bookmark for a marking suggestion.
 - b. After revealing blessings and curses in Deuteronomy 28 and 29, God speaks promises in Deuteronomy 30:1-5. Read Deuteronomy 30:1-5 and list the main things God promises.

- 4) When did they finish?
- b. Now according to the chart, what book of the Bible records this history and in what chapters? If you studied our Precept course on Ezra/Haggai, this is review. Aren't you thrilled with what you learned? Studying inductively really makes the difference, doesn't it?
 - c. Now look at the chart again. Note when the book of Ezra ends and the book of Nehemiah begins. If Ezra is about the rebuilding of the temple, what concerns Nehemiah since the temple is already built? Or to put it another way, what caused Nehemiah to mourn, weep, fast, and pray?
6. What do you learn from the following verses about city walls?
- a. Joshua 6:5, 20
 - b. 2 Samuel 11:18-24
 - c. 2 Samuel 18:24-26; Ezekiel 33:1-6
 - d. 1 Kings 3:1

DAY
FOUR

1. Let's begin our study today with one more read through Nehemiah 1, but let's do it by paragraph.
 - a. Read Nehemiah 1:1-3 aloud. When you finish, summarize the content of these verses—what is happening? Write the summary in pencil in the margin of verses 1-3 on your Observation Worksheet.
 - b. Read Nehemiah 1:4-11 and record a summary in the margin of your Observation Worksheet near verse 4.
 - c. Now you are ready to summarize in as few words as possible a theme for Nehemiah 1. Use words from the text.
Record a chapter theme at the heading of your Observation Worksheet and in the designated place on the “Nehemiah at a Glance” chart in the Appendix. An At a Glance chart is an incredibly valuable tool that helps you systematically record key elements you want to remember from each book of the Bible. (You'll find these in the *NISB* at the end of every book.)
2. Now read Nehemiah 2 to familiarize yourself with the content. It's history and history involves people.
 - a. We are looking at what “one individual” can do, so color-code the references to *Nehemiah* in this chapter as you did in chapter 1.
 - b. Add to the list on Nehemiah you began when you observed chapter 1.
 - c. When you finish, write down your first impression of what this chapter is all about.
3. Let's go even deeper and observe this chapter—discover what it says for ourselves.
 - a. Observe Nehemiah 2. Add the following words to the back of your Key Word Bookmark. Pick a color and/or symbol for your marking. Words with suggested markings on the front of the bookmark have an asterisk*.
 - 1) *Jerusalem* and *city* (when it refers to Jerusalem)
 - 2) *wall* (mark it in Nehemiah 1:3 also)
 - 3) *temple** (*house of God*)
 - 4) *Sanballat*, *Tobiah*, and *Geshem*—Mark each in a distinctive color; you will encounter these three men in other chapters of Nehemiah.
 - 5) *build* and *rebuilding*

Good job, faithful one! We will finish chapter 2 tomorrow. In the meantime, think of what you learned simply from marking references to Nehemiah. What manner of man is this cupbearer?

DAY
FIVE

1. Now that you have marked the text, we want to move through Nehemiah 2. Read Nehemiah 2:1-8 picturing what's happening. Put yourself in Nehemiah's place. He was the king's cupbearer—a servant. And those who served the king were not to be sad, down, depressed in the presence of the king; nothing was to upset the king! When you finish, summarize 2:1-8 in the margin of your Observation Worksheet.
 - a. First of all, God wants you to see the timing of 2:1; this is why it is included in the text, so we must pay attention to it. How does 2:1 compare with Nehemiah 1:1? Understanding the Jewish Calendar will help. There's one in the Appendix. Look at it and record the time interval between the two chapters. Write it below or on your Observation Worksheet.
 - b. Do events in Nehemiah 2:1-8 give you insights into the following, and if so, what?
 - 1) Nehemiah's prayer in chapter 1?
 - 2) God?
 - 3) Nehemiah the man?

What does God want you to know? Are there truths you can incorporate into your knowledge of God? What do you learn for your life from the examples of the characters you read about—both good and bad?

Did you see any truths that reveal wrong thinking and less than godly behavior and character? Anything that inspires you? Did God put anything in your mind (heart) (Nehemiah 2:12)?

To apply scripture is to take what God says and let it impact your life so that it conforms you to His plumb line of truth. List your insights.

8. Feel free to consult commentaries, but please don't read beyond Nehemiah 2. We don't want you to miss the joy of discovery or prematurely interpret. Remember, accurate observation is essential for correct interpretation.

NEHEMIAH 1
Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

THE words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah.

- Now it happened in the month Chislev, *in* the twentieth year, while I was in Susa the capitol,
- 2 that Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men from Judah came; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped *and* had survived the captivity, and about Jerusalem.
 - 3 They said to me, “The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire.”
 - 4 When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.
 - 5 I said, “I beseech You, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,
 - 6 let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against You; I and my father’s house have sinned.
 - 7 “We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses.
 - 8 “Remember the word which You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful I will scatter you among the peoples;
 - 9 but *if* you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote

part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.’

10 “They are Your servants and Your people whom You redeemed by Your great power and by Your strong hand.

11 “O Lord, I beseech You, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name, and make Your servant successful today and grant him compassion before this man.”

Now I was the cupbearer to the king.

NEHEMIAH 2
Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

AND it came about in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine *was* before him, and I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence.

2 So the king said to me, “Why is your face sad though you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of heart.” Then I was very much afraid.

3 I said to the king, “Let the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad when the city, the place of my fathers’ tombs, lies desolate and its gates have been consumed by fire?”

4 Then the king said to me, “What would you request?” So I prayed to the God of heaven.

5 I said to the king, “If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.”

6 Then the king said to me, the queen sitting beside him, “How long will your journey be, and when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me, and I gave him a definite time.

7 And I said to the king, “If it please the king, let letters be given me for the governors *of the provinces* beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah,

8 and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress which is by the temple, for the wall of the city and for the house to which I will go.” And the king granted *them* to me because the good hand of my God *was* on me.

9 Then I came to the governors *of the provinces* beyond the River and gave them the king’s letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen.

- 10 When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard *about it*, it was very displeasing to them that someone had come to seek the welfare of the sons of Israel.
- 11 So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days.
- 12 And I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. I did not tell anyone what my God was putting into my mind to do for Jerusalem and there was no animal with me except the animal on which I was riding.
- 13 So I went out at night by the Valley Gate in the direction of the Dragon's Well and *on* to the Refuse Gate, inspecting the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were consumed by fire.
- 14 Then I passed on to the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was no place for my mount to pass.
- 15 So I went up at night by the ravine and inspected the wall. Then I entered the Valley Gate again and returned.
- 16 The officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; nor had I as yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials or the rest who did the work.
- 17 Then I said to them, "You see the bad situation we are in, that Jerusalem is desolate and its gates burned by fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a reproach."
- 18 I told them how the hand of my God had been favorable to me and also about the king's words which he had spoken to me. Then they said, "Let us arise and build." So they put their hands to the good *work*.
- 19 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard *it*, they mocked us and despised us and said, "What is this thing you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?"
- 20 So I answered them and said to them, "The God of heaven will give us success; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no portion, right or memorial in Jerusalem."

NEHEMIAH THE MAN

NEHEMIAH THE MAN

NEHEMIAH AT A GLANCE

Book Theme:

Segment Divisions

Chapter Themes

Author:

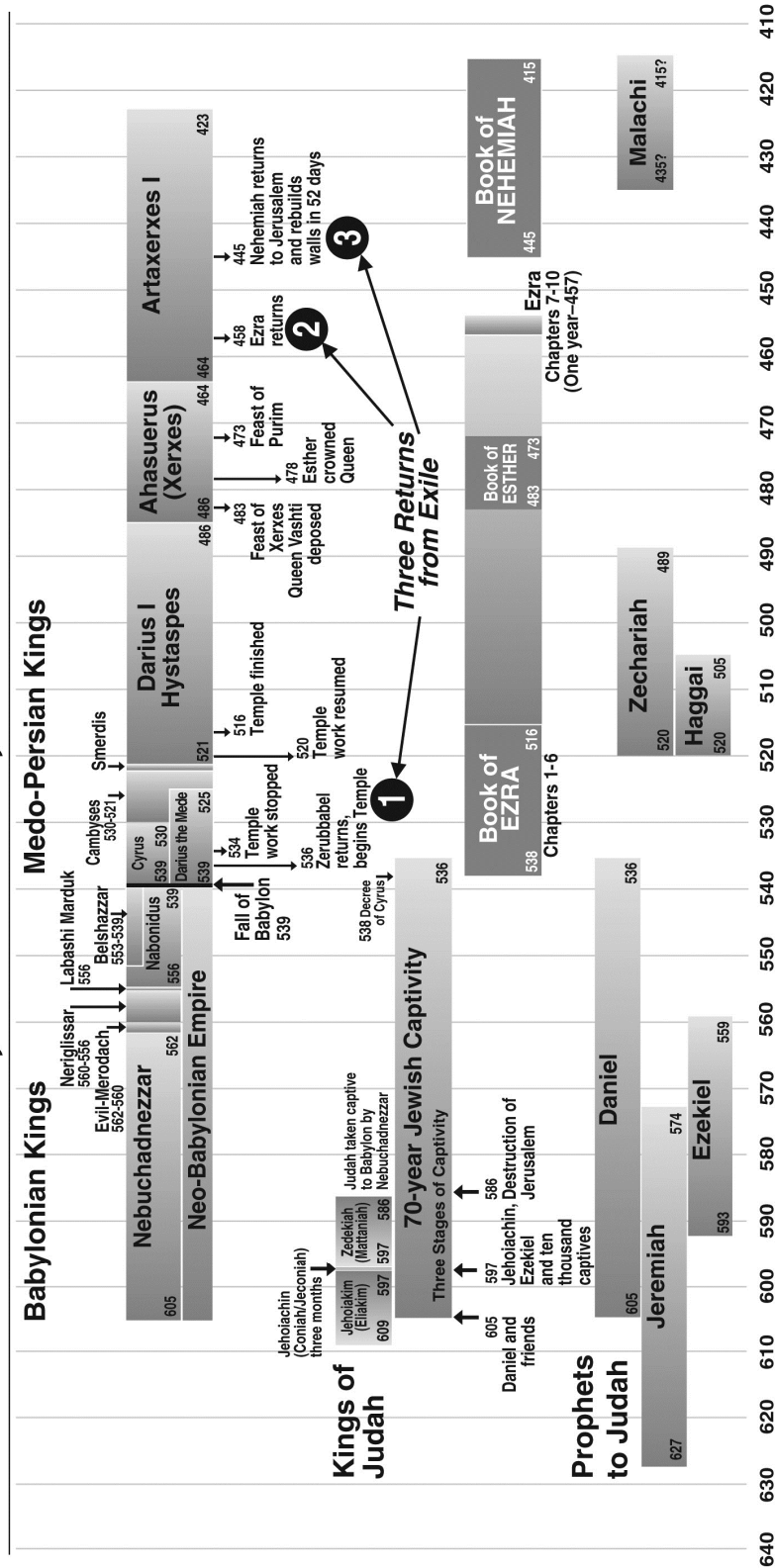
Date:

Purpose:

Key Words:

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THE TIMES OF EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND ESTHER



The Jewish Calendar

Babylonian names (B) for the months are still used today for the Jewish calendar. Canaanite names (C) were used prior to the Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. Four are mentioned in the Old Testament.

Adar-Sheni is an intercalary month used every two to three years or seven times in 19 years.

1st month	2nd month	3rd month	4th month
Nisan (B) Abib (C) March-April	Iyyar (B) Ziv (C) April-May	Sivan (B) May-June	Tammuz (B) June-July
7th month	8th month	9th month	10th month
5th month	6th month	7th month	8th month
Ab (B) July-August	Elul (B) August-September	Tishri (B) Ethaniam (C) September-October	Marcheshvan (B) Bul (C) October-November
11th month	12th month	1st month	2nd month
9th month	10th month	11th month	12th month
Chislev (B) November-December	Tebeth (B) December-January	Shebat (B) January-February	Adar (B) February-March
3rd month	4th month	5th month	6th month

Sacred calendar appears in black • Civil calendar appears in gray