

EZRA
and
NEHEMIAH

October 7-December 30, 2015

Sunset church of Christ

Introduction and Background

I. Setting of Ezra and Nehemiah

The nation of Israel had been taken captive by the Assyrians and had disappeared as a people (II Kings 17:1-18) and left Judah alone. The nation of Judah did not learn from Israel and fell to the Babylonians (Jer. 52:1-16). Jerusalem was destroyed, including the temple and the wall, and only the poorest of the people were left in the land. It would be seventy years before God would restore the people to their land (Jer. 25:8-11). There were actually three groups that returned – one under Zerubbabel which rebuilt the temple, a group with Ezra (whose charge was to restore the law of Moses), and a group with Nehemiah who rebuilt the walls of the city. The story of Ezra and Nehemiah takes place over a hundred years – from when Cyrus gives the Jews permission to go home and rebuild their temple until Nehemiah is in his second term as governor of Judah. Ezra starts with the city of Jerusalem in ruins and largely unpopulated, but by the end of Nehemiah the temple, and walls have been built, the worship of Jehovah has been reestablished, and the Jews have separated themselves from the evil nations around them.

II. Things to look for as you study the books:

- A. The three major events of the books (in order)
 1. Rebuild the temple
 - a. The people set up an altar soon after they arrived (Ezra 3:2-3)
 - b. Temple was ignored until it was a disgrace (Hag. 1:4, Zech. 4:9)
 2. Restore the law
 - a. Ezra's purpose (Ezra 7:10)
 - b. Law – something to be respected (“tremble at the command...”) Ezra 10:3
 - c. Law was something that the people needed to understand. Teachers were provided (Neh. 8:7-8)
 3. Rebuild the wall – a study in leadership
 - a. Overcoming difficulties from your supervisor, your own people, and powerful external enemies. Regarding the external enemies Nehemiah faced – historical documents tell us that Sanballat was at some point the governor of Samaria, Gesham was a leader of a powerful group of Arab communities, and Tobiah was probably the governor of Ammon and a member of an influential Jewish family.
 - b. The wall was more than protection from enemies – it represented the separation of the Jews from the rest of the world. Nehemiah uses the wall to defend the Sabbath from violation (Neh. 13:15-22)

B. God's People

1. Only a remnant is saved (Ezra 9:15) – 50,000 return (Ezra 2:64-65)
2. God's love for His people
 - a. God saved His people (Ezra 9:8)
 - b. God's providence in working out the events of the book:
 1. "Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus" (Ezra 1:1)
 2. "Jehovah...hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart..." (Ezra 7:27)
 3. God stirred up the spirit of those who volunteered to go (Ezra 1:5)
 4. God put into Nehemiah's heart to rebuild the wall (Neh. 2:12)

C. Prayer

1. Content of prayer (Ezra 9, Neh. 9)
2. Frequency of prayer
3. Length of prayer (Compare Neh. 9 with Neh. 2:4-5)
4. Occasion of prayer

III. Outline of Ezra (Adapted from Guthrie)

1. 1:1-2:70 – Return from Exile
2. 3:1-4:5 – The work of restoration begins
3. 4:6-23 – List of opposition to Jewish building programs
4. 4:24-6:22 – The temple is completed (Approximately a 60 year gap)
5. 7:1-8:36 – Ezra's return to Jerusalem
6. 9:1-10:44 – The problem of mixed marriages

IV. Outline of Nehemiah (from Guthrie)

1. 1:1-2:11 – Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem
2. 2:12-3:32 – The building of the wall commenced
3. 4:1-7:4 – The wall completed in spite of opposition
4. 7:5-13:3 – Other events during Nehemiah's first term of office
5. 13:4-31 – Nehemiah's second term of office

V. Significant dates to remember

- 721 BC – Israel goes into Assyrian captivity and loses its identity as a nation
- 606 BC – First group of captives taken from Judah to Babylon
- 597 BC – Capture of the city of Jerusalem to Babylon - Second group of captives taken
- 586 BC - Destruction of Jerusalem - Third group of captives taken
- 539 BC – Babylon falls to the Medes and Persians
- 536 BC – First group of captives returns under Zerubbabel
- 520-516 BC – The temple is rebuilt
- 458 BC – A second group of captives returns under Ezra
- 444 BC – The wall around Jerusalem is rebuilt by Nehemiah

VI. Persian kings during the period of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah

1. Cyrus (559-530 BC) – Founder of the Persian Empire. In 539 BC Babylon fell to him without a struggle. His policy included returning people and their gods back to their homelands, thus fulfilling Isaiah 44:28, 45:1ff. The “Cyrus Cylinder”, a record of some of the Persian policies reads as follows:

“I returned to these sacred cities..., the sanctuaries of which have been in ruins for a long time, the images which (used) to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I (also) gathered all their (former) inhabitants and returned (to them) their habitations...

May all the gods whom I have resettled in their sacred cities ask daily Bel and Nebo for a long life for me..., to Marduk, my lord, may they say this: “Cyrus, the king who worships you, and Cambyses, his son...”

2. Cambyses (530-522 BC)
3. Darius I (522-486 BC) – The first several years of his reign, he spent putting down revolts. This was 520, when Haggai and Zechariah began prophesying, and in which year the work on the temple was resumed (see Ezra 5 and 6). The Persian empire reached the height of its power during the reign of Darius.
4. Xerxes I (also called Ahasuerus 486-465 BC) – He is mentioned in passing in Ezra 4:6. He was the king of Persia during the time of Esther.
5. Artaxerxes I (465-424 BC) – Persian king whose reign encompasses Ezra 7 to the end of the book and the entire book of Nehemiah. In the early years of his reign, there was a revolt in Egypt, so Ezra’s trip to nearby Judah in 458 BC could have been politically useful to him. Several years later (449 BC) his own governor of Syria revolted. The king’s sensitivity to unrest in the region can be seen in his response to accusations that the Jews might also try to revolt (Ezra 4:7ff). He recognized a man he could trust, however, in Nehemiah and appointed him governor of Judah in 445.
6. Xerxes II (424-423 BC)
7. Darius II (423-404 BC) – Last Persian king mentioned by Nehemiah (Neh. 12:22)

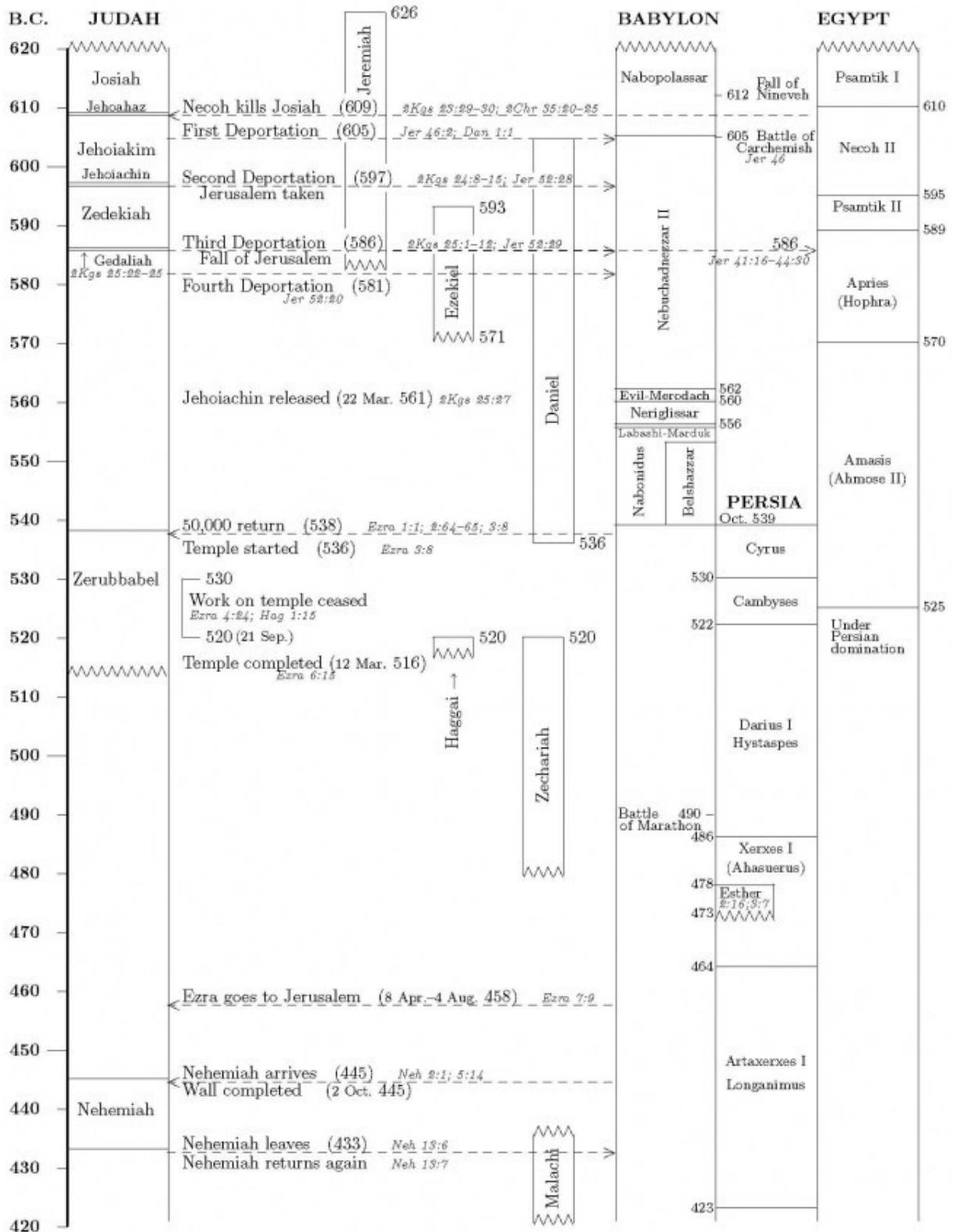
VII. Things that you should be able to do when you have completed this class:

1. Be able to give dates to the events in item V.
2. Be able to list the three major events in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.
3. Be able to discuss the leadership styles of Ezra and Nehemiah and what characterizes an effective leader.
4. Be able to list the kings of the Persian empire and their accomplishments.

VIII. Bibliography

1. Ezra & Nehemiah, An Introduction and Commentary by Derek Kidner (Part of the Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)
2. The New Bible Commentary, Revised – Ezra and Nehemiah by D.Guthrie, J.Motyer, A.Stibbs, D.Wiseman
3. Hand Me Another Brick by Charles Swindoll

The Times of the Captivity



EZRA and NEHEMIAH

Ezra 1-2, Daniel 9:1-19, II Chronicles 36:22-23

Lesson 1 – October 7, 2015

Main themes: The promised restoration required spiritual preparation, as seen in Daniel 9. We are introduced to two VERY important men, Joshua and Zerubbabel. We also meet Cyrus, God's anointed one.

1. In what time frame do these chapters take place?
2. What role did Daniel's prayer play in the return?
3. List some of the accomplishments of Cyrus (see introduction). How does Isaiah describe his rise to power and his purpose (see Isaiah 45:1-13, especially v.4, 13)? How is he a messiah?
4. What mission does Cyrus give the group returning to Judah?
5. What is a Jew? What is an Israelite? What is a Hebrew? How are they different?
6. To what extent did Cyrus help the Jews returning to their land? Did all of the Jews return to Judah?
7. List two ways that a Jew was characterized in chapter 2 (see vs. 3-19 and 21-35). Why would the text list those who couldn't give their qualifications as a Jew (2:59-60)?
8. What happened to the priests who could not prove their genealogy (2:61-63)? How important was it for a man to know he was descended from Aaron for his service in the priesthood? (see Numbers 16:40 and the context).
9. How many people returned in this first group?
10. Describe the giving that the leaders did. Why do this in light of the Persian grant?

EZRA and NEHEMIAH

Ezra 3:1-4:5, Zechariah 3-4

Lesson 2 – October 14, 2015

Main themes: The temple building begins. We can see a parallel in Zerubbabel's work and Jesus' work building a temple.

1. Why did the people build the altar before they ordered material for the temple? (see Ex. 29:43). Do you think the people had enough faith in God?
2. How many of the people took part in setting up the altar and observing the feasts of tabernacles, and making the required offerings?
3. Why would the people go to Sidon and Tyre for cedar trees? Who else in Biblical history had gone to one of these cities for similar materials (see II Chron. 2:3)?
4. Where did the money for the purchase of the materials for the temple come from?
5. Is there any significance of the work on the temple starting in the second month of the year (see I Kings 6:1)?
6. How many of the people came out for the work?
7. Compare what happens in Ezra 3:10-11 with the ceremony for the dedication of the first temple in II Chron. 5:11-13. Considering the circumstances of the dedication of the foundation of the temple, do you think an attitude of pride or of humility characterized the people on this occasion?
8. Why would there be the mixed reaction of 3:11-13 to the laying of the foundation. What might some of the feelings of the people be?
9. Read II Kings 17:24-33 and describe the heritage of the people who now offered to help Zerubbabel build the temple. How does this passage characterize their religion?
10. Was Zerubbabel wrong in refusing the offer of help from the surrounding people? Why are they characterized as "adversaries" in Ezra 4:1? What danger did they pose to the people?
11. What was the response of the adversaries to Zerubbabel's rebuff? How successful were the adversaries in their efforts (see 4:24)?

EZRA and NEHEMIAH

Ezra 4:6-5:17, Haggai 1-3

Lesson 3 – October 21, 2015

Main themes: Opposition by the Samaritans and others stalls the temple. Ezra 4:6-23 recounts some of the opposition the Jews faced in their building program. These verses should be considered as parenthetical remarks between 4:5 and 4:24.

1. Are the examples of the problems the Jews faced in 4:6-23 given as a reason why the house of God had not been built? Why or why not?
2. Why might this section of scripture be included in the record?
3. How many letters are referred to as having been written by the enemies of the Jews in 4:6-23?
4. Describe the contents of the letter Rehum and Shimshai wrote. What do they say the Jews may do if they complete their building program?
5. In 4:12 the walls and foundations are discussed. Is this speaking about the temple?
6. How did the king react to Rehum and Shimshai's letter? Were the dangers they mentioned to the king real? Look at the history of Artaxerxes (see lesson 1). Why might he react they way he did?
7. According to Ezra, what prompted the continuation of the work on the temple?
8. What questions did Tattenai have for the Jews? Why would he want this information? Was the temple the only thing they were working on?
9. From Tattenai's letter, how did the Jews respond to his questions?
10. How are the Samaritans here paralleled in the world today?

EZRA and NEHEMIAH

Ezra 6

Lesson 4 – October 28, 2015

Main themes: Darius decrees that the building recommence. The temple is finished and the Passover is celebrated at the temple.

1. Describe the decree of Cyrus that Darius found. Where was it found? Could Darius have overruled this decree (see Esther 1:19, 8:8, Daniel 6:8)?
2. What was the answer to Tattenai's concerns about the "great stones and timber" (5:8) being used in the temple?
3. What were Darius' instructions to Tattenai? Where would the money come from to do the king's will (6:8)?
4. Do you think the Jews had any input in drafting the king's answer (see 6:9)? Was the king right in saying that "God hath caused his name to dwell there" (6:12)? (see I Kings 8:27-29).
5. What was the punishment for not following King Darius' instructions?
6. How did Tattenai respond to Darius' instructions?
7. How important was the role of Haggai and Zechariah in rebuilding the temple?
8. How long did it take to finish the temple? Describe what the life of the Jews was like during this period (see Hag. 1:6-11, Zech. 4:10, Ezra 5:3).
9. Compare the offering at the dedication of the first temple with the offering at the dedication of the second temple (I Kings 8:63).
10. Who ate the Passover feast? Compare this with 4:1-3. Who are the only ones excluded from fellowship with God's people?

EZRA and NEHEMIAH

Ezra 7-8

Lesson 5 – November 4, 2015

Main themes: Ezra comes decades after the temple is dedicated. His divine and imperial purpose is to restore the Law of Moses

1. How many years have passed between the end of chapter 5 and the “now after these things” of 6:1?
2. How far does the text trace Ezra’s lineage?
3. Look at 7:6 in several translations. How is Ezra described? From 7:10, was this just a job for Ezra?
4. Compare 7:6 with 7:27. Discuss how God’s providence and man’s actions interact to accomplish God’s will. How large a role did God’s providence play in getting these people to Jerusalem (see 7:6, 9, 28, 8:18, 22, 31)?
5. Compare 7:6 with 7:28. How many people did Ezra have to convince to get approval for his mission? Compare 7:6 with Neh. 2:2. Do you think Ezra’s job was easy?
6. 7:7-10 is a brief summary of the expedition that Ezra led. How long did the journey take?
7. Outline the letter that Ezra received from Artaxerxes authorizing his trip:
 - A. v.13 –
 - B. v.14,25 –
 - C. v.15-18 –
 - D. v.19 –
 - E. v.21-23 –
 - F. v.24 –
 - G. v.25ff –
8. What duties did the seven counselors of 7:14 have (see Esther 1:14)?

Lesson 6 – page 2

9. In 7:27-28 Ezra himself speaks. How would you characterize Ezra's attitude in these verses?

Note: In 8:2-14 in every case but one (Joab in v.9) the family names are the same as the people who are listed as returning from Babylon 80 years earlier (2:3-15).

10. What did Ezra discover during the three day wait at the river?

11. Why might he have chosen the men he did to deal with the problem? How detailed were his instructions? How successful was he in achieving his objective?

12. Before the people left the river, what did Ezra proclaim? Why did he proclaim this? Discuss how Ezra's faith was manifested in 8:21-23.

13. What responsibility did Ezra put on the priests? How much is listed?

14. Is there a contradiction between 7:9 and 8:31 on when the journey started? Explain.

15. How does Ezra describe the 1000 mile journey to Jerusalem?

16. After the silver and gold were delivered to the temple, what did the people do?

EZRA and NEHEMIAH

Ezra 9-10

Lesson 6 – November 11, 2015

Main themes: The people have intermarried contrary to the Law. Ezra's prayer for God's forgiveness. The people repent.

1. Compare Ezra 9:1-2 with Exodus 34:11-16. Should we be surprised at the results reported in Ezra? What dangers did this situation present to the nation? What lessons can be learned today from this?
2. Who brought the news to Ezra? Who did these men say were largely responsible for this? Why do you think they realized the problem at this time (see 7:10, 7:25)?
3. How did Ezra react to the situation? Compare this to how Nehemiah reacted to a similar situation (see Neh. 13:23-25).
4. In Ezra's prayer in 9:5-15, list examples of the following:
 - a. Suffering of God's people and why they suffered
 - b. God's Mercy
 - c. Guilt of God's people
5. In his prayer, does Ezra offer any reason for the people's sin?
6. How do the people react to Ezra's prayer? What did they propose to Ezra? How effective was Ezra's leadership in getting the people to do what was right? How would you characterize Ezra's leadership (see 7:10)?
7. What did Ezra do when he arose from prayer? Where did he get the authority to issue the decree of 10:7-8 (see 7:26)? Who are the "they" of 10:7?
8. How did the people respond to the decree? (Note verse 9 – This is late in the year and probably equivalent to our December). What were the conditions when the people gathered?
9. What did Ezra tell the people to do? How did the people respond? Was everyone in agreement? Was this the right thing to do? (see Deut. 24:1)
10. How long did it take Ezra and the other leaders to examine this matter in detail? (see 10:16-17). What does this say about the magnitude of the problem? Were the priests less likely to be guilty of this than others?

EZRA and NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah 1:1-2:8

Lesson 7 – November 18, 2015

Main themes: News of the wall and Nehemiah's prayer. Araxerxers sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem.

1. How much time passed between Nehemiah 1:1 and Ezra's trip to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:7)?
2. What was the status of those in Jerusalem? Do you think the report that Jerusalem's walls were broken and the gates burned with fire referred to the Babylonian destruction of the city? If not, what might it refer to? (see Ezra 4:7-23).
3. What was Nehemiah's reaction to the news from Jerusalem? Describe the qualities of a good leader that Nehemiah demonstrates in his reaction and his prayer.
4. Outline Nehemiah's prayer in 1:5-11:
 - a. v. 5 –
 - b. v. 6-7 (note the connection with 'covenant' in verse 5).
 - c. v. 8-10
 - d. v. 11
5. Who is the "this man" of 1:11?
6. Look up 'cupbearer' in a Bible dictionary or encyclopedia and describe his responsibilities. What dangers to a person's spiritual health might a position like this have?
7. What did the king attribute Nehemiah's countenance to? Why might Nehemiah be afraid?
8. Describe Nehemiah's prayer in 2:4. Had he thought about this question before? (note how he responds to the king's questions). Describe the manner in which he makes his request.
9. Did the king's granting Nehemiah's request show a shift in Persian policy? (see Ezra 4:21-22). To what did Nehemiah attribute the granting of his request?

EZRA and NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah 2:9-3:32

Lesson 8 – November 25, 2015

Main Themes: Nehemiah inspects the walls of Jerusalem in person. Building of the walls begins.

1. What did Nehemiah do when he reached the governors beyond the River?
2. Who were Sanballat and Tobiah (see introduction)? How did they react to Nehemiah's presence?
3. What did Nehemiah do when he got to Jerusalem? Look at the map of Nehemiah's journey around the walls of the city. Why might he have gone out at this time to view the walls by himself? What was the condition of the walls?
4. When did Nehemiah finally tell the people about his plan? How did he appeal to them? (2:17-18). How did the people respond?
5. Who opposed Nehemiah in his work? What was their argument? How did Nehemiah respond? Discuss his response in light of the letters he had from the king.
6. Look at your map of the wall of Jerusalem and discuss the order Nehemiah gives for the repair of the gates. (see 3:1, 3:3, 3:6, 3:13, 3:14, 3:15, 3:26, 3:28, 3:32).
7. Compare Ezra 8:33 with Neh. 3:4. What does this say about some of the people who came back with Ezra?
8. Compare Neh. 3:5 with the rest of the chapter. Was the attitude exhibited by some of the people in 3:5 characteristic of all of the people (or even people of the same class – see 3:9, 12)?
9. What is the job Nehemiah has once he reaches Jerusalem? Compare this job with the one he left in Persia. Do you think the skills used in both jobs are the same?

EZRA and NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah 4

Lesson 9 – December 2, 2015

Main Themes: Enemies of Israel create opposition in the building of the walls. The Israelites stand fast in their building.

1. Describe Sanballat's response to the Jews for their rebuilding the wall. What do you think he was trying to accomplish with these actions?
2. What was Nehemiah's response to Sanballat's actions?
3. What effect did this initial opposition have on the building of the wall (4:6)? Why?
4. What groups opposed the Jews? Suggest a reason that they did not attack the Jews building the wall.
5. How did Nehemiah respond to the threat of all of these peoples against him? What lessons are there for us in this?
6. List 5 sources of discouragement that the tribe of Judah mentioned. At what point in the work does this occur?
7. Describe Nehemiah's response to this discouragement – both long term and short term responses. What was the result of his actions?
8. Describe the characteristics of a good leader that Nehemiah exhibits in this chapter.

EZRA and NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah 5-6

Lesson 10 – December 9, 2015

Main Themes: The Israelites have other problems which Nehemiah must deal with for their living in Jerusalem. Even more opposition to the rebuilding arises. We see Nehemiah must faces problems without and within.

1. Read chapters 4, 5, and 6. Describe the different threats to completion of the wall.
 - A. Chapter 4 –

 - B. Chapter 5 –

 - C. Chapter 6 –

2. Describe the problems brought to Nehemiah in 5:1-5 in detail. Was sin involved? (see Deut. 24:10-13, Ex. 22:25, Lev. 25:42). To what means had the people gone to pay their debts? To whom did they owe money? (v. 7).

3. Describe Nehemiah's reaction when he heard the complaint. What did he do? How did the rulers and nobles initially respond? What did Nehemiah ask the rulers and nobles to do? Did they comply with his request?

4. 5:14-18 illustrates what important aspect of leadership? Contrast Nehemiah's behavior in these verses with previous governors. (See I Cor. 9:1-12).

5. How much of the work was completed in 6:1? Why might Sanballat and Geshem propose to meet Nehemiah away from Jerusalem? How did Nehemiah respond?

6. Why might Sanballat and Geshem make this request four times? What approach did they try the fifth time? What do you think they hoped to accomplish with this last request?

EZRA and NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah 7-8

Lesson 11 – December 16, 2015

Main Themes: The walls are finished, the returnees are listed, and Ezra reads the law. We see how people react to the reading of the law.

1. After the walls and gates were complete, what did Nehemiah do?
2. Who was Hananiah? What role did he play earlier in Nehemiah (see 1:2-3)? Why was Hananiah asked to share in leading the city?
3. Why might Nehemiah offer the warning in 7:3? What condition were the homes of Jerusalem in?
4. Compare 7:6ff to Ezra 2. Why did Nehemiah review this history (see 7:5)?
5. What prompted Ezra to read the law? How long did Ezra read from the law? How was it received? Who was Ezra's audience?
6. Did Ezra do all of the reading/teaching? How did Ezra make sure the people understood the message?
7. How did the people react to the reading of the law? Why might they react that way? What did Nehemiah tell them to do? What attitude did the people have when they left the assembly?
8. Who met on the second day? Why might this group been chosen (see Deut. 6:6-9)? What was found?
9. Had the feast of tabernacles been completely forgotten? (see Lev. 23:39-43). Compare Ezra 3:1, 4 with Neh. 8:7.
10. List all of the actions of the people in chapter 8 which showed their attitude toward the word of God.

EZRA and NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah 9-10

Lesson 12 – December 23, 2015

Main Theme: Repentance. The Israelites confess their sins and make the vows to be a new people. They have lost their freedom, but still have hope.

1. How much time elapsed between the end of the feast of tabernacles and the fasting of 9:1 (see Lev. 23:39-43)? Contrast the attitude of the people in 9:1 with their attitude during the feast (see also Neh. 8:10-12). Suggest why there might be a change, in light of Nehemiah's admonition in 8:10.

2. What did the people do on the 24th day of the 7th month? How long did they spend in these activities?

3. Describe the physical surrounding and the condition of the people in Jerusalem at this time (see Neh. 7:4, 5:1-5). In light of that, explain the admonition of 9:15.

4. In two or three sentences, summarize the prayer of 9:6-38.

5. Outline the prayer of 9:6-38:
 - A. 9:6-25 – Several characteristics of God illustrated
 1. 9:6 –

 2. 9:9 –

 3. 9:11 –

 4. 9:12 –

 5. 9:13 –

 6. 9:15 –

 7. 9:17 –

 8. 9:19-21 -

 9. 9:22-25 –

B. 9:26-31 – The people’s reaction and God’s response

1. People’s reaction (9:16, 26, 28)

2. God’s response (9:27-28)

C. 9:32-37 – Effect on God’s People

6. As a result of the confession of sin, what did the people do (9:38)?
7. In broad terms, who took part in the oath? In general terms, what did the oath require of the people?
8. List the specifics that the people agreed to do.
9. Why might the Jews charge themselves to maintain the house of God in light of Ezra 6:8-10?

EZRA and NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah 11-13

Lesson 13 – December 30, 2015

Main Themes: The new residents of Jerusalem are listed. Nehemiah conducts his final reforms.

1. Why might the leaders (princes-Am. Std) dwell in Jerusalem? Who else lived in the city? How was it decided they should live there?

2. Summarize in a few sentences 11:3-35. Why might this list be included in the text?

Note: In 12:25, Nehemiah again speaks in the first person. He last spoke this way in 7:5.

3. What preparations were made to dedicate the wall? Compare with 11:1, 18.

4. Describe the ceremony which Nehemiah conducts in 12:31-39. Compare Psalm 48:12-14. Who led the two groups? What happened after the two companies stood still? How did all of this affect the people?

5. Compare 12:47 with 13:10. Suggest reasons for the change.

6. Is “on that day” in 13:1 the same day that is referred to in 12:44 (see 13:4-6)?

7. How did the people find out that an Ammonite or Moabite should not enter the assembly of God? What did the people do when they learned this?

8. Who was Eliashib (see 3:1)? What had he done for Tobiah? What was Tobiah’s nationality? What kind of influence did Tobiah have in Jerusalem (see 6:17-19)?

9. How did Nehemiah react when he found out what Eliashib had done? Do you think there was any risk to Nehemiah personally or professionally in doing this?

10. Compare 13:10 with 10:39 and suggest a reason for the difference in behavior. Describe the situation Nehemiah faces and how he reacts.

11. Describe the situation in 13:15-18 and compare with Jeremiah 17:21ff and Neh. 10:31. How did Nehemiah deal with this situation?

12. What sin were the people guilty of in 13:23ff? What resulted from this sin? What hazard did this pose to the Jews? Where has this sin occurred before? Describe how Nehemiah dealt with the sin.

13. How would you characterize Nehemiah's leadership style in dealing with problems? What lessons can we learn?