

Nehemiah 1:1-2:9
Nehemiah's Prayer
Lesson 10

Ezra, the priest, had arrived in Jerusalem with the second group of exiles in the 7th year of King Artaxerxes (458 B.C.). Within the first year of his teaching God's Word, the people responded by revealing that many had disobeyed God's Word by inter-marrying with the Canaanites. This confrontation of sin also brought with it repentance and a spiritual renewal among all the exiles.

Setting the Stage - Nehemiah 1:1-4

1. By this time the House of the Lord and the city of Jerusalem had been rebuilt, but the wall around the city still lay in ruins. The story resumes in the 20th year of King Artaxerxes reign (445 B.C.). Using Nehemiah 1:1:
 - Who was writing this next account?

 - Where was his current location?

 - What was his occupation? (See 1:11e)

2. Using Nehemiah 1:2:
 - Who was Hanani?

 - Where had Hanani been?

 - What did Nehemiah question Hanani about?

3. What did Hanani say in response to the question? (vs. 3)

4. How did Nehemiah take this news? (vs. 4)

Nehemiah's Prayer #1 - Nehemiah 1:5-11

5. The study of the book of Nehemiah will reveal that above all else in his life, Nehemiah was a man of prayer. His strength and direction come from spending time alone with the Lord, his God. In this first recorded prayer, how did Nehemiah address the Lord? (vs. 5)

6. What did he emphasize about God? (vs. 5)

7. Nehemiah asked the Lord to be attentive to hear and to see his prayer. Using Nehemiah 1:6a:
 - How did Nehemiah refer to himself?

 - How often did he say he prayed?

 - What was the object of those prayers?

8. After addressing the Lord and acknowledging His holiness, Nehemiah began confessing sin. Whose sin did Nehemiah confess? (vs. 6b)

9. What specifically did he confess? (vs. 7)

10. Nehemiah then asked the Lord to remember. He wanted to remind the Lord, by quoting the Torah (Scriptures), the instruction God gave to Moses prior to Israel's possession of the land. Fill in the blanks below using:
 - vs. 8 If: _____ Then: _____

 - vs. 9 If: _____ Then: _____

11. Nehemiah acknowledged that God had done exactly as He promised; He had redeemed His servants by His strength and His mighty hand. Then he asked the Lord a second time to hear the prayer of His servant. What did Nehemiah reveal about himself in verse 11a?

12. What was his request of the Lord? (vs. 11b)

God's Answer - Nehemiah 2:1-9

13. Nehemiah's official title was "*Cupbearer to the King*". What did that require? (vs. 1a)

14. Turn to the Jewish Calendar at the end of this lesson and determine how long it was from the time Nehemiah heard the news and began to pray (in the month of Kislev) until God gave him the opportunity he had asked for (in the month of Nisan)?

15. Explain, in your own words, how the Lord answered Nehemiah's prayer to "*find favor with the king*". (vs. 1b-2b)

16. Apparently Nehemiah was not aware that he was being less than professional in his duties before the king. What was his first reaction to the king's question? (vs. 2c)

17. But he was required to answer the king's question. How did he answer? (vs. 3)

18. Using the time line at the end of this lesson:

- If Nehemiah's audience with the king took place in 445 B.C., approximately how long had it been since Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed Jerusalem and burned the gates?
- How long had it been since the first exiles returned to Jerusalem?

19. "*The king said to me, 'What is it you want?'*" In Nehemiah's answer we learn how he handled life's problems. What did he do first? vs. 4b)

20. Then what did he do? (vs. 5a)

21. What insight can we learn from Nehemiah through this?

22. Nehemiah used the same language that Esther had when making a request of the king, "*if it pleased the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight.*" Then what did Nehemiah request of the king? (vs. 5)

23. The king and Nehemiah were not alone during this conversation. Who else was with them? (vs. 6a)

24. After making his request known, what did King Artaxerxes ask Nehemiah? (vs. 6b)

25. How did Nehemiah interpret this question? (vs. 6c)

26. Nehemiah was confident, knowing the Lord was answering his prayer, so he asked the king for two letters. To whom were these letters addressed and what were they for? (vs. 7-8a)

27. Why did Nehemiah say the king had granted his request? (vs. 8b)

28. What else did the king do for Nehemiah? (vs. 9)

29. How was this different from Ezra's journey which was also authorized by King Artaxerxes? (Ezra 9:21-23)

Jewish Calendar

Holy	Month	Day	Hebrew	English
1	Nisan 30 days	14 15-21 16	<i>Pesach</i>	Passover Feast of Unleavened Bread First Fruits
2	Lyar 29 days			
3	Sivan 30 days	6	<i>Shavuot</i>	Pentecost
4	Tammuz 29 days	17		Fast for taking of Jerusalem
5	AV 30 days	9	<i>Tisha B" AV</i>	Fast for destruction of the Temple
6	Elul 29 days			
7	Tishri 30 days	1 10 15 22	<i>Rosh Hashanah</i> <i>Yom Kippur</i> <i>Sukkot</i>	New Year Day of Atonement Feast of Tabernacles Solemn Assembly
8	Heshvan 29 or 30 days			
9	Kislev 29 or 30 days	25	<i>Chanukah</i>	Feast of Dedication
10	Tevet 29 days			
11	Shevat 30 days			
12	Adar 29 days (30 in a leap year)	13 14	<i>Ta'ait Esther</i> <i>Purim</i>	Fast of Esther Purim

The Jewish months are based upon the phases of the moon, with an average length of 29 ½ days per month. But, because there is a difference of 11 days between a lunar year (354 days) and a solar year (365 ½ days, the Jewish calendar is based upon a 19-year cycle.

Return to Jerusalem Time Line

Date	Event
Babylonian Empire	
605 B.C.	1 st Deportation including Daniel
597 B.C.	2 nd Deportation including King Jehoiachin & Ezekiel
586 B.C.	Fall of Jerusalem to Babylon Destruction of Solomon's Temple 3 rd Deportation
586 - 583 B.C.	Remnant flees to Egypt w/ Jeremiah & Baruch
Persian Empire	
539/8 B.C.	Babylon overthrown by Cyrus, king of Medo-Persia Daniel in the lion's den
538 B.C.	1 st Exiles return to Jerusalem Altar rebuilt Reconstruction begins on the Temple
530 B.C.	Harassment by Samaritans halts work on the Temple
522 B.C.	Darius the Great becomes king of Persia
520 B.C.	Haggai & Zechariah prophesy Temple work resumed
516 B.C.	2 nd Temple is completed This ends the 70 years from exile
486 B.C.	Xerxes becomes king of Persia
479 B.C.	Esther becomes queen
474 B.C.	Haman's decree to destroy the Jews is issued
473 B.C.	1 st Feast of Purim celebration
458 B.C.	Ezra return to Jerusalem
445 B.C.	Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem
433 B.C.	Nehemiah returns to Babylon
432 B.C.	Nehemiah goes back to Jerusalem
430 B.C.	Malachi prophesies