

VIA EMMAUS:

A CHRIST-CENTERED WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE

Nehemiah: Rebuilding God's City and Reforming God's People (18)

THE PATTERN OF SALVATION IN EZRA-NEHEMIAH

- (1) God appoints deliverers
Persian Kings = Cyrus; Darius; Artaxerxes
Covenant Restorers = Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah
- (2) God leads his people on an exodus into his presence
From Babylon to Jerusalem
- (3) Temple-building and Law-giving follow entrance into his presence
This pattern is called Covenant Renewal (Deut 29-30; Josh 24; 2 Ki 23 / 2 Ch 34-35; Ezra-Nehemiah)
This is present in the NT as well – New Covenant where Jesus is the Temple Builder

NEHEMIAH NON-SENSE: WRONG WAYS TO INTERPRET NEHEMIAH

- (1) Rebuilding the Gates of Your Life (Allegory)
- (2) Life Lessons from Nehemiah (Moralistic)
- (3) Spiritual Leadership Manual (Extra-Textual Principles) -- *There is value here, but it is secondary*

EZRA-NEHEMIAH: RESTORATION

- (1) God's Worship was Reestablishment; Altar was reconstructed
- (2) God's Law was Reinstated
- (3) God's City Wall was Rebuilt
- (4) God's People Repent & Rejoice (cf. Neh 8-9)
Rule + People + Place
The restoration is concentric & centrifugal → Like the Garden, the Church, the New Creation

NEHEMIAH: BUILDING TWO WALLS

- (1) Physical Walls – Rebuilding Jerusalem
- (2) Spiritual Wall – Restoring Spiritual Jerusalem / Restoring the Covenant People of God
The goal is to mark out spiritually, ethically, and physically from the nations

Ezra – chronologically longer, focuses on Israel's initial return, rebuilding temple, and Ezra's reforms

- 586** Judah exported to Babylon (**2 Chronicles 36:17-21**)
- 539** Cyrus captures Babylon (**Dan 5:30-31**)
- 537** Jewish exiles return to Jerusalem (**1:11**) and altar rebuilt (**3:1-2**)
- 516** Temple building completed (**6:15**)
Silent Period
- 458** Men assemble in Jerusalem (**10:9**) – *Investigate covenant-breaking marriages*

Nehemiah – shorter, focuses its attention on 6 months when Nehemiah leads wall reconstruction

- 445** Nehemiah receives a report of Jerusalem's need and returns to Jerusalem (**1:1-3**)
Nehemiah before Artaxerxes (**2:1**)
Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem to inspect walls (**2:11**)
Wall is finished (**6:15**)
People of Israel worship – gather (**7:73-8:1**); Feast of Booths (**8:14**); Fast & Confess (**9:1**)
- 433** Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem (**5:14; 13:6**)

RETURN TO JERUSALEM (Nehemiah 1-2)

Neh 1 Nehemiah in Persia – *wept & prayed at the news of Jerusalem’s condition (v. 4-9)*
Prayer is filled with God’s promises and petitions from God’s word

Neh 2 Nehemiah in Jerusalem
Artaxerxes’ favor (v.1-8), Nehemiah returns to build (v. 9-16); Nehemiah leads by faith (v. 17-20)

REBUILDING THE CITY WALL (Nehemiah 3-7)

Neh 3 Construction – all kinds of people (3:6-12); near their homes (3:28); led by priest (3:1, 17, 22, 28)

Neh 4 Opposition – Mocking (4:2-3); Military Threat (4:7-8); Invitation to Desert (4:12)
Intercession – Imprecatory Prayer (4:4-5); Intercessory Petition (4:9) – *God gives the victory (4:15)*
Action – Determination (4:6); Strategy (4:13-14); Prayer + Perspiration (4:15-23)

Neh 5 Justice – *Nehemiah protected the Jews who sold themselves into slavery*
Generosity – *Nehemiah did not take to himself large provisions or land – He shared his wealth*

Neh 6 Distraction – “Come let us meet together...” (6:2) + Sanballat & Tobiah hired a false prophet (6:10-14)
Perseverance – “I am doing a great work...” (6:3) + “Should such a man as I run away?” (6:12)
Nehemiah’s success is greatly attributed to his dependence on God in prayer (5:19; 6:9, 14)
Prayer is a response to God’s work for his people -- 2:7-10; 6:15-16

Neh 7 *The Temple Assembly is initiated by YHWH – Same list as in Ezra 2*
Emphasis is on the priesthood – 7:39, 43, 46, 60, 73
God’s People in God’s Place Worshiping In God’s Presence... According to God’s Rule

READING THE LAW AND COVENANT RENEWAL (Nehemiah 8-10)

Neh 8 Reading the Law

Logistics All the people (v. 1), all ages (v. 2, 3), all morning (v. 3)
People sat under the word (v. 5), plurality of leader/teachers (v. 4, 7-8)
Method ‘Read the Law’ (v. 2-5), ‘...clearly (i.e. w/ interpretation)’ (v. 6), ‘...gave the sense’ (v.8)
Response Worship (v. 7), Weeping & Joy (v. 9-12), Celebrated Exodus w/ Feast of Booths (v. 13ff)
The Word of God is Powerful & Sufficient to Transform God’s People

Neh 9 Repentance & Redemptive History

Highlights God’s Sovereign Election of Israel (v. 6-8) & Glorious Salvation (v. 9-15)
Recounts Israel’s Innumerable Sins (v. 16-17, 26, 28a,
Demonstrates God’s Unfailing Love (v. 17b, 19-25, 27, 28b, 31)
Confession grounded in God’s covenant faithfulness and mercy (v. 31-38), covenant pledge (v. 38)

Neh 10 Renewing the Covenant

List of names – *Nehemiah, the Priests, and the Chiefs (v. 1-27)*
Obligations – *oath unto the law (v. 29), separation from nations (v. 30-31), Temple service (v. 32-39)*
Origin of Second Temple Judaism – People, Place, Rule → ESTABLISHES A SPIRITUAL WALL

REINFORCING REFORMATION (Nehemiah 11-13)

Neh 11 Census Israel – *focusing on the leaders, chiefs, priests, Levites, and gatekeepers (People)*

Neh 12 Service of Worship – *Priests & Levites counted (v. 1-26), Wall dedicated & Worship offered (v. 27-47)*
Great Continuity with David and God’s Earlier Covenants with Israel (v. 45-47)

Neh 13 Nehemiah’s Cleanse (v. 30-31) – *Separate from Ammon/Moab (v. 1-3), Zeal for God’s House (v. 4-9),*
Confronts Tithing (v. 10-14), Sabbath-breaking (v. 15-22), Idolatrous Marriages (v. 23-29)