

Rebuild #1

A passion for the Kingdom of God

(*Nehemiah 1:1-4*)



Introduction

Nehemiah is historical narrative, and some of it memoir (probably from his journal!). It tells the story of Judah's (the Southern Kingdom's) return from Exile (**2 Chronicles 36:11-21**), as was prophesied (cf. **Isaiah 2:1-5; 44:24-28**).

722 BC: Northern Kingdom of Israel taken into exile by the Assyrians; ceases to exist.

597/ 587 BC: Southern Kingdom of Judah taken into Exile by the Babylonians.

537-515 BC: First wave of exiles returned from Babylon (Ezra 1-6) (Initial reform)

458-433 BC: Succeeding waves of Exiles return from Babylon with Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 7 - Nehemiah 13) ("present day")

The return of the Exiles is often described in Exodus language i.e. a second Exodus. God was rescuing his people again!

The book of **Ezra** is concerned about rebuilding the temple.

The book of **Nehemiah** is concerned about rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem.

God's people went into Exile because of God's judgment for breaking the Old Covenant. Could the Old Covenant be restored? Would the Kingdom of God finally dawn?! Nehemiah goes faithfully to work to do what he can for the sake of God's Kingdom.

However, the book of Nehemiah ends with disappointment (cf. **Nehemiah:9:36**, Ch. 13!) and prepares the way for Jesus and the New Covenant.

Jesus came to end the spiritual exile people from all around the world! Jesus came to fulfill all God's promises. All God's promises will finally be experienced in full when Jesus returns as King to bring in the New Heavens and New Earth (Renewed Universe).

In the meantime, we (like Nehemiah) are called to be faithful workers for God's Kingdom.



Sermon points

1. Nehemiah's circumstances
2. Nehemiah's priority
3. Nehemiah's God



Discussion starter

How bothered are you about the life, growth and health of your church?



From the Bible

1. What does Hanani say about Jerusalem and its people?
2. How does Nehemiah respond?
3. Why do you think he feels this way?



Think it through

1. How does Nehemiah point us to Jesus? (cf. Philippians 2:6-7)
2. The church is the local, visible expression of God's Kingdom. Like Nehemiah, we should be concerned for the life, growth and health of the church. If Jesus loved his church (cf. Ephesians 5:25), so should his people. How are you concerned for and loving your church?
3. Where is our true home, as Christians? (cf. Hebrews 12:22-24)



Pray

One of the first things Nehemiah did was pray (v4).

Spend some time in prayer

- Thank God for who He is
- Pray for your church
- Ask God to show you where you can use your gifts and abilities, like Nehemiah, for the good of God's people
- Ask God to speak to you through the book of Nehemiah