

This week we will study about how God sent Erza and Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem. This brings us to the end of the Old Testament.



Torchlight

"Amidst great discouragement, Nehemiah made God his trust, his sure defence. ...However craftily the plots of Satan and his agents may be laid, God can detect them, and bring to nought all their counsels. The response of faith today will be the response made by Nehemiah, 'Our God shall fight for us;' for God is in the work, and no man can prevent is ultimate success."
– Prophets and Kings p. 645

Rebuilding Jerusalem



SUNDAY

LET'S PRAY Dear Heavenly Father, I am so grateful for Bible prophecy. What You say will happen does come to pass. You are awesome. In Jesus' name I thank You. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE - ROMANS 8:3

“If God is for us, who can be against us?”

THERE'S **POWER** IN THE WORD!

LET'S READ:

Ezra 7:6, 10–28

KEY TEXT: Ezra 7:27–28

“Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem, and has extended mercy to me before the king and his counselors, and before all the king's mighty princes. So I was encouraged, as the hand of the Lord my God was upon me; and I gathered leading men of Israel to go up with me.”

LET'S THINK ABOUT THIS

Today we meet a new person, Ezra, a priest and scribe. He had a close relationship with God and knew the writings of Moses very well. He worked tirelessly to revive the Jews' interest in the holy writings. He was also a friend of King Artaxerxes of Persia.

Zerubbabel had returned to Jerusalem nearly 70 years before, under Cyrus' decree. Now, Artaxerxes, the son of Ahasuerus, made a new decree allowing Ezra to return to Jerusalem. This decree marked the beginning of the 2300 day (years) prophecy (Daniel 8:14), plus the 70 weeks prophecy concerning Jesus' work on earth (Daniel 9:25).

This was the third, and final, decree for the restoration of Jerusalem. It allowed the Jews to govern themselves, authority to worship God and teach His laws, and much more. In short, it gave back religious and civil rights to the Jews. The king would also pay for any other temple expenses out of his own money. God had really touched the king's heart!

GOD AND THE KING'S DECREE

King Artaxerxes must have known a lot about the God of the Jews – the true God – maybe Esther, his step mother, taught him. He believed that this God was real and was the God of both Jerusalem and heaven. He also knew that Ezra was a priest and scribe of God.

Artaxerxes' decree mentioned God, and things to do with Him, many times. Look through the decree in today's verses and find out how many times he mentioned the following words.

God	<input type="text"/>
Jerusalem	<input type="text"/>
Heaven	<input type="text"/>
Law(s)	<input type="text"/>
House (God's temple)	<input type="text"/>
Offer/offering/offered	<input type="text"/>





MONDAY

LET'S PRAY Father in heaven, thank You for the promises in the Bible that give me encouragement and hope. In Jesus' precious name I pray, Amen.

MEMORY VERSE - ROMANS 8:3

"If _____ is for us, who can be against us?"

THERE'S POWER IN THE WORD!

LET'S READ:

Ezra 8:21–23, 31; 7:8–9; 9:1–5; 10–12

KEY TEXT: Ezra 8:23

"So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer."

LET'S THINK ABOUT THIS

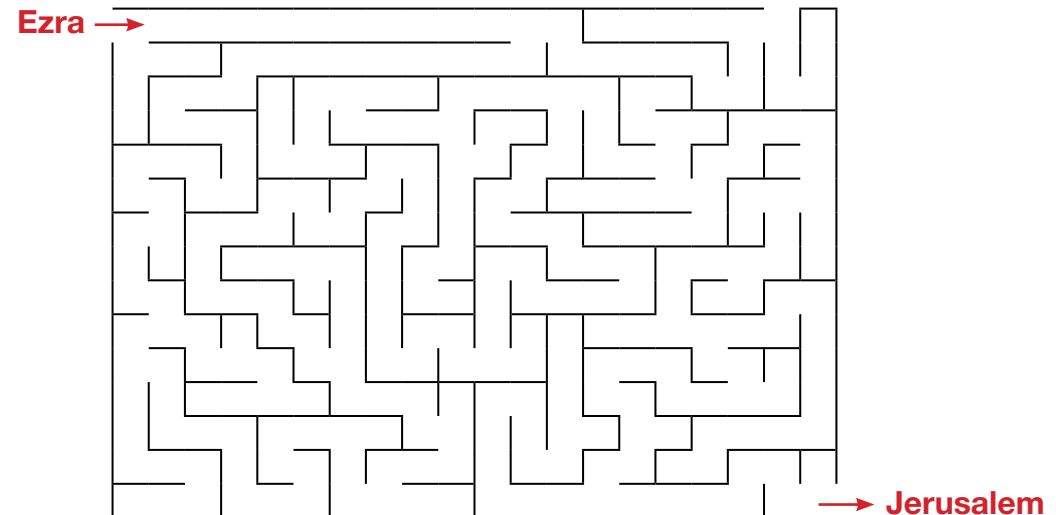
Before leaving for Jerusalem, Ezra encouraged other Jews to return with him. They had to travel slowly as they had their children, cattle and possessions with them, along with gold and silver for the temple. There would be robbers and other dangers along the way and they had no soldiers to escort them, as Ezra had told the king that God would look after them.


So, they fasted and prayed for God to protect them, and the treasures they carried, on the long and dangerous journey ahead. God answered their prayers. Four months after they left Persia they arrived safely in Jerusalem with everything they had taken with them.

However, many of those who had returned with Zerubbabel, around 70 years before, were now dead. Their children and grandchildren had married non-Jews who lived nearby. This was a great sin, one that had led them to turn from God and go into Babylonian captivity. Through Ezra's faithfulness to God, he brought repentance, spiritual reform and revival to Jerusalem.

THE LONG JOURNEY HOME

Help Ezra and his friends find their way from Persia to Jerusalem.





TUESDAY

LET'S PRAY Dear Father, I want to be a shining light that influences others to love Jesus. Please give me a loving heart like Yours.
I ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

MEMORY VERSE - ROMANS 8:3

“If _____ is _____, who can be against us?”

THERE'S **POWER** IN THE WORD!

LET'S READ:

Nehemiah 1:1–11

KEY TEXT: Nehemiah 1:4

“So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.”

LET'S THINK ABOUT THIS

We now turn to the book of Nehemiah. It begins 13 years after Ezra went to Jerusalem. Nehemiah was cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, a very important position at the palace, given only to a very trustworthy person who was close to the king. The cupbearer needed to have great courage as it was his job to make sure that no one was trying to kill the king through his food or drink. Often he would have to taste it first to make sure it was not poisoned. He also loved God very much and was a man of prayer. You will find his prayers all through his book. We should be people of prayer as well.

When men came to Persia from Jerusalem they told Nehemiah that the people in Jerusalem were in great distress, the city walls were not rebuilt, the burned gates not replaced. Nehemiah was shocked and wept at this news. He fasted for a number of days, weeping, and praying for forgiveness, direction and help from God for him and his people.

A WORK OUT

Work out and match the various job descriptions

Tastes food and drink

A Scribe

Writing

A Prophet

Temple services

A Governor

Representative

A Cupbearer

Inspired teacher

A Priest





WEDNESDAY

LET'S PRAY Dear Lord, thank you that I can call out to You at any time, in any situation. You have promised to hear and answer me. Help me to trust you like Nehemiah did. In Jesus' name, Amen.

MEMORY VERSE - ROMANS 8:3

"If _____ is _____, _____ be against us?"

THERE'S **POWER** IN THE WORD!

LET'S READ:

Nehemiah 2:4

KEY TEXT: Nehemiah 2:4

"Then the king said to me, 'What do you request?' So I prayed to the God of heaven."

LET'S THINK ABOUT THIS

One day, the king saw Nehemiah's sadness and asked what was wrong. It was dangerous to be sad before the king. Nehemiah became "dreadfully afraid", then told the king about the terrible situation in Jerusalem. The king asked what he wanted done about it. Nehemiah quickly prayed to God for help. He then requested leave to go to Jerusalem to complete the wall. The king granted his request, made him governor, and gave him all the things he asked for. God certainly answered Nehemiah's prayer. He knew God was leading him and that God would use him to complete the work.

We learn from Nehemiah's example that we can turn to God in prayer at any time, any place, when we need God's help or advice, or just to thank Him and talk with Him. He rejoices when we do that. It shows we believe and trust Him and want to know Him. He has promised to hear and answer us.

TO PRAY OR NOT TO PRAY — THAT IS THE QUESTION

Talking to God each day is very important. The devil knows that we will lose our relationship with God if we neglect to pray. There are many examples of prayer in the Bible. Look up the verses below to see who prayed the following words. Write the name in the box beside the verse.

Genesis 32:11 "Tell me Your name, I pray."

Numbers 12:13 "Please heal her, O God, I pray!"

Judges 6:39 "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more:..."

Judges 16:28 "O Lord God, remember me, I pray!..."

2 Kings 6:17 "Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see."

Matthew 26:39 "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me;..."

Luke 18:11 "God, I thank You that I am not like other men..."

Acts 10:31 "and said, '_____, your prayer has been heard,..."





THURSDAY

LET'S PRAY Father in heaven, thank You for looking after us when people try to hurt us. Help me to encourage others with kindness when they are being hurt. In Jesus' name, Amen.

MEMORY VERSE - ROMANS 8:3

"If _____ is _____, _____ be _____ us?"

THERE'S **POWER** IN THE WORD!

LET'S READ:

Nehemiah 2:11–20

KEY TEXT: Nehemiah 2:18

"And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me. So they said, 'Let us rise up and build.' Then they set their hands to this good work."

LET'S THINK ABOUT THIS

When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem he did nothing for a couple of days. The enemies of the Jews were watching every move. Then, one night, while everyone slept, he inspected every inch of the broken walls and gates. Then he knew what to do. In the morning he gathered the priests and officials together, telling them of his mission and how God had opened the way for him to be there. He encouraged them to work, despite their enemies, and almost everyone chose to join him.

Each family was given part of the wall to build. Their enemies worked hard to cause discouragement (verses 10, 19) but the people worked hard, filling in all the gaps, until the wall was half its required height. Then, in chapter 4, the enemies threatened to come and kill them. So, half the workers built the wall while the other half held weapons to protect them. They also wore their day clothes to bed so they were always ready to fight. This is how they had to work while rebuilding the wall.

GOD'S PROMISE TO US—IT'S BETTER THAN MONEY IN...

A	P	V	L	E	O	N	I	H	T	I	D	M	A	S	W	E	G	L	N
B	Here is another Bible verse game for you to complete.																	F	
E	We've hidden a message of encouragement in this puzzle.																	X	
K	To find it, start at the correct letter (which one is it?), then read every second letter, going in a clockwise direction.																	W	
H	Then, go to Nehemiah 2 to find the verse with this message. We can claim this promise whenever we are doing God's work.																	E	
I	" _____																	I	
F	_____ " Nehemiah 2: _____																	F	
D																		L	
O																		A	
R																		L	
D																		D	
S																		P	
O																		H	
N																		R	
G																		U	
T	E	A	H	L	T	C	S	T	U	P	R	W	E	L	P	I	S	K	O



FRIDAY

LET'S PRAY Loving Father, I realise that friends can influence me for good or bad. Please help me to choose my friends wisely. In Jesus' name I ask, Amen.

MEMORY VERSE - ROMANS 8:3

“If _____ is _____, _____ be _____?”

THERE'S **POWER** IN THE WORD!

LET'S READ:

Nehemiah 6:1–14

KEY TEXT: Nehemiah 6:3

“So I sent messengers to them, saying ‘I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?’ ”

LET'S THINK ABOUT THIS

The wall was almost built and the enemies of God's people were very worried. None of their threats had worked to stop Nehemiah. They had to try something different. Maybe they could trap and kill him if they pretended to be his friends. So, they sent a message asking him to meet them in a certain village to talk. Nehemiah knew this was a trap so he refused to go. His work for God was too important.

Sometimes, those who seem to be friends are being used by the enemy to discourage us or give us false advice. Such a man was Shemaiah. Though a Jew, he was a friend of the Jew's enemies. He tried to trick Nehemiah to try to save himself. Once again, Nehemiah was not deceived because he had a close relationship with God.

Sometimes, in life, we need to be careful who we listen to, or have as friends. If we chose badly they will lead us away from God. Let's be faithful and always chose to put God first.

THE ENEMIES COULD NOT PULL DOWN THIS 'WALL OF WORDS'

Find the listed words in the grid and circle them. Write down the remaining letters to reveal Nehemiah's reply to God's enemies. Then in Nehemiah 6 find the verse containing the answer.

I	S	E	C	R	E	T	A	M	M	R	D		
T	O	B	I	A	H	O	I	E	I	E	N	AFRAID	ENEMIES
G	A	S	E	T	A	G	N	S	G	P	M	INFORMER	REPORTED
R	C	E	A	S	E	E	F	S	H	O	E	SANBALLAT	TOBIAH
M	E	H	S	E	G	A	O	E	A	R	L	AGAINST	GATES
T	A	F	R	A	I	D	R	N	I	T	A	JERUSALEM	REPROACH
W	O	R	K	S	O	T	M	G	A	E	S	SECRET	WALL
H	S	E	I	M	E	N	E	M	D	U	CEASE	GESHEM	
A	L	L	A	W	T	I	R	R	E	C	R	MESSENGRS	RUMORS
A	S	R	O	M	U	R	N	S	H	N	E	SHEMAIAH	
R	E	P	R	O	A	C	H	O	S	T	J		
C	S	A	N	B	A	L	L	A	T	O	M		
E	D	T	S	N	I	A	G	A	O	W	N		

“Wall of words” answer: _____



SABBATH

LET'S PRAY Dear Father, Help me to be faithful to You at all times, and not to go astray seeking the things of the world. I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

MEMORY VERSE - ROMANS 8:3

“ _____ , _____
 _____ ?”

THERE'S POWER IN THE WORD!

LET'S READ:

Nehemiah 6:15-16; 7:1-2; 12:27-30, 43

KEY TEXT: Nehemiah 6:15

“So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days.”

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

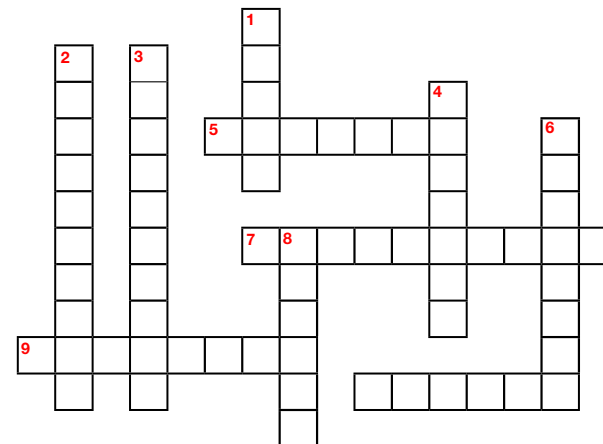
At last the wall was finished and the gates hung. After over 140 years of broken walls Jerusalem was once again protected. Amazingly, the walls were rebuilt in only 52 days and their enemies saw that God had done this. Now, it was time for all the Jews in the land to celebrate and sing praises to God. The singers sang, musicians played, and thanksgiving sacrifices were offered to God. The sound of celebration could be heard a long way from the city.

After being governor for 12 years, and working with Ezra to teach the people the word of God, Nehemiah went back to Persia for a time. When he returned to Jerusalem he found that, while he was away, many Jews had returned to evil – marrying idolaters, buying and selling on Sabbath, and other sinful practices. He helped the faithful priests and officials lead the people back to obedience to God.

Apart from the prophet Malachi, God gave no more messages for four hundred years. Then, God became a human being and a new story began.

FROM JERUSALEM TO BABYLON – AND BACK AGAIN!

What an amazing journey we have been on this quarter! We have met so many historical people through the Bible, and have come to the end of the Old Testament as well. It is time to do some revision by completing the crossword. How much do you remember without looking up the texts?



ACROSS:

1. Nehemiah's job. Neh 1:11
6. What the 3 young men were thrown into. Dan 3:2
7. What Daniel and his friends wanted to eat. Dan 1:12
9. Who predicted the 70 year captivity? Dan 9:2

DOWN:

1. The king who fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecy. Ezra 1:1
2. Who wrote a decree to Ezra? Ezra 7:12
3. Who took the first group back to Jerusalem? Ezra 2:2
4. The third beast of Daniel's first vision? Dan 7:6
5. What was the chest made of? Dan 2:32
8. She replaced Vashti as queen. Esth 2:17