

Nehemiah

Summary

Upon hearing the report of his repatriated countrymen languishing within the city of Jerusalem and the city's wall of which was still in a state of disrepair, Nehemiah is determined to come to the aid of his people. After serious fasting and prayer, and with the empowerment of God, Nehemiah oversees the reconstruction of the city wall and orchestrates the revival of God's people living in Jerusalem. Though Nehemiah faced pervasive foreign opposition throughout the course of his work, he persevered to accomplish the task that God had given him.

Author

With much of the book written in the first-person narrative, Nehemiah is recognized as the primary source for most. As Ezra and Nehemiah appear as the single book Ezra in earliest manuscripts, and later separated as 1 Ezra and 2 Ezra, the latter portion is perhaps under the editorial guidance of Ezra.

Date

Written around 445-432 B.C. regarding the historical accounts of the same timeframe.

Primary Characters

Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1-13)

Artaxerxes I (Nehemiah 2, 5, 13)

Tobiah (Nehemiah 2, 4, 6)

Sanballat (Nehemiah 2, 4, 6)

Ezra (Nehemiah 8, 12)

Historical Moments

The Reign of Artaxerxes I of Persia (Nehemiah 1-13)

The Rebuilding of the Wall in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2-6)

Ezra Reads the Law (Nehemiah 8)

Major Theological Themes

There Is Power and Purpose in the Word of God - There is an emphasis on the power of Scripture in the book of Nehemiah. As a leader of the reconstruction process and the remnant, Nehemiah led God's people to love and respect the Scriptures. Nehemiah's love for God was contagious. With passion, Nehemiah led the people of God to deeper faith and faithfulness.

God Desires Obedience - Despite the many instances of opposition, Nehemiah was expected to finish the task that was given to him. Just because God gave him the call to rebuild the wall did not mean that He eliminated every obstacle and hindrance. Sometimes God uses obstacles and hindrances to make us stronger and give us perseverance.

Lessons Learned from Nehemiah

The Importance of Prayer and Fasting - Nehemiah's plans were always preceded by prayer and fasting. Many times we use prayer and fasting as a last resort when we are at the end of our rope, but Nehemiah used prayer and fasting as a preparation for the hard things that he knew were to come. God wants His people to rely on Him for strength and guidance and this can be done through pointed prayer and fasting.

Leadership in the Church - Nehemiah is often recognized for his prowess in leadership and delegation in the midst of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. The task of leading and working towards God's purposes should not be limited to a single individual but should be a collective effort by the entire family of God. It is not simply the lead pastor's duty to do everything; there is an expectation of work and commitment from the entire community of believers.