

BIB104 OT2 Life & Literature of Israel

Unit 5 Devotional Nehemiah

Presented by the



LANCASTER BIBLE COLLEGE
CAPITAL SEMINARY & GRADUATE SCHOOL

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CREATE A DEVOTIONAL – NEHEMIAH

(Ezra and Nehemiah are one book in the Hebrew canon.)

WRITER: Perhaps Ezra

Nehemiah was a layman; Ezra was a priest. In the Book of Ezra, the emphasis is upon the rebuilding of the temple; in the Book of Nehemiah, the emphasis is upon the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. In Ezra, we have the religious aspect of the return; in Nehemiah, we have the political aspect of the return. Ezra is a fine representative of the priest and scribe; Nehemiah is a noble representative of the businessman. Nehemiah had an important office at the court of the powerful Persian king, Artaxerxes, but his heart was with God's people and God's program in Jerusalem. The personal note is the main characteristic of the book.

DATE: Chronologically, this is the last of the historical books. We have come to the end of the line as far as time is concerned. The Old Testament goes no further. The Book of Ezra picks up the thread of the story about 70 years after 2 Chronicles. The 70-year captivity is over and a remnant returns to the land of Israel. The return under Ezra takes place about 50 years after Zerubbabel. Nehemiah returns about 15 years after Ezra. These figures are approximate and are given to show the stages in the history of Israel after the captivity. This enables one to see how the "70 weeks" of Daniel fit into the picture in a normal and reasonable way. The "70 weeks" of Daniel begin with the Book of Nehemiah (not with Ezra) "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks...." The background of the events of Nehemiah is "...the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times" (Daniel 9:25).

Note: The following dates, suggested by Sir Robert Anderson, seem to be a satisfactory solution to the problem of the "70 weeks" of Daniel:

- Decree of Cyrus, 536 B.C. — Ezra 1:1-4
- Decree of Artaxerxes, 445 B.C. (20th year of his reign) — Nehemiah 2:1-8
- The "70 weeks" begin.
- The first "7 weeks" end, 397 B.C. — Malachi. (For details see Sir Robert Anderson's *The Coming Prince*.)

KEY WORD: "So" occurs 32 times. It denotes a man of action and few words. Mark this word in your Bible and notice how this ordinarily unimportant word stands out in this book.

KEY VERSES:

And it came to pass when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven. (Nehemiah 1:4)

And I sent messengers unto 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? (Nehemiah 6:3)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Use any of the above points to create a devotional based on the book of Nehemiah. You may use any format, but the following outline is suggested for your use.

1. Devotional Title
2. Key Verse. Chose one or two verses as you focus verse for the devotional
3. Full Reading. Identify a passage or compilation of verses as the foundation for your devotional. For best results the choose between 6 and 18 contiguous verses. Or, choose a compilation of related verses, again totaling between 6 and 18 total verses.
4. Scripture Insight. In 3 to 6 sentences give the setting or contextual analysis of these Scriptures.
5. Add an Illustration. Create an illustration to explain or illumination the Scriptures you have chosen. Typically, this is a story or experience that clarifies or expounds on the verses. Your illustration should lead to an understating of the verses in today's culture and provide an application of the verse in our lives today, while at the same time remaining true to the meaning and context of the Scripture.
6. To end the devotional, write a short prayer for both understanding and application from the passage.

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