

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan

NEHEMIAH 1

Nehemiah 1

Nehemiah one introduces us to one of the most beloved characters in the older testament, Nehemiah. In the Hebrew divisions of the Old Testament, called the TNK, Ezra and Nehemiah are one book. It is only in the Septuagint version of the Bible that we have them divided into two books. Some believe Nehemiah wrote the book because of the words of Nehemiah 1:1, "These are the words of Nehemiah" it is not likely that Nehemiah wrote the entire book, but rather more likely that Ezra wrote the book, using the words and memoirs of Nehemiah. This is the ancient tradition of the Jewish people from the earliest days.

Ezra was a master scribe. Ezra was a researcher and obviously had access to materials from the priests, Levites, and other scribes in compiling the works of Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah. Nehemiah came on the scene in 444 B.C. approximately fourteen years after Ezra led the second return of the Jews back from Mesopotamia. Nehemiah was one of the most trusted of all the servants of Artaxerxes I Longimanus (464-424 B.C), he was the "cupbearer" see chapter two. Artaxerxes is the same king who had commissioned Ezra to lead the exiles back to Jerusalem.

Chapter one opens with Nehemiah serving the king in the city of Shushan about 150 miles north of what is called today, the Persian Gulf. Someone had just returned from the city of Jerusalem and Nehemiah asked of the welfare of the city and received a bad report. The people were discouraged, and the walls were broken down and had never been repaired since the days of the Babylonians over one hundred and forty years earlier. As reported earlier in Ezra, some of the walls were reported to have begun to be rebuilt, but by firsthand reports that effort had not been successful.

Nehemiah knew as a leader that an ancient city was vulnerable and open to attack without the protection of "walls" and in ancient times, a city without walls is not considered a city at all. Nehemiah was in distress, and it became obvious to all around. This was not good for a cupbearer, who tasted the king's food and wine. Nehemiah was in a great dilemma.

Prayer and Action Steps

Like Nehemiah we need to discern the urgent and critical needs of our day and act on them. Dear Lord, Give us discernment in these days of darkness.

Date _____ Scripture _____

- *Read the chapter. If you have time, read it again.*
- *Highlight, underline or circle the Key Verse or Verses of the chapter.*
- *Ask yourself these questions as you read through the chapter.*

Is this historical narrative, analogy, metaphor, allegory, or some other element of speech or communicating truth?

What is the Context? Old Testament? New Testament? What is the writer speaking or writing about? To whom is he writing?

Is this a clear passage of Scripture (can only be interpreted one way)? Or could the passage be interpreted legitimately, in two or more ways, according to grammar and context?

Does the passage teach a Biblical Precept; that is, tells you something to be, do or act? _____

Are there principles in this chapter that if followed, would require me to change my attitudes or actions? _____

Does the passage give a Biblical Pattern that is followed here and other places in the Bible? _____

