

What happens when you are in the middle of a project and problems start pressing in on you from all sides? The project itself is challenging and somewhat overwhelming, and there are those from the outside that are intent on making sure you don't accomplish your goal and those on the inside that are bickering with one another and you. People don't understand what you are doing. You get to the point where you wonder who you can trust, what should you do, will it ever stop?

Following God is never easy. There are always enemies trying to thwart your progress, but remember, there is a great reward in finishing the race set before you.

DAY ONE

Nehemiah is a great book for those who are discouraged by what is happening in their lives, their homes, and their nation and long to do something to change it. You can learn from Nehemiah and discover what it takes to thrive in the midst of persecution.

1. Read Nehemiah 3. Let me warn you in advance, there are going to be chapters in Nehemiah that seem a bit dry and you may wonder why it is necessary to read these. There are tidbits of information and gems to be mined even in chapters like this. There is a purpose - a lesson - in this chapter. Let's see what you can find.

Last week you marked various words as you were studying. If you haven't put those on a bookmark (index card), you want to do that now. That way you can continue marking those words as you work your way through the rest of the book of Nehemiah. You will also want to add the following words today.

- a. any references to the *gates* which are important landmarks. There is a map that shows all these locations on page OWS 55. Locate these gates and draw arrows to show the progression from one gate to another. Note north, south, east, and west on your map. A typical attack on Jerusalem was from the north. How does that fit with the text?
- b. Look for other key, repeated words or phrases (they are obvious) and mark each of them in a distinctive way. Put them on your bookmark for later chapters.

2. Did this chapter seem to give a lot of detail for simply communicating that the wall and gates were repaired? Why do think God wanted these details reported? What can you learn from this? Can you apply anything to the tasks that stand before you that need to be accomplished?

3. Nehemiah was one man called of God to do God's work in Jerusalem. The wall needed to be rebuilt. Nehemiah couldn't do it on his own; he needed the help of others. All kinds of people with different backgrounds, different gifts and abilities, all needed to work together to complete this task.
 - a. What about you? Do you see something that needs to be done? Is God stirring your heart to do something for Him? Does it seem overwhelming? Is anything too difficult for God?

 - b. Where did Nehemiah start - a man moved of God to complete an extraordinary task? What did he know that allowed him to be the man he needed to be at that time and in that culture? What do you need to know?

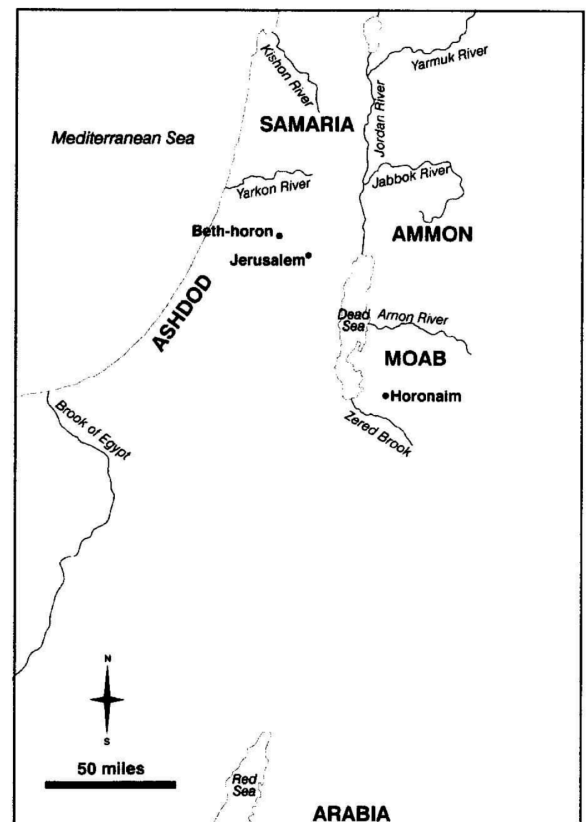
4. Is there anything that you learned about Nehemiah in chapter 3? If so record it on your chart "Nehemiah the Man" in your Observation Worksheets.

5. Record paragraph themes for Nehemiah 3 and then enter a chapter theme on the theme line and the "At A Glance Chart."

DAY TWO

1. Today you are going to explore Nehemiah 4.
 - a. Using your key words bookmark, read through chapter 4 marking the key words you find.
 - b. If you come across other key, repeated words, add them to your bookmark and mark them as well.
 - c. Add what you learn about Nehemiah to the “Nehemiah the Man” list.

2. As you observed Nehemiah 4, did you notice the word *enemies*? Did you mark it along with its synonyms (like Sanballat)? If not, take the time now to write it on your bookmark and mark it in your Observation Worksheets. If there are different enemies, identify each of them with a different color and/or symbol.
 - a. List what you learn about each of the enemies. You can make a list in the margin of your Observation Worksheets. Give their names, origins, character, behaviors, tactics, and anything else you can learn about these people.
 - b. Did the enemies have leaders? What do you learn about these leaders and their methods or tactics?



- c. Look at the map and find where these enemies were coming from. Draw arrows from origins to Jerusalem.

- 1) What do you know about Jerusalem and her enemies? Look back at Nehemiah 2:20.

- 2) Does anything you have learned about Jerusalem and her enemies help you understand turmoil in Jerusalem from the Word of God?

Let's call it a day and tomorrow we will continue to study Nehemiah 4.

DAY THREE

1. Remember to begin each day in prayer asking that God would lead and direct you into truth. Ask God to show you how He wants you to handle conflict and opposition that comes your way as you try to serve Him.

2. Read Nehemiah 4 aloud. Remember that this helps you to retain information better because you are interacting with the Scripture. When you are finished reading, answer the following questions using only the text, in other words don't read anything into it. Let Scripture speak!

- a. What is chapter 4 about?
 - b. Who are the major characters in this chapter?
 - c. What is happening and when does it occur?
 - d. Where is it happening?
 - e. What is the atmosphere of this chapter? Look for and list words and events that would let you know why there was tension in the air.
 - f. Have you ever been in a similar situation? How did you handle it? Were you happy with the results? Would you handle it differently after studying Nehemiah thus far?
 - g. Go back in this chapter and mark the word *afraid*. Add this to your bookmark and go back and mark this in Nehemiah 2:2 the same way.
3. Let's look at the chapter paragraph by paragraph. Record the main idea or event in the following verses and then record these on your Observation Worksheets.
- a. Verses 1-3
 - b. Verses 4-6
 - c. Verses 7-14
 - d. Verses 15-20
 - e. Verses 21-23

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DAY FOUR

1. Today you are moving on to Nehemiah 5. Spend time thoroughly observing this chapter. Start by reading it and looking for and marking key words which you have previously marked, and add these two to your list.
 - a. *usury*
 - b. *fear of God* - mark *fear* as you marked *afraid* - they are the same Hebrew word.
2. Read the chapter again, this time aloud, and as you do, record a theme for each paragraph. Record these on your Observation Worksheets as well.
 - a. Verses 1-5
 - b. Verses 6-13
 - c. Verses 14-19 (take note of how this paragraph is different from all the other ones)
3. Read through Nehemiah 4 and 5 together. Make sure that you have marked all your key words. If you didn't mark the word *angry*, mark it at this time. Who is angry and why? Record your insights.
4. Record what you learn about Nehemiah the Man on your chart.
5. Record a chapter theme for Nehemiah 5 on your Observation Worksheets and your At a Glance Chart.

Let's call it a day and you will wrap up things tomorrow.

DAY FIVE

1. Read through Nehemiah 4 and 5 and watch how these two chapters relate to each other. Answer the following questions.
 - a. What is Nehemiah having to deal with in these chapters?
 - b. Are there similarities between these chapters? Differences?
 - c. Nehemiah was upset with his own people because they were exacting usury from each other. Think about the situation they were in and all that was happening in the land since they returned to it.
 - d. Look up the word usury in a dictionary and record what you learn. This word is used in verse 7 and 10.
 - e. Why do you think Nehemiah was angry?
 - f. Now look up the following verses and record how God instructed His people to act concerning the poor, lending money, and charging interest.
 - 1) Exodus 22:25
 - 2) Leviticus 25:35-43
 - 3) Deuteronomy 15:7-11
 - 4) Deuteronomy 23:19-20

2. Now let's look at some New Testament passages to see the parallels. What should our heart and attitude be towards one another?
 - a. John 13:34-35
 - b. I John 3:16-18
 - c. James 5:1-5
 - d. Acts 4:32-35
3. What do learn about Nehemiah's personal testimony in Nehemiah 5:14-19?
4. Look at the places you marked *fear* and *afraid* in chapters 4 and 5. What did you learn from marking these words? Explain how fearing God rather than man can be a guide for your own life.
5. God calls each of us to make disciples - discipling others, teaching them to observe all He commands us to do. How can you use what you have learned this week to disciple others?

- It has been quite a week hasn't it? You covered a lot of ground. I pray that Nehemiah may touch your life in a very real way, and that you can become the next person who can make a difference in your home, church, community, work place, your world. One person can make a difference - one person at a time!*