

NEHEMIAH

return + rebuild



NEHEMIAH OVERVIEW

The book of Nehemiah tells the story of the return of God's people to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. But this isn't just about physically returning to Jerusalem. This story is about returning to God and his ways – what the Bible calls repentance.

This is a story for all of us. It's a story about all of us. We all go through seasons of rebellion and ruin. And we all have the opportunity to return and rebuild, repent and restore.

Thankfully, we have a God who never gives up on rebellious people and offers means for us always to return to him and be made new. Israel was given the means to return and rebuild through foreign kings. We are given the means to return and rebuild through King Jesus.

To learn more about Nehemiah, watch this Bible Project video on Ezra-Nehemiah: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/ezra-nehemiah/>.

PART 4: GOD WILL FIGHT FOR US

Read the text: Nehemiah 4:1-23 (only vs. 7-14 included below)

But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry. And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause

confusion in it. And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.

In Judah it was said, “The strength of those who bear the burdens is failing. There is too much rubble. By ourselves we will not be able to rebuild the wall.” And our enemies said, “They will not know or see till we come among them and kill them and stop the work.” At that time the Jews who lived near them came from all directions and said to us ten times, “You must return to us.” So in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in open places, I stationed the people by their clans, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.”

Opposition is brought against Nehemiah and the builders in the form of ridicule, confusion and violent threats. This is followed by a planned attack to come against Jerusalem and cause confusion with the builders. We see opposition come in the form of words of accusation, confusion, and fear. Nehemiah responds with honesty before God about what he is feeling and with trust that God is stronger than their enemy. Yet, Nehemiah also responds with a contingency plan, revealing he was not fully trusting God would fight for them.

In seeking to rebuild our lives, we also face a very real enemy who will oppose us with accusation, confusion, and fear. God invites us to honestly bring our fears to Him and then to let Him fight for us. The amazing news is that we have a Savior who did not flee when opposition came, but stayed and trusted in His Father, ultimately disarming and defeating the greatest enemies of sin, Satan, and Death through His own death and resurrection.

Even if we have failed and given into the fear and confusion, we can come back to Him and know that He will fight for us.

Discussion Questions:

These questions are written for DNA groups, but you can use in any setting, including missional communities. Because they were written for the intimacy of DNA friendships, you may need to adjust for larger groups.

1. What kind of opposition are you currently experiencing? If life is going fairly smoothly, you might not feel like you have any real opposition. But the reality is, as Peter says, we have a very real enemy prowling around and seeking to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8). How does the Enemy bring opposition through words of accusation? Or, through confusion? Or, through fear? What does that look like right now in your life? Take time to share with each other.
2. How do you normally respond to this opposition? Sometimes we hide, thinking if we can ignore it, it will disappear. Other times, we listen to the opposition, believing the accusations and giving in to confusion and fear. And sometimes, we fight back, but often in our own strength, not resting in God who fights for us. What's your normal response to the opposition you shared about in the first question and what does that tangibly look like? Why do you think that is?
3. How is God inviting you to respond differently? What would a Gospel-shaped response look like? (Gospel-shaped means a response that is shaped by the truth of God's love for you, His promise to fight for you, and His defeat of the greatest enemies through Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and reign.) Take time to remind each other of the Gospel in tangible and specific ways to give courage for the unique opposition you face.
4. We are not called to face opposition alone, but together. Knowing what you do now about the unique opposition each of

you faces and how you are tempted to respond, how can you support each other this week? Discuss what it might look like to tangibly help each other. Close your time in prayer, looking to God who fights for you.