

Chronological Bible Study

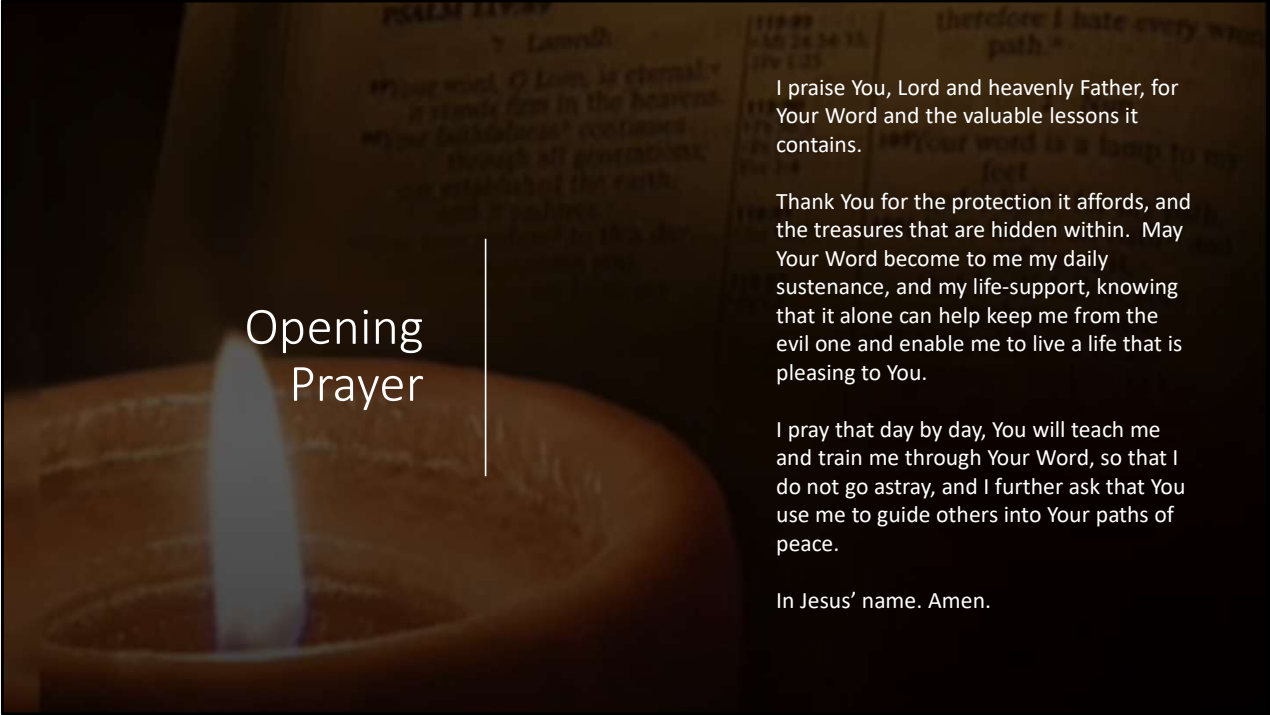
Week 36:

Rebuilt Walls and Renewed Faith

Ezra 7:1-10:44

Nehemiah 1:1-12:30

Psalm 1, 91, 119

A lit candle in a holder, with a Bible in the background. The candle is lit, and the flame is visible. The Bible is open, and some text is visible on the pages. The scene is dimly lit, with the candle providing the main source of light.

Opening Prayer

I praise You, Lord and heavenly Father, for Your Word and the valuable lessons it contains.

Thank You for the protection it affords, and the treasures that are hidden within. May Your Word become to me my daily sustenance, and my life-support, knowing that it alone can help keep me from the evil one and enable me to live a life that is pleasing to You.

I pray that day by day, You will teach me and train me through Your Word, so that I do not go astray, and I further ask that You use me to guide others into Your paths of peace.

In Jesus' name. Amen.



Introductions

Do you know anything about your family's ancestors? Has any family history been passed down through the generations?

Questions?

Comments?

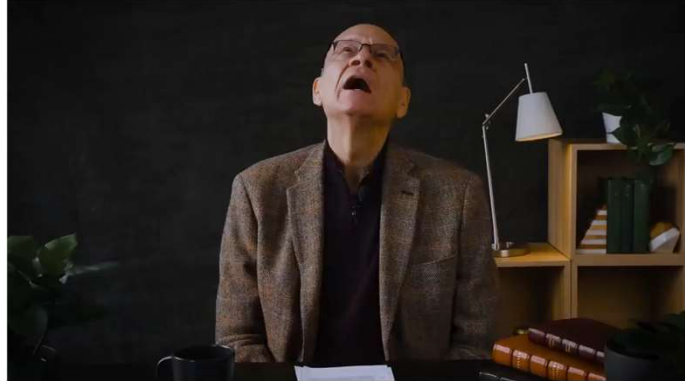
Summary of This Week's Readings

- Ezra's return to Jerusalem
- Jeremiah returns to Jerusalem and rebuilds the wall
- Dedication of the wall
- Wisdom Psalms
- Names of the returned exiles

The Gospel in Ezra-Nehemiah

[Video Link](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=PmNWGLgz1Fo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmNWGLgz1Fo)



Overview of Nehemiah

- Was originally a single book with Ezra
- Author unknown. Some believe it was written by Ezra in the latter part of the reign of Darius II (423-404 BC). Others believe Nehemiah wrote at least parts of it. Some say they don't know who the author is.
- Ezra and Nehemiah stage a revival in Jerusalem. They lead the restoration and rebuilding of not only the broken city, but also the broken people.
- Several themes, with different scholars emphasizing different themes
 - Leadership examples
 - The Human condition
 - The importance of worship and God's word
 - God's grace

Big Ideas in NEHEMIAH

God's people rebuild the Jerusalem wall

God responds to prayer

Through great leaders, God empowers his people to accomplish great things

Understanding God's Word leads to repentance

Nehemiah was originally part of the Ezra scroll. The author unknown, with some believing it was written by Ezra in the latter part of the reign of Darius II (423-404 BC). Others believe Nehemiah wrote at least parts of it since some is in the first person. Some say they don't know who the author is.

Ezra and Nehemiah stage a revival in Jerusalem...; Nehemiah 11-13: ... which basically fails and ends with Nehemiah's anger and disappointment. They lead the restoration and rebuilding of not only the broken city, but also the broken people.

Ezra, although primarily a teacher, had clear ideas about the constitution of the returned community; and Nehemiah, while primarily an administrator, had a vital spiritual life. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are both concerned with the interplay of the public and the personal and the inextricable link of the material and the spiritual. The book was probably written by Ezra in the latter part of the reign of Darius II (423-404 BC). Nehemiah was cup bearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia. He and Ezra were contemporaries. Malachi may also have been active at this time.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah have some similarities: each starts with a Persian king

sponsoring an Israelite leader to lead a wave of exiles back to the ruins of Jerusalem to rebuild their lives (Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel in Ezra 1-2; Nehemiah in Nehemiah 1). In each case the group returns, makes some attempt at restoration (by rebuilding the temple, making a commitment to the Torah, or rebuilding the city walls. And in each case they face hostility from without (Ezra 4 and Nehemiah 2-7) and failure from within (Ezra 9-10). After these cycles, we start to ask “Why do the great beginnings keep having mixed results?”

Remember why the Israelites ended up in Babylon in the first place. According to Israel’s prophets, it was the result of centuries of abandoning God for other gods and for allowing covenant violation and social injustice. The prophets also said that the exile was a just consequence, but was not the end of the story. God was going to fulfill his promise to Abraham and bring divine blessing to all of the rebellious nations through Abraham’s family, despite their failures. God was going to bring the remnant back to Jerusalem and make them the epicenter of the new kingdom of God that brings peace to all the nations (Isaiah 2, 11 and Ezekiel 34-37). People were looking forward to these blessings, but at every turn of the story, things don’t work out the way you think they should. When the temple is rebuilt many are thrilled but the elders think it’s small compared to Solomon’s. When Ezra leads a revival, he finds many of the leaders of the returned exiles have been compromised by inappropriate marriages. When Nehemiah rebuilds the walls he discovers that the returned exiles have perpetuated unjust lending practices that led to the enslavement of their fellow Israelites (Nehemiah 5).

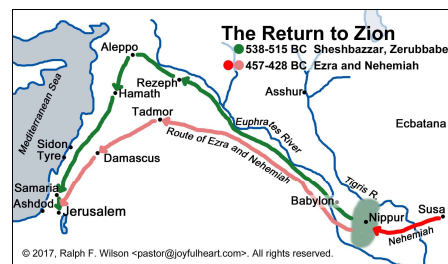
But when the walls are completed, there is great fanfare. The Israelites gather to hear Scriptures read aloud and people are moved and recommit to following the terms of Torah again. That’s where we end this week’s reading. Next week, we find that these commitments are not kept. The temple is neglected and defiled, People violate the Sabbath, compromised marriages have worsened. Nehemiah is distraught and disappointed.

There are several themes in these books. Some analysts concentrate on the examples of leadership. But the books are also about the human condition. Even though the Israelites are back in their ancestral land, they are still in exile, spiritually speaking. Israel’s problem before the exile was a hard heart that resulted in rebellion against their covenant with God. And Israel’s problem after the exile persisted, despite having some moments of revival. The importance of worship and God’s word in building a community of God, and the display of God’s grace in accepting the exiles despite their sins are also themes.

These books are more than examples in leadership. The real intent of the stories are to tell the truth about the human condition.

The Second Return to Zion

- 60 years have passed since the events of Ezra 5-6 and 80 years since the first exiles return.
- Ezra leads another group to Jerusalem in 458 BC, which was permitted and funded by King Artaxerxes I
- Ezra permitted to operate in and around Jerusalem and establish the Torah through the whole province of Trans-Euphrates.
- An account of all who returned is listed. There were about 5000 people. Few Levites join.
- The people fast before the journey to humble themselves before God.



It is now 458 BC; some 60 years have passed since the events of chs. [5-6](#) and some 80 years since the early pioneers returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. The temple was completed in 516 BC. Ezra leads a second group to Jerusalem in 458 BC. Ezra's genealogy is traced back to Aaron, the high priest and brother of Moses.

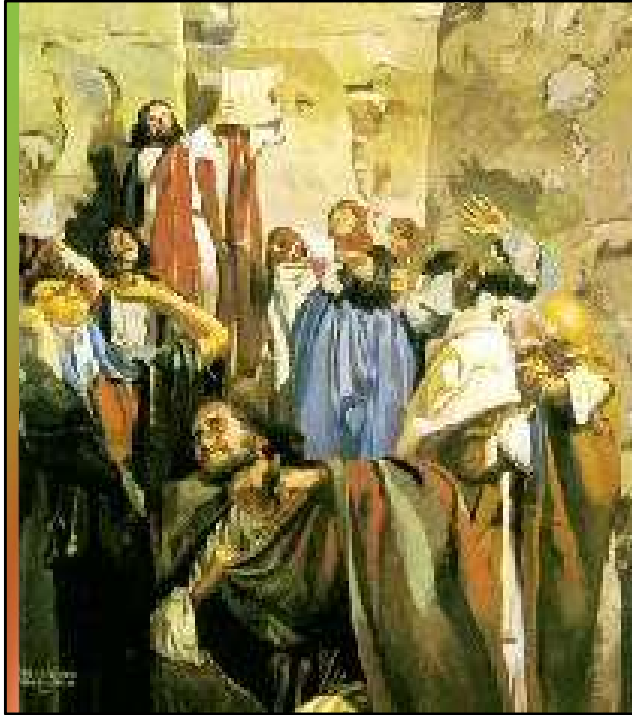
King Artaxerxes I (465–424 BC) approves the return. The journey of about 900 miles (1,450 kilometers) took some four months, occurring between early April and early August. God's providential ruling is at play in this approval. The king wrote a letter authorizing Ezra's teaching and funding his administrative program. 100 talents of silver was a huge amount, but the province was on the fringe of the empire, and its loyalty was important, especially since it was close to Egypt.

Ezra was a model teacher. Not only did he study carefully, but he also practiced what he preached. The king gives Ezra permission not only to operate in and around Jerusalem but also to establish the rule of the Torah throughout the whole province of Trans-Euphrates. The Trans-Euphrates was all territory west of the Euphrates river. Thus the Persian king recognizes the Mosaic law as part of his own law.

An account of everyone who returned is provided. There were 12 family heads and only about 1500 men (probably 5000 people in all). This is a much smaller number than the

42,000 who had returned 100 years earlier. Initially no Levites appear to have joined. Perhaps the Levites had not responded to the call because the chance to settle and own property in Babylon proved more attractive than a long, hazardous journey followed by the strict routines of temple service. Ezra seeks Levites, but only 38 answer Ezra's call.

Before starting the journey, Ezra puts the whole matter in the hands of the Lord. Fasting prepares one for action and allows for concentration on fundamental realities. Thus the fast is not an end in itself but an opportunity for the people to humble themselves before God and ask for his protection on the coming journey. Both the fasting and the humbling are in recognition of their vulnerability and total dependence on God.



Intermarriage

- The core problem was replacing worship of Yahweh with pagan Gods.
- Only the Ammonites, Moabites, and Egyptians were living in Jerusalem in the postexilic period.
- Ezra's prayer on intermarriage is one of the Bible's great prayers. The people respond with repentance.
- The problem with the mixed marriages is that the Jews were yoked to people who denied the one true God
- It would have been difficult for many to separate their family to abide by this law

Intermarriage itself was not forbidden, as evident from the cases of Moses (NUM 12:1), Joseph (GEN 41:45, Ruth, and Esther. It was the temptation to lapse into the worship of pagan gods and associated lifestyles that was the problem.

The text mention the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites. This represents the original inhabitants of Canaan before the conquest ([Exod 3:8](#)). Only the Ammonites, Moabites, and Egyptians were still living there in the postexilic period ([2 Chr 8:7-8](#)). The archaic names for the inhabitants of the land deliberately echo those in the Pentateuch, which warns Israel of the dangers they would face upon entering the land ([Deut 7:1-6](#)). The archaic references may also suggest that these women had not become Jews and thus were likely to tempt the Israelites into sin, as had happened in earlier times (e.g., [Num 25](#)).

Ezra's prayer on intermarriage is one of the Bible's great prayers. Ezra identifies himself with the sins of the people and becomes the mouthpiece for their confessions. Ezra felt shame and humiliation before God and the people for his sins and their sins. The accumulated sins of generations have so piled up that they reach to heaven itself. A similar expression is used of God's covenant love in [Ps 103:11-12](#): God's grace is greater than our sin.

Corporate sin means that the whole community suffers even if they were not personally involved in the sin (here: mixed marriages). A proper sense of God's holiness makes us aware of our unworthiness. The people respond to Ezra's prayer and follow his lead. The people respond with repentance. Only repentance in heart and action, as well as in words, can open the way back to God.

The problem with the mixed marriages in Ezra's day is that the Jews had yoked themselves to people who denied the one true God. But it can be difficult to imagine having to separate your family that may be well established in order to fulfill Ezra's command.



Nehemiah

- A cupbearer to King Artaxerxes
- A man of prayer
- Spent 12 years in first term as governor of Judah.
- His rebuilding mission was well planned.
- He faced opponents from all sides but God protects Jerusalem.
- Nehemiah demonstrates generosity and social responsibility as a governor.

Nehemiah was a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia. A cupbearer was a high-ranking royal official who served drinks at the royal table. The position was highly valued and only given to a select few people throughout history. Cupbearers were responsible for protecting the king from plots and intrigues, such as poisoning, by being the first to taste any food or drink served to him. They would sometimes be required to swallow some of the drink before serving it. Because they were always in the king's presence, cupbearers could also become friendly with the king and gain a position of great influence.

Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem to ensure that Jerusalem's walls are rebuilt in order to secure the city. Such security would allow regularized worship at the temple.

Nehemiah was a man of prayer, demonstrated throughout the text. The king allows him to return to Jerusalem as governor of Judah.

Nehemiah probably requested a brief leave of absence that was then extended. [Neh 5:14](#) suggests he spent at least 12 years on his first term as governor of Judah. Then he returned in the 32nd year of Artaxerxes' reign to report to the king, after which he came back to Jerusalem for a second term. He was accompanied by royal guards, giving him protection and legitimizing Nehemiah when he arrived at provincial courts. Nehemiah did extensive planning.

The city and province are now ringed with enemies: Sanballat (from Samaria) in the north, Arabs in the south, Ammonites in the east, and Ashdodites in the west. It is not clear how much of this was boasting, but the threat was real. This opposition led to a growing loss of morale. Although sensible precautions were necessary and taken, the defender of Jerusalem was God.

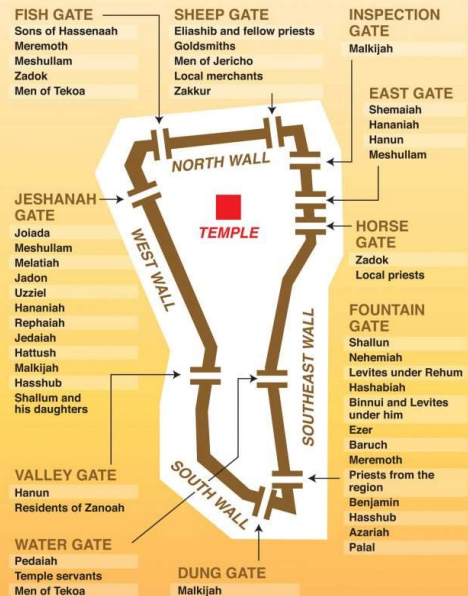
Serious problems of poverty and food shortage emerged during the building of the walls (vv. [1–13](#)), however the 52 days of building ([6:15](#)) could not in themselves have caused these problems. Diverting manpower from the work of agriculture to concentrate on building may, however, have seemed a step too far. Nehemiah not only eased financial burdens in Judah but also modeled generosity and social responsibility

Nehemiah Organizes the Rebuilding

- Nehemiah given permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls'
- Nehemiah organized everyone to get the wall rebuilt in 52 days
- The walls would provide security and national identity to the returned exiles
- The dedication included Ezra reading from a 1000 year old scroll that contained God's covenant with the Israelites

Walls and Their Builders

Nehemiah 3 tells us the names of many who help rebuild Jerusalem's wall



The temple was rebuilt but the city of Jerusalem was unfortified. The Jews who settled around Jerusalem began to intermarry with idol worshippers in the area, which Scripture warns against throughout. Ezra, a Jewish priest and scribe in Persia, led a group of Jewish returnees back to Jerusalem to rekindle religious enthusiasm and discourage intermarriage with idol worshippers.

At almost the same time Nehemiah, a Jewish cupbearer to the Persian king, asked for the king's permission to lead a group of Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls around the city. A fortified city would provide security and national identity for the Jews in the homeland. Nehemiah boldly persevered in rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem, which once again was a sacred city. He organized the people to be able to perform this feat in 52 days because he was concerned by the opposition that surrounded Jerusalem. Archeological evidence shows that the wall was hastily built, with many stones not honed.

Ezra, as spiritual leader and Nehemiah as civil leader, were a powerful and effective team, although it's unclear how closely they actually collaborated. At the dedication ceremony, Ezra stood on a high platform and read from the 1000 year old scroll of scripture that contained the original covenant between God and the Israelites.

JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF NEHEMIAH (C. 444-420? B.C.)

Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 a.c. Upon their return from exile in 536 a.c., the Jews, under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Jechia, first exposed the altar and then laid the foundation of the temple. Twenty years later, in 516 a.c., the temple was rebuilt. This time period is referred to as the Second Temple period. Later on, and under very difficult circumstances, Nehemiah restored the city wall. This is described in great detail in ch. 3. There is ample archaeological evidence, both positive and negative, to show that only the Eastern Hill of Jerusalem was fortified at that time and that the eastern wall of the city was built higher up the slope than the previous wall, so that the city was smaller than that of Solomon.

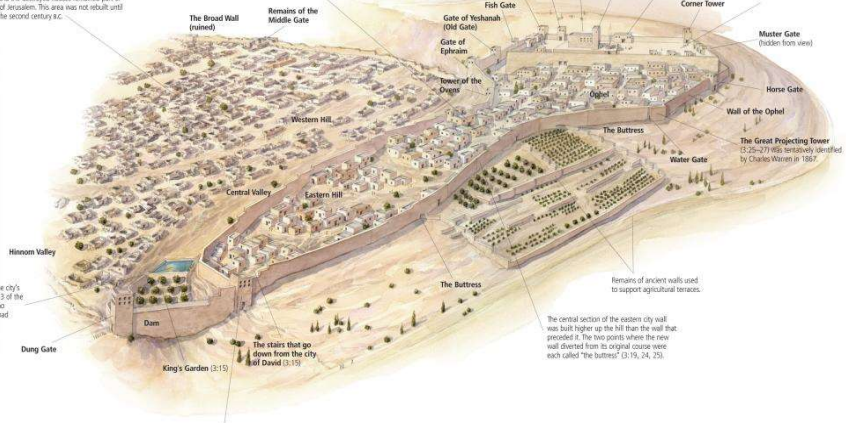
The Tower of Hananel, the Tower of the Hundred, the Sheep Gate, the Gate of the Guard, and the Corner Tower added strength to the northern wall of the Temple Mount, which also served as the northern city wall in this area.

The Western Hill was not occupied at this time. However, the ruins of the Broad Wall (3:8, 12-38), the Middle Gate (3:31), and the destroyed houses remained part of the landscape of Jerusalem. This area was not rebuilt until the middle of the second century a.c.

The Valley Gate (2:13, 15; 3:13), the remains of which were excavated in 1924, lies part of the western city wall. The other gates and the Tower of the Ovens, mentioned in chs. 3 and 12, are unattested to in the archaeological record, but are placed in the drawing in the order in which Nehemiah records them.

The Temple and the altar were rebuilt soon after the return from exile. The dimensions of the temple, given as 60 cubits (90 feet 27 in) high and wide (Ezra 6:3), probably refer to those of the porch. For a colorway illustration of the temple, see p. 813.

The Temple Mount was restored by Nehemiah as part of the fortification of Jerusalem.



The Siloam Pool was again used as the city's main source. There is no mention in ch. 3 of the Gihon Spring, probably because it was no longer accessible after the Babylonians had destroyed its protective towers.

The Fountain Gate (2:14; 3:15, 32-37) was located in the southern part of the eastern wall, presumably close to the Siloam Pool.

The central section of the eastern city wall was built higher up the hill than the wall that preceded it. The two points where the new wall deviated from its original course were each called "the buttress" (3:19, 24, 25).

Remains of ancient walls used to support agricultural terraces.

The Great Projecting Tower (3:25-27) is tentatively identified by Charles Warren in 1867.

The Leadership of Nehemiah

[Video Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FW80ywP2qpA)

[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=FW80ywP2qpA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FW80ywP2qpA)





Which of the themes in Nehemiah did you most relate to?

Discussion

- Leadership
- Human Condition
- God's commitment and grace
- Other?



Ezra Reads the Law

- Occurred as part of Feast of Tabernacles, which is held in late September or October.
- Celebration of wall completion was reading of the Torah
- Renewed understanding of God's word and a readiness to obey
- Feast follows
- Celebrating their return to the land

Upon completion of the wall, the people come together to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This is one of the three feasts that Jews were to observe each year by going to “appear before the LORD your God in the place which He shall choose” ([Deuteronomy 16:16](#)). It is one of the three feasts where all native born male Jews were commanded to go to Jerusalem to participate. The feast begins five days after the Day of Atonement and at the time the fall harvest had just been completed. It was a time of joyous celebration as the Israelites celebrated God's continued provision for them in the current harvest and remembered His provision and protection during the 40 years in the wilderness. The Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned in Scripture, including the time that [Solomon's Temple](#) was dedicated to the Lord ([1 Kings 8:2](#)).

The people wanted to hear Ezra read the Word of God to them. The reading lasted about 6 hours, daybreak to noon. Probably the Pentateuch as a whole was read, but emphasis would have been on Deuteronomy. Ezra's preaching resulted in a great revival as the Israelites confessed and repented of their sins.

The people stood. This was not merely a formality but a declaration that from now on the words of this book were to be authoritative in the community's life. The reading was carried out in a spirit of worship. Repentance had been an appropriate response, but ultimately true engagement with Scripture leads to deep rejoicing. Their rejoicing flows

from a renewed understanding of God's gracious words and a readiness to obey them.

There has been little joy during the laborious weeks of building; now is the time for thanksgiving and praise to God. The generous provision is a foretaste of the new creation (e.g., [Isa 25:6](#)). This is not a self-indulgent party but probably includes the poor ("send some to those who have nothing prepared"). It was customary for God's people to remember the less fortunate on joyous occasions.

They were celebrating their return to the land, just as Joshua celebrated when the Israelites first entered the promised land

Israelites Confess Their Sins

- A day of national mourning and confession
- Their prayer reviews Israel's theology and history
- The account in Nehemiah was in 444 BC, two days after Feast of the Tabernacles ends
- The story of rebellious Israel and the love of God that pursues the sinner is told.
- The people ask God to bring the mercy he has shown in the past to the people today
- The people publicly and visibly respond to the reading and prayer of confession with a pledge of loyalty to God.



This day of national mourning and confession does not contradict the previous chapter's emphasis on rejoicing but prevents that joy from being superficial. The confessional prayer (vv. [5b-37](#)) ranges widely and richly through Israel's theology and history, starting with creation. It powerfully reinforces the fundamentals of their faith by surveying God's faithfulness and their sinfulness. The Festival of Tabernacles ended on the 22nd day of the month, and it is now the 24th. This would be Oct. 444 BC, 2 days after the Feast of Tabernacles ended. Though Ezra is not mentioned, he probably led the reading and study.

A vigorous summons to praise is followed by an expression of the glory and majesty of the Lord in the whole created order and in the sweep of history. The basic conviction of Israel's faith is evoked: Yahweh, the covenant God who is committed to his people by promises that he cannot and will not break. He is the Creator of all things visible and invisible and the author of all life above and below. His name emphasizes his splendor and his power. A history of the major events in Israel's history is told.

In spite of God's faithfulness, his people were rebellious when they wandered in the wilderness and after they entered the land. Only God's covenant love prevented total destruction of the rebellious people. The story of rebellious Israel and the love of God that pursues the sinner is told. A plea is made to the Lord for the people's present situation and the people asks him to bring the mercy he has so richly shown in the past into this

moment. It is one thing to acknowledge general sin and quite another to apply that same confession to the specific sins of the present.

The people publicly and visibly respond to the reading and exposition of the law and to the prayer of confession. The leaders sign a binding agreement as an example for the rest of the community ([10:1–27](#)). The 84 names include Nehemiah, the governor ([10:1](#)); a group of priests ([10:2–8](#)); Levites ([10:9–13](#)); and leaders ([10:14–27](#)). The pledge of loyalty to the Lord includes specific promises; some reflect regular items, and others are especially pertinent to their situation ([10:30–39](#)).



Discussion

Are there any worship traditions that are particularly important to you? How do these traditions bring you joy toward God or improve your relationship with God?

Psalm 1

OVERVIEW

- Serves as an Introduction to the Psalms (with Psalm 2)
- Those who worship God genuinely must embrace his Law (Torah)
- There are only two ways to live:
 - Receive instruction from God or from fools
 - Are we either deep-rooted trees or chaff to be blown about
 - It's not what we do but who we follow
- Solid happiness (blessedness) is found in God and His word
- The wicked perish; they do not stand in judgment

The reading continues on to three Wisdom psalms: Psalm 1, 91 and 119.

Psalm 1, along with Psalm 2, serves as an Introduction to the Psalms

Those who worship God genuinely must embrace his Law (Torah)

There are only two ways to live:

Receive instruction from God or from fools

Are we either deep-rooted trees or chaff to be blown about

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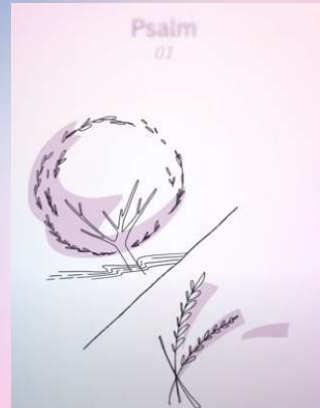
Solid happiness (blessedness) is found in God and His word

The wicked perish; they do not stand in judgment

Psalm 1

[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7k01kfBx6Y>

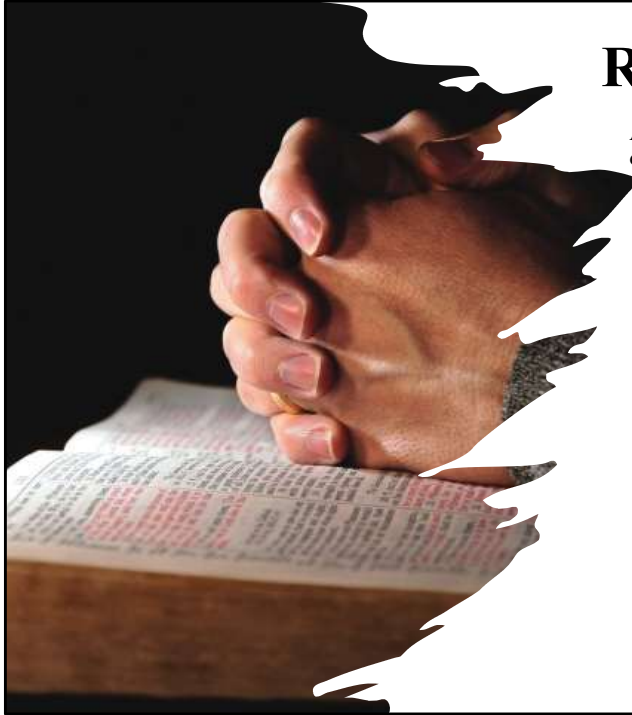


A Contrast of the Righteous and the Wicked

Righteous	Wicked
Bear fruit	Are fruitless
Are rooted in God	Blow in the wind
Are humbled and trust in God for righteousness	Are self-righteous
Walk before God with integrity of heart, helping neighbors in need (Psalms 15, 112)	Selfishly use and abuse others without thinking of God (Psalms 26, 37)
Blessed/known and watched over by God	The Wicked will perish

- Psalm 1 sets the stage, but theme carried beyond Psalm 1
 - See Psalms 1, 9, 10, 15, 26, 28, 37, 40, 68, 84, 112, 128
- The path to wickedness/spiritual hard-heartedness is gradual...it's a progressive process
 - First casually identify by walking with them, exploring ideas
 - Then you stand with them, beginning to identify with and adopt ideas in parts of life
 - Then you sit with them – you have complete association and adopt the values and reject the values of the righteous
- The wicked of the world may seem rich and substantial, but from God's point of view they are cheap, unsubstantial and destined for judgment

Each way of living has a distinctive and radically different destination.



Righteous/Righteousness

A key theme of the psalms, but used in various ways in different contexts

- It is one of God's distinctive attributes – He is morally right and without sin
- Humans are not righteous because they sin
 - In the Psalms, righteousness usually refers more generally to those innocent of a specific sin or in contrast to others (e.g., oppressors).
 - The righteous are the humble who voice their troubles to God in total dependence on His assistance.
 - Jesus, the Son of God, displayed righteousness throughout His earthly life
 - We are all sinners and for Christians, we can only be righteous when God imputes righteousness through Jesus
- Engagement with the law of the Lord is fundamental to righteousness

Psalm 91

OVERVIEW

- A song of deep consolation to the one looking to God for rest amid the adversities of life.
- It's key theme is the rest and peace that God gives. We can find peace when we trust in God, even in times of turmoil.
- A response to Psalm 90, which focuses on the brevity and difficulty of life. Psalm 91 responds by talking about God's protection in adversity. God is a refuge.
- The devil quoted Psalm 91 when tempting Jesus in the wilderness. Satan seeks evidence of God's presence and protection in spectacular acts. Psalm 91 stresses faith without requiring proof.
- Psalm 91 doesn't promise there everything will just take care of itself, nor does it ignore the evil that exists. It does provide a promise that God is a protector and refuge that can provide the courage for us to deal with evil.

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Psalm 119

OVERVIEW

- The psalm celebrates the gift of God's law, his Torah, his covenant instruction for his people. Having redeemed his people and brought us through grace into relationship with him, God lovingly instructs us in the way to enjoy fullness of life.
- No one keeps God's law perfectly (we abuse it through legalism and works righteousness), the psalmist reminds us throughout this psalm of the delight that the law should be for the child of God.
- We tend to view god's law as inhibiting human flourishing, but instead it is intended to make us flourish. God has given us his law to guide us into full happiness as we trust and follow him.

Why Study Psalm 119?

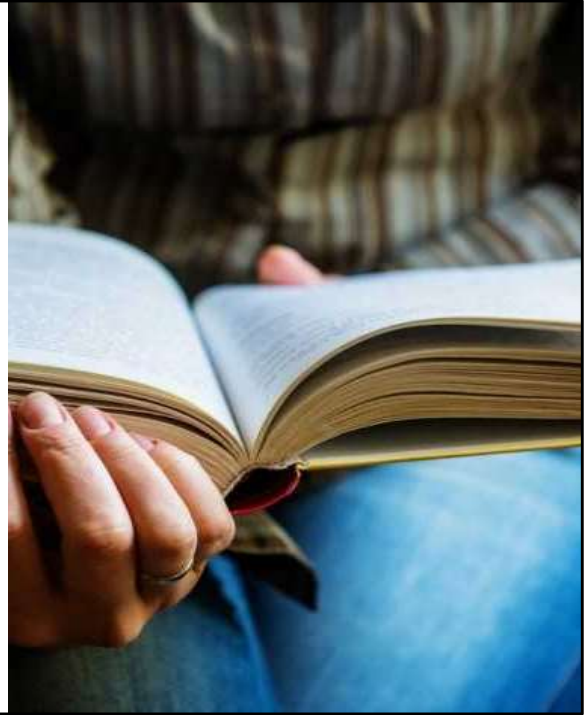
- The focus of the entire psalm is the Word of God.
 - Reliability
 - Accuracy
 - Authority
 - Necessity
 - Sufficiency
- This psalm describes the central place God's Word should have in our life.
- The law is a faithful expression of God's character. God sent His Son to keep the law for us.
- Can dig deeper into the Word and find out how to apply it to daily life.
 - We are to ponder, memorize, recall, and in other ways think about God's Word.
 - We are to honor God with both our lips and our actions, based on the Word.



*Blessed are those who keep his
testimonies, who seek him with their
whole heart
[Psalms 119:2]*

Unique Qualities of Psalm 119

- The longest chapter in the Bible.
- Written as an acrostic poem – a series of lines or verses that begin with or contain particular letters that, when taken in order, spell out a word or phrase. Acrostics often used to help with memorization.
- There are 22 stanzas of 8 verses each.
- Each stanza begins with a different letter of the 22 letter Hebrew alphabet.
- The psalm uses 8 different words for God's law. The full meaning of these 8 words elaborate on the Word of God. Repetition is key.
- The use of the alphabet symbolizes completeness, and the vocabulary represents comprehensiveness.
- Beginning with verse 17, it is written in the form of a prayer.
- The psalm includes elements of lament and petition, intertwined with expressions of confidence and innocence.
- There are many links with the theology and vocabulary of Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Proverbs.



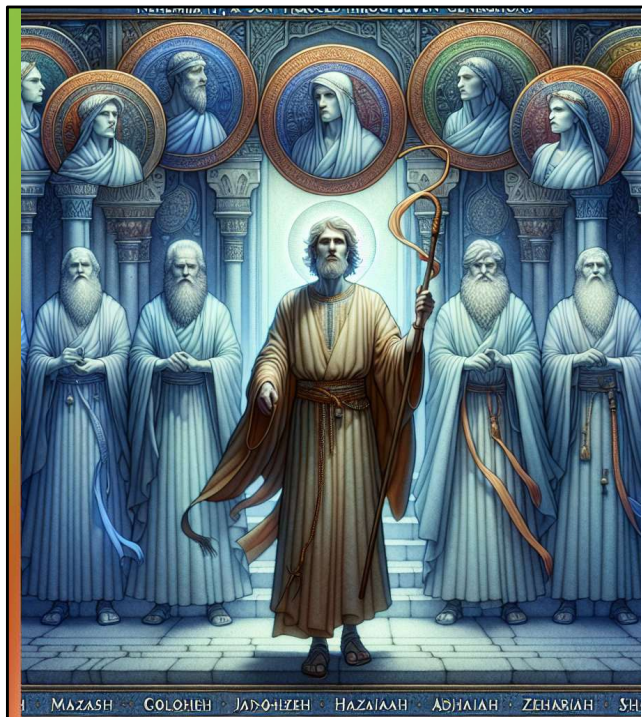
Descriptions of the Word of God in Psalm 119

Descriptions	Meaning
Law (<i>torah</i>), instruction, teaching	Generally, refers to the first 5 books of the Old Testament
Testimonies	God's standard of conduct according to the 10 commandments
Way (or Ways)	The pattern of life required by God's law
Precepts	A commandment or requirement
Statutes, decrees, ordinances	Enacted laws
Commands, commandments	Orders; God's decrees
Judgments (Rules)	A binding law; judicial decision
Word (Words, Promise, Promises)	A general term of God's revelation, prophecy



Discussion

How does understanding God's Word and study of the Bible inspire us to a deeper relationship with God?



Names of the Returned Exiles

- Nehemiah concerned with repopulating Jerusalem.
- Parallels list of the first wave of exiles that returned in 1 Chronicles 9.
- These were real people who were a part of God's people.

Our reading ends with the names of the returned exiles. Nehemiah is concerned to repopulate Jerusalem in order to put both spiritual and economic life on a secure footing. Community leaders were already settled in Jerusalem, but they needed large numbers of ordinary citizens to live there too, which required a costly uprooting from their native villages. The list of community and religious leaders is probably selective. It parallels a list of the first residents of Jerusalem after the return from Babylon in 1 Chronicles 9. About half the names in the two lists are the same. These were real people who were a part of God's people.

Nehemia's Jerusalem

[Video Link](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQILIXOr8Q&list=PLnETovik96eNY9G4UDziOxXQjWU6SGB3i&index=55>





Repentance For Revival

Songs of Ascent (Psalms 120-134)

Praise Songs (Psalms 104, 107, 111 -118, 135-136, 145-150)

Psalm 92

Nehemiah 12:31, 13:1-23

Joel

Isaiah 56:1-66:24

Closing Hymn

[Video Link](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6LC8cu03lg&list=RDa6LC8cu03lg&start_radio=1

