

## Nehemiah 1 New American Standard Bible

### Nehemiah's Grief for the Exiles

The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah.

Now it happened in the month Chislev, *in* the twentieth year, while I was in Susa the capitol, <sup>2</sup> that Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men from Judah came; and I asked them about the Jews who had escaped and had survived the captivity, and about Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and disgrace, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates have been burned with fire."

<sup>4</sup> Now when I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. <sup>5</sup> I said, "Please, Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps the covenant and faithfulness for those who love Him and keep His commandments:

<sup>6</sup> let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open, to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have committed against You; I and my father's house have sinned. <sup>7</sup> We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses.

<sup>8</sup> Remember, please, the word which You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, '*If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples; <sup>9</sup> but if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place where I have chosen to have My name dwell.*'

<sup>10</sup> They are Your servants and Your people whom You redeemed by Your great power and by Your strong hand. <sup>11</sup> Please, Lord, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name, and please make Your servant successful today and grant him mercy before this man."

Now I was the cupbearer to the king.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God's character?

### Pauls Observations and insights

1. 'The words of it' mean a record of what Nehemiah wrote for the purpose of recalling history.

2. Can you imagine rewriting history?
3. Nehemiah, having been in Susa twenty years, was visited by some men from Judah who came with news about the situation in Jerusalem.
4. Nehemiah enquires about the welfare of some Jews who have managed to live in freedom despite the overthrow of Jerusalem.
5. This group is now called a remnant, it is a small group of people who kept themselves together despite the occupation, I guess they were a kind of freedom fighter.
6. Sadly things were not so well with this remnant due to the state of the city, the walls and the gates, which had been burned with fire.
7. The gates represent protection and safety.
8. Nehemiah having heard this news was touched in his heart and he wept for the sad state of affairs.
9. Have you wept for the breakdown of our land and the Godly infrastructure.
10. Nehemiah went into a prayer and fasting time for God to act for the good of the people. Why do we fast and pray?
11. What is it for a person to beseech God?
12. Why does Nehemiah remind God of His promises that had been made to His people?
13. Why is God kind to all those who keep His commandments.
14. Why should God be attentive to our prayers?
15. Why do God's eyes need to be opened for Him to hear prayer?
16. Nehemiah was in an all night prayer meeting. Why?
17. Why is it important to confess sins to God?
18. When we sin we sin against God, ourselves and others.
19. Notice Nehemiah uses the term 'we' to describe Israel's unfaithfulness and not 'them'.
20. Nehemiah knew this calamity had fallen on Israel because of her unfaithfulness and disobedience to God's warnings.
21. God's warning also had a promise attached, it said 'if you return to me' it means repent and turn back to God.
22. God promises no matter how far apart they were He would draw them back together.
23. God will restore the fortunes of His people if they repent.
24. It is by the hand of God that He redeems.
25. When God's people honour His name it will go well with them.
26. Nehemiah asks God that he might find favour with the King.