

Youth At-Home Sunday School
Jan. 17, 2021

Nehemiah Week 2

Over the next couple of months, we'll be working through the Old Testament Book of Nehemiah together. Nehemiah tells us about God's faithfulness as the Jewish people return to Jerusalem after the Exile, seeking to rebuild the city God had given them. Remember that God allowed His people to be taken into Exile by the Assyrians and Babylonians because they consistently refused to obey Him. (Eventually the Persians came into power, which is why this part of the story focuses on the Persian kings.) But He promised to one day bring them back to the land He had given them (Jeremiah 25), fulfilling His covenant promises to Abraham (Genesis 12).

I encourage you to [watch this video about Ezra-Nehemiah from the Bible Project](#).
So, let's get started!

In Nehemiah 1:11 (the very end of last week's passage), we learned that Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the king of Persia. This was a high-ranking position in which we would have tasted the wine the king was to drink to make sure it wasn't poisoned. The mention of the month *Nissan* tells us that Nehemiah had been fasting and praying for about four months. Let's read on to find out how God used Nehemiah as part of His plan for His people to return to Jerusalem.

First, read Nehemiah 2. Then answer the journal questions below and spend time with God in prayer.

Journal Questions:

Observe: What did King Artaxerxes want to know as Nehemiah served him his wine?

What did Nehemiah do first in response to that question? Then what did he request of the king?

What did Nehemiah want to do for Jerusalem?

Interpret: How did God use Nehemiah's position and his prayer to begin the work in Jerusalem?

Why do you think Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem thought Nehemiah might be rebelling against the king?

What do you think Nehemiah meant when he said that the "gracious hand of God" was upon him?

Apply: Faced with an opportunity to share his concern for Israel with the powerful King Artaxerxes, the first thing Nehemiah did was pray for God's wisdom and help! Is this usually your first response when you are faced with difficult circumstances? Why or why not?

Very often we are not quick to admit our need for God's help. But Jesus **always** looked to spend time with his Father in prayer. Read the following passages, and write down some things you notice about Jesus' prayer life.

Mark 1:35

Mark 14:32-42

Luke 5:16

Luke 6:12

How can admitting we need God's help through Jesus' perfect life and death in our place bring us closer to Him? Take a few minutes to acknowledge the places in your life where you most need Jesus to rescue you from sin or to help you obey him.