THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

and the Ministry of Restoration

**HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH:** Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC and its people exiled. Although many Jews had already returned in two groups (in 538 B.C. and in 458 B.C.) in the time of Nehemiah the city and its walls were still in ruins (444 BC). At that time Nehemiah was a high government official close to the Persian king, Artaxerxes I. Nehemiah asked the king for permission to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and its walls. The king sent to be the governor of Judah for 12 years. Nehemiah’s first work was to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He faced opposition from powerful neighbors that did not want the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem and become strong. After rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, he then helped restore the people of Jerusalem and Judah. Ezra the Priest helped support this restoration.

***Three Phases of Jewish Exile*** / ***Three Phases of their Return***

 *#1 605 B.C. (Daniel)* / *538 B.C. (led by Zerubbabel)*

 *#2 597 B.C. (Jehoiachin)* / *458 B.C. (led by Ezra)*

 *#3 586 B.C. (Zedekiah)* / *444 B.C. (Nehemiah & team)*

**AUTHOR:** The Book of Nehemiah is a personal account originally written by Nehemiah, Neh.1:1. Jewish tradition also supports Nehemiah as the author. However, Ezra the Priest may have edited Nehemiah’s account into its final book form.

**SPIRITUAL IMPORTANCE:** Nehemiah restored the walls & people of Jerusalem, to help prepare the Jews for the 1st Coming of Christ. We need to have the same ministry of restoration in our days, to prepare the Church for the 2nd Coming of Christ, Mal.4:5-6, Is.58:12.

**INTERESTING FACTS:** Nehemiah never gave or received any prophecies to encourage his work- he was only given false and foolish prophecies! (Neh.6:10-14.) He also never performed or received a miracle. But God was with this righteous and wise leader, and helped him to accomplish a great work for God. Perhaps you do not have what would appear to be a supernatural ministry- but God can still work mightily through you!

**OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH:**

**PART 1 THE RESTORATION OF JERUSALEM’S WALL, chapters1-6**

A. PREPARATION TO REBUILD THE WALL, chapt.1-2

B. THE REBUILDING OF THE WALL, chapt.3-6

**PART 2 THE RESTORATION OF JERUSALEM’S PEOPLE, chapters 7-13**

A. ORGANIZING JERUSALEM, 7:1-4

B. THE JEW’S REGISTRATION in the 1st Return, 7:5-73

C. THE RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT, 8:1-10:29

D. OBEDIENCE TO THE COVENANT, 10:30-13:31

**Part 1 The Restoration of Jerusalem’s Wall, Neh.1:1-6:19**

**A. PREPARATION TO REBUILD THE WALL, 1:1-2:20**

 1. Nehemiah’s Burden & Prayer for Jerusalem, 1:1-11

 v.1 Nehemiah’s name means “Comfort of Yahweh.” He was also the son of a man named

 Hacaliah, which translates from the Hebrew as “Wait for the Lord.” Nehemiah became a man

 whose character fulfilled the godly heritage of his name and of his father’s name.

 v.1 Nehemiah was a high government official who worked at the royal palace in Shushan.

 Shushan was the winter capital of the Persian empire at this time.

 v.2 Nehemiah’s brother, Hanani, brought to him Jews who had just returned from Judah.

vs.3-4 Nehemiah heard that the Jews in Judah were in great distress. While Judah was a province

of the Persian Empire, without a strong capital city the province was weak and helpless against

its more powerful neighbors.

 vs.5-11 Nehemiah gave himself to intercessory prayer asking for God’s favor that the king would

 allow him to help rebuild Jerusalem and restore the people of Judah.

 v.11 Nehemiah was the king’s cupbearer. This was an important government job given to those

who were very trusted servants of the king. They had to taste and confirm that everything the

king was to drink had not been poisoned -but if they were unfaithful, they could poison him!

\* The Persian cupbearers were also often an advisor to the king, and usually had the

responsibility of choosing who could have appointments with the king. Everyone would seek

the favor of the cupbearer, so that they could seek the favor of the king! It was a powerful

position with great rewards. We will study later how he was a wealthy man.

 2. Artaxerxes I grants favor to Nehemiah to rebuild the city, 2:1-8

 v.1 “in the month of Nissan” was the 4th month after Neh.1:1, when Nehemiah had first heard

 about the distress of the Jews and the broken walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah patiently waited for

between 3 to 4 months for a favorable time to ask the king to appoint him to rebuild Jerusalem.

 v.1 “in the 20th year of King Artaxerxes” Artaxerxes I was the king that Nehemiah served. He

 ruled the Persian Empire for over 40 years, from 465 B.C. to 424 B.C.

 v.2 The king remarked that Nehemiah was sad as he served him- that made Nehemiah afraid!

 \* It was a requirement for the king’s servants to always be joyful in his presence. It was

 disrespectful, or even worse, it showed dissatisfaction to the king. The cupbearer was to shield

the king from dissatisfied people who might want to murder him, which would be easy for the

cupbearer to do through poisoning him.

\* The need for fully faithful servants would be deeply felt by the king- his father, Xerxes, had

been murdered 20 years before in his own bedchamber by one of his most trusted & powerful

officials named Artabanus. Nehemiah was risking his life to appear sad before the king!

 vs.3-8 Nehemiah shared his burden and request to go and rebuild Jerusalem.This request could

 have been unsuccessful for two reasons:

 1) Nehemiah had shown his sorrow while serving the king, this would have usually insulted

 the king or made him suspicious of betrayal!

 2) At the beginning of his reign 20 years before, Artaxerxes had learned that Jerusalem had

 been a mighty but rebellious city, and he was advised by the leaders of Samaria that

 Jerusalem should not be rebuilt, Ezra 4:12-16. So when he was a young king, Artaxerxes

 had already decreed that Jerusalem should not be rebuilt, Ez. 4:21-22. Then what could

 change the king’s mind? The following reasons could have helped:

 a) Throughout the book of Nehemiah we read of Nehemiah’s outstanding character and

 integrity. The king had undoubtedly already seen his cupbearer’s faithfulness during the

 previous years as he had served the king, and may have felt safe in letting Nehemiah

 rebuild Jerusalem.

 b) The reign of Artaxerxes I, which was long and mostly peaceful, had already been

 disturbed by two revolts in Egypt and Syria in the eastern area of his empire. Four years

 after this second revolt was when Nehemiah asked to be sent to rebuild Jerusalem. King

 Artaxerxes may have felt that sending his trusted cupbearer there as a governor to

 strengthen the province of Judah would help bring stability and loyalty to this troubled

 area of his empire. (There were no more troubles there after Nehemiah rebuilt Jerusalem!)

 c) The Persian Empire has been greatly impacted by the Jews who were scattered throughout

 the Empire, and many Jews became trusted to great positions of leadership in the Persian

 Empire, such as:

\* Daniel, had a top position in the government of the first Persian king, Cyrus, Dan.6:28

\* Esther had become the influential queen of the empire a few decades before,

probably in the later years of the reign of Xerxes, the father of Nehemiah’s king!

\* Mordecai, the cousin of Queen Esther, became a powerful Prime Minister of the

Persian Empire during her reign, Est.10:3. His faithful support of the Persian Empire

probably helped other Jews to gain positions of power, such as Nehemiah.

 \* Ezra the Priest had been given permission to lead a group of Jews back to their

 home land thirteen years before Nehemiah asked the king for permission to rebuild

 Jerusalem, Ezra 7:12-26. Ezra was respected by the king as being a godly priest and

 faithful subject of his kingdom, for he was given great authority to guide the Jews

 and all the provinces around Judah to follow the laws of God.

\* Queen Damaspia, the wife of Nehemiah’s king, seemed to be favorable to the Jews.

Nehemiah asked the king for permission to rebuild Jerusalem while the queen was sitting beside him, Neh.2:4-6.

\* These godly and faithful leaders and queens helped the Jews to gain much favor in

the Persian Empire, and King Artaxerxes seems to have grown to trust Nehemiah and

the Jews far beyond his earlier concerns about Jerusalem’s rebellious past.

 vs.6-9 The king agreed with all of Nehemiah’s requests, and gave him beyond what he requested

 (the king also gave Nehemiah army captains and horsemen as a bodyguard, v.9.) It is important

 That we gain authority from God, and sometimes from people, before we start a big project.

 3. Nehemiah Travels to Jerusalem and Prepares to Rebuild its Walls, 2:9-20

 v.10 We first read here about Sanballat, who was the governor of Samaria, and Tobiah, a leader of

the Ammonites. These were neighboring provinces of the Persian Empire, and their leaders did

not want Judah to become strong again. They tried to stop Nehemiah in many ways.

 vs.11-16 After resting for 3 days from his long journey, Nehemiah began a secret inspection of the

 broken walls of Jerusalem. He wisely conducted a private study of the project he was planning

 *before* he would publicly announce his plans. Jesus said we need this type of wisdom,

Lk.14:28-30. Faith and wisdom must work together!

 vs.16-18 After his advance private planning, Nehemiah publicly revealed his vision and plans.

 Through his skillful presentation he got all of the Jews to join in with the building program! In

 these verses we can gain many keys towards us also becoming builders and restorers:

1) A private vision must be imparted to become a corporate vision. A united team can

accomplish much more than one person or a few people, Lev.26:8. If you can build a large,

united team you can accomplish great things!

 2) We must identify with the people so that everyone feels like they are working together.

3) We must inspire God’s people to rise up in faith and fulfill the vision!

4) As part of our imparting the vision, we need to show the people how God is with our plans.

 Nehemiah could recount how the Lord had given him favor with the king, and how he had

 obtained authority through which the building program could become successful.

 v.19 As Nehemiah was gathering his team to rebuild, his enemies also started to gather their team

 that wanted to stop the Jews! Geshem, an Arab leader south of Judah, joined in with the

 governor of the Samaritans to the north and the leader of the Ammonites to the east. On three

 sides of them the enemies of the Jews were uniting to oppose them.

**B. THE REBUILDING OF THE WALL, 3:1-7:73**

 1. The Organization & Work of the Builders, 3:1-3:32

 \* Nehemiah was not mentioned by name in chapter 3 concerning those who rebuilt the walls.

What was emphasized was the variety of workers & their good organization. This speaks of the

need for the body of Christ to have many different members & ministries (1 Cor.12:14-18), that

work together (Eph.4:16) to come to full restoration and maturity, Eph.4:13-15.

 \* The first one listed as rising up to start the rebuilding was the Jewish High Priest, Eliashib,

 Neh.3:1. His name means, “God will restore.” In Hebrews we are told that Jesus Christ is now

 our High Priest, Heb.8:1. The lesson we can learn is that we need to have Christ as the one who

starts the process of restoration and building. If Christ is leading the way, all will be

accomplished, Mt.16:18.

 \* None of the workers were professional carpenters or stone masons- they were goldsmiths,

perfumers, priests, women… but each group started & finished their portion of the wall:

unskilled (but dedicated) workers can be successful with the help of God!

 \* The listings of people who rebuilt the walls, and the other lists of people in Nehemiah, are

suggestive of the records that heaven keeps of those who faithfully serve Him, that will be

revealed on judgment day, Rev.20:12, Mal.3:16-18.

 \* This chapter many times repeats that the workers built “over against their house,” Neh.3:23, 28,

29, & 30. The workers would have built the strongest, and fought the best, when it directly

concerned their family and house’s protection. When we mobilize people for Christian service,

get them busy in works of service that are closest to their heart and family, that will give them

the easiest motivation to serve well and with their full strength.

 \* The order of the rebuilding of the gates of Jerusalem teaches us wisdom about how we are to

rebuild the people of God. (See the other page of notes, “Rebuilding the Gates of Jerusalem.”)

 2. Opposition to the Rebuilding, 4:1-6:14

 a) The Enemies’ Mockings & Threats of War, 4:1-23

 vs.1-3 Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, and Tobiah, a leader of the Ammonites, stood before

 the army of Samaria and mocked the abilities of the Jews to rebuild. Their discouraging

 comments were carried to the Jews and to Nehemiah, to discourage their rebuilding. Words can

 have great power & influence, both for the good or bad, Prov.18:21. The 10 spies’ report of

 fear & unbelief kept Moses’ generation from entering into the Promised Land, Num.13:3-14:4.

 vs.6-8 Nehemiah and the Jews had remained focused on their rebuilding, and had repaired the wall

 up to half of its height. By this time their enemies could see that the Jews might be successful

 in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, so they decided to actively oppose them by sending

 soldiers to ambush the Jews and stop the rebuilding. We also see here that the confederacy

 against the Jews was growing, as the Ashdodites agreed to join the others to attack Jerusalem.

 They lived on the west side of Judah, so that by this time, the Jews were surrounded on every

 side with enemies that were ready to attack them!

 vs.13-23 Nehemiah organized the Jews to defend themselves so that a secret of quick surprise

 attack could not be successful. While the enemies of the Jews were strong enough to defeat

 them in open war, they could not do that, because they were all provinces of the Persian Empire

 and could not openly fight against another province, especially one that had a governor who

 was favored by the king!

 v.17 Each of the workers held a building tool with one hand, and a weapon with the other. When

 we want to be restorers and builders in a time of opposition we must remain vigilant in spiritual

 warfare, ready to defend God’s people from spiritual attack.

 b) The Economic Difficulties & Nehemiah’s Sacrificial Leadership, 5:1-19

 vs.1-5 The common people of the land were in a time of great economic difficulty for three

 reasons: 1) a famine, 2) high taxes from the Persian Empire, and 3) The Jewish moneylenders

 were charging high interest. As a result many of them were hungry and were selling their

 children into being slaves. These problems were weakening the Jews and their rebuilding.

 vs.6-13 Nehemiah rebuked the leaders of the people who were increasing the burdens on the

 people who were poor and in debt. He reminded them of the good example that he, his brothers,

 and men were being- not charging interest for loaning money, and buying back the Jews being

 sold to slavery, as much as their finances permitted.

 vs.14-18 Nehemiah’s good governance- the former governors had forced the Jews to give them

 taxes and food. Nehemiah and his men (his officials) did not do that, or take advantage of their

 positions to buy land at good prices. We are also told here that Nehemiah was the governor for

 12 years, which were the years of 444-432 B.C.

 v.19 Here we read another of Nehemiah’s frequent prayers. (See 2:4, 4:4, 6:9, 6:14, 13:14, 13:22,

 13:29, 13:31. He was a man who sought to constantly live his life to please the Lord and abide

 in His presence, 1 Thess 5:17.

 c) Attempts to Snare Nehemiah, 6:1-14

 vs.1-4 Nehemiah was asked to leave the work and take counsel with his enemies, to meet them

 about 40 km. away from Jerusalem towards Samaria. They planned to kill him or perhaps

 kidnap him. This is similar to what the enemies of Paul had attempted, Acts 23:20-21, and with

 what happened to John Huss in Church history.

 vs.5-9 After attempting to pressure Nehemiah 4 times to meet them away from Jerusalem, they

 made their fifth attempt much more threatening by saying that there were rumors that

 Nehemiah was preparing to make himself a king in Jerusalem. But Nehemiah saw that they

 were making the rumors themselves (and spreading their lies by sending an open, unsealed

 letter that anyone could read) and he told them that their threatened report to King Artaxerxes

would not stop him.

 vs.10-13 Nehemiah was next pressured to hide in the temple by a false prophet who was paid to

 speak a false prophecy. Nehemiah was being watched to see if he would do what was wrong, so

 that he could be declared to be a hypocrite and lose the respect (and help) of the people. We are

 continually being tested by the world, especially by false brethren.

 v.14 All the prophets of Judah were off balance with their prophecies- instead of helping the

 rebuilding, their prophecies would have produced fear and been a hindrance to Nehemiah if he

 had believed them. Many times the voices of false and foolish prophets are multiplied while the

 true prophets remain few, 1 Kings 18:22, 2 Chron.18:5-22.

 3. Completion of the Rebuilding, 6:15-6:19

 vs.15-16 The walls were rebuilt in 52 days! While God worked no obvious miracles to help them,

 the enemies of the Jews felt weak, seeing that God was with His people, Josh.5:1.

 vs.17-19 Tobiah the Ammonite official was allied to many in Judah (through marriage and

 through good works), and he had a form of godliness (his name means “Goodness of Yahweh”)

 but he was still an enemy of the Jews, Neh.4:7-8.

**Part 2 The Restoration of Jerusalem’s People, Neh. 7:1-13:31**

Rebuilding the walls & gates of Jerusalem could help protect the Jews from outside danger, but they were still internally weak. The Jews needed to repopulate Jerusalem and be cleansed from much mixture and compromise so that they could become a nation prepared for the coming of the Messiah, Mal.3:1-4. In a similar way we need strong spiritual defenses rebuilt around the people of God, but then we also need revival, cleansing from the ways of the heathen, and church growth for us to become ready for the Second Coming of Christ!

**A. ORGANIZING JERUSALEM, 7:1-4**

 v.2 Governor Nehemiah appointed his brother Hanani to be the mayor of Jerusalem along with one

 other godly associate.

 v.3 Nehemiah made strict standards for opening & shutting the gates. As a Persian government

 official, Nehemiah would know the story of how the army of the former Persian king,

 Cyrus, had conquered Babylon by sneaking through the unguarded gates of the river that

 normally flowed thru the city, Is.45:1. Cyrus had also quickly conquered the city of Sardis

 through a similar tactic. Slothful & undedicated watchmen have been the destruction of the

 strongest defenses.

\* In a similar way we need to be able to watch and pray to guard our own lives & protect God’s

 people, Mat.26:41, Prov.25:28, Prov.24:30-31.

\* As leaders we need to be careful what we let thru the gate into our churches: what ministers

are invited to come, what doctrines we preach, what books & ministries we endorse, what

prophecies we endorse…

**B. REGISTRATION OF THE JEWS IN THE FIRST RETURN, 7:5-73**

 v.5 Nehemiah knew that the population of Jerusalem was too small to properly defend such a large

 area (Neh.7:4), so in preparation to organize a repopulation of the city, he wanted to make a

 census of the people. In preparing for this, he found a list of the group of Jews who had first

 returned from Babylon under Zerrubbabel’s leadership about 95 years before.

**C. THE RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT, 8:1-10:39**

 1. The Water Gate Revival, 8:1-18

 There were many problems towards bringing the Jews into unity with God and each other, but

 Nehemiah & Ezra united them through revival into strong unity. Nehemiah & Ezra knew that

 united prayer and worship was needed to bring unity and blessings on the nation. Any

 government- any church- any family- will face many needless arguments and conflicts if they do

 not learn to humble themselves before the Lord and seek His help.

 vs.1 &3 All the Jews gathered at a large open square just inside the Water Gate. After this gate

 had been restored they could enter into the spiritual fulfillment of this gate, that the Word of

 God was restored to the people, Eph.5:26.

 v.2 This gathering was on the first day of the 7th month, which was also the day on the Jewish

 calendar for the Feast of Trumpets, Lev.23:24. This feast signified that God was speaking

 afresh to His people, and was leading them on, Num.10:2, Heb.3:15.

 v.4 The elders of the Jews sat with Ezra on the platform in front of the people. This helped give

 unity and solemnity to the service.

 vs.4-8 As many thousands of people had gathered, they needed good organization so that all the

 people could hear, and so that all the people could understand, God’s word. The Scriptures

 needed to be explained very simply to the people.

 vs.9-12 This solemn gathering where the Scriptures were read to them from early morning until

 noontime had a deep impact in the hearts of the people: they all wept, and then they all greatly

 rejoiced. God had brought His people back to the Promised Land, and had given them a strong

 capital city- and now God’s word was turning the people wholeheartedly back to the Lord!

 vs.9-10 After all the people had wept, Nehemiah and Ezra encouraged them to rejoice on that

 special day. Skillful leaders must balance the spiritual experiences of their people, Eccl.3:4.

 Nehemiah, the king’s cupbearer, specifically knew the importance of this balance and spoke the

 famous words, “the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

 vs.13-15 All the leaders were gathered together for a second day where Ezra taught the Scriptures.

 They saw that they should soon celebrate another feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, Lev.23:39-40.

 vs.15-18 The people gathered in their booths for 7 days as Ezra continued to teach them the word

 of God. The revival continued! The Feast of Tabernacles was also the time of harvest, and

speaks about the multitudes who will turn to the Lord in these Last Days. Then its greatest

fulfillment will be in the millennial reign of Christ, Zech.14:16.

 2. The Levites Recount their History & Situation, 9:1-37

 vs.1-3 The revival continued a few days later when all the people fasted and confessed their sins.

 Now they also went a step farther in the revival, where the Jews separated from their pagan

 spouses. True repentance will cause us to turn from our sins, not just be sorry about them!

 vs.4-37 The Priests and Levites told the story to all the people, how God had blessed their

 forefathers and given them the promised Land. But the Jews had grown content and disobedient

 in their prosperity, and were punished, until at their time they were only servants or slaves of

 the Persian kings.

 3. The Renewal of the Covenant, 9:38-10:29

 v.38 As a result, the Jews had decided to make a new covenant with God, to serve Him properly

 and seek for God’s full blessing to again be upon them.

 vs.10:1-27 All the leaders signed this covenant with God, starting with the greatest (Nehemiah the

 governor) down to the priests and Levites.

 vs.28-29 All the rest of the people joined the covenant by promising with a spoken oath and curse.

 They all promised to be obedient to the Covenant, as shown by the following commitments.

**D. OBEDIENCE TO THE COVENANT, 10:30-13:31**

 1. Personal Obedience and Temple Support, 10:30-39. They promised to:

 v.30 Not allow their children to marry the heathen.

 v.31 Observe the 7th day Sabbath and the seventh year Sabbath

 v.32 Give the yearly temple tax, Ex.30:11-13. (1/3 of a Persian shekel = ½ of a Hebrew shekel)

 vs.33-34 Supply the needs of the House of God

 v.35-39 Give their tithes & offerings

 2. The Resettlement of Jerusalem, 11:1-36

 v.1 Since Jerusalem had very little population and needed more people for protection and

 prosperity, lots were cast to choose who would live there. God chose those who would live in

 Jerusalem (Prov.16:33), just as He chooses those who will live in the New Jerusalem, Rev.3:12.

 v.2 Those who chose to move to Jerusalem were helped by the others, for it would be difficult and

 expensive to move and rebuild again (they had already done this once when they returned from

 Babylon). There is a cost to aim higher in God, but God will help us & reward us, Mt.19:29-30.

 Most of the Jews that had been taken captive to Babylon did not even return to rebuild their

 nation, usually because they had grown prosperous and comfortable in Babylon- but they

 paid for their compromise in the end, Rev.18:4.

 vs.3-19 People from among the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (vs.3-9) and from among the priests

 and Levites (vs.10-19) were chosen to dwell in Jerusalem. The other tribes never even returned

 to rebuild the nation, they remained scattered among the nations. Some wrong choices that

 people make cannot find restoration, Heb.12:17.

 vs.20 & 25-36 Here we find a list of the cities of Judah and Benjamin where the rest of the Jews

 lived who were not in Jerusalem.

 v.21 The Nethinim were the temple servants who would today be considered deacons. They lived

 just outside Jerusalem, near the temple.

 vs.22-23 The singers for the house of God are mentioned, and were specifically supported by the

 king (Ezra 7:20). Those who are true worshipers will find the King’s favor, Jn.4:23.They were

 of the sons of Asaph, a family line of Levites who had been greatly blessed and whose mantle

 was carried down through many generations since the time of King David, 1 Chron.16:4-5.

 3. Register of the Priests and Levites, 12:1-26

 It was important for the genealogies of the priests and Levites to be accurately kept, as no one was

 allowed to do their works of ministry unless they qualified by their birthright calling, Neh.7:64-65.

 \* In a similar way each minister today must be called of God, and not just be someone who enters

 the ministry for reward or honor, Heb.5:4.

 4. The Dedication of Jerusalem’s Wall, 12:27-43

 Nehemiah appointed two large choirs led by the priests and Levites, who circled around the wall

 of Jerusalem in two groups that met and ended their procession at the house of God, v.40.

 Dedication services can be a time of great joy, v.43!

 5. The Restoration of the People, 12:44-13:31

 vs.44-47 At the time of the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, everyone wholeheartedly worked

 together in the service of God. Tithes, offerings, and firstfruits were faithfully given and used to

 support the servants of God.

 CHAPTER 13 NEHEMIAH'S SECOND ADMINISTRATION

 After Nehemiah had been the governor of Judah for 12 years, he returned to again serve King

 Artaxerxes I (v.6). After some time back, the king gave him permission to go again to

 Jerusalem (v.7) where he stayed for probably a much shorter time. At this time he corrected

 abuses that had crept back in to Judah and Jerusalem.

 13:1-3 – “On that day” probably refers to when Nehemiah had returned to Jerusalem. At this time

 the Jews were again tolerating mixed marriages, probably led by the wrong example of the

 High Priest, Eliashib, (v.28). This was the third time in 30 years that Ezra and Nehemiah had

opposed the Jews having mixed marriages with pagan foreigners. There are still many wrong

and sinful marriage relationships tolerated in many churches today, but the churches that go

onwards to restoration will repeatedly confront and correct these problems.

 vs.4-9 Eliashib had given Tobiah, the Ammonite governor, a large room in the Temple compound

 where he could stay when he visited Jerusalem. Nehemiah threw Tobiah’s possessions out and

 cleaned it for its proper use for the House of God. Eliashib had been compromising with their

 corrupt neighbors, who often had some form of religious godliness.

 vs.10-13 The corruption in the House of God had probably discouraged the people from bringing

 their tithes, which caused the Levites and singers (who were no longer being supported) to

 leave Jerusalem and go back to their fields in the province, v 10. Nehemiah corrected this and

 the tithes started coming in again.

 vs.15-22 Nehemiah corrected the neglect of the Sabbath as many were putting financial prosperity

 above seeking to honoring God.

 vs.23-29 Nehemiah strongly opposed those who were intermarrying with the foreigners. He pulled

 out their hair and drove the High Priest’s grandson out of Judah!

 vs.30-31 Nehemiah also reorganized the provision of wood for the temple and the firstfruits

 offerings.

 vs.22, 29, & 31- Nehemiah wrote his prayers, “Remember Me…” and “Remember them…” (his

 enemies) and “Remember Me, O my God, for good!” Nehemiah desired to earnestly serve God,

 and his efforts helped raise up a restored godly people that were ready for the coming of Christ!

CONCLUSION: If Nehemiah had not resisted the liberal influence of the High Priest and others, as well as the corruptions of their neighboring peoples, the Jews would have never been able to remain a united people through the next centuries of Greek and Roman domination. There would have been no Jewish people for the Messiah to come for! Nehemiah did his work of restoration well, and was a worthy cupbearer to make glad the heart of the King of Kings!