

Lessons from the Life of Nehemiah I

1- Objectives

- ❖ To know about Nehemiah
- ❖ To learn from him dealing with oppression

2- References

- ❖ The Holy Bible “Book of Nehemiah”
- ❖ Interpretation of the Book of Nehemiah by father Tadros Malaty

http://st-takla.org/pub_Bible-Interpretations/Holy-Bible-Tafsir-01-Old-Testament/Father-Tadros-Yacoub-Malaty/16-Sefr-Nahamia/Tafseer-Sefr-Nehemiah_00-introduction.html
http://st-takla.org/pub_Bible-Interpretations/Holy-Bible-Tafsir-01-Old-Testament/Father-Tadros-Yacoub-Malaty/16-Sefr-Nahamia/Tafseer-Sefr-Nehemiah_00-introduction.html

Formatted: Default Paragraph Font

Formatted: Default Paragraph Font

3- Scriptural Verse

- ❖ Then the king said to me, “What do you request?” So I prayed to the God of heaven. ~~And I said to the king:~~ “.....” (Nehemiah 2: 4-5)

4- Lesson Outlines

Who is Nehemiah?

- ❖ The son of Hachaliah and the leader of the 3rd and last group that returned from Captivity.
- ❖ The cupbearer for King Artaxerxes in Babylon.
- ❖ The Israelites had started returning to Israel, but they had no leader and their homeland was in shambles. Nehemiah asked the king’s permission to return to his home to lead the people in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.
- ❖ Nehemiah sacrificed his high and comfortable position for the sake of God’s house.
- ❖ He had good faith in God’s promises and had a great zeal for God’s house.

Formatted: Font: 12 pt

Formatted: Font: 12 pt

Formatted: Font: 12 pt

Nehemiah’s Plan to overcome obstacles and complete his task

1- True Repentance

“He prayed: “Please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father’s house and I have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses” (Nehemiah 1: 5-7).

2- Faith in God’s Promises

- ❖ Trusting in God’s words even while we know we are sinners; God’s love is boundless and He wants us all to return; despite our sin, we are still God’s people.
- ❖ He works through us: “The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build” ([Nehemiah 2: 20](#))
- ❖ He fights on our behalf and delivers us from our enemies: “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.... And It happened that God had brought their plot to nothing” ([Nehemiah 4: 14-15](#))
- ❖ He strengthens us to complete the work: “For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, “Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands” ([Nehemiah 6: 9](#))

3- Zeal for God’s House

- ❖ Nehemiah was really sad for Jerusalem while he was enjoying his life in the palace “So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven” ([Nehemiah 1: 4](#)).
- ❖ He sacrificed his high and comfortable position for the sake of God’s house “Therefore the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart.” So I became dreadfully afraid, and said to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers’ tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?” ([Nehemiah 2: 2-3](#)).
- ❖ He did not make excuses that someone else was more equipped and was not afraid to ask the king to go: “So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.” ([Nehemiah 2: 4-5](#)).
- ❖ He believed that he was doing God’s work and that God was supporting him: “The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build” ([Nehemiah 2: 20](#)).

4- Dealing with External Oppressions

- ❖ He was faithful to do his work despite all mockeries and his reply was prayers to the Lord: “They laughed at us and despised us, and said, “What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?” ([Nehemiah 2: 19](#)); “Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall” ([Nehemiah 4:3](#)).
- ❖ He kept focus and calmed the people: “The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build” ([Nehemiah 2: 20](#)).
- ❖ He did not remain idle, but stationed people around the city for protection; “Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion. Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and

Formatted: Font: Not Italic

Formatted: Font: Not Italic

Formatted: Font: Not Italic

Formatted: Font: 12 pt

Formatted: Font: 12 pt

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt, Not Bold, Not Superscript/ Subscript

because of them we set a watch against them day and night ([Nehemiah Neh.4:7-9](#) & [13-14](#)).

- ❖ They built with one hand, while holding a weapon with the other: “Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built” ([Nehemiah Neh.4: 17-18](#)).

5- Dealing with Internal Oppression

There were also those who said, “We have borrowed money for the king's tax on our lands and vineyards. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and indeed we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been brought into slavery. It is not in our power to redeem them, for other men have our lands and vineyards. “And I became very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said to them, “Each of you is exacting usury from his brother.” So I called a great assembly against them. And I said to them, “According to our ability we have redeemed our Jewish brethren who were sold to the nations. Now indeed, will you even sell your brethren? Or should they be sold to us?” Then they were silenced and found nothing to say” ([Nehemiah Neh.5:4-8](#)).

- ❖ The poor people borrowed money ~~for~~ ~~from~~ the nobles (both Jews) to pay their taxes.
- ❖ When they could not repay they became slaves to the nobles.
- ❖ Oppressed from the outside and the inside.
- ❖ Nehemiah rebuked the nobles and lent money to the poor.
- ❖ Nehemiah had a balanced response that showed love and a desire for unity.

6- Sharing with others and did not take advantage of his high position

- ❖ “Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor’s provision” ([Nehemiah Neh.5:14](#)).
- ❖ “And at my table were one hundred and fifty Jews and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations around us” ([Nehemiah Neh.5:17](#)).

5- Conclusion

- ❖ To face a problem in our life, we should go the same path of Nehemiah starting with true repentance, faith in God’s promises, have a zeal for God’s commandments, face our oppressions with prayers and hard work and never forget the good deeds specially for the needy.

6- Activities / Discussion Points

- ❖ Divide the audience into groups and give each group parts of the Book of Nehemiah and let them find all the points you want to discuss so that they will be active in the discussion.

