

FEBRUARY

2026

ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BIBLE FOR ALL (BFA) MATERIAL FOR DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Dig Deeper Study Tools

Author's Purpose
Context
Structure
Linking Words
Parallels
Narrator's Comment
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"Who am I?"
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Nehemiah — Strengthening Faith, Strengthening Community

Sermon Series

08 February 2026

February Study 1

Nehemiah 4:1-14

22 February 2026

February Study 2

Nehemiah 5:1-13

Introduction to Nehemiah (Biblical Theology Study Bible NIV)

The book of Nehemiah, along with its companion Ezra, comes from the time of the return from exile in Babylon and vividly narrates the obstacles and opposition the Jews encountered when they rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and eventually made the city habitable and secure. Ezra and later Nehemiah led the restoration and rebuilding not only of the broken city but also the broken people. Their roles were different, but we should not exaggerate the difference. 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.

Leading Themes

Nehemiah comes to us first as a man of prayer before we see him in action as a gifted administrator and leader. All he does is driven by loyalty to the God of the covenant. He is passionate about the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the establishment of God's people in the land, including a resumption of community life and worship.

- The doctrine of God
- The supremacy of Scripture
- The history of salvation
- The importance of prayer
- The nature of leadership
- The provisional nature of the work: The book ends not with a great flourish but with a renewed call for faithfulness and a heartfelt prayer for God's help. Before the end of Nehemiah's service, initial enthusiasm is running out, leading to lapses into past ungodly practices. Until the kingdom is consummated, there will always be the need for faith, obedience, and daily dependence on the Lord's help.

The Portrait of Nehemiah in the Book

Nehemiah comes across more vividly than Ezra. We should not rigidly distinguish between Ezra the spiritual leader and Nehemiah the political leader because each is prominent in both spheres. Yet Nehemiah, although a lay figure, is involved in projects of building and spiritual reformation usually associated with kings and prophets. Like Hezekiah and Josiah, he rebuilds and repairs the city and calls the people to return to the celebration of the great festivals that commemorate aspects of Israel's relationship with its covenant Lord.

Nehemiah is not strictly a prophet, but the book opens with the phrase "The words of Nehemiah," analogous to introductions in the Prophetic Books (e.g., Jer 1:1; Amos 1:1). His words often are prophetic (e.g., 2:12, 17–18), and false prophets harass him (6:10–14) as they do the great prophets. Neither is Nehemiah a priest, but he is thoroughly involved in the renewal of priests and Levites (chs. 7–13). He is not a perfect figure, and we are not invited to admire or imitate him in every respect—e.g., beating people and pulling out their hair (13:25)! We are not Nehemiah, but Nehemiah's God is our God; and we, like Nehemiah, are servants. Thus, we can see in the struggles he faced and the reforms he carried out a voice for our own day. Ezra and Nehemiah acted to restore Israel's covenant relationship with the Lord: they confessed their sin of

turning from the Lord in disobedience; they restored the Torah at the heart of the nation's life; and they carried out the necessary restoration to allow the kind of settled life and security where progress could be made.

Relevance

- It is important to be rooted in the story of God's past dealings without living in the past and pining for a mythical golden age. The hard grind of recovery and reform is calculated to bring out strong faith.
- We must emphasise the gospel's uniqueness and confront spiritual and moral compromise.
- Prayer is the link between balancing God's sovereignty with the need for action.
- In our day we will never complete the work, because God begins and finishes that for his glory.

Timeline (adapted from ESV Study Bible)

<i>Event</i>	<i>Month/Day</i>	<i>Year (BC)</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Cyrus king of Persia captures Babylon		539	Dan 5:30-31
First year of Cyrus; issues proclamation freeing Jewish exiles to return		538-537	Ezra 1:1-4
Jewish exiles, led by Sheshbazzar, return from Babylon to Jerusalem		537?	Ezra 1:11
Altar rebuilt		537	Ezra 3:1-2
Temple rebuilding begins		536	Ezra 3:8
Adversaries oppose the rebuilding		536-530	Ezra 4:1-5
Temple rebuilding ceases		530-520	Ezra 4:24
Temple rebuilding resumes (2 nd year of Darius)		520	Ezra 5:2; compare Hag 1:14
Temple construction completed (6 th year of Darius)		516	Ezra 6:15
Ezra departs from Babylon to Jerusalem (arrives 7 th year of Artaxerxes)		458	Ezra 7:6-9
Men of Judah and Benjamin assemble at Jerusalem		458	Ezra 10:9
Officials conduct three-month investigation (intermarriage)		458-457	Ezra 10:16-17
Artaxerxes decrees that work on Jerusalem's walls and foundations should stop		Just before 445	Ezra 4:7-23
Hanani brings Nehemiah a report from Jerusalem (20 th year of Artaxerxes I)		445-444	Neh 1:1
Nehemiah goes before Artaxerxes	1	445	Neh 2:1
Nehemiah arrives to inspect Jerusalem walls		445	Neh 2:11
Wall is finished	6/25	445	Neh 6:15
People of Israel gather	7	445	Neh 7:73-8:1
People of Israel celebrate Feast of Booths	7/15-22	445	Neh 8:14
People of Israel fast and confess sins	7/24	445	Neh 9:1
Nehemiah returns to Susa (32 nd year of Artaxerxes I)		433-432	Neh 5:14, 13:6

Outline of Nehemiah (with preaching schedule)

BFA	Date	Text
STRENGTHENING FAITH: THE RETURN OF NEHEMIAH AND THE REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM'S WALLS		
Jan Study 1	4 Jan 2026	Be Resolute, Come in Brokenness Neh 1:1-4
	11 Jan 2026	Be Resolute, Seek God in Prayer Neh 1:5-11
Jan Study 2	18 Jan 2026	Be Resolute, Act on God's Timing Neh 2:1-8
	25 Jan 2026	Be Resolute, Discern Challenges & Rally God's People Neh 2:9-20
	1 Feb 2026	Be Resolute, Everyone Matters Neh 3:1-32
Feb Study 1	8 Feb 2026	Be Resolute, Fight for Our Families Neh 4:1-14
	15 Feb 2026	Be Resolute, God Fights for Us Neh 4:15-23
Feb Study 2	22 Feb 2026	Be Resolute, Fear God Neh 5:1-13
	1 Mar 2026	Be Resolute, Care for God's People Neh 5:14-19
Mar Study 1	8 Mar 2026	Be Resolute, Stay Focused Neh 6:1-14
Mar Study 2	15 Mar 2026	Be Resolute, Remain Vigilant Neh 6:15-19
	22 Mar 2026	Be Resolute, Appoint Godly Leaders Neh 7:1-3
	29 Mar 2026	PALM SUNDAY (break from Nehemiah series)
	5 Apr 2026	EASTER SUNDAY (break from Nehemiah series)
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY: THE PEOPLE AND THEIR RECOMMITMENT TO GOD		
Apr Study 1	12 Apr 2026	Be Resolute, Guard Healthy Membership Neh 7:5-7, 60-73
Apr Study 2	19 Apr 2026	Be Resolute, Gather Around the Word Neh 8:1-7
	26 Apr 2026	Be Resolute, Celebrate His Grace Neh 8:8-18
May Study 1	3 May 2026	Be Resolute, Come in Confession and Worship Neh 9:1-8
	10 May 2026	Be Resolute, Remember God's Faithfulness Neh 9:9-21, 32-38
May Study 2	17 May 2026	Be Resolute, Commit As A Covenant Community Neh 10:1-3, 28-39

<i>BFA</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Text</i>
THE EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN FAITH AND COMMUNITY HAS TO CONTINUE: THE REDEDICATED PEOPLE WITH THE DEDICATED WALL		
Jul Study 1 (recap)	24 May 2026	Be Resolute, Take Up Your Assignment Neh 11:1-25
	31 May 2026	Be Resolute, God Remembers the Faithful Neh 12:1, 7-9, 22-26
	7 Jun 2026	Be Resolute, Celebrate God's Victory Neh 12:27-47
	14 Jun 2026	Be Resolute, Protect Worship Space Neh 13:1-14
	21 Jun 2026	Be Resolute, Guard Sacred Time Neh 13:15-22
	28 Jun 2026	Be Resolute, Reject Compromises Neh 13:23-31

08 February 2026

February Study 1

Nehemiah 4:1-14

PREPARE (INDIVIDUAL): READ, MARK, AND REFLECT

Read the text throughout the week(s) before your group time.

Nehemiah 4:1-14

Opposition to the Rebuilding

⁴ When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, ² and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, “What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?”

³ Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, “What they are building—even a fox climbing up on it would break down their wall of stones!”

⁴ Hear us, our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity.

⁵ Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders.

⁶ So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.

⁷ But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the people of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem’s walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. ⁸ They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. ⁹ But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.

¹⁰ Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, “The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall.” ¹¹ Also our enemies said, “Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work.” ¹² Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, “Wherever you turn, they will attack us.”

¹³ Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. ¹⁴ After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, “Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.”

Notes and Questions

PREPARE TO SHARE (INDIVIDUAL): LOOK BACK

What has God been teaching you in the last few weeks?

Who has God laid on your heart to pray for?

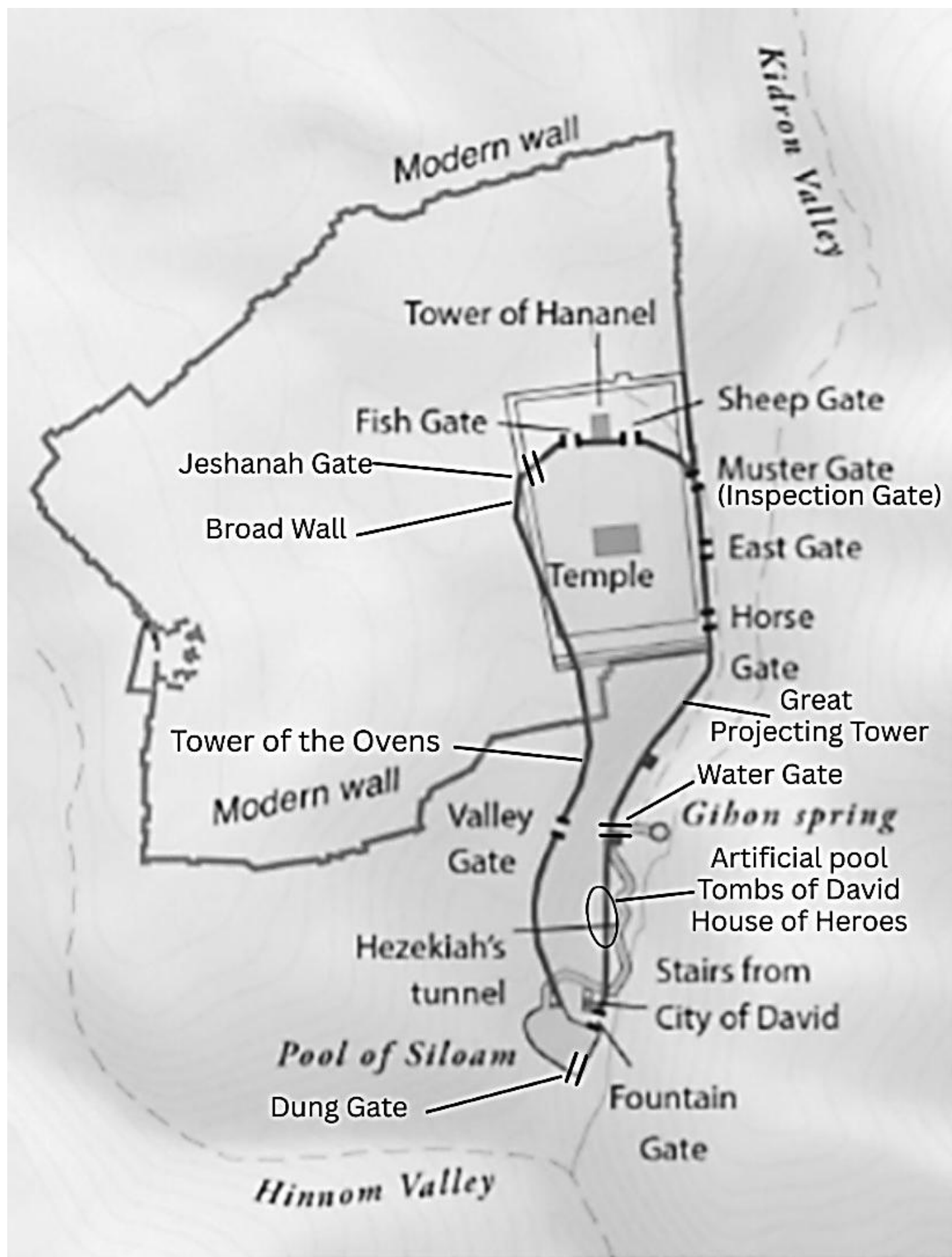
GROUP: SHARE AND PRAY

Take note of one another's prayer concerns.

Come together to pray for each other, the church, and the world (see this month's prayer bulletin).

GROUP: WORSHIP TOGETHER

Prepare your hearts to meet God and one another in His Word through worshipping together.



GROUP: STUDY 1

Read Nehemiah 4:1-14.



CONTEXT:

What happens around (before/after/during) this passage?

1. On the diagram (previous page), trace the path taken by Nehemiah in Neh 2:13-15, and fill in the builders of the sections as noted by Nehemiah 3.



OBSERVATION:

What do you notice as you read this passage?

2. What were the initial responses to the Jews rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem?

3. How did the opposers react when they heard that the work continued? What did they do to stop the work?

4. How did Nehemiah and the Jews respond to the opposition they faced?

Sanballat is the governor of Samaria (other references Neh 2:10, 19; 6:1-9; 13:28).

Tobiah is possibly the governor of Ammon (other references Neh 6:17-19).

Note that archaeologists have found the walls built by Nehemiah to be 2.7m thick.

North of Jerusalem was Samaria, south of Jerusalem were the Arabs, east of Jerusalem was Ammon, and west of Jerusalem was Ashdod.



INTERPRETATION:

What is the meaning & significance of your observations?

5. Why do you think Sanballat and Tobiah wanted the wall building project to fail?

6. How does the rebuilding of the wall symbolise spiritual restoration?
7. Consider Nehemiah's position as the king's representative. What authority do you think Nehemiah had to deal with the opposition he was facing? Why do you think he chose this course of action instead?
8. What do you think gave the Jews the strength to carry on, despite the discouragement, persecution and the dangers?



BIG IDEA: What is the main message of the passage?
Sum up the main idea and supporting ideas.

9. Sum up the events of Nehemiah 4:1-18 in one sentence.
10. Where do you see God acting in this passage?



APPLICATION:
Why did the Holy Spirit give us this text?

11. We too are God's people doing God's work in God's world.
Note down the parallels and how we can apply them.

	Nehemiah	Me	ORPC
God-given task			
Obstacles faced			
Response			

12. Why does God allow us to encounter difficulties and suffering when we serve Him?

GROUP: DISCIPLESHIP FOCUS

Share about a time you felt very discouraged, as if the world was against you. What helped you to stay strong and focused? What didn't?

22 February 2026

February Study 2

Nehemiah 5:1-13

PREPARE (INDIVIDUAL): READ, MARK, AND REFLECT

Read the text throughout the week(s) before your group time.

Nehemiah 5:1-13

Notes and Questions

Nehemiah Helps the Poor

⁵ Now the men and their wives raised a great outcry against their fellow Jews. ² Some were saying, “We and our sons and daughters are numerous; in order for us to eat and stay alive, we must get grain.”

³ Others were saying, “We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our homes to get grain during the famine.”

⁴ Still others were saying, “We have had to borrow money to pay the king’s tax on our fields and vineyards. ⁵ Although we are of the same flesh and blood as our fellow Jews and though our children are as good as theirs, yet we have to subject our sons and daughters to slavery. Some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but we are powerless, because our fields and our vineyards belong to others.”

⁶ When I heard their outcry and these charges, I was very angry. ⁷ I pondered them in my mind and then accused the nobles and officials. I told them, “You are charging your own people interest!” So I called together a large meeting to deal with them ⁸ and said: “As far as possible, we have bought back our fellow Jews who were sold to the Gentiles. Now you are selling your own people, only for them to be sold back to us!” They kept quiet, because they could find nothing to say.

⁹ So I continued, “What you are doing is not right. Shouldn’t you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies?”

¹⁰ I and my brothers and my men are also lending the people money and grain. But let us stop charging interest! ¹¹ Give back to them immediately their fields, vineyards, olive groves and houses, and also the interest you are charging them—one percent of the money, grain, new wine and olive oil.”

¹² “We will give it back,” they said. “And we will not demand anything more from them. We will do as you say.” Then I summoned the priests and made the nobles and officials take an oath to do what they had promised. ¹³ I also shook out the folds of my robe and said, “In this way may God shake out of their house and possessions anyone who does not keep this promise. So may such a person be shaken out and emptied!” At this the whole assembly said, “Amen,” and praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.

PREPARE TO SHARE (INDIVIDUAL): LOOK BACK

What has God been teaching you in the last few weeks?

Who has God laid on your heart to pray for?

GROUP: SHARE AND PRAY

Take note of one another's prayer concerns.

Come together to pray for each other, the church, and the world (see this month's prayer bulletin).

GROUP: WORSHIP TOGETHER

Prepare your hearts to meet God and one another in His Word through worshipping together.

GROUP: STUDY 2

Read Nehemiah 5:1-13.



CONTEXT:

What happens around (before/after/during) this passage?

1. What arrangement was made for the defence of Jerusalem's walls? (See Neh 4:15-23, particularly 4:22)



OBSERVATION:

What do you notice as you read this passage?

2. Nehemiah 5:1-5 describes a problem that arose – an outcry from three groups of oppressed peoples within the Jews. What was each group facing, and what was the overall problem?

Group	Problem Faced

Overall problem:

3. What was Nehemiah's reaction and response to this problem? (vv.6-8)

The events of Nehemiah 5 may have happened shortly before the wall was finished in August-September, near the end of the harvest.

It is estimated that the Persian king collected the equivalent of 100 million USD each year in taxes, of which little was ever returned to benefit the provinces since most of it was melted down and stored as bullion.

Famines were relatively frequent in this area, produced by lack of rainfall in due season, destructive hail storms and by rain out of season, destruction of crops by locusts and caterpillars etc.

4. What was Nehemiah's solution to this problem? (vv.9-13)



INTERPRETATION:

What is the meaning & significance of your observations?

5. What caused the problems being faced by the Jews? Consider their geographic and political situation, as well as Neh 4:15-23.

6. Why did Nehemiah say that what they were doing was not right? Consider Exod 22:25-27; Lev 25:35-37; Deut 23:19-29, 24:10-13.

7. Was Nehemiah part of the problem? (See Neh 5:8, 14-19)



BIG IDEA: What is the main message of the passage?
Sum up the main idea and supporting ideas.

8. What is the key point of this passage?



APPLICATION:

Why did the Holy Spirit give us this text?

9. What does oppression look like today in our society? In what ways might we be participating in oppression of others?

10. Do you think those outside of the ORPC community would describe us as honouring God? Why, or why not?

11. What commitment can we make as individuals, DGs, and as a church that demonstrates the reality of God in our lives?

GROUP: DISCIPLESHIP FOCUS

Discuss how your group can follow up on the commitment you have made in Q11. Plan for action as a DG.