



Minor Prophets

Lesson 17

Nehemiah 5-7 The Return

Though they remain under the authority of the king of Persia, the Jews who desired to were allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their city. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Ezra the temple was rebuilt despite years of opposition. For the next phase of restoration, God had raised up Nehemiah to return and rebuild the walls of the city so that it could once more be inhabited and worship of Yahweh could become the center of their lives. Nehemiah, as an excellent leader and motivator, broke up the daunting process into sections of the wall and gave the work to families or other groups who were willing to work. Despite some serious threats and discouraging mockery, the walls were rebuilt in 52 days. The task of external restoration was happening, but now Nehemiah would now have

to deal with several problems that were internal. Though the people were there to reestablish their religious worship and identity as God's nation, they were not following the laws that had been established by God regarding how they were to worship and serve Him. The financing of the materials for building the wall had been provided by Persia, but many of the people themselves were struggling through a famine and living in extreme poverty. To compound their suffering, the rich of the land were taking advantage of the situation and imposing taxes that the people couldn't pay. This became a dramatic distraction from the progression of unity and righteous living that was the goal in the restoration of the community.

READ NEHEMIAH 5

1. *What were some of the injustices happening in the area that Nehemiah has to contend with? 5:1-5*

2. *Why was this situation serious beyond being a money issue? Exodus 22:25; Deut. 23:19-20. What should they have been doing instead? Leviticus 25:35-48.*

3. *How did Nehemiah respond to this problem? 5:6 What steps did he take to solve it? 5:7-13*
4. *What things did Nehemiah do that were examples to the people?*

READ NEHEMIAH 6

5. *What new threat does Nehemiah face in 6:1-9? Why is this not surprising, and how does Nehemiah handle it? Nehemiah 1:10; 2:19; 4:1-3*
6. *How does Shemaiah want to handle the threat, and why does Nehemiah rebuke him? 6:20-14*
7. *How did some of the surrounding people respond to the wall being finished, but how did Tobiah continue to harass? 6:15-19*

READ CHAPTER 7

8. *What further precautions does Nehemiah take to protect the city, and why do you think he does that? 7:1-4*
9. *Why do you think Nehemiah created another genealogical record of the returnees even though that had been done when he first returned with Zerubbabel? 7:5; Ezra 2*

Prayer requests:

Group time notes:
