

Old Testament Survey
Lesson 16 – Ezra and Nehemiah
Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School
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Historical Setting (much from Terry Riley’s Chronology Study)

In 722 BC the Northern Kingdom, Israel, fell to Assyria. The captivity (exile) of Judah occurred in three stages. Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel fulfilled their prophetic ministries during this Babylonian captivity.

Stage #1 (605 BC) On his way back from victory in Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar, general of the armies of Babylon, laid siege to Jerusalem, and took some of the leading nobles and young men from the city of Jerusalem as hostages and carried them back to Babylon. It is at this point that Daniel and his three friends are carried off. Most of the citizens are still in the land of Judah, but are certainly subservient to Babylon. It is possible that it was at this point that Jeremiah prophesied the 70-year captivity (cf. Jer 25:11-12).

Stage #2 (597 BC) Jehoiakim rebels against Nebuchadnezzar (ca 602 BC), who finally comes and attacks Jerusalem (March 10, 597 BC), carrying off 10,000 captives to Babylon. Jehoiakim had died in 598 BC, so that by the time Nebuchadnezzar arrived to punish Jerusalem for their rebellion, Jehoiachin had come on the throne. He was taken captive to Babylon, and remained prisoner there until the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 561 BC (2 Kings 25:27-30). It was at this time that the wealthy elite were carried off to Babylon including Ezekiel, who would be called to the prophetic office about 593 BC.

Stage #3 (586 BC) King Zedekiah ignores the warnings of Jeremiah (Jer 27-28) and plots against Babylon once again by entering an alliance with Egypt, so that Nebuchadnezzar returns, lays siege against Jerusalem (Jan 15, 588 – July 18, 586 BC). The city was besieged leading to terrible atrocities including children killed and eaten as the food ran out. Finally Jerusalem fell and was sacked, the Temple stripped and burned, and the remaining masses of people deported. A tiny remnant of Jews, including Jeremiah, was left in Judah under Gedeliah, who was appointed governor. When Gedeliah was murdered, those Jews feared reprisal and fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah there against his wishes (cf. Jer 40:13). The land of Judah began to experience 70 years of slavery to make up for its neglected Sabbaths.

The restoration (or deportation) of Judah also took place in three stages. Remember that while Judah fell to the nation of Babylon. Babylon in turn was destroyed by Medo/Persia in 539 BC (cf. Dan 5). Thus when the Jews return to the land, they do so under the authority of the Persians. The Babylonians had a policy of *expatriation*, where they would remove people from their native land and place them somewhere else in the empire in order to avoid an organized resistance. In contrast, the Persian policy was *repatriation*, which was the concept of replacing people back into their native land in order to gain their loyalty.

Stage #1 (538 BC) (Ezra 1-6) The decree of Cyrus (2 Chron 36) allowed for the return to the land. The political leader who led the return was Zerubbabel and the religious leader was Joshua. There were about 50,000 Jews who returned at this time. The purpose of this return was to rebuild the temple, which was completed in 516 BC. It was during this time that the prophets of Haggai and Zechariah ministered. It is during this time that the events of the book of Esther take place (ca. 483-478 BC) in Persia, which highlight the fact that not all of the Jews returned to the land.

Stage #2 (458 BC) (Ezra 7-10) The leader of this return was Ezra the Scribe, who led about 2,000 Jews back to Jerusalem. This group refurbished the Temple, which had deteriorated, and instituted religious reform mainly by reestablishing the Law of Moses as the standard of faith and conduct.

Stage #3 (445BC) (Neh 1-13) It was at this time that Nehemiah, an important official in the Persian court, was appointed governor of Jerusalem and allowed to return to the land in order to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and enable the people to re-inhabit the city. Malachi ministered during this time.

The Book and the Author:

In the Hebrew Bible Ezra and Nehemiah are one book. This time it was the scholars who translated the Latin Vulgate who split them and named them. Ezra was, obviously, named after the books primary character. Ezra is the main player in both Ezra and Nehemiah. Hebrew tradition says that Ezra wrote the Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Ezra was a descendant of Hilkiah, the high priest who found a copy of the Law and starting a revival during the reign of Josiah (2 Chron 34:14). Ezra was a priest without a Temple but he gave himself to the study of word of God and was according to Ezra 7:6, "a scribe skilled in the law of Moses." He started a revival by reading God's word as reported in Nehemiah. He organized the synagogue, was a founder of the order of scribes, revived the law as the basis for religious and social life, helped to settle on the canon of Scripture, and arranged the Psalms.

Outline of Ezra

Unlike the captivities during the age of the Judges, the Babylonian captivity did not bring a national repentance from the Hebrew people. It was Cyrus, the pagan king of Persia, who ordered the captives to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. Out of millions, only 50,000 returned most of who were Levites, Priests, and the very poorest of the people. Even as, through the years, this number increased they never again became a truly independent political nation. They had puppet leaders and, until our time, were always subject to the whims and control of governments and their Gentile (pagan) rulers. This accounts for the rising influence of the priesthood--the only other office of authority available under Mosaic Law.

The key to the story of Ezra is not political, but spiritual, as indicated in Ezra 9:4 and 10:3 where the people "...trembled at the word." In fact, the topic of God's word is mentioned in prominent ways ten times Ezra.

I. The First Return under Zerubbabel (Chapters 1-6)

Zerubbabel was a descendant of David and the only "royal" person to return at this time. He, therefore, became a political leader of the remnant. Jeshua, the high priest, was the religious leader. The good news was that Cyrus gave the remnant the vast remaining treasures that were taken from the original temple. The bad news was that the journey back was long, hard, dangerous, and led to intense opposition from their long standing enemies and mixed raced Samaritans who had settled into Judah around Jerusalem. This, along with their selfishness and spiritual coldness, caused it to take fifteen years to finish the rebuilding.

We will also be introduced to the ministry of the Prophet Haggai and the Prophet Zechariah whose stirring prophecies were vital in prodding the people to finish building. Actually, it is the people's continued dallying with the idols of their pagan marriage partners that presented the need for Ezra and his campaign of religious reform.

A. Restoration (1)

Restoration to the land did not bring re-establishment of the nation. Jehovah had once been their king, now He didn't even "dwell among them." The Throne of David was not re-instituted as only puppet leaders (governors) were allowed under Persian control.

1. Decree from Cyrus (1:1-3)

This follows the Persian style of ruling their captive nations. The Cyrus Cylinder, an inscribed pottery tube found in Babylon and dated in the first year of his reign, discusses his tolerance of the religions of the nations under his control and his encouragement to them to re-build their holy places. Included in this record are details of his actual decree permitting the Jews to return to Judah. It is also exciting to note that God was involved in the process: Cyrus himself says God did it (v2); Jeremiah had prophesied God would do it (Jer 25, 29); and Isaiah identified Cyrus as "an anointed servant of the Lord" (Isa 45)

2. Support from Cyrus (1:4-11)

- a. Money – Cyrus called for donations from the remnant's neighbors and also returned what remained of the temple treasures stolen by Nebuchadnezzar (1 Kings 25, 1 Chron 36).
- b. Leadership – Cyrus appointed Sheshbazzar, Jehoichin's son whom he called "the Prince of Judah," to be his governor in Jerusalem and gave him the inventory.

B. Registration (2)

1. Registry

Zerubbabel, listed (v2) as one of the sub-leaders of the people, was the son of Shealtiel (3:2) and grandson of Jehoichin (1 Chron 3:19) which made him the nephew of Sheshbazzar whom he later succeeded as governor (Hag 1:1). The whole assembly was approximately 50,000 (v64-65).

2. Remnant

The listed people included: leaders (2); general populace (3-36); temple personnel (36-54); descendants of Solomon's servants (55-58); uncertain others (59-63).

C. Reconstruction (3)

1. Worship (3:1-6)

The first concern of the leaders of the returned remnant was worship. They recognized that spiritual renewal was more important than political renewal. There had not been a sacrifice offered to God in the temple for over 55 years, since the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Zerubbabel and Jeshua supervised reconstruction of the altar first, then, offered sacrifices according to the Law of Moses. First, get right with God! Next, they re-instituted the commemoration of sacred events, starting with the Feast of Tabernacles (1-6), Feasts of Trumpet, Atonement, and other feasts as instructed in Leviticus 23. Then, stay right with God!

2. Building (3:1-7)

In the second year the temple foundation was re-laid and the building begun, using materials from Lebanon and other allies of Cyrus (7-11). It was an exciting time for everyone. The people responded: the Levites led the people in music and acts of worship. The young responded with joy and the old with tears. The prophets responded: Zechariah taught the importance of each small bit of work done for God (Zech 4) and Haggai declared the coming glories of a new rebuilt Temple (Hag 2).

D. Resistance (4-5)

Residents of Samaria offered to help rebuild the temple because they believed they worshipped "the same true Lord." Remember the Samaritans were the Jews who mixed with foreigners in the north under the encouragement of the Assyrian captors to intermarry. Zerubbabel refused their help, not because of their mixed race, but because their marriage to pagans meant mixing of idol worship with the worship of God.

1. Enemies Response (4)

The Samaritans responded by harassing the builders (v4) and hiring counselors (lawyers) to frustrate them (v5). The work actually stopped for sixteen years (536-520 BC) until Darius came to power as reported in chapter 5. Verses 6 through 23 summarize the ongoing opposition as recorded in personal letters and Government documents from Xerxes I (v6), and his son, Artaxerxes I (v7-16). Their strategy was to remind the King about the history of the Jews and the threat of insurrection. They then charged the Jews with sedition and treason (v12-16) and succeeded in getting king Artaxerxes to stop the work (v17-23).

2. God's Response (5)

The Prophets Haggai and Zechariah pushed the community to renew their commitment to God and the building project (v1-2). Haggai criticized the people for living in fine houses and amassing wealth while the Temple lay in ruins (Hag 1:3-6). Zechariah unveiled a vision of a glorious Temple in the future days of the Messiah's coming to earth. Tattenai, governor of the provinces west of the Euphrates, questioned the authority of the Jews to rebuild. But God used this challenge to turn the whole situation around (v3-5). Tattenai sent a letter to King Darius asking him to search the royal archives to find the decree of Cyrus that he didn't believe existed. He was sure the Jews were lying.

E. Revival (6)

1. Search for Records

The search of the Babylonian and Median records recovered the decree of Cyrus (v1-5) and Darius ordered the governor not only to allow the Temple building to reconvene but to pay for the work from his royal treasury and impose strong sanctions on anyone who opposed the project (v6-12). Tattenai's speedy response enabled the completion of the temple in four years, by 515 BC (v15). Man's plan is thwarted ... God's plan succeeds! Pagan kings, Jewish elders, government officials, and Hebrew prophets, and returned exiles all contributed.

2. Celebration of Passover

The chapter ends with the first commemoration of the Passover since the fall of Jerusalem. It was carefully and joyfully celebrated as a sweet offering to the Lord (v19-22).

II. Second Return under Ezra (Chapters 7-10)

Almost sixty years passed between the completion of the Temple and the return of the next group of exiles. The leader of this group was a priest from the tribe of Levi and the house Aaron. Ezra was a Godly man, a candidate for high priest, who called himself a scribe. He made it his personal cause to teach other scribes and the people of Judah the word of the Lord, encouraging them to live holy lives in the face of a hostile world.

A. Ezra's Expertise (7)

Ezra had perfect credentials for the job God called him to do.

1. Ezra's Credentials

- a. His priestly genealogy (v1-5)
- b. His knowledge of the Law (v6-9)
- c. His favor with God (v9)
- d. His commitment as a student and leader (v10) – Ezra shows us a model for our interaction with the word. Ezra “set his heart” to 1) study; 2) practice; and 3) teach the word.
- e. His favor with King Artaxerxes (v11-26)
- f. His humble and thankful attitude toward God (v27-28)

2. Ezra's Responsibility

He led the next group of returning volunteers, spoke for God, supervised the religious life of the people, and developed the judicial system of the province.

B. Ezra's Experience (8)

Ezra's close companions on the journey are listed in verses 1-14.

1. Ezra's Leaders

He especially recruited Levites and family heads to assist him in teaching the Law and running the government in Jerusalem. Each one had to meet the proper qualifications of heritage and total reliance on God (15-20). Ezra demonstrated his reliance on God by praying and fasting, and attributed all their successes to the Lord (21-23).

2. Ezra's Followers

Ezra's group, carrying enormous treasure, arrived without incident. Again he gave God credit for their protection (24-32). The treasure was deposited in the Temple treasury and the re-energized priests offered sacrifices for the entire nation (33-36).

C. Ezra's Example (9)

1. Ezra's Problem

Ezra barely arrived in Jerusalem and the civic leaders confronted him with an immense problem, intermarriage and its accompanying idolatry. They compared the problem to when the Gentiles had trapped them in the past (v1-2). The answer was spiritual, not racial.

2. Ezra's Response

Ezra was immediately moved to sorrow over the nation's sins. He prayed for forgiveness for himself and his people (v3-5). He recalled the sins of their ancestors and God's response (v6-7). He offered thanks to God for saving a remnant (v8-9). He confessed their inability to stop sinning and asked for God's mercy (v10-15).

D. Ezra's Exhortation (10)

Ezra's prayer and example of contrition contributed to the people's conviction for their sins. They themselves recommended a renewal of the covenant and urged Ezra to bring reform to the community (v1-4).

1. Ezra's Reformation

Ezra called for convocation (a holy meeting) of all the tribes and ordered the men to separate from their pagan wives (v5-11). Divorce was not God's will, but it was needed and permitted in order to preserve the spiritual life of the nation.

2. Ezra's Purification

The evil pagan practices were so wide spread it took over three months for a tribunal to hear all the individual cases (v12-17).

Conclusion:

A remnant of the Jews returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple and reinitiate ritual worship. Still the nation did not repent and cleanse their personal lives. It was only when Ezra brought the word of God (The Law) to bear on the daily lives of the people, that they saw their sin, repented, and turned to God in obedience including true worship.

Outline of Nehemiah

Twelve years after Ezra instituted his religious reforms and brought about a revival to Judah, Nehemiah came to rebuild the city walls. He was appointed governor of Jerusalem by Artaxerxes. Arriving in Jerusalem he conducted a secret survey, attacked the job with determination and wisdom, ignoring fierce opposition. With the help of the Lord and the king he completed this monumental task in just seven weeks. John Philips writes that Nehemiah is a story of victory in the face of "the ridicule and rage, the greed and guile of his adversaries that makes thrilling reading." The overlap of Ezra and Nehemiah are evident in the last part of the book as they work together to consecrate and consolidate the nation after the wall is built. This happened in three steps: 1) Re-population of Jerusalem; 2) Repentance and revival brought by a return to the word of the Lord; and 3) Renewal of the covenant.

In Nehemiah, once again, we see the result of the convicting word of God. Nehemiah illustrates how much a layman – not a priest, prophet, or king can accomplish through a committed life of prayer and obedience.

I. Nehemiah's Return and Rebuilding of the Walls (Chapters 1-7)

It was fairly common for the kings and governors of the provinces of various ancient countries, i.e. Israel, Assyria, Babylon, Persia to keep journals or archives. This is undoubtedly the source for the first seven chapters of Nehemiah. The beauty of this record is that it gives us an accurate account of his role in fortifying Jerusalem, the opposition he encountered and God's intervention in the process to bring about success.

A. Prayer (1)

1. News from home (v1-3)

Nehemiah was in Susa (in modern Iran), in the Nov-Dec time (month of Chislev) which was the winter palace of the kings of Persia, when he received a delegation of Jews (his brothers) from Judah reporting on the plight of those who had escaped the original captivity and those who had returned to rebuild the temple. The worst of the news was that the walls, since they were broken down and the great gates burned, offered little or no protection for the people or their temple.

2. Nehemiah's response (v4-11)

⁴When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. Neh 1:4

Nehemiah was a man of compassion. He was also broken over sin – in his own life and in the lives of his people. His appeal to God was based on God's covenant given to Israel in Deut 28 and 30 where He threatened to punish the unfaithful, but promised to aid the repentant. His prayer was one of confession and repentance for himself and his people. Now even before we know *who* he is, we know *what* he is ... a righteous man.

B. Place (2)

1. In the right place at the right time

Chapter one ends with a phrase which is actually the start of a new paragraph, "*I was the cupbearer to the king.*" The cupbearer was the personal valet or butler to the king and most probably the man closest to him. Part of his responsibility was to taste all food and drink before the king to assure that it was not poisoned. Four months later in the Mar-Apr time, King Artaxerxes noticed that Nehemiah, who was usually upbeat, was sad and depressed. He asked why? Obviously small talk with the king was not an everyday occurrence because he was "very much afraid". He had, however, spent four months of time with the Lord and so he answered honestly. The king's response was unexpected, "What do you want me to do?" The next phrase exposes his heart, (v4-6) "So I prayed to the God of heaven, and I said to the king ... Send me ... that I may rebuild it."

2. A faithful servant receives honor and opposition

The king not only let him go, but provided royal letters of authority and protection, and a letter to Asaph, keeper of his forests, to provide supplies. The people rallied behind them. Sanballat, governor of Samaria, and Tobiah, an Ammorite official were really upset. They, together with Gershem, the Arab, threatened them and called them traitors just as they had Zurubbabel. But this time Nehemiah placed the opposition in proper perspective. His response was that he had the backing of the king, and more importantly, the true supreme authority of God.

C. The Plan to Rebuild (3)

People of all ages, classes, occupations, and sometimes complete families, took part in rebuilding the gates and then the walls connecting those gates. They ignored their enemies because they were "doing the Lord's work."

D. The Work Attached (4:1-6:14)

1. Verbal threats answered with prayer (4:1-6)

The re-builders were maligned and ridiculed and taunted as weak and inept laborers. Organized intimidation through threats, taunts, and rumors was met with prayer and hard labor, "for the people had a mind to work." (v6)

2. Physical threats answered with preparation (4:7-23)

Their enemies said, "They will not know or see until we come among them, kill them and put a stop to the work." (v11) Nehemiah's response was civil defense. He posted armed guards at the exposed places and stationed whole families, armed and ready, at the work site. That shut their enemies plans down, but he still had everyone work with weapons beside them and in shifts, half working and half on alert.

3. Economic threat answered with pronouncement (5)

A famine caused additional hardship on the people. Many had actually mortgaged their homes, and some of the very poor sold their children into servitude in order to provide food for their families. The tragedy was that the creditors and mortgage holders were fellow-Jews. Nehemiah called a hearing, accused them of "usury" which was against Jewish law (Deut) and announced to them that he had, for twelve years, refused to use his governor's allowance for his own use, but had supported 150 Jews with his own money (v17). He also made loans, but according to the law, with no interest and taking no payments from money needed for necessities. His statement caused the guilty to return confiscated possessions and enslaved children.

4. The Final Plot (6:1-14)

Sanballat and his cohorts tried to lure Nehemiah into a meeting at Ono, between Judah and Samaria, on four separate occasions. Nehemiah, in touch with God, knew it was a plot and answered that he was too busy doing the "work of the Lord." He next hired an alleged priest and prophetess to give Nehemiah a fake message from God, to avoid assassination by hiding in the temple. Again, by prayer, he avoided the attempt to discredit him before the people. God brought him honor instead.

5. The Work Accomplished (6:15-7:73)

The wall was completed and the city was now ready for its new residents. He placed righteous men in charge and turned his attention to populating the city (Chapter 11). He began by reviewing the genealogical records of the first exiles who came to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel.

II. Ezra Reading the Word (Chapters 8-10)

Now we move on to the ministry of Ezra. The people gathered together and asked Ezra to bring the book of Moses and he began to read "The Law." He probably read each morning for at least a week.

A. Conviction (8)

1. Law read and understood

The seventh month was the most important month of the ceremonial calendar. On the first day of that month Ezra read "The Law" to the people. Several things are clear:

1. They wanted it – they called for the reading (8:1)
2. They were serious – they stood all morning listening (8:3, 5)
3. They were affected by it – they responded (8:9)
4. They had it read to understand it (8:8)

2. Law produces results

After hearing the law, the Elders urged Ezra to call all the people together to observe the Feast of Booths (Ex 34). This was a celebration to remind the people of their trip out of Egypt and God's provision of their needs in the wilderness. For seven days they focused on the Lord and His blessings to them, bringing about a second exodus, from Babylon. It had not been properly celebrated since the time of Joshua. Again the people listened to the word of the Lord every day and celebrated with praise, prayer, and tears.

B. Confession (9)

1. Preparation

On the 24th of the month, two days after the feast time, the people dressed in sackcloth, threw dirt upon themselves and prepared for personal and national confession, repentance, and worship.

³While they stood in their place, they read from the book of the law of the LORD their God for a fourth of the day; and for another fourth they confessed and worshiped the LORD their God. Neh 9:3

2. Participation

The Levites led and the people prayed:

1. Praising God as great and gracious
2. Recalling God's protection and provision
3. Admitting their stiff-necked rebellion
4. Acknowledging God's long-suffering
5. Continuing with supplications and call for mercy
6. Concluding with a national renewal of their covenant oath

C. Covenant (10)

1. Official signing (v1-27)

Nehemiah, the governor, Zedekiah and the other leaders of the people, both civil and religious, signed the covenant document as representatives of the people.

2. Features of the Covenant

1. Submission to the Law
2. Separation from foreign marriages (from idol worship)
3. Sabbath observance
4. Service through tithes, offerings, and obedience

III. Repopulating and Rejoicing (Chapter 11-13)

This section completes the repopulating theme begun in chapter seven. The catalog of new residents provided continuity with ancestral line. The ceremonies provide continuity with ancestral religious heritage. The covenant reforms provide continuity with ancestral accountability.

A. Commencing (11-13)

1. Distribution of Population (11)

The exiles organized their society by lot, plus those who had voluntarily migrated to Jerusalem before it was "fashionable."

2. Descendants of Particular People (12:1-26)

Descendants of all of Israel's tribes returned to Judah, but only those whose families had been there in the days of David's kingdom, Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, would inhabit Jerusalem.

B. Completing (12:26-13)

1. Formal Dedication of the City (12:27-47)

The wall and the city were dedicated with a grand celebration including a music festival, two parades and services of praise and thanksgiving.

2. Fundamental Dealing with Sin (13)

Sin is an ongoing problem. Nehemiah went on a business trip to Persia and when he returned he found that Eliashib, the high priest had allowed Tobia, an enemy, to occupy several temple storerooms. He also found few people offering the required sacrifices, merchants selling on the Sabbath, and a renewal of intermarriage with foreigners. These are the very sins that the people had previously repented of and committed to put off. This last problem was so bad that even Sanballat's daughter had married into the priestly line. Nehemiah again reformed the system and cleansed the people and the priesthood. His heart is reflected in his final words in 13:31:

"Remember me, O my God, for good."

Homework:

- Read Esther

Nehemiah's Example of a Godly Leader

Nehemiah 1

- Remembers and is concerned about past and continuing events (1:1-3)
- Is compassionate (1:3-4)
- Is a person of prayer (1:4; 2:4)
- Is broken over sin and takes responsibility for sin (1:4-7)
- Is a student of the word (1:8-9)
- Has a proper view of self and God (1:10)

Nehemiah 2

- Is honest (2:1-3)
- Has character that people respect (2:4)
- Is tactful (didn't mention Jerusalem by name, see Ezra 4:21) (2:3)
- Prays before acting (2:4)
- Prayerfully makes achievable goals (2:4-6)
- Recognizes obstacles and develop plans to overcome (2:7-8)
- Always give glory to God (2:8)
- Is patient (2:11)
- Carefully investigates and analyzes a situation (2:12-15)
- Keeps original goals in mind – no requirements creep (2:13)
- Has a realistic, but God enabling view of difficult situations (2:17)
- Is not above the team – WE (2:17 and throughout)
- Motivates by having a proper “God consciousness” (2:18)
- Deals positively with opposition (2:19-20)

Nehemiah 3

- Has a plan; knows the team by name and gifts; assigns tasks; and tracks progress (3:1-32)
- Encourages workers and acknowledges extra effort (3:20)

Nehemiah 4

- Prays when encountering opposition (4:9)
- Handle naysayers from within through prayer, encouragement, and modeling trust in God (4:9-14)
- Make provision to protect your people (4:16)
- Serve side-by-side with the team (4:23)

Nehemiah 5

- Has righteous indignation against sin (5:6)
- Does not impatiently react to situations, but thinks through a situation based on the word (5:7)
- Confronts sin in fellow believers (5:7-9)
- Demands restitution from those who sins against a fellow believer (5:10-13)
- Does not take advantage of people/situations for personal gain (5:14-16)
- Is hospitable (5:17-18)
- Is committed to God's people (5:19)

Nehemiah 6

- Is aware of the schemes of the enemy (6:1)
- Is not distracted from the work (6:1-4)
- Fears God not man - will stay the righteous course when tempted to depart from it (6:5-14)
- Knows God's word in detail (6:11)
- Completes their God given task with excellence (6:15-19)