



St Mark's  
Malabar

# TIME TO REBUILD

STUDIES IN NEHEMIAH

St Mark's, Malabar | [www.malabar.church.org.au](http://www.malabar.church.org.au)

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Malabar

Every person  
made new in Christ,  
mature in Christ,  
making Christ known.

# TIME TO REBUILD

2020 was a challenging year as we adapted to changes and restrictions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many activities were cancelled, or postponed, and new ways of meeting were discovered.

Now that restrictions are being lifted, we have an opportunity to intentionally rebuild and become stronger than before.

## 1) Bring back the old



What stopped with COVID? What do we want to bring back? How can we do it in a different way?

## 2) Keep the new



What new ways of meeting have been discovered? How can we use these effectively to rebuild? Zoom, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook?

## 3) No person left behind



Who have we not seen for some time? How can we reach out to and encourage them? 'See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God.' (Hebrews 12:15)



# THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

**‘I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling place for my name.’**  
(Nehemiah 1:9)

The book of Nehemiah contributes to our knowledge of **God’s plan of salvation.**

It records Israel’s return from exile and the **rebuilding** of the Jerusalem city walls.

In the Hebrew Bible Ezra and Nehemiah are grouped together. Roughly speaking, Ezra reintroduces the law (God’s rule), Nehemiah leads the rebuilding of the city walls (God’s place) and Zerubbabel leads the rebuilding of the temple (God’s presence). **God’s rule, place and presence** are important themes in God’s plan of salvation.

Ultimately God’s plan moves toward the fulfillment of his promise, **‘Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God.’** (Exodus 29:45).

Nehemiah follows the decree by **King Cyrus BC538** that the temple in Jerusalem is to be rebuilt and Israelites may return (2 Chronicles 36:23).

Nehemiah works hard to rebuild the walls despite **opposition, doubt, famine and disobedience.**

Nehemiah concludes with the wall built and dedicated but **disobedience threatens to unravel the plans.**

We are reminded that God’s place is within his people’s hearts, where he cannot permanently dwell until he enacts his **new covenant**, ‘I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts, I will be their God and they will be my people.’ (Jeremiah 31:33).



## Bring back the old

- What is a pre COVID church activity you miss?
- Should it be brought back? Why? Why not?



## Keep the new

- How has social media helped our church lately?
- What etiquette should be observed?



## No person left behind

- How did COVID threaten our ability to care for others?

# NEHEMIAH 1

## TIME TO RETURN

1. Nehemiah records events to do with Israel during 6th century BC. What could we possibly gain from studying and discussing this book today?
2. Read Nehemiah 1:1-11. How does Nehemiah's understanding of God drive his prayer?
3. Reread Nehemiah 1:3. What do you understand about the exile? Why did it take place? (This may require advance reading and preparation).
4. Reread Nehemiah 1:5-6. What is a 'covenant of love'? How should this drive Israel's relationship with God?
5. Read Deuteronomy 30:1-5. This forms the background to Nehemiah's prayer. At what stage of Israel's history was this written? Why does Nehemiah raise it here?
6. What is the return contingent on? What lesson should the Israelites have learnt from the exile?
7. Nehemiah 1:9 mentions, '... the place (God) has chosen as a dwelling for (his) name.' If Jesus was the word who became flesh and made his dwelling among us (John 1:14), in what ways does he fulfil Nehemiah's prayer?
8. What stands in the way of God gathering his people and how does Jesus overcome it (Isaiah 53:6)?
9. How can we experience God's presence:-
  - a. In creation;
  - b. In a church building;
  - c. In his word; and
  - d. In fellowship with each other?
10. How should this passage inform our prayers?
11. What will it be like when we have full consciousness of God's presence?



# NEHEMIAH 2



Bring back the old

- What old activity can be practiced in a new way?



Keep the new

- How can we use Zoom effectively?
- What are its limits?



No person left behind

- Who haven't you seen at church recently?
- Pray for them.

## TIME TO REBUILD

1. What are important foundations for a church?
2. Read Nehemiah 2:11-20. Contrast the responses toward the proposal to rebuild the walls.
3. Reread Nehemiah 2:17. How do you account for the officials' enthusiasm? What are they hoping that the rebuilding will achieve?
4. Compare these to Jesus' attitude toward the temple walls and Jerusalem (Mark 13:1-2, John 2:19-22).
5. Read 1 Peter 2:4-8. If God's people today are being built into a spiritual house, what is the role of Jesus according to this passage?
6. How did Jesus endure shame and disgrace?
7. How does he save us from ultimate shame and disgrace?
8. Read Revelation 21:1-4. What is so beautiful about the bride? What is the end goal of God's plan of salvation?
9. What is it about this image that excites you?



# NEHEMIAH 3

Bring back the old

- What is a good reason to reintroduce old activity? What is a bad reason?



Keep the new

- How do you see livestreaming (YouTube) being used by the church into the future?



No person left behind

- How can we ensure that no person 'slips through the net'?

## SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

1. Do you admire hard work? Why?
2. Read Nehemiah 3:1-12. Which family stands out to you? Why?
3. In most instances, the wall sections were worked on by the people who would live near there. Why would this be important?
4. How would you describe the leadership in this account?
5. Reread Nehemiah 3:5. Why did the nobles refuse to work?
6. Read Philippians 1:4-6. Why was Paul filled with joy by the Philippians partnership in the gospel?
7. What is a 'partner in the gospel'?
8. What makes a good partnership?
9. Why does God use human partners?
10. How are we stronger together than apart?



# NEHEMIAH 4



Bring back the old

- What has been the church's most effective outreach?



Keep the new

- What lessons have we learnt about being adaptable and able to quickly change?



No person left behind

- How can we reach out as a team?

## CAN THEY BRING THE STONES BACK TO LIFE?

1. What goals do you have that are hampered or frustrated?
2. Read Nehemiah 4:1-14. Describe the threats that Nehemiah faced from enemies, well-meaning allies and within.
3. How was the work frustrated?
4. Reread Nehemiah 4:1-2. What was the impact of the insults?
5. Read John 4:21-24. How could Jesus' words provide some background to the conflict with the Samaritans?
6. How does Nehemiah deal with the opposition?
7. How has the geographical location of worship changed for us today? How does this impact the character of our worship?
8. What does it mean to worship in spirit and truth? (Read Romans 12:1-3)
9. What frustrates our worship today?
10. D. Peterson, 'The whole of life is to be lived in relation to the cross and to the sanctuary where Christ is enthroned as our crucified saviour and high priest.' Discuss.



# NEHEMIAH 6



Bring back the old

- What has been the church's most effective community building events?



Keep the new

- How can we use Social Media?



No person left behind

- What events or groups can we use to help reconnect people?

## THERE IS A KING IN JUDAH

1. Describe the feeling of 'betrayal'.
2. Read Nehemiah 6:1-9. What game are Nehemiah's enemies playing?
3. How are they trying to deceive Nehemiah?
4. Read Nehemiah 6:10-15. What game is Shemaiah playing?
5. How does Nehemiah discern whether or not Shemaiah was sent from God to help him?
6. Read John 18:28-37. Who handed Jesus over to Pilate? What was their relationship to him?
7. What is he accused of? How close is this to the truth?
8. Read Psalm 38:12. How does Jesus' experience match the events of the Psalmist?
9. What deceptions about Jesus are promoted today?
10. How can we prepare for these attacks on his character?



# NEHEMIAH 8



Bring back the old

- What are important foundations of our church that should never change?



Keep the new

- How did we effectively care for people during COVID?



No person left behind

- What would welcome people back?

## THE WORD READ AND EXPLAINED

1. “Sunday sermons shouldn’t go beyond twenty minutes.” Discuss.
2. What was read to the people?
3. How did the people engage with God’s word? What did their different body postures express?
4. What were Ezra and his colleagues aiming to achieve with their instruction?
5. Why did the people weep as they listened to the words of the Law?
6. What was the basis of their joy? Do we share that joy?
7. How does Nehemiah 8 challenge our attitude towards the hearing of God’s word?
8. Read Hebrews 1:1-2 and Luke 24:25-27. How do we properly understand what the Scriptures are about?
9. Read 2 Timothy 4:1-6. Why is it important that we sit under God’s word together? (also consider Israel’s history)



# NEHEMIAH 9



Bring back the old

- What is unique about our church?



Keep the new

- What lasting effect has COVID had on our church?



No person left behind

- For those who are unlikely to return, are they settled into another church? Pray for them.

## GOD-GRACIOUS AND COMPASSIONATE

1. Do you find saying "sorry" easy or difficult?
2. What led the Israelites to confess their sins together?
3. In Nehemiah 9:1-2, how do they prepare for confession? Compare with 1 Kings 21:20-29.
4. Looking at the prayer of confession, where do we find the following sections recorded in the Bible (9:6; 9:7-8; 9:9-21; 9:22-23; 9:24-25; 9:26-31)?
5. Is there anything which stands out for you about the prayer?
6. In the prayer detailing God's dealings with Israel: What do we learn about God's character and actions? What do we learn about Israel's response to God?
7. From 9:32-37, what is their prayer request? What gives them confidence that their prayers will be answered?
8. How is Jesus ultimately the answer to their prayer? (Galatians 3:10-14)
9. What is the point of confessing our sins if we have already been forgiven by Jesus? (1 John 1:8-2:2)
10. How can we grow in genuine repentance and commitment to Christ?



# NEHEMIAH 10



Bring back the old

- What is St Mark's mission field?



Keep the new

- If we add new initiatives that require time and dedication, how can we redeem that time? What could we drop? What is essential and what is optional?



No person left behind

- What steps should be taken to bring people back?

## A BINDING AGREEMENT

1. What agreements have you made (or were made on your behalf) that you are still living under? Do these provide benefits and/or costs?
2. Read Nehemiah 10:28-39. What do the leaders promise to do?
3. Read Nehemiah 9:17-18. What happened to the Covenant their ancestors had agreed to?
4. Why were they not destroyed?
5. What is different this time? Will they keep the covenant? Why/Why not?
6. Read Jeremiah 31:31-34. How is this new covenant different to the old?
7. Read Hebrews 9:15. What is the basis of the new covenant?
8. Read Romans 5:5. How does God change our hearts in Christ?
9. Why is the new 'better'?
10. Are you sure you will be blessed through Christ? Why?



# NEHEMIAH 13



Bring back the old

- What fond memories of St Mark's do you have?



Keep the new

- What new initiative would you like to see at St Mark's? What would it take?



No person left behind

- How can we retain people longer?

## A BROKEN AGREEMENT

1. What is the role of obedience in the life of a believer?
2. Read Nehemiah 13:1-22. How does Nehemiah conclude? What questions does it raise?
3. According to Nehemiah, how have the people disobeyed? Why does this matter?
4. Read John 2:13-22. What similarities does Jesus have to Nehemiah?
5. What does Jesus say will be the result of turning the temple into a market?
6. What is the implication of Jesus referring to his own resurrection when he says that he will rebuild the temple in three days?
7. The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed and no longer exists. A significant Muslim mosque (Al-Aqsa) sits on the temple mound. Does this matter?
8. What does Jesus' resurrection mean to you?
9. How have you benefited from studying Nehemiah?
10. Pray for 'God's kingdom to come'.