

STUDY GUIDE

discover

NEHEMIAH



1 Nehemiah 1:1-2:10

Longing for Home

Getting Started

Tim Keller in his book *Prodigal God* indicates the powerful influence that the concept of “home” places on all human beings. He states that one of the major themes of the Bible is exile and homecoming. All people are exiles, longing for their true home.

In Nehemiah 1 we will be introduced to the main character of the book, Nehemiah, whose name means “The LORD comforts.” Nehemiah had been born in captivity in a foreign land. His ancestors had been taken into exile by the Babylonian Empire, which was now ruled by Persia. As he grew up, Nehemiah became a trusted official in the court of Artaxerxes, king of Persia. News had just arrived from Jerusalem, Nehemiah’s ancestral home, and in chapter 1 we will see how Nehemiah responded to the news.

What Does It Say?

1. Nehemiah 1:1-4

a. What do we learn about Nehemiah in these opening verses?

Let’s talk about . . .

b. Who arrived, and what seemed foremost on Nehemiah’s mind?

Note: It was about 765 miles (1,231 km) from Jerusalem to Susa.

- c. What did Nehemiah learn about the state of affairs in his homeland, and how did he react?

For conversation ...

Note: It may be helpful to refer to the Introduction for what was happening in Jerusalem and Judah at that time.

2. Nehemiah 1:5-11a

- a. What was the content of Nehemiah's prayer, and what do we learn about him by what and how he prayed?

Note: Pastor and theologian James Boice, in commenting on this prayer of Nehemiah, points out that it has all the elements of a prayer style taught in Scripture: **A**doration (praise), **C**onfession (of sin), **T**hanksgiving (for all God has done), and **S**upplication (request for God's help and ongoing provision)—often referred to as ACTS.

- b. What request does Nehemiah make, and what promise does he claim?