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THE BITTERSWEET STORY OF EZRA & NEHEMIAH



Ezra-Nehemiah Timeline

1st Wave Returns from Exile (538 BC)

2nd Wave - Rebuilt Temple (515 BC)

3rd Wave - Ezra's Reforms (458 BC)

4th Wave - Nehemiah (445 BC)



Nehemiah 1:3–4

ESV

³ And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great **trouble** and **shame**. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire." ⁴ As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

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Nehemiah 1:5–6

ESV

⁵ And I said, “O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, ⁶ let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father’s house have sinned.

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Nehemiah 1:7–8

ESV

⁷ We have **acted very corruptly** against you and have not kept the **commandments**, the **statutes**, and the **rules** that you commanded your servant Moses. ⁸ Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples,

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Nehemiah 1:9–10

ESV

⁹ but if you **return to me and keep my commandments** and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.’ ¹⁰ They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand.

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Nehemiah 1:11

ESV

¹¹ O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy **in the sight of this man.**" Now I was cupbearer to the king.

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**Nehemiah's goal was not merely to
rebuild walls, but to remove shame
and restore glory.**



Nehemiah 2:17–18

ESV

¹⁷ Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may **no longer suffer derision**.” ¹⁸ And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, “Let us rise up and build.” So they strengthened their hands for the good work.

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Nehemiah 5:6–7

ESV

⁶ I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. ⁷ I took counsel with myself, and I brought charges against the nobles and the officials. I said to them, “You are exacting interest, each from his brother.” And I held a great assembly against them

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Nehemiah 5:8–9

ESV

⁸ and said to them, “We, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations, but **you even sell your brothers** that they may be sold to us!” They were silent and could not find a word to say. ⁹ So I said, “The thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent **the taunts of the nations** our enemies?”

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Nehemiah 6:15–16

ESV

¹⁵ So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶ And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.

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Nehemiah 6:19

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¹⁹ Also they spoke of his good deeds in my presence and reported my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to make me **afraid**.

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Nehemiah 7:4

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⁴ The city was wide and large, but the people within it were **few**, and **no houses** had been rebuilt.

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Nehemiah 7:73

ESV

⁷³ So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants, and all Israel, lived **in their towns**. And when the seventh month had come, the people of Israel were **in their towns**.

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**human efforts forever fail to
reverse the curse, remove the shame,
and restore the glory.**



Apart from Christ,
human efforts forever fail to
reverse the curse, remove the shame,
and restore the glory.

