

Book of Nehemiah

**Have you ever stood before
a challenge so vast, it
seemed rebuilding from its
ruins was a task reserved
for dreams?**

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**When it looks like the
kingdom of the world will
overcome the kingdom of
our Lord and of His Christ,
on what shall we depend?**

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**How can we, like Nehemiah,
confront the vast challenges
before us and not just dream
of, but actively participate in
God's rebuilding?**

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**This is
our story.**

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was riding. I went on at night through the Valley Gate toward the Serpent's Well and the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that had been broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. I went on to the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but farther down it became too narrow for my animal to go through. So I went up at night by way of the valley and inspected the wall. Then heading back, I entered through the Valley Gate and returned. The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, for I had not yet told the Jews, priests, nobles, officials, or the rest of those who would be doing the work.

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Nehemiah teaches us that the journey to fulfilling God's vision is not walked alone—it is a collective endeavor, fueled by prayer, propelled by faith, and accomplished through the unity of the church.

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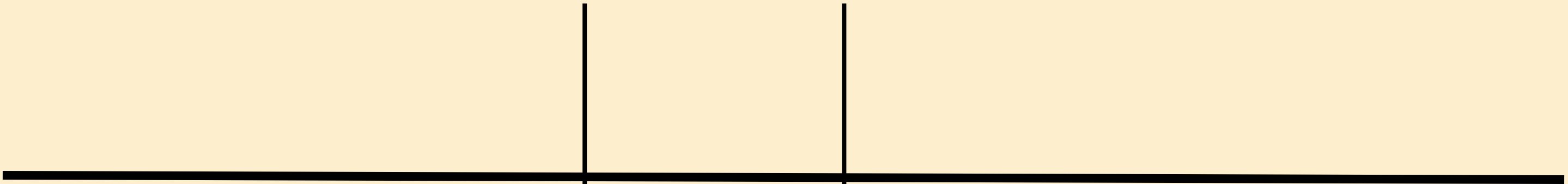
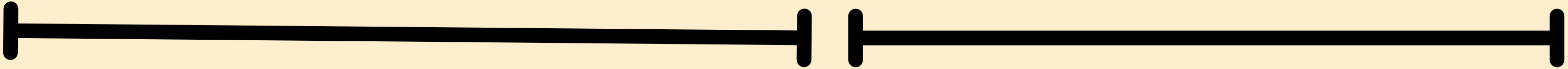
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The BIG PICTURE of Nehemiah...

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Old Testament

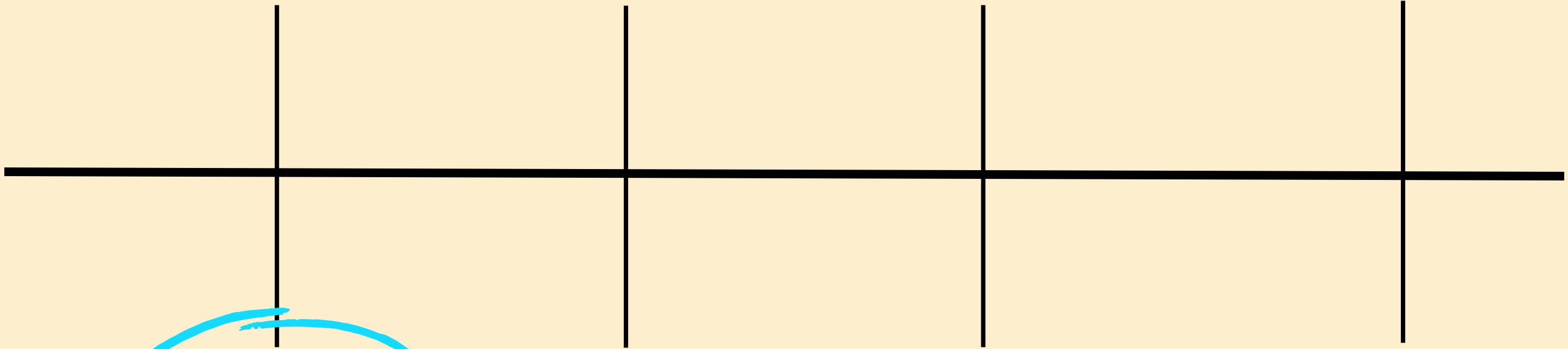
New Testament



Jesus born

450 B.C.

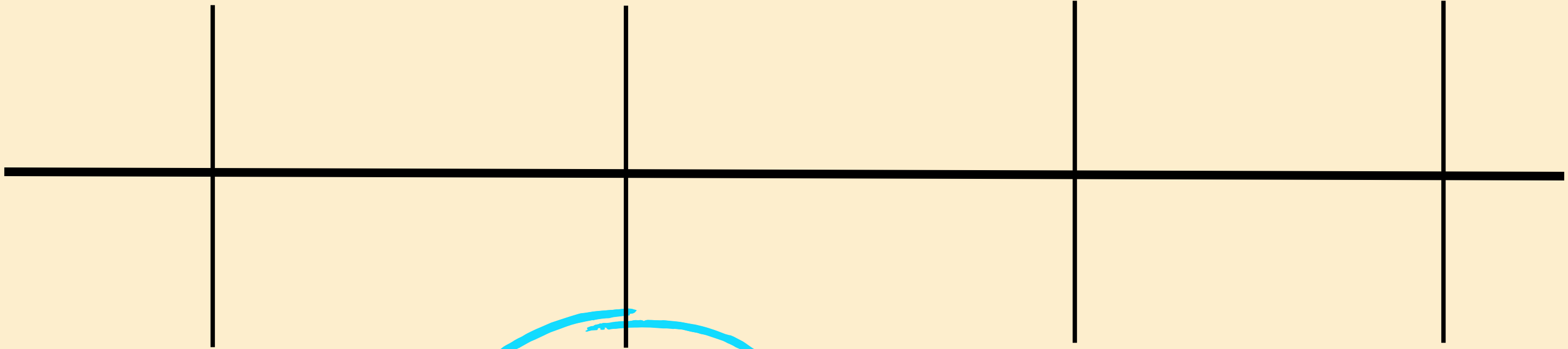
Nehemiah



722 B.C.
Assyrians
conquer

450 B.C.
Nehemiah

Jesus born



722 B.C.
Assyrians
conquer

586 B.C.
Babylonians
conquer

450 B.C.
Nehemiah

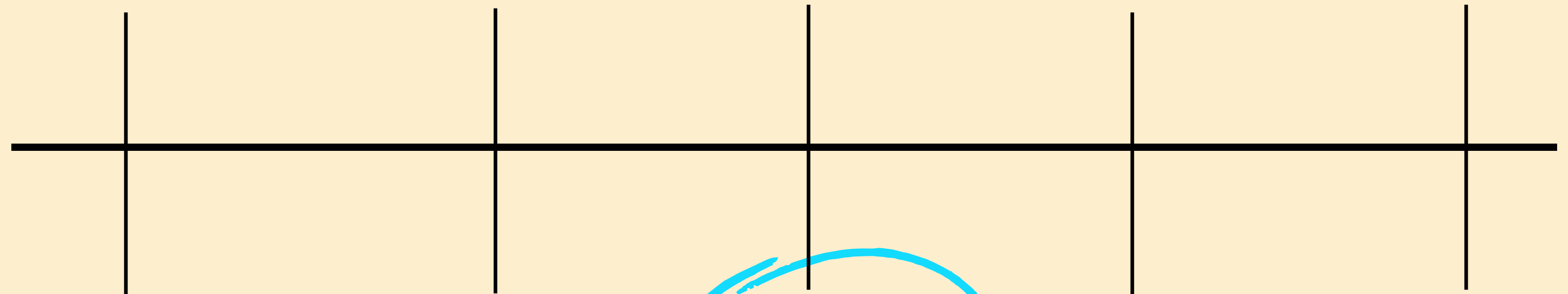
Jesus born

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By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our harps, for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"

Psalm 137:1-3

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722 B.C.
Assyrians
conquer

586 B.C.
Babylonians
conquer

538 B.C.
Cyrus
decree

450 B.C.
Nehemiah

Jesus born

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**“I was cupbearer to
the king.”**

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So I said to them, "You see we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, its gates have been burned, let's rebuild Jerusalem's walls, we will no longer be a disgrace to them, how the gracious God had been on me, as the king had said to me. They said, "Let's start rebuilding, and their hands were strengthened to do this good work. When Sanballat the Horean, the Ammonite official, and the Arab heard about our work, they mocked and despised us. "What is this you're doing, rebelling against the king?" I gave them this reply, "The God of the heavens is the one who will give us success. We, his servants, are building, but you have no power or historic claim in Jerusalem."

Nehemiah 1:11

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God had a work for him to do there that he could not have accomplished elsewhere.

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Esther Joseph in Egypt Daniel in Babylon

**When God wants to accomplish
a work, He always prepares His
workers and puts them in the
right places at the right time.**

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Nehemiah 1

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The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah:

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

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They said to me, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.”

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

Nehemiah 1:1-4

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**Great life-changing
events can happen on
very small hinges.**

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So I said to them, "You see we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, its gates have been burned. Let's rebuild Jerusalem's walls so we will no longer be a disgrace. They said, "How can we do this? The God had been on me when the king had said to me. They said, "Let's start building." and their hands were strengthened to do this good work. When Sanballat the Horonathite, the Ammonite official, and the Arab heard about this, they mocked and despised us. "What is this you're doing? You're rebelling against the king," they said. I gave them this reply, "The God of the heavens is the one who will give us success. We are building for the king, but you have no right or historic claim in Jerusalem."

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In a palace and a high-ranking position hundreds of miles away in a foreign country, Nehemiah was stirred.

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Some people prefer to not know what's going on because information might bring obligation.

“What you don't know can't hurt you,” says the old adage, but is it true?

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Henry Adams, “practical politics consists in ignoring facts” but it’s Aldous Huxley who said, “Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored.”

Closing our eyes and ears to the truth could be the first step toward tragedy for ourselves as well as others.

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Could it be we've
become **indifferent?**

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So I said to them, "You see we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, its gates have been burned. Let's rebuild Jerusalem's walls, and we will no longer be a disgrace to them, how the gracious God had been on me, as the king had said to me. They said, "Let's start, and their hands were strengthened to do this good work. When Sanballat the Horean, the Ammonite official, the Arab heard about this, he mocked and despised. "What is this you're doing, rebelling against the king?" I gave them this reply, "The God of the heavens is the one who will give us success. We, his servants, are building, but you have no right or historic claim in Jerusalem."

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Can we truly find success through ignorance and confidence, as Mark Twain suggests, or does what we ignore hold the potential to cause us—and others—great harm?

If Nehemiah had chosen to ignore the plight of his city, what would have been the cost?

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**Do the things that break
God's heart, break mine?**

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**So I ask myself, and
I ask you:**

**Can we dare to care for
God's kingdom with that
same intensity?**

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Jeremiah wept (Jer 9:1)
Paul (Acts 20:19)
**Jesus over the condition of
Jerusalem (Luke 19:41)**

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**He wept, prayed,
and fasted.**

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So I said to them, "You see we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, its gates have been burned. Let's rebuild Jerusalem's walls, and we will no longer be a disgrace to them, how the gracious God had been on me, as the king had said to me. They said, "Let's start, and their hands were strengthened to do this good work. When Sanballat the Horian, the Ammonite official, the Arab heard about this, he mocked and despised. "What is this you're doing, rebelling against the king? I gave them this reply, "The heavens is the one who will give us success. We, his servants, are building, but you have no right or historic claim in Jerusalem."

Then I said:

“Lord, the God of heaven, the **great and **awesome God**, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel.**”

I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you.

We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

“Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations,

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but if you **return** to me and **obey** my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

“They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand.

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Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.”

I was cupbearer to the king.

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Nehemiah's prayer:

**God is always our
starting point.**

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So I said to them, "You see we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, its gates have been burned. Let's rebuild Jerusalem's walls, and we will no longer be a disgrace to them, how the gracious God had been on me." They said, "Let's start rebuilding." So their hands were set to do this good work. When Sanballat the Horonathite, the Ammonite official, and the Arab heard about this, they mocked and despised us. "What is this you're doing? You're rebelling against the king," they said. I gave them this reply, "The heavens are the one who will give us success. We, his servants, are rebuilding, but you have no power or historic claim in Jerusalem."

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**“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name”**

**Our starting point is always
God--the character of God,
the faithfulness of God.**

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Nehemiah's prayer:

Confession of sin.

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was rising. I went out at night through the Valley Gate toward the Serpent's Well and the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that had been broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. I went on to the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but farther down it became too narrow for my animal to pass. I went up at night by the wall of the valley and inspected the wall. Then, heading back, I entered through the Valley Gate and returned. The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, for I had not yet told the Jews, priests, nobles, officials, or the rest of those who would be doing the work.

So I said to them, "You see we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, its gates have been burned, let's rebuild Jerusalem's walls, we will no longer be a disgrace to them, how the gracious God had been on me, the king had said to me. They said, "Let's start, and their hands were strengthened to do this good work. When Sanballat the Horean, the Ammonite official, the Arab heard about this, he mocked and despised. "What is this you're doing, rebelling against the king? I gave them this reply, "The heavens is the one who will give us success. We, his servants, are building, but you have no right or historic claim in Jerusalem."

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Nehemiah's prayer:

**True rebuilding comes
through collective
ownership.**

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Nehemiah's prayer:

“Lord, use me.”

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So I said to them, "You see we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, its gates have been burned. Let's rebuild Jerusalem's walls, and we will no longer be a disgrace to them, how the gracious God had been on me." They said, "Let's start now, and their hands were strengthened to do this good work. When Sanballat the Horonathite, the Ammonite official, the Arab heard about this, he mocked and despised. "What is this you're doing? You're rebelling against the king." I gave them this reply, "The God of the heavens is the one who will give us success. We, his servants, are building, but you have no power or historic claim in Jerusalem."

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Nehemiah's prayer:

“Lord, use me.”

**He offers who he is back to
God, saying, “if you can use
anyone, use me!”**

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BUILDING &
REBUILDING

NEHEMIAH

BUILDING &
REBUILDING

After I arrived in Jerusalem and had been there three days, I got up at night and took a few men with me. I didn't tell anyone what my God had laid on my heart to do for Jerusalem. The only animal I took was the one I was riding. I went out at night through the Valley Gate toward the Serpent's Well and the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that had been broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. I went on to the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but farther down it became too narrow for my animal to go through. So I went up at night by way of the valley and inspected the wall. Then heading back, I entered through the Valley Gate and returned. The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, for I had not yet told the Jews, priests, nobles, officials, or the rest of those who would be doing the work.

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Our prayer:

For us, as a church, to have our hearts break with the things that break God's heart is to walk in the footsteps of Nehemiah and Jesus. It means we cannot remain indifferent to the spiritual ruins around us—the brokenness in our communities and the despair in our world.

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