

**1. The royal cupbearer receives bad news (445 BC)**

- a) Nehemiah 1:1-3 More than 90 years have passed since the first group of Jewish exiles returned from Babylon, and more than a decade since Ezra returned with the second group of exiles. Why has their progress in rebuilding Jerusalem been so slow?
- b) Nehemiah 1:4 What can we learn about Nehemiah from his reaction to this bad news from Jerusalem?
- c) How does Nehemiah's reaction to bad news differ from those who lack a close relationship with God?

**2. Nehemiah's prayer**

- a) Nehemiah 1:5-11 What impresses you the most as you listen to Nehemiah's prayer?
- b) What promises of God have brought comfort and hope to you when facing hardship or trials?

**3. Nehemiah's prayer is answered (4 months later)**

- a) Nehemiah 2:1-3 Why was it dangerous for Nehemiah to be sad in the presence of the King?
- b) Nehemiah 2:4-8 What important lessons can we learn from Nehemiah's response to the King?
- c) Sometimes God's answers to our prayers seem delayed from our perspective. How can we learn to wait patiently for the Lord's perfect timing? Psalm 27:13-14

- d) Think of other Bible characters who were bold and courageous when God opened a door of opportunity for them.
- e) What opportunities has God given you to serve Him and make a difference in the lives of those around you?

**4. The royal cupbearer embarks on a mission**

- a) Nehemiah 2:9-10 Contrast the reaction of Sanballat and Tobiah with that of Nehemiah.
- b) Name other men and women who experienced opposition when they sought to fulfill the mission given to them by God.
- c) Why should we expect opposition when God sends us on a special mission? John 15:18-20, John 16:1-3, Ephesians 6:10-12

**5. Nehemiah prepares for his special assignment**

- a) What is the significance of the 3 days mentioned in Nehemiah 2:11 (see Esther 4:15-16, Acts 9:8-9)
- b) Nehemiah 2:12-16 Why did Nehemiah assess the condition of the city under the cover of darkness?
- c) Nehemiah 2:17-18 What important information did Nehemiah include in his challenge to local officials and residents of Jerusalem?
- d) How did Nehemiah respond to ongoing opposition? Nehemiah 2:19-20
- e) What can we learn from the example of Nehemiah?

