6

Nehemiah's Journal

Key References: Nehemiah 1; 2; *Prophets and Kings,* chap. 52, pp. 628-634; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 6, pp. 104-110; Our Beliefs, nos. 21, 11, 17



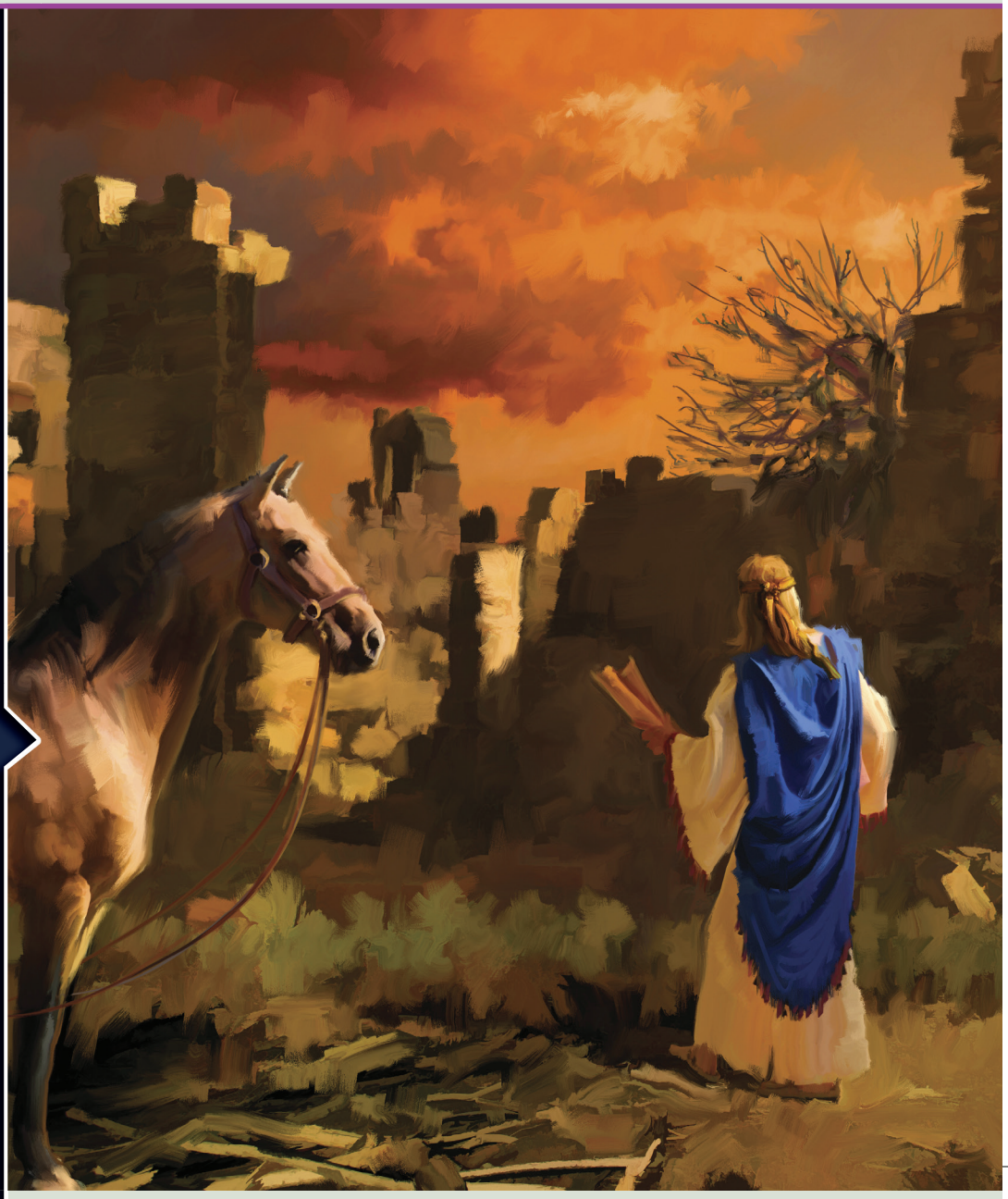












powertext

"But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you" (1 Samuel 12:24).

Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 47.

powerpoint

Wherever we are, we serve when we share what we know about God.

Living with people you don't know very well is not easy. Asking for favors from people you don't know very well is even harder. Our story this week demonstrates how God gives us the power to serve Him and witness for Him no matter how difficult it may be. If Nehemiah would have written a journal about his experiences, his story might have read something like this:

26th day, Kislev, Year 20, Susa, Persia

Hanani came from Judah today. He and his friends said the walls of Jerusalem are broken down and the gates are burned. A lot of the former residents have returned. They are suffering too. They have no protection with the walls down. How could this have happened? I haven't been able to eat since they told me.

29th day, Kislev, Year 20

I can't eat. I can't sleep. I can only cry and pray about Jerusalem. I try not to look distressed while at work.

30th day, Kislev, Year 20

Today I confessed to God the sins of Israel, including my sins and those of my family. We have acted very wickedly toward Him. We have disobeyed His laws. I asked God to forgive us. I claimed His words. He has promised that if His people return to Him and obey Him, He will bring them back to their homeland. I prayed that God would give me the courage—and the chance—to talk to King Artaxerxes today. I trusted that God would inspire the king to allow me to go back and build up Jerusalem.

6

Sunday

READ Read 1 Samuel 12:24 and this week's story, "Nehemiah's Journal."

LEARN Learn the power text, 1 Samuel 12:24.

PRAY Ask God to teach you to serve and witness for Him.

Monday

READ Read Nehemiah 1:2, 3.

EXPLAIN While serving the king of Persia, Nehemiah felt a concern for his friends and relatives back in his homeland. About whom do you feel a concern?

WRITE Write a letter, make a phone call, or send a care package to that person.

PRAY Ask God to use you to serve and witness for Him.

Tuesday

READ Read Nehemiah 1:4–11.

WRITE Fill in the missing information from this reading.
Verse 5: Nehemiah is telling God that He is _____.
Verse 6: Nehemiah _____ the sins of the Israelites, including his and his family's.
Verse 8: Nehemiah asks God to _____ His promises.
Verse 11: Nehemiah asks God to help the _____ be willing to help the Jews.

PRAY Use Nehemiah's prayer as a model. Praise God first, confess your sins, claim His promises, ask Him to meet your needs.

Nisan, Year 20

Did I have an answer to prayer! While I was serving lunch, the king mentioned how sad I've been looking. How could he tell anything was wrong? I've been trying to hide it, but the fasting and crying has caught up with me. I can't blame him for asking what's wrong. I was afraid for my life, but I told him about Jerusalem anyway. I've been waiting four months for this chance!

He asked me directly, "What do you want?" I said a quick prayer silently before I answered. I told him I wanted to go back to my homeland to rebuild the walls of my city. He asked me questions such as how long it would take and when I would be back. (I'm glad I had thought about these things ahead of time!) As I told him, a thought dawned on me. Maybe he could help me even more. I took a deep breath and asked for letters of introduction for the governors of the provinces on the way, and timber for the walls, the gates, and the house in which I will live. He gave me everything I asked for! He even sent with me a military escort. GOD IS GOOD!

25th day, Tammuz, Year 20, Jerusalem, Judah

I met Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite. They don't know why I'm here, but they know it has to be something important because of the king's military escort. I can tell by the way they talk that they are going to be trouble.



6

Wednesday

READ Read Nehemiah 2:2-8.

LIST In your Bible study journal, list three ways you could serve God and others. Do these acts of service today.

PRAY Ask God to help you serve Him to the best of your ability so that someone would be touched by His love.

Thursday

READ Read Nehemiah 2:17, 18.

REFLECT What helped the Israelites decide to start rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem after they listened to Nehemiah's message?

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write a plan for how you could overcome your fears by serving God and others.

PRAY Tell God that you will trust Him and serve others even when you face difficulties and challenges.

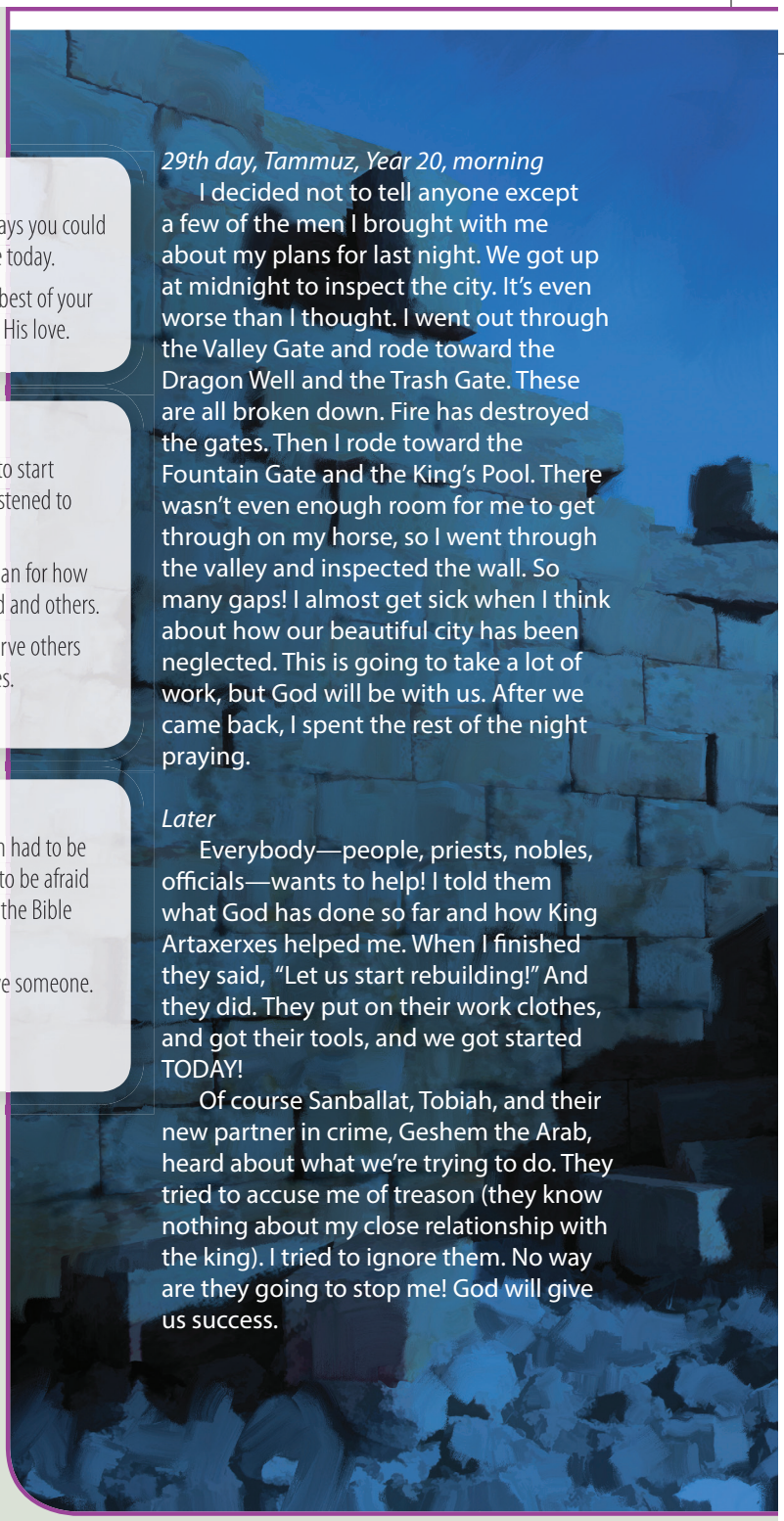
Friday

READ Read Nehemiah 2:19, 20.

THINK What reasons do you think Nehemiah had to be afraid of the king? What situations cause you to be afraid or worried? How are God's promises found in the Bible helping you to trust Him in every situation?

PLAN Plan together with your family to serve someone. Do your act of kindness as a surprise.

PRAY Pray for God's strength and wisdom.



29th day, Tammuz, Year 20, morning

I decided not to tell anyone except a few of the men I brought with me about my plans for last night. We got up at midnight to inspect the city. It's even worse than I thought. I went out through the Valley Gate and rode toward the Dragon Well and the Trash Gate. These are all broken down. Fire has destroyed the gates. Then I rode toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool. There wasn't even enough room for me to get through on my horse, so I went through the valley and inspected the wall. So many gaps! I almost get sick when I think about how our beautiful city has been neglected. This is going to take a lot of work, but God will be with us. After we came back, I spent the rest of the night praying.

Later

Everybody—people, priests, nobles, officials—wants to help! I told them what God has done so far and how King Artaxerxes helped me. When I finished they said, "Let us start rebuilding!" And they did. They put on their work clothes, and got their tools, and we got started TODAY!

Of course Sanballat, Tobiah, and their new partner in crime, Geshem the Arab, heard about what we're trying to do. They tried to accuse me of treason (they know nothing about my close relationship with the king). I tried to ignore them. No way are they going to stop me! God will give us success.



PUZZLE 6

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Instructions: Be ready to serve at all times and wherever you are. Can you read the Bible verse that illustrates this? These pieces are mixed up and fit together into a rectangle, and the words form a five-pointed star. See if you can read the verse without cutting up the page.

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