

# Week 30: Ezra and Nehemiah - Rebuilding the Walls and the People

*A Sabbath Family Bible Study*

---

## Introduction

After decades in Babylon, Israel returned home to ruins - broken walls, broken worship, and broken resolve. God raised up two faithful leaders: Ezra, a scribe devoted to restoring the people through the Word, and Nehemiah, a governor devoted to rebuilding the walls through courage and perseverance.

Their ministries teach us that restoring a household or community requires both the altar and the wall - both spiritual renewal and practical order. Ezra reestablished truth; Nehemiah reestablished protection. Together they show that real revival is not emotional but structural: the rebuilding of hearts, homes, worship, discipline, boundaries, and identity.

This week's study calls families to rise up, rebuild the broken places, and renew their commitment to God's Word and God's order.

---

## Scripture Reading: Selected Passages (KJV)

Ezra 1:1–6, Ezra 3:1–7, Ezra 7:6–10, Nehemiah 2:11–20, Nehemiah 4:6–18, Nehemiah 8:1–8, Psalm 127:1–5 (KJV *with commentary throughout*)

---

### **Ezra 1:1–6 - God Stirs His People to Return**

*1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,*

*2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.*

**3** *Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.*

**4** *And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.*

**5** *Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem.*

**6** *And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered.*

**Commentary:**

*Restoration begins when God stirs hearts. Israel did not return because the land improved - God moved their spirits. Families today must also respond when God stirs them to rebuild areas neglected or broken. No revival begins with convenience; it begins with conviction and obedience.*

---

**Ezra 3:1–7 - The Altar Rebuilt Before the Temple**

**1** *And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem.*

**2** *Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God.*

**3** *And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, even burnt offerings morning and evening.*

**4** *They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required;*

**5** *And afterward offered the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD.*

**6** *From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid.*

*7 They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.*

**Commentary:**

Before walls, before foundations, before structures - Israel rebuilt the altar. Worship must be restored before work can succeed. Families cannot rebuild homes through effort alone; they must establish worship, prayer, and obedience as the central altar of the household.

---

**Ezra 7:6–10 - Ezra the Scribe: A Man Prepared**

*6 This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him.*

*7 And there went up some of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.*

*8 And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king.*

*9 For upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him.*

*10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.*

**Commentary:**

Ezra's ministry flowed from preparation: He sought the Word, He obeyed the Word, He taught the Word. This is the same order required in every home. No father can teach what he has not obeyed; no mother can shape what she does not submit to. Reformation begins with Scripture.

---

**Nehemiah 2:11–20 - Rise Up and Build**

*11 So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.*

*12 And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.*

*13 And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.*

*14 Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass.*

*15 Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned.*

*16 And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.*

*17 Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.*

*18 Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.*

*19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?*

*20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.*

**Commentary:**

Nehemiah inspected the ruins before he inspired the work. Leadership sees reality and still chooses faith. His call, *“Let us rise up and build,”* echoes through Scripture. Families must not ignore broken areas - marriage, discipline, devotion, order - they must rise and rebuild them with confidence in God’s help.

---

**Nehemiah 4:6–18 - Building and Guarding**

*6 So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.*

*7 But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth,*

*8 And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.*

*9 Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.*

*10 And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.*

*11 And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.*

*12 And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.*

*13 Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.*

*14 And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the LORD, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.*

*15 And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.*

*16 And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah.*

*17 They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.*

*18 For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.*

**Commentary:**

Nehemiah teaches that restoration requires both labor and vigilance. Families must build with one hand and defend with the other - building godliness while guarding against influences that would tear it down. The fight for a holy home requires prayer, boundaries, courage, and unity.

---

**Nehemiah 8:1–8 - The People Gather to Hear the Word**

*1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.*

*2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.*

*3 And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.*

*4 And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.*

*5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:*

*6 And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.*

*7 Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place.*

*8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.*

### **Commentary:**

This is revival - families gathered, attentive, reverent, eager to understand God's Word. Ezra did not entertain them; he explained Scripture. True rebuilding is impossible until the household submits to God's Word again. Worship is restored when hearts are humbled under Scripture.

---

## **Discussion Questions for All Ages**

### **Young Children:**

- Why did the people rebuild the altar first?
- Who helped rebuild the walls?
- How did the people listen to the Word of God?

### **Older Children & Teens:**

- Why does rebuilding a home or nation require both worship and obedience?
- What dangers tried to stop the people from building?
- How can your family build and guard at the same time?

**Adults:**

- What “walls” or “altars” in your home need rebuilding?
  - How does Ezra’s example challenge your approach to Scripture?
  - What distractions or oppositions must you guard against while strengthening your household?
- 

 **Psalm Reading**

**Psalm 127:1–5 (KJV)**

*1 Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*

*2 It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*

*3 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*

*4 As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.*

*5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.*

**Commentary:**

Building a home, raising children, guarding a household - none of it succeeds without the Lord. The Psalm echoes Ezra and Nehemiah: God builds the people, God guards the city, God grants children as heritage. Families that build with Him will never be shaken.

---

 **Hymn: “Rise Up, O Men of God”**

By William P. Merrill (1911)

1.  
Rise up, O men of God!  
Have done with lesser things.

Give heart and mind and soul and strength  
To serve the King of kings.

2.

Rise up, O men of God!  
His kingdom tarries long;  
Bring in the day of brotherhood  
And end the night of wrong.

3.

Rise up, O men of God!  
The church for you doth wait,  
Her strength unequal to her task;  
Rise up, and make her great!

4.

Lift high the cross of Christ!  
Tread where His feet have trod;  
As brothers of the Son of Man,  
Rise up, O men of God!

---



## Family Application Points

1. **Rebuild the Altar:** Restore worship, prayer, Scripture, and obedience in the home.
  2. **Rebuild the Walls:** Guard your household from anything that undermines truth or holiness.
  3. **Prepare the Heart:** Like Ezra, seek, obey, and teach the Word.
  4. **Rise and Build:** See what is broken and courageously begin the work.
  5. **Build and Guard:** Work with faith and vigilance - labor with one hand, defend with the other.
- 



## A Sabbath Feast Prayer (to be used later when the Sabbath meal is ready)

Father, You are the God who restores ruins and rebuilds what was broken. As we share this Sabbath meal, bless this food before us and bless the loving hands that prepared it. Give us the heart of Ezra and the courage of Nehemiah as we rebuild the places in our home that need strength and order. Teach us to worship faithfully, guard diligently, and labor joyfully under Your

care. Establish our household as a place of truth, peace, and obedience. In Jesus' name, Amen..

---

## **Closing Prayer**

Lord, make us faithful builders in our generation. Give us the conviction of Ezra to know and obey Your Word, and the courage of Nehemiah to stand firm against opposition. Strengthen our families to rebuild what has been neglected, to repair what has been broken, and to guard what You have entrusted to us. Let our homes be places where worship is pure, walls are strong, and generations walk in Your ways. Guide our hands, steady our hearts, and anchor our lives in Your truth. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.