

THROUGH THE BIBLE IN A YEAR

6/18 – Neh 7-8, Acts 3
6/19 – Neh 9-11, Acts 4:1-22
6/20 – Neh 12-13, Acts 4:23-37
6/21 – Est 1-3, Acts 5:1-16

6/22 – Est 4-6, Acts 5:17-42
6/23 – Est 7-10, Acts 6
6/24 – Job 1-3, Acts 7:1-19
6/25 – Job 4-6, Acts 7:20-43

** Summaries/outlines from The Holy Bible, Contemporary English Version, ©1995 by the American Bible Society.

NEHEMIAH

Twelve years after the last events of the book of Ezra, a Jew named Nehemiah received bad news about Jerusalem: the walls of the city were still broken down, and the burned gates had never been replaced.

Nehemiah lived in the Persian city of Susa and was a personal servant to King Artaxerxes. So Nehemiah prayed and asked God to have Artaxerxes send him to Jerusalem to rebuild the city. Artaxerxes did send Nehemiah, and he even provided the materials for the repairs.

After Nehemiah had arrived in Jerusalem and the repair work had begun, the officials from neighboring areas insulted the Jews and accused them of wanting to rebel against Persia. These enemies even planned attacks against Jerusalem and tried to have Nehemiah killed. Finally, the walls and gates were finished and dedicated to God, and they became a sign that God had blessed his people.

But Nehemiah realized that God would continue to bless his people only if they obeyed him.

OUTLINE

- I. King Artaxerxes Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem (1:1-2:10)
- II. Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem (2:11-4:22)
- III. Nehemiah's Concern for the Poor (5:1-19)
- IV. The Wall is Finished, in Spite of Enemy Plots (6:1-7:3)
- V. Exiles Who Returned (7:4-73)
- VI. Ezra Reads God's Law to the People, and the Festival of Shelters (8:1-18)
- VII. The People Confess Their Sins (9:1-37)
- VIII. The People Sign an Agreement to Obey the Lord (9:38-10:39)
- IX. The People Who Settled in Jerusalem and Judah (11:1-36)
- X. Priests and Levites Who Returned From Exile (12:1-26)
- XI. Nehemiah Dedicates the City Wall (12:27-47)
- XII. Changes Nehemiah Made (13:1-31)

BIBLE BLURB (from @biblesummary)

Neh7: I gave Hanani and Hananiah charge over Jerusalem. I registered the nobles, rulers and people by genealogy. The assembly was 42,360.

Neh8: The people gathered and Ezra read from the law. Nehemiah said, "This day is holy. Do not mourn." The people held the Feast of Booths.

Neh9: The Israelites confessed. The Levites said, "LORD, you brought our fathers out of Egypt. They rebelled but you did not forsake them."

Neh10: The leaders sealed a covenant. The people made an oath: "We will not marry foreigners. We will bring the offerings for the temple."

Neh11: The leaders and one in ten of the people lived in Jerusalem. There were descendants of Judah and of Benjamin, priests and Levites.

Neh12: All the Levites and leaders gathered to dedicate the wall. They made offerings and rejoiced. Men were appointed over the storerooms.

Neh13: I cleared Tobiah out of the temple. I confronted those who profaned the Sabbath and who married foreign women. Remember me, O God.

ESTHER

The story of Esther takes place in the city of Susa, in the winter palace of the Persian king. After King Xerxes divorced his queen, he chose a young Jewish woman named Esther as his new queen. She was an orphan but had been adopted and cared for by her

cousin, Mordecai, who was given a job as a palace official. Mordecai warned her not to tell anyone that she was a Jew, and she obeyed.

The king's highest official was a man named Haman. He hated the Jews, and he tricked the king into giving permission to have them all killed. The rest of the book tells how Esther risked her own life to save the lives of her people.

Afterward, Mordecai and Esther wrote a letter telling all Jews to celebrate the festival of Purim every year to remember how the nation was saved.

The Hebrew text of the book of Esther doesn't mention God, but the whole plot shows that God was protecting his people by making Esther queen.

OUTLINE

- I. Esther Becomes Queen (1:1-2:23)
- II. Haman Plans to Destroy the Jews (3:1-15)
- III. Mordecai Asks for Esther's Help (4:1-17)
- IV. Haman is Put to Death (7:1-10)
- V. The Jews Defend Themselves and Kill Their Enemies (8:1-9:19)
- VI. The Festival of Purim (9:20-32)
- VII. The Greatness of Xerxes and Mordecai (10:1-3)

BIBLE BLURB (from @biblesummary)

Est1: King Ahasuerus gave a feast for all his officials. Queen Vashti refused to come to him, so the wise men advised him to replace her.

Est2: Mordecai raised Esther. She was taken into the king's harem and was chosen as queen. Mordecai told Esther of a plot against the king.

Est3: Ahasuerus promoted Haman, but Mordecai would not bow to him. Haman asked to destroy the Jews. The king gave his seal for the decree.

Est4: Mordecai asked Esther to plead with the king. Esther said, "Hold a fast. I will go to the king against the law, and if I die, I die."

Est5: Esther won favour with the king. She said, "Let the king and Haman come to a feast tomorrow." Haman built a gallows to hang Mordecai.

Est6: That night the king read about the plot against him. Haman came to ask about hanging Mordecai. The king told Haman to honour Mordecai.

Est7: At the feast, the king asked Esther, "What is your request?" She said, "My people have been sold by Haman." The king had Haman hanged.

Est8: The king gave his ring to Mordecai. Mordecai sent letters to the provinces allowing the Jews to defend themselves. The Jews rejoiced.

Est9: On the day of the king's decree, the Jews destroyed their enemies. Mordecai wrote to all the Jews and established the Feast of Purim.

Est10: Mordecai the Jew was second only to King Ahasuerus.

JOB

Job was a very rich man, and although he did not belong to the people of Israel, he worshiped the Lord and was a truly good person. But Satan talked to God and accused Job of serving God only because God was blessing him. God agreed to let Satan take away Job's wealth, his children, and finally, his health, to see whether Job would stay faithful to God. Job did remain faithful.

Then three of Job's friends came to comfort him. They believed that health and prosperity were signs of God's blessing. And because Job had lost both his health and his prosperity, the three friends insisted that God must be punishing Job for some sin. Job answered that he was innocent and this meant that they were wrong. Job and the friends argued back and forth, with neither side really proving the other wrong, although at the end of the argument, the friends gave up.

Job was suffering deeply, and several times during the argument he asked God to appear and explain the reason for his suffering. Then, after the friends stopped speaking, Job decided that human beings cannot find the kind of wisdom that gives answers to the deep questions of life. Only God has that wisdom. Job ended his speeches by swearing that he was innocent of doing wrong.

At this point, a young bystander named Elihu began talking. He repeated some of what had already been said, but he also criticized both sides of the argument. Elihu finished with a poem praising God's care for nature.

God finally did appear to Job, but he did not explain Job's suffering. Instead, God showed that the many things he does cannot be understood by humans; humans cannot do what God does. God criticized Job for talking so much when he knew so little, but he also said that Job had remained his faithful servant. And so, at the very end, the book tells how God blessed Job and made him twice as wealthy as he had been before.

Job never did understand why he had suffered; he felt bitter, but he never rejected God or turned away from him. Job was convinced that someday, God would rescue him.

OUTLINE

- I. Job Loses His Wealth, Family, and Health (1:10-2:13)
- II. Job Curses the Day of His Birth (3:1-26)
- III. The First Round of Debate (4:1-14:22)
- IV. The Second Round of Debate (15:1-21:34)
- V. The Third Round of Debate (22:1-26:14)
- VI. Job's Closing Statements (27:1-30:31)
- VII. Job Swears that He is Innocent (31:1-40)
- VIII. Elihu's Speeches (32:1-37:24)
- IX. God's First Speech (38:1-39:30)
- X. God's Second Speech and Job's Responses (40:1-42:6)
- XI. The Lord Again Blesses Job with Health, Wealth, and Family (42:7-17)

BIBLE BLURB (from @biblesummary)

Job1: Job was blameless. The LORD allowed Satan to test him. Job's servants and children were killed. He tore his robes and worshipped.

Job2: Satan struck Job with boils. Job's wife told him to curse God. But Job did not sin. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar came to comfort him.

Job3: Job said, "Curse the day I was born! Why did I not die at birth? Why is light given to him who suffers? I have no rest, only turmoil."

Job4: Eliphaz said, "Will you become impatient? When did the innocent ever perish? I heard a voice: 'Can a man be more righteous than God?'"

Job5: "Who will answer you? Man is born to trouble. As for me, I would seek God. Do not despise his discipline. He wounds, but he binds up."

Job6: Job said, "My misery would outweigh the sand of the seas! You have proved no help. Show me how I have been wrong! Would I lie to you?"

ACTS

This is the second book written by Luke. In his first one, commonly known as the Gospel of Luke, he told "all that Jesus did and taught from the very first until he was taken up to heaven." In this book, Luke continues the story by describing some of the struggles the disciples faced as they tried to obey the command of Jesus.

So many different countries are mentioned in Acts that the book may seem to have been written only to tell about the spread the Christian message. But that is only part of the story. After Jesus was taken up to heaven, one of the big problems for his followers was deciding who could belong to God's people. And since Jesus and his first followers were Jews, it was only natural for many of them to think that his message was only for Jews. But in Acts the Spirit is always present to show that Jesus came to save both Jews and Gentiles, and that God wants followers from every nation and race to be part of his people.

The first conflict between Christians and Jews took place when some of the Jewish religious leaders rejected the message about Jesus. But the most serious problems for the early church happened because the disciples at first failed to understand that anyone could become a follower of Jesus without first becoming a Jew. This began to change when Philip dared to take the message to the Samaritans, and when Peter went to the home of Cornelius, a captain in the Roman army.

Finally, Peter reported to the church in Jerusalem and a meeting was held there to discuss the question of who could become followers of Christ. Before the meeting was over, everyone agreed that the Spirit of God was leading them to reach out to Gentiles as well as Jews with the good news of Jesus.

The one who did the most for the spread of the faith was a man named Paul, and much of the book tells about his preaching among the Gentiles. Finally, he took the message to Rome, the world's most important city at that time. One of Luke's main reasons for writing was to show that nothing could keep the Christian message from spreading everywhere.

OUTLINE

- I. Telling the Good News in Jerusalem (1:1-8:3)
- II. The Good News in Judea and Samaria (8:4-12:25)
- III. Paul's First Journey to Tell the Good News (13:1-14:28)
- IV. An Important Decision in Jerusalem (15:1-35)
- V. Paul's Second Journey to Tell the Good News (15:36-18:22)
- VI. Paul's Third Journey to Tell the Good News (18:23-21:16)
- VII. Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem (21:17-23:22)
- VIII. Paul is Taken to Caesarea (23:23-26:23)
- IX. Paul is Taken to Rome (27:1-28:31)

BIBLE BLURB (from @biblesummary)

Acts3: Peter and John healed a lame man at the temple. Peter told the people, "Faith in Jesus has healed this man. Repent of your sins."

Acts4: They were taken before the rulers. Peter and John said, "We cannot stop speaking about Jesus." The believers prayed for boldness.

Acts5: Ananias and Sapphira told a lie and fell dead. An angel released the apostles from prison. Gamaliel advised, "Leave these men alone."

Acts6: The disciples chose seven men to distribute food. Some from the synagogue disputed with Stephen. They took him before the council.

Acts7: Stephen said, "Brothers, God called Abraham and appeared to Moses. You killed the Righteous One." They were enraged and stoned him.

Getting to Know God Through His Book - 4 Questions - Ask...

Insight—what does the passage say? Paraphrase the main point(s) and the commands to follow, promises to claim, examples to follow (or avoid), etc.

Question—what don't I understand? Need to know more about? How does this passage make me feel?

Praise—what does this passage teach me about God? Turn what the passage says into praise for the Lord's goodness, power, holiness, wisdom, etc.

Apply—what is God saying to me from this passage? Confess how you have not followed it. Pray, asking God to help you obey. Get quiet and ask God to speak to you.

Journal—write out your prayers, thoughts, responses to God and His Word

HOW TO PRAY

Scripture is God speaking to us. Prayer is us speaking to and listening to God. Jesus gave us the model in the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6). Keep your relationship fresh with the Lord by both reading and praying - two way communication. Remember to look up like Jesus did when He prayed.

1. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name – focus on God, adore, praise, thank Him – long to see His glory and honor.
2. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done – ask for what you know will please Him, pray back the Scripture – that is His will.
3. Give us this day our daily bread – ask for your needs and others to be met.
4. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us – ask for forgiveness, from God, and from others you may have hurt. Ask God to help you forgive and restore others too. Ask Him to get rid of bitterness and have love & compassion for those who have hurt you.
5. And lead us not into temptation – ask God to take over your day, protect you and others from evil.
6. For thine is the kingdom, power & glory – end by re-focusing on God, His kingdom, power, and glory!
7. Listen – ask God to speak to you by His Spirit – always test what you hear by His Word.
8. Pray the Blind Bartimaeus Prayer (Mark 10) – Tell God what you feel, what you want, and ask God what you should do to get what you want (if what you want is right).