

# Connect360: Discovering Our Kingdom Assignment

March 7, 2025

- *Lesson 1 in the Connect360 unit “Kingdom Assignment: The Relentless Pursuit of Obedience” focuses on Nehemiah 1:1-3, 11.*

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, 70 years after the prophecy of Jeremiah, the king sent out a decree throughout the land allowing Hebrews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the house of the Lord. In 536 BC, Zerubbabel led a group of 42,360, consisting of priests, Levites and others almost 800 miles back to Jerusalem for this task. However, the work was suspended because of opposition from enemies surrounding Jerusalem.

Decades afterward, in 457 BC, Ezra the priest led a remnant back to Jerusalem to restore the vessels of the Temple and call for a reconciliation with God. Thirteen years later, Nehemiah led a third group to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls.

Jerusalem was still desolate. The walls and the gates of the city remained as they were when the armies of Babylon’s King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city and led captives away to Babylon.

When the Hebrew people first entered the Promise Land, God instructed his people to pronounce blessings and curses on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. God promised to bless them when they obeyed and punish them when they didn’t.

The Hebrew people turned away from God, and the Lord did as he had promised. Israel was destroyed in 722, Judah was taken captive, and the Temple and walls of Jerusalem burned down in 586 BC. However, God

promised after 70 years they would be restored. God kept his word and used Cyrus, Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah to fulfill his promise.

Nehemiah was an unlikely choice to lead a movement rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. He was living in the Persian capital, Susa, and cupbearer for King Artaxerxes. With a prestigious place of influence serving the king, why would he jeopardize the security of his position for a risky and dangerous task? Nehemiah obeyed because he never forgot about Jerusalem nor the promises of the God of Israel.

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