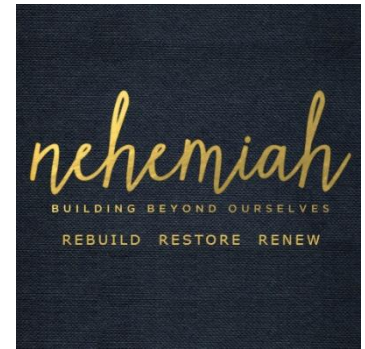


Nehemiah (“Yahweh comforts”) – rebuild, restore, renew

Romans 15:4 (NLT) Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. They give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises.

Without any doubt the most theologically distressing event of the history of Israel was the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and the deportation of **the covenant people** to far-off Babylon.



Many pre-exile prophets had anticipated this calamity and had already gone on record as extending hope to those who, in captivity, would seek the Lord’s forgiveness and thus be reinstated as the priestly nation.

2 Chronicles 36:18–23 (NLT) ¹⁸ The king took home to Babylon all the articles, large and small, used in the Temple of God, and the treasures from both the Lord’s Temple and from the palace of the king and his officials. ¹⁹ Then his army burned the Temple of God, tore down the walls of Jerusalem, burned all the palaces, and completely destroyed everything of value. ²⁰ The few who survived were taken as exiles to Babylon, and they became servants to the king and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. ²¹ So the message of the Lord spoken through Jeremiah was fulfilled. The land finally enjoyed its Sabbath rest, lying desolate until the seventy years were fulfilled, just as the prophet had said. ²² In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, the Lord fulfilled the prophecy he had given through Jeremiah. He stirred the heart of Cyrus to put this proclamation in writing and to send it throughout his kingdom: ²³ “This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: “The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a Temple at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Any of you who are his people may go there for this task. And may the Lord your God be with you!”

With this in mind, Nehemiah led his people in one of the most well-documented and significant ceremonies of covenant renewal in all the Old Testament (Neh. 8–10).

What we see in the covenants is that **God entered into a series of formal relationships with various human partners in order to ultimately rescue the world through Jesus.**

“Covenant” ... describes a formal relationship in which either of two parties make binding promises so they can work together toward a common goal.

Salt covenant – shoe – marriage (not a contract – about relationship)

- I. **Covenant with Noah – Genesis 9:8–12 (NLT)** ⁸ Then God told Noah and his sons, ⁹ “I hereby confirm my covenant with you and your descendants, ¹⁰ and with all the animals that were on the boat with you—the birds, the livestock, and all the wild animals—every living creature on earth. ¹¹ Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth.” ¹² Then God said, “I am giving you a sign of my covenant with you and with all living creatures, for all generations to come.

- II. **Abraham** – Genesis 12, 15, 17 – God selects Abram from among the nations scattered at Babylon and makes promises to him that will eventually restore his blessing to all humanity.

Genesis 12:1–3 (NLT) ¹ The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. ² I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. ³ I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”

Genesis 17:4–9; Genesis 22:16–18

- III. **The covenant with Moses and Israel** –

Exodus 2:24 (NLT) ²⁴ God heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. See **Exodus 19:1–6**

- IV. **The covenant with David** fulfils previous covenants.

2 Samuel 7:10–16

God entered into a series of formal relationships with various human partners in order to ultimately rescue the world through Jesus.

So for Nehemiah and the nation of Israel, this was so much more than just the rebuilding of the wall. It was the rebuilding of the people of God that would lead to the fulfilment of the promises of God through Jesus Christ.

With this in mind, Nehemiah led his people in one of the most well-documented and significant ceremonies of covenant renewal in all the Old Testament (Neh. 8–10).

1. Reminds us of the faithfulness of God and the fickleness of the human condition.
2. Jesus’ disciples, now made up of all nations, are the family of God, the new covenant people who follow the Spirit of Jesus into a life of freedom and blessing.
Hebrews 7:22 (NLT) ²² Because of this oath, Jesus is the one who guarantees this better covenant with God.
3. Cautious how we apply covenant promises.
4. A better covenant, better promises in Jesus.
Hebrews 8:6 (NLT) ⁶ But now Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old priesthood, for he is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises.