

The prayers, actions and speeches of Nehemiah

| Prayers of Nehemiah | Action of Nehemiah <i>Action of others</i> | Public speeches of Nehemiah |
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| | Nehemiah is in exile, cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia. Hanani arrives from Jerusalem with news that Jerusalem is in ruins and the wall is rubble. | |
| | When I heard this, I sat down and wept. I mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven. 1.4 | |
| <p>God of heaven, the great and awesome God, loyal to his covenant and faithful to those who love him and obey his commands: Look at me, listen to me. Pay attention to this prayer of your servant that I am praying day and night in intercession for your servants, the People of Israel, confessing the sins of the People of Israel. And I am including myself, I and my ancestors, among those who have sinned against you.</p> <p>We've treated you like dirt: we haven't done what you told us, haven't followed your commands, and haven't respected the decisions you gave to Moses your servant. All the same, remember the warning you posted to your servant Moses: "if you betray me, I'll scatter you to the four winds, but if you come back to me and do what I tell you, I'll gather up all these scattered peoples from wherever they ended up and put them back in the place I chose to mark with my name".</p> <p>Well, there they are – your servants, your people whom you so powerfully and impressively redeemed. O Master, listen to me, listen to your servant' prayer – and make me successful today so that I get what I want from the king. 1.5-11</p> | | |
| <p>Praying under my breath to the God of heaven, I said, "if it please the king..." 2.4</p> | <p>Nehemiah asks the king for permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city.</p> <p>He asks for safe passage, resources and the kings</p> | |

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| | authority to do the work. He arrives in Jerusalem and surveys the walls. | |
| | | Face it: we are in a bad way here. Jerusalem is a wreck; its gates are burned up. Come – let us build the wall of Jerusalem and not live with this disgrace any longer. I told them how God was supporting me and how the king was backing me up. 2.17-18 |
| | <i>The people set to work rebuilding the walls. Many people take part, including the high priest, priests, mayors, heads of families, daughters, trade guilds and people living outside the city.</i> | |
| | <i>Sanballat, ruler of Samaria and by default of Judah tries to stop the work – he doesn't want to lose his influence. The people become tired</i> | |
| Oh listen to us, dear God. We're so despised: Boomerang their ridicule on their heads; have their enemies cart them off as war trophies to a land of no return; don't forget their iniquity, don't wipe away their sin – they've insulted the builders! 4.4-5 | | |
| | | Don't be afraid of them. Put your minds on the Master, great and awesome, and then fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your homes. 4.14 |
| | | There's a lot of work going on and we are spread out along the wall, separated from each other. When you hear the trumpet call, join us there; our God will fight for us. 4.19-20 |
| | | Each person and his helper is to stay inside Jerusalem – guards by night and workmen by day. 4.22 |
| | <i>The poor complain that they cannot even afford to eat. The work is in danger!</i> | |
| | | We did everything we could to buy back our Jewish brothers who had to sell themselves as slaves to foreigners. And now you are selling these brothers back into debt slavery! Does that mean that we have to buy them back again? |

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| | | <p>What you are doing is wrong. Is there no fear of God left in you? Don't you care what the nations around here, our enemies, think of you?</p> <p>I and my brothers and the people working for me have also loaned them money. But this gouging them with interest has got to stop. Give them back their foreclosed fields, vineyards, olive groves and homes right now. And forgive your claims on their money, grain, new wine and olive oil. So may God empty the pockets and house of everyone who doesn't keep this promise – turned inside out and emptied. 5.7-11, 13</p> |
| Remember in my favour, O my God, everything I have done for this people. 5.19 | | |
| | <i>More attacks from Sanballat and others</i> | |
| Give me strength. 6.9 | | |
| O my God, don't let Tobiah and Sanballat get by with all the mischief they have done. And the same goes for the prophetess Noadiah and the other prophets who have been trying to undermine my confidence. 6.14 | | |
| | <i>The walls are finished!</i> | |
| | | Don't open the gates of Jerusalem until the sun is up. And shut and bar the gates while the guards are still on duty. Appoint the guards from the citizens of Jerusalem and assign them to posts in front of their own homes. 7.3 |
| | <p><i>A record of the peoples' genealogy.</i></p> <p><i>People bring voluntary offerings to support the work of the Temple.</i></p> <p><i>An assembly is held and the Law read.</i></p> | |
| | | <p>This day is holy to God, your God. Don't weep and carry on.</p> <p>Go home and prepare a feast, holiday food and drink; and share it with those who don't have anything: this day is holy to God. Don't feel bad. The joy of the Lord is your strength. 8.9-10</p> |
| | <p><i>A celebration takes place and a long psalm sung.</i></p> <p><i>The people pledge to keep the Law and support the work of the Temple.</i></p> | |

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| | <p><i>Some people agree to live in Jerusalem.</i></p> <p><i>The wall is dedicated with great rejoicing.</i></p> | |
| <p>Remember me, O my God, for this. Don't ever forget the devoted work I have done for the Temple of God and its worship. 13.14</p> | <p>Over time people fail in their promises and Nehemiah calls them back to keep them.</p> | |
| <p>Remember me also for this, my God. Treat me with mercy according to your great and steadfast love. 13.33</p> | | |
| <p>Remember them, O my God, how they defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priests and the Levites. 13.29</p> | | |
| <p>Remember me, O my God, for good. 13.31</p> | | |

