

WEEK 39 — STRENGTHENING THE FAITH AND SECURITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Date: about 445-400 BC • The dates of the psalms in this section are unknown (most likely from between 1020 and 400 BC)

The Story: God continues to bless, correct, and guide his people as the Old Testament period winds down. Nehemiah and Ezra work to build up Jerusalem and to enact reforms, increasing the city's security even as its relationship with God is being refreshed. But troubles persist among Jews who are not fully faithful to God; many are violating God's laws. Nehemiah, Ezra, and Malachi confront them, standing as godly leaders (both political and religious) to warn, teach, and lead his people back to him. Where in centuries past the political and religious leaders of Israel and Judah were often ungodly and corrupt, these leaders serve God faithfully, and so their people have hope. After completing the historical and prophetic readings of the Old Testament, we return to Psalms, reading psalms written at unknown times in the Old Testament period.

* Kids' readings may not align with the daily full readings. Parents, see the content ratings on the back page.

SEPTEMBER 25 NEHEMIAH 3-5

Today's reading sees construction of Jerusalem's defensive wall, in ruins since the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem, begin. Many of the Jews in Jerusalem assist earnestly in its construction—but some refuse. Enemies in the region oppose the work, and mid-way through it Nehemiah must address a problem with some Jews taking financial advantage of others, violating God's law (see Leviticus 25:35-38). Watch for what Nehemiah says about—and to—God in this section; in his view, the success, and the very lives, of Nehemiah and the Jerusalem Jews depends on God.

Date: June to September of about 445 BC

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Nehemiah 3-4

Kids' Reading*: Nehemiah 4-5

SEPTEMBER 26 NEHEMIAH 6-8

Today's reading again reveals Nehemiah's trust in God as construction of Jerusalem's wall is finished and God again delivers Nehemiah from the threats of local enemies, who do not want to see Jerusalem and the Jewish people grow in strength. Then Ezra reappears and leads the Jews in a formal reading of the Law of Moses, and the people obey it by observing a festival that has apparently been neglected for some time.

Date: June to October of about 445 BC

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Nehemiah 6:1 to 7:3 • Nehemiah 8

Kids' Reading*: Nehemiah 6:1 to 7:3

SEPTEMBER 27 NEHEMIAH 9-10

Today's reading continues the reforms initiated by Ezra among the Jews in the homeland, especially in Jerusalem. Here the Jews confess their sins and recommit themselves to God. Notice the great prayer of Nehemiah 9. It offers a profound summary of God's work with his people from creation to Ezra's day.

Date: September-October of about 445 BC

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Nehemiah 9:1-37 • Nehemiah 10:28-39

Kids' Reading*: Nehemiah 8

SEPTEMBER 28 NEHEMIAH 11-13

Today's reading records the final stages in Nehemiah's physical and spiritual building up of Jerusalem. The city is repopulated, increasing its economic and military strength. The new wall is dedicated. And more religious reforms are carried out, especially after Nehemiah's return from a journey back to King Artaxerxes. Nehemiah 13 gives us insight into some ways that Jews in this period struggled to abide by God's laws for them; the issues this chapter brings up prepare us for the issues that Malachi addresses in his message.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS — Summit View Church of Christ

Date: about 445 to sometime between 431 and 407 BC

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Nehemiah 12:27 to 13:31

Kids' Reading*: Nehemiah 13

SEPTEMBER 29 MALACHI

Today's reading covers the prophetic message of the last prophet of the Old Testament period: Malachi, whose name means "my messenger". Notice his rhetorical technique: Five times God or Malachi speaks, the people question what was said, and God responds with corrective teaching. Watch for issues related to those that appear in Ezra and Nehemiah, especially regarding holy behavior that honors God, marriage and divorce, justice, and serving God faithfully. Also watch for two prophecies that are fulfilled in Jesus and John the Baptist (3:1, 4:5-6).

Date: probably around roughly 430 BC

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Malachi

Kids' Reading*: Malachi 3:6 to 4:6

SEPTEMBER 30 PSALM 1 • PSALM 33 • PSALMS 66-67 • PSALM 71 • PSALM 91

Today's reading begins to wind down our reading of the Old Testament with psalms to which we cannot assign a date. They almost certainly come from somewhere between the rise of David (ca. 1020 BC) and the last of the other Old Testament writings (ca. 400 BC). In today's psalms, notice the recurring theme of trust in God—trust that brings confidence, praise, and obedience to God's commands.

Date: unknown (most likely between 1020 and 400 BC)

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Psalm 1 • Psalm 33 • Psalms 66-67 • Psalm 71 • Psalm 91

Kids' Reading*: Psalm 1 • Psalm 33 • Psalm 66

OCTOBER 1 PSALMS 92-94 • PSALMS 96-100

Today's reading continues our reading of the undatable psalms. Praise is a major theme in our selections today. Notice all the calls for the reader/listener to sing, worship, shout, and rejoice before the Lord. There is recognition of difficulty in these psalms, but it is overpowered by confidence in God.

Date: unknown (most likely between 1020 and 400 BC)

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Psalms 92-93 • Psalms 96-100

Kids' Reading*: Psalms 97-100

Parents' Guide

PG preview for young children

Neh 4:8 (V), 11-14 (V)

Neh 5:5 (T), 8 (T)

Neh 6:10 (V)

Neh 9:11 (V), 24-25 (V), 26-31 (T, V), 36-37 (T)

Neh 13:8 (T), 25 (V)

Ps 71:10-13 (T, V)

Ps 92:6-11 (T)

Ps 94:2-7 (T, V), 13 (T), 16-17 (T), 21-23 (T, V)

Mal 1:3-4 (T)

Mal 2:14-16 (T)

Mal 3:5 (S, T)

Mal 4:1 (T), 3 (V), 6 (T)

PG-13 preview for under age 13

Mal 2:3 (T)

R shocking, graphic, or disturbing
none

C = Circumcision
N = Nudity
S = Sexuality
T = Dark/Sensitive Themes
V = Violence