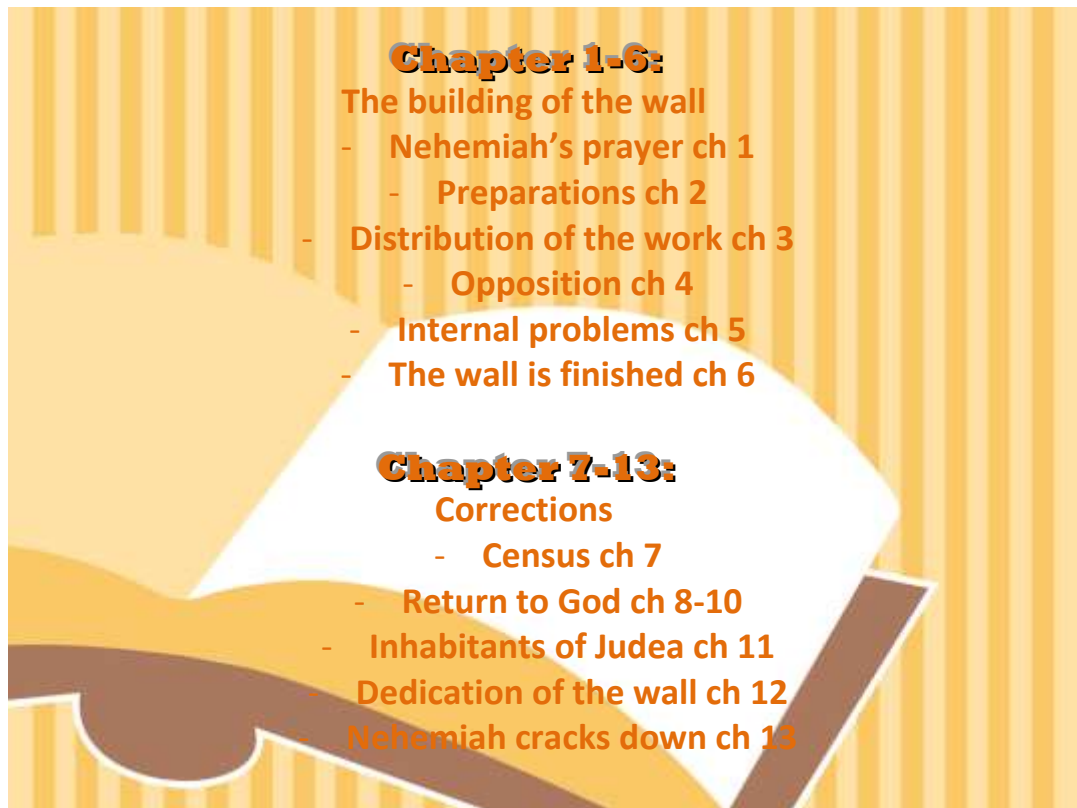


The Book of Nehemiah

"The joy of the LORD is your strength." Mark 10:45



How it started: As a direct consequence of Solomon's sin of idolatry, the kingdom of Israel was divided into two parts in 931BC.

As God had announced on many occasions in the law and by the prophets, He finally had to punish all Israel. At first, the northern kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722BC and its inhabitants taken into captivity.

586BC the Babylonians conquered the southern kingdom of Judah. Whilst the Israelites of the northern kingdom amalgamated with the Assyrian culture, the Jews of the southern kingdom kept their identity, even in Babylon. Many of them returned into their

homeland when the Babylonians were conquered in 539BC by the Medes and Persians.

The first group of Babylonian Jews returned into Judea in 536BC under the leadership of Zerubbabel. With God's help, they were finally able to rebuild the temple in 516BC. Many years later (457BC) a second group of Jews returned home under Ezra.

What it is all about: 14 years later Nehemiah took the same journey. He allowed himself to be used by God to build the wall of Jerusalem. How Nehemiah, through the "good hand" of his God, reached this goal, is a captivating and instructive story.

Later, Nehemiah also made sure that God's word was valued again in the day to day lives of the Jews.

How about today? The wall was a clear dividing line between the city of Jerusalem and the surrounding area, in which the heathen neighbours lived.

Today, there is also such a clear dividing line between those who belong to God and those who don't. If you believe in the Lord Jesus, you are so to speak, "inside". And if you don't believe, you are still "outside". – Do come in!

As a young Christian, you can learn a lot from the book of Nehemiah for your personal life of faith. Especially from Nehemiah, who was a faithful man of God. – Become an industrious builder for God!