

## Lesson VIII.

## NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER

November 19, 1905

Nehemiah 1 : 1-11. Commit to memory vs. 8, 9. Read ch. 2.

GOLDEN TEXT—The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.—James 5 : 16.

1 The words of Nehemiah the son of <sup>1</sup> Hachaliah.  
 2 And it came to pass in the month <sup>3</sup> Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace.

2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men <sup>4</sup> of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.

5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD <sup>5</sup> God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy <sup>6</sup> for them that love him and <sup>7</sup> observe his commandments:

6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest <sup>8</sup> hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee <sup>9</sup> now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, <sup>10</sup> and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have

**Revised Version**—Hachaliah: <sup>2</sup> Now it; <sup>3</sup> Chisleu; <sup>4</sup> out of; <sup>5</sup> the; <sup>6</sup> with; <sup>7</sup> keep; <sup>8</sup> hearken unto; <sup>9</sup> at this time; <sup>10</sup> while I confess; <sup>11</sup> ye; <sup>12</sup> trespass; <sup>13</sup> peoples; <sup>14</sup> return; <sup>15</sup> your outcasts were in; <sup>16</sup> cause my name to dwell there; <sup>17</sup> delight; <sup>18</sup> (Now I was cupbearer to the king.)

## LESSON PLAN

I. God's People in Distress, 1-3.

II. The Prayer of God's Servant, 4-11.

## DAILY READINGS

(By courtesy of I. B. R. Association)

M.—Nehemiah's prayer, Neh. ch. 1. T.—Request granted, Neh. 2 : 1-8. W.—Resolve to build, Neh. 2 : 9-20. Th.—The promise, Lev. 23 : 40-46. F.—Far-reaching deliverance, Deut. 30 : 1-10. S.—Daniel's prayer, Dan. 9 : 3-15. S.—Prayer in adversity, Psalm 80.

Shorter Catechism—Ques. 103. What do we pray

sinned against thee : <sup>11</sup> both I and my father's house have sinned.

7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Mo'ses.

8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Mo'ses, saying, If ye <sup>12</sup> transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the <sup>13</sup> nations :

9 But if ye <sup>14</sup> turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them ; though <sup>15</sup> there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from hence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to <sup>16</sup> set my name there.

10 Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.

11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who <sup>17</sup> desire to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. <sup>18</sup> For I was the king's cupbearer.

for in the third petition ? A. In the third petition (which is, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*) we pray, That God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

**The Question on Missions**—44. What are industrial schools ? They are schools in which the children are taught some handicraft by which they can earn their own living. These schools increased greatly in number when so many children were gathered in during the famine.

**Lesson Hymns**—Book of Praise, 438 (Supplemental Lesson); 263; 295; 35 (Ps. Sel.); 401 (from PRIMARY QUARTERLY); 313.

## EXPOSITION

Time and Place—445 B.C.; Shushan.

**Connecting Links**—The narrative in the Book of Nehemiah begins at a point some thirteen years later than Ezra's expedition. At this time the Jews in Judæa were in great distress, and news of their condition reached Nehemiah.

## I. God's People in Distress, 1-3.

V. 1. *The words*; an expression emphasizing the fact that we have here writings by Nehemiah himself, not merely about him and his work. *Of Nehemiah*; a Jew, probably very young, declared by tradition to belong to the royal house of David, possessed apparently of large wealth (see ch. 5 : 16-18). His birthplace probably, and certainly the scene of his early life, was Susa (Shushan). Here he became "cupbearer" to King Artaxerxes, a court position of great power and influence. "Nehemiah was a councillor, statesman, courtier, and favorite." *The*

*month Chisleu*; the ninth month of the Jewish year, the end of our November or the beginning of December. *In the twentieth year*; of Artaxerxes (see Light from the East). The date would be 445 to 444. *Shushan*; the chief of the three capitals of the Persian empire, about two hundred and fifty miles east of Babylon. It was now winter, and Shushan was the usual winter residence of the Persian kings. *The palace*. This word seems to mean more than a royal residence; it designates Shushan as a stronghold as well as a royal city.

Vs. 2, 3. *Hanani, one of my brethren*; "not necessarily an actual brother, although according to ch. 7 : 2 most probably." (Bertholet.) *Certain men out of Judah* (Rev. Ver.). These men were eye-witnesses of the conditions among the returned exiles. *I asked*. Nehemiah is an alert man and full of interest in his countrymen. *Concerning*