

The only thing that matters is that you are reading God's word regularly. While that is still true with this schedule, the goal with this one is to get a better understanding of the entire story of the bible. There is no substitute for reading God's word. Keep reading! My website is at <http://graceofourlord.wordpress.com>. I encourage you to get the actual reading plan I am currently following. You can get it from the same place I do - at [this link](#). They have some great guidance for the reading plan there as well, and they have it all in both PDF and in Kindle format!

July 2012						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 (Week 27)	2 2 Kings 23	3 2 Kings 24	4 2 Kings 25	5 Daniel 1	6 Daniel 2	7
8 (Week 28)	9 Isaiah 11	10 Isaiah 53	11 Joel 2	12 Jeremiah 31	13 Amos 5	14
15 (Week 29)	16 Ezra 1	17 Ezra 3	18 Ezra 6	19 Nehemiah 1	20 Nehemiah 2	21
22 (Week 30)	23 Nehemiah 4	24 Nehemiah 6	25 Nehemiah 8	26 Nehemiah 13	27 Malachi 4	28
29 (Week 31)	30 John 1	31 Luke 1	Aug 1 Luke 2	Aug 2 Matt 3	Aug 3 Matt 4	

July Week 4 (Week 30) Summary

Nehemiah 4, 6, 8, 13, and Malachi 4- Click the chapter below to go to the ESV Bible passage for that chapter and read or listen.

[Nehemiah 4](#) – Sanballat and Tobiah were jeering and trying to make mockery of the rebuilding efforts (verses 1-3). But Nehemiah just prayed, and left it to God to deal with them. Verse 6 shows that great progress was being made on the wall, and verses 7-8 allow that the opposition was growing because of the progress. Nehemiah led them in prayer, and they set a guard by night and day. Verse 10 shows that the overwhelming size of the effort to rebuild the wall among this danger was discouraging some of the people, and their lives were being threatened (verse 11). This prompted the people who lived nearby to try to get them to abandon the work and come home (verse 12).

But Nehemiah showed great leadership, standing firm and telling them not to be afraid, setting people by their own clans armed with swords and spears (verses 13-14). The work continued with some men building with one hand while having the other on their weapons. Then Nehemiah had half of the people working, and half of them standing guard over them (verses 21-23). In verse 20, Nehemiah (aware of their vulnerability being stretched out along the wall) has them ready to sound a trumpet if attacks come at some point, so everyone could rally to their defense at that location. This was God's work, and it would get done!

[Nehemiah 6](#) – Having had their plans to derail the rebuilding of the wall thwarted, Sanballat, Tobiah, and their allies conspire to ambush and kill Nehemiah. Several attempts are made to lure him into their trap, but he would not fall for it. In desperation Sanballat sends a messenger with a letter (and pretending to speak for the king), speaking of rumors of Jeremiah trying to usurp the king's authority and claim kingship for himself. The ruse is intended to lure him to speak to Sanballat personally - at the king's insistence (verses 5-7). Jeremiah knows that Sanballat is lying and says so in so many words - then just prays for more strength (verses 8-9).

We do not know much about Shemaiah, first mentioned in verse 10, or what the meaning is exactly of him being confined to his house - or what exactly had led Jeremiah there. It seems likely that he had been a priest. But Jeremiah realized that he was not speaking from God, but rather was working for the enemy when he tried to get Jeremiah to go into the Temple (verses 10-13). Jeremiah was not a priest, and so he knew that he was forbidden to go in (for just one example of scripture, refer to [Numbers 16:39-40](#)). Jeremiah responds once again with prayer to God, asking for His justice in the matter (verse 14).

Only 52 days after it was started, the wall was finished (verse 15); and this amazing feat being accomplished in so short a time brought fear to the nations surrounding them, because they perceived that it only could have been accomplished with the help of God. If God had helped them to do that, how else might He help them in gaining more power that could threaten them? Verses 17-19 make clear that many of the nobles in Judah were guilty in this matter; and many sent letters to Tobiah and reported on Nehemiah to him. So Tobiah now was sending letters to Jeremiah to intimidate him.

[Nehemiah 8](#) – In Nehemiah chapter 8, Ezra the priest is summoned to read the Book of the Law of God at the Water Gate (possibly an entry into the Gihon Spring - the main water source outside the city wall), for which this passage has become known as the Watergate Revival. It was read from early morning to mid-day, with the people gathered around in reverence; and the Levites went around explaining as needed (as was their job - see [Deuteronomy 33:8-10](#)), so that it was "clearly" understood (verses 7-8). It was a very special and emotional occasion, and likely the first time it had been read - particularly in its entirety - to most of them. In hearing the Law, the people would hear an account of the sins that had led to captivity. And the completion of the wall, while striking fear in the hearts of others ([Nehemiah 6:16](#)), was an awesome event for them. Ezra and Nehemiah, therefore, tell the people not to weep, but to rejoice - as this day was holy to the Lord (verses 9-10).

As this was the seventh month, it was the perfect time to re-institute the Feast of Tabernacles - or "Feast of Booths" ([Leviticus 23:34](#) and [Leviticus 23:39-43](#)), and so they gathered the commanded material and built themselves the booths (or temporary shelters) that they lived in for the entire time of the feast observance - and heard from the Law of God daily.

How blessed we are to have God's word available to us so readily, and in so many forms!

[Nehemiah 13](#) – When Nehemiah had asked the king for leave to go to Jerusalem, Artaxerxes had made him give a time when he would return to him. In verse 6, we find that he had done so in the thirty-second year of the king's reign - a journey that would take far more than a month to make, in each direction. And he well may have been gone for several years. When he came back to Jerusalem, he found that Tobiah the Ammonite had been given a chamber in the house of God (verse 4 and 7)! Nehemiah angrily threw all of his possessions out, and had the chambers cleansed and restored (verses 8-9).

He also found that the people had not been giving the Levites their portion as commanded (verses 10-13), and that the Sabbath was being profaned (verses 15-22). Nehemiah promptly sets those things right, appointed treasurers over the storehouses, set guards at the city gates before the Sabbath to keep people from bringing loads of wares in, and warned those lodging outside the city in wait they he would "lay hands on them" if they continued to do so. Nehemiah was fed up. The Lord had restored their Temple and the Wall and they were out of captivity - now they were sinking deeply into sin again! Then, in verses 23-28, we find that the people were again marrying the foreigners and idol-worshipers that had been forbidden in the Law. In Ezra 9 and 10, we find Ezra confronting this problem (see [Ezra 9:1-2](#)). Apparently, his measures had not been effective. Notice that in [Ezra 9:3](#), Ezra tore his garments and pulled out his hair when he found out about it. In verse 25 of this chapter, Nehemiah, upon learning of it, confronted the guilty and beat them and pulled *their* hair out!

In verse 30-31, Nehemiah ends the book on a positive note, listing the reforms he had made when he returned. He was merely reporting a better condition of the state of affairs, and asking God to remember him for the good he had done. Nehemiah always gave the glory to the Lord - especially for the rebuilding of the wall.

[Malachi 4](#) - Malachi 4 continues the message begun in previous chapters of Malachi. The people have returned from captivity, and the problem of idol worship that has plagued them ever since the time of their deliverance from Egypt in the Exodus appears now to be under control. But they are spiritually bankrupt. Even their priests are rebuked for offering sacrifices of diseased animals ([Malachi 1:1-2:3](#)). The "day of the Lord" is coming - a theme repeated in the books of the prophets, which always refers to a time when God will take some sort of decisive action - as he did with the destruction and captivity previously. But this time, the action will be glorious for the righteous (verse 2). In verses 5-6, as previously stated in [Malachi 3:1](#), He will send a prophet to prepare the way for the Messiah. That prophet will be John the Baptist, and is confirmed by Jesus in [Mark 9:11-13](#) and in [Matthew 11:10-14](#).