



Devotional

April 12 - June 27

WEEK TWO (APRIL 19–25)

Day 110: April 19, 2020

Full Plan: Nehemiah 5:1–7:73

Abbreviated Plan: Nehemiah 13:1–31

Nehemiah was not only rebuilding a wall, he had to rebuild economic justice between the rich and the poor, all while maintaining his own integrity and humility and overcoming threats from his enemies. He is one of the Old Testament's greatest leaders. What can you learn from his example?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 111: April 20, 2020

Full Plan: Nehemiah 8:1–10:39

Abbreviated Plan: Esther 2:1–23

Returning from exile did not just involve rebuilding a wall. It meant building a consecrated people. Ezra's reforms rooted the people in the law and anchored them in 1) confession, 2) remembrance, 3) commitment, and 4) covenant renewal. How can you incorporate those four elements in your spiritual journey?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 112: April 21, 2020

Full Plan: Nehemiah 11:1–13:31

Abbreviated Plan: Esther 3:1–15; 4:1–17

Nehemiah finishes with some “spring cleaning.” Removal of impurities from the temple and ungodliness from the people, and a return to Sabbath keeping. The wall may have defined their city, but only faithfulness would define their hearts. How might you do some “spring cleaning” in your soul today?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 113: April 22, 2020

Full Plan: Esther 1:1–4:17

Abbreviated Plan: Esther 5:1–14; 6:1–14

God is not named in Esther, but God is active. God’s work toward justice will not be deterred, whether we choose to participate in it or not. (4:14) We have been called to “such a time as this.” How can you participate in God’s work today?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 114: April 23, 2020

Full Plan: Esther 5:1–10:3

Abbreviated Plan: Esther 8:1–17

Haman is killed by his very device to kill Mordecai. It's a plot twist that is a commentary on sin. We are undone by how we would undo others. It's the corollary of the Golden Rule: you will have done to you what you would do unto others.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 115: April 24, 2020

Full Plan: Job 1:1–5:27

Abbreviated Plan: Job 1:1–22; Job 2:1–10

The story of Job upends much of what the Bible has said so far about rewarding only the faithful and punishing only the wicked. It allows us to ask, "Why God?" The permission to ask that question is itself liberating. In what ways might you be asking that question of God today?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 116: April 25, 2020

Full Plan: Job 6:1–14:22

Abbreviated Plan: Job 29:1–25

Job's prayer is raw, honest, and real. It gives us permission to do the same when we are struggling with the faith and with God. Can you believe that God can handle your lament, impatience, doubt, and fear?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

April 19–25, 2020: Weekly Devotion by Glenn Simpson

What a glorious assortment of scripture passages this week. Our scripture readings begin with the last half of Nehemiah in which Nehemiah led the reconstruction of the wall around Jerusalem. Our readings end with the first half of Job. In both Nehemiah and Job, the biblical lessons are centered squarely on obedience to God's will. Between those books, we read the book of Esther – a literary marvel offering a biblical lesson of God fulfilling His promises to the people of Israel. Although Esther is the only book in the bible that does not mention God, it is replete with God's overwhelming sovereignty.

The intriguing story involves a disparate collection of characters in this O. Henry-like plot. **King Xerxes** is a drunkard who banishes his wife, Queen Vashti, for refusing to attend a banquet in his honor. Following a search, **Esther**, a Jew, became the new Queen. The villain of the story, **Haman**, is the king's second in command who

plots to have all the Jews executed. Finally, **Mordecai**, is Esther's cousin and a fellow Jew.

The plot begins with Mordecai stopping a plot to assassinate the king and telling the king about it. Thereafter, Haman becomes incensed at Mordecai for refusing to bow to him. Haman deceives the King into issuing an edict condemning all Jews to death. Mordecai tells Esther about Haman's actions, so she approaches the King and convinces him to reverse the edict. In a plot reversal, the king orders the execution of Haman on the gallows that Haman had constructed to execute the Jews. As an additional plot twist, Mordecai is appointed to serve as the king's second in command replacing Haman.

An overview of the plot reveals that two Jews, Esther and Mordecai, are able to outwit Haman and prevent his evil aim to execute the Jews. In so doing, God's sovereignty prevails over evil and, once again, saves the Jewish people. To this day, Jews celebrate *Purim* in recognition of the story in Esther.

How does this story speak to us today?

- Even though people may not? perceive God as the motivation behind their actions, God is always at work,
- God works in ways that are not readily apparent, and
- Powerful forces are no match for God's sovereignty.

Prayer: Father God, may you help me cast aside my doubts when I confront forces that are opposed to Your Will even though they may be so powerful that I see no way I can overcome their power; may you help me see that I am powerful when you are with me; may I clearly see your will as the guiding light in my life. Amen