



## The book of Nehemiah

### *DID YOU KNOW?*

1. The book of Nehemiah allows us to enter into the personal memories of a great leader. We may be wrong about his style. However, he was an organizer, a pragmatic leader. This is probably why he had a privileged place in the Persian Empire, one of the greatest empires in the history of the world.
2. Nehemiah used to pray to God as he went about his business. He had even made a flash prayer to God, asking for his help in the middle of a decisive conversation with the king (Neh. 2 :4). He spontaneously included prayers when he wrote his memoirs. Here are some examples. (Neh. 1 :5-11 ; 4 : 4 – 5 ; 5 :19 ; 6:9, 14; 13:14, 22, 31)
3. In Nehemiah's day, a city without a wall was vulnerable to gangs of bandits. Concerned for their safety, the Jews mixed with other nationalities who lived in the small villages outside Jerusalem. There they intermarried with them and gradually lost their own language, culture and - most importantly - their own religion. A wall could give them the possibility to make Jerusalem a real Jewish city, to protect it and to control the comings and goings.
4. Both Sanballat and Tobiah were influential local politicians. Sanballat's family ruled Samaria and had arranged to marry their son to a daughter of the high priest's family (Neh. 13 :28). Tobiah, an officer in Ammon, was related to and had influence over the important families (Neh. 6 :17-19; 13:4-5). There is evidence that these men were from Jewish families, but they preferred political status to their Jewish identity.
5. Nehemiah, in his prayer of repentance (Neh. 1 :4 – 10), referred to God's word to Moses in Deuteronomy 30:1-3 where God promised to bring back the captives of Israel, to have compassion on them and to gather them again from all the nations where he would have scattered them if they returned to him and obeyed his voice with all their hearts and souls, they and their children.
6. The religious year of Israel began in the spring, in the month of Nisan (Neh. 2 :1) ; the civil year began in the fall, in the month of Tisri, the seventh month. Kislev or Kislev is the ninth month of the Jewish calendar (Neh. 1:1; 7:1), counting from Nisan. Therefore, Kislev begins in the middle of November.