



Nehemiah's Journey

Supplies Needed

For each child you will need the following:

- 13 Sheets of [Cardstock](#) (8.5" x 11")
- 13 3 mil Laminating [Film](#)

Directions

- Print pages 2-27 two-sided on cardstock. Laminate the pages.
- Hold up the pictures while you read the story.



Medes and Persian Empire

Jerusalem

Babylon

Susa (Shushan)

Ethiopia

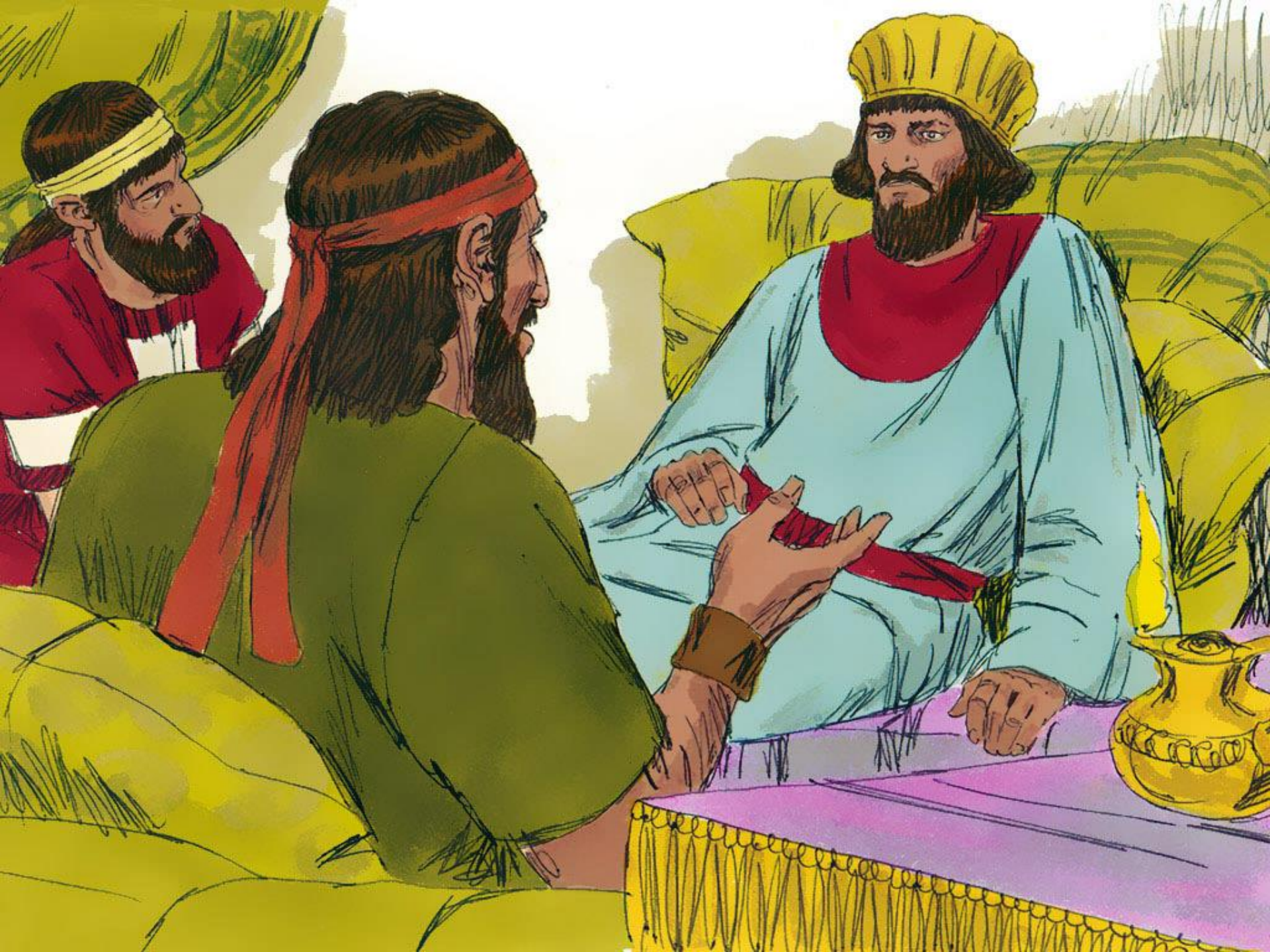
India

Nehemiah was a Jew living in Susa (Shushan). Many years before, the Jews had been taken as captives by the Babylonians. When the Medes and Persians then defeated the Babylonians, many Jews, like Nehemiah, resettled in this new empire. Some Jews had returned to Jerusalem with Ezra to rebuild the Temple.



Nehemiah worked as a cupbearer for King Artaxerxes, who ruled over the mighty Persian Empire.

What is a cupbearer? (A highly trusted official who brings the king his food and drink and makes sure that it's not poisoned)



One day, Nehemiah's brother Hanani and some friends returned from Jerusalem. Nehemiah asked them about the city and the Jews that had gone back to rebuild the temple.



Hanani and his friends told Nehemiah some sad news. The Jews living in Jerusalem were greatly troubled by their enemies. The walls of the city were still in ruins and the gates had been set on fire and never replaced. The Jews living there had no protection from their enemies.

(Remember it had been 70 years since Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Jerusalem. You can imagine how everything would have been left in ruins.)



When Nehemiah heard these things, he sat down and wept. For several days, he mourned, fasted and prayed.

What does it mean to mourn? (to feel or show great sadness)

What does it mean to fast? (a period of time when you do not eat any food)

He confessed his sin and the sin of his people to God. Then he asked God for an opportunity to speak to the King about the situation.



Later, when Nehemiah was serving King Artaxerxes, the king asked, “Why do you look so sad when you are not sick?”

Nehemiah was afraid. Was the king angry because he looked sad? Nehemiah answered, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad when my father’s city lies in ruins and its gates burnt by fire?”

Then the king asked Nehemiah, “What do you want?”

Nehemiah prayed for God to give him the right words to the king. Then he answered the king, “If I have found favor in your eyes, I ask that you send me to Jerusalem to rebuild the city.”

The king and queen listened carefully, but the king wanted to know how long Nehemiah would be gone. Nehemiah explained that it would take a long time to go so far and rebuild the walls.



Nehemiah also asked the king to give him letters to the governors beyond the river so they would know that he had permission from King Artaxerxes.

Nehemiah also asked for a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, to give him the lumber he would need to rebuild the city. The king agreed and gave Nehemiah everything he asked for. He even sent captains and soldiers from his army with Nehemiah to help him on his journey.



Medes and Persian Empire

Susa (Shushan)

Jerusalem

Nehemiah set off on the long journey to Jerusalem. After many days, they came to the countries near Judah. Sanballat, the Horonite, and Tobiah, the Ammonite, were not happy that Nehemiah had come to help the Jews. But Nehemiah had letters from the king, so they couldn't stop him.

Remember the names of Sanballat and Tobiah, because they will cause trouble later.



Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem and rested for three days. He did not tell anyone why he was there yet. Then one night, he went out secretly to inspect the walls.

Jerusalem City Walls



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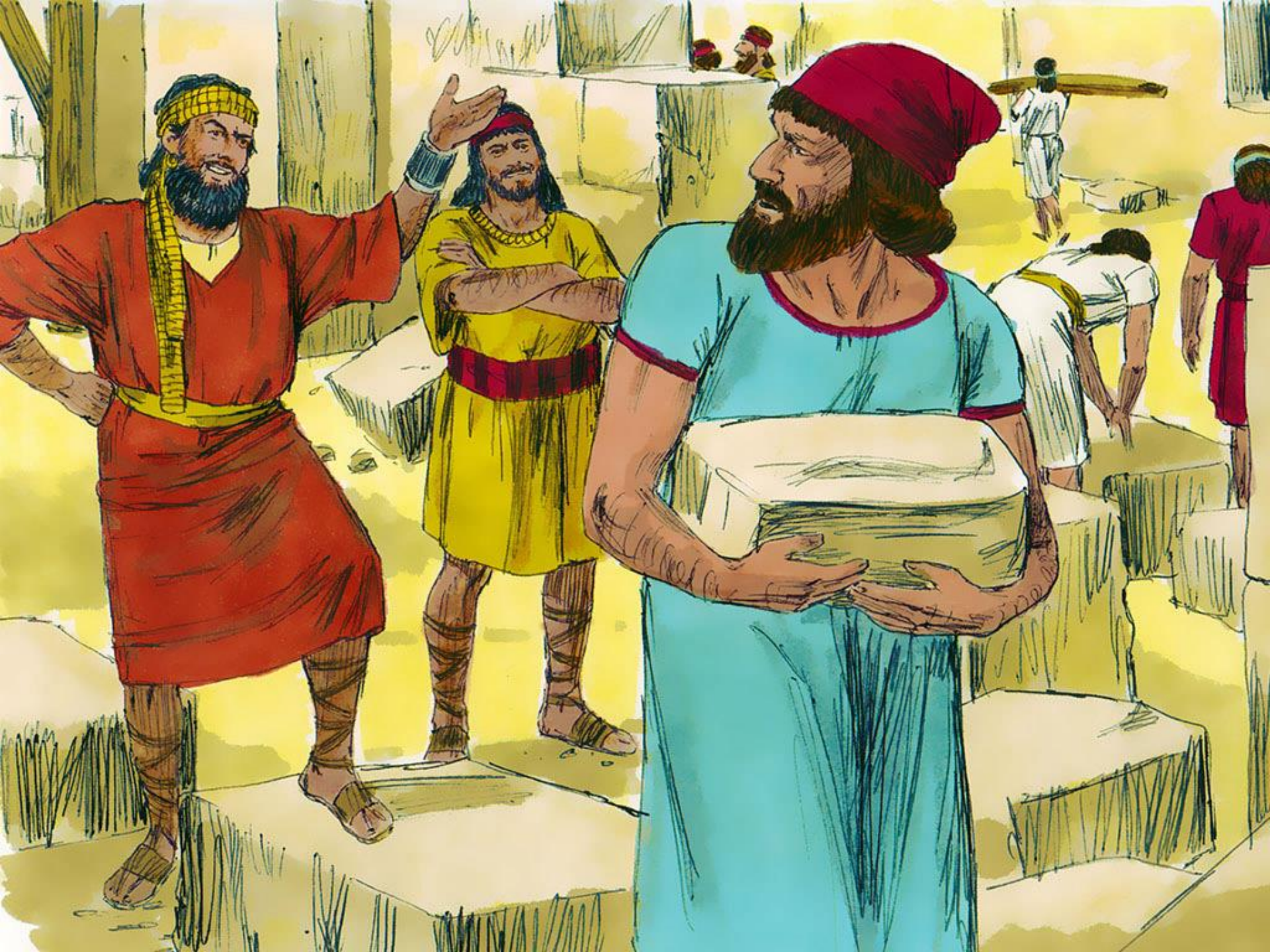
Nehemiah started from the Valley Gate and went towards the Dung Gate. He viewed the walls which were broken down and the gates which had been burned with fire. Then he went to the Fountain Gate but there was no room for his horse to pass, so he went back and returned to the Valley Gate.



In the morning, Nehemiah told the rulers and priests why he had come. He said, “You see the trouble we are in and how Jerusalem lies in ruins and its gates are burnt. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, so we will no longer be ashamed.” Then Nehemiah told them how God was with him and how the king had approved his trip.



Immediately the Jewish leaders said, “Let us rise up and build.” Then they set their hands to do the work of rebuilding the walls.



But, there were those who did not want the walls rebuilt...

Do you remember the names I mentioned earlier?

Sanballat, the Horonite, Tobiah, the Ammonite, and Gesham, the Arab, laughed and made fun of the Jews. They said, “What is this you’re doing? Are you rebelling against the king?”

But Nehemiah told them, “God will give us success. We, His servants, will rebuild, but you have no share or claim to Jerusalem.”

Next time, we’ll learn more about Sanballat and Tobiah who try to stop the Jews from rebuilding.