

## September 29 Answers

- 1) Malachi's prophecy to the remnant and Nehemiah's reforms. The walls of Jerusalem were completed in 444 BC, and Nehemiah remained in the city as governor for several years. Eventually, he was recalled to Persia (Neh 13:6), and in his absence, the spiritual fervor of the people began to **cool**. The days of national repentance and commitment receded into the past, and old **habits** and **attitudes** crept back into their hearts. This teaches us that the true test of our character comes **after** a great spiritual victory. It's one thing to do right in the midst of a national revival; it's another to **continue** to do right when the excitement is gone and the trials of life return. Apostasy comes a little at a time: first, the occasional **indulgence**, then **neglect**, and finally outright disobedience. Are we saying **no** to temptation, or are we permitting ourselves a few small sins on the side? Eventually, the people developed a harsh, critical attitude toward God. This teaches us that when people point the finger of blame at God, they are really trying to silence their own guilty **conscience**. Malachi rebuked the remnant for their sin and called them to treat God with the honor and respect He deserved. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem not long after Malachi's prophecy, and he was furious when he realized how sinful the people had become. He threw **Tobiah** out of the temple, restored the **tithes** to the Levites, enforced the keeping of the **Sabbath**, and punished those who had married foreign women. This teaches me that a righteous leader **confronts** people for their sin and refuses to overlook wrongdoing.