

The Book of NEHEMIAH

445 - 425 BC

Nehemiah is the last of the historical books.

Esther happened chronologically during the Book of Ezra between the first return under Zerubbabel and the return of Ezra.

Originally Ezra and Nehemiah were one book in the Hebrew Bible.

- 722 BC Fall of Israel, the Northern Kingdom falls to Assyria
- 605 BC Assyria and Egypt fall to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon
- 586 BC Temple destroyed and the Babylonian deportation and exile continues
- 539 BC Cyrus, King of Persia, defeats Babylon and allows exiles to return to Israel

Post-Exilic Period

3 Groups of Exiles

- 538 BC Zerubbabel returns with Decree of Cyrus
Exiles from Northern Kingdom (Israel) and Southern Kingdom (Judah) are allowed to return. They do not regain independence as a nation until AD 1948.
Esther, who doesn't return from exile, becomes Queen, and serves during the 20 year reign of Xerxes (486-465 BC) See Ezra 4:6
- 458 BC 80 years after Zerubbabel, Ezra returns when Artaxerxes was king and finishes rebuilding the temple
- 445 BC 13 years later Nehemiah (Artaxerxes' cup bearer) returns and rebuilds the wall

Kings of Persia

- 576-530 BC Cyrus the Great First return of exiles under Zerubbabel
- 520-486 BC Darius Restoration of the temple resumed
- 486-465 BC Ahasuerus also called Xerxes Esther was a Queen during this time
- 465-424 BC Artaxerxes Ezra 7:1 Ezra returns
Nehemiah 2:1 20th year of King Artaxerxes Nehemiah returns to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem
- 331 BC Persia falls to the Greeks

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CHAPTERS 1-6 NEHEMIAH'S RETURN AND REBUILDING THE WALL

- Ch 1 1-3 Bad news from Jerusalem. The wall is broken down and the gates are burned
5-11 Nehemiah's Prayer
- Ch 2 Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem
10 Opposition from the locals
11-20 Exploring the wall and encountering mocking and ridicule from the locals
- Ch 3 Rebuilding the wall and the gates
- Ch 4 1 Ridicule turns to anger, later turns to hostility
3 "the wall will fall if a fox climbs on it"
9 "Nevertheless, we made our prayer to God."
- Ch 5 Oppression and debt among their own people dealt with
- Ch 6 15 The wall was finished in 52 days

Chapter 7 The genealogy is repeated. GENEALOGY IS IMPORTANT TO GOD!

- Matthew 1:12-16 Zerubbabel's genealogy traced to Joseph, husband of Mary
Ezra 7:1-5 Ezra's genealogy traced back to Aaron the chief priest

Chapters 8-10 Further Reforms of Ezra

- Ch 8 1-12 Ezra reads the Law
13-18 The Feast of Tabernacles observed
- Ch 9 Confession and worship and revival
- Ch 10 Covenant to serve God and Restoration of the Covenant

Chapters 11-12 Activities of Nehemiah and Dedication of the Wall

- Ch 11 Repopulating Jerusalem 1 out of 10 chosen to live in Jerusalem
- Ch 12 1-26 The roster of Priests and Levites
27-43 Nehemiah dedicates the wall
44-47 Temple responsibilities

Chapter 13 Return to Jerusalem and Reforms of Nehemiah

- Principles of Separation
Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem again and institutes reforms