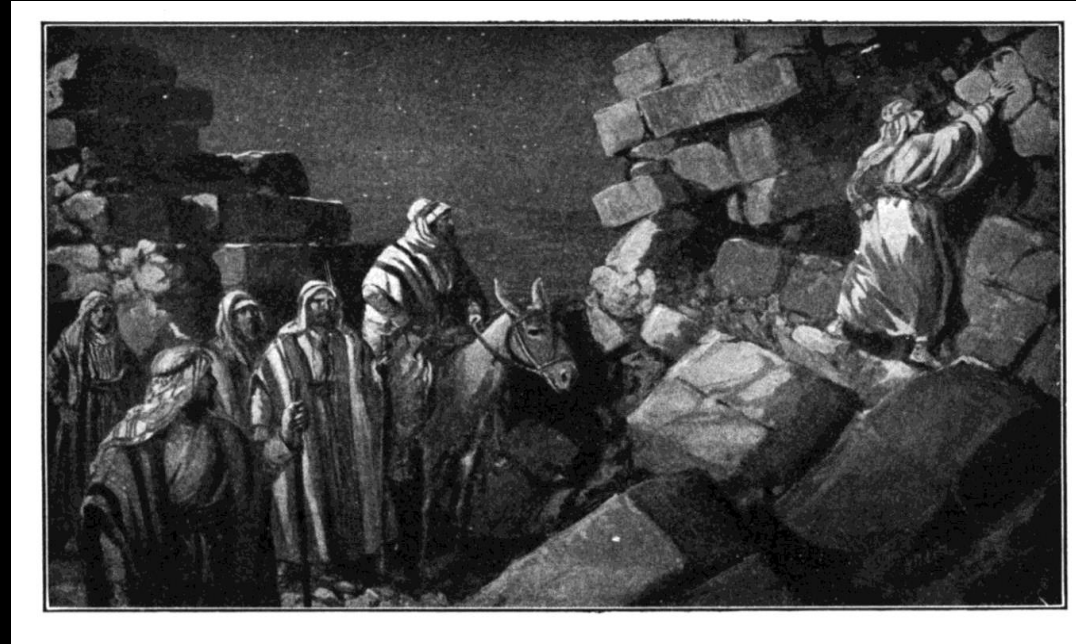


A Time to Build



A Study of the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther

Key Dates and Events in the Period of the Return*

- 538/37 B.C.** first return of the Jews under Zerubbabel (Ezra 1-2)
- 537/36 B.C.** the altar built and the foundation laid (Ezra 3)
- 536/15-520 B.C.** the work on the temple ceases (Ezra 4)
- 520 B.C.** the preaching of Haggai (1-2) and Zechariah (1-6)
- 520 B.C.** the temple construction resumes (Ezra 5)
- 518 B.C.** the preaching of Zechariah (Zechariah 7-14)
- 516/15 B.C.** the temple is completed (Ezra 6)
- 486 B.C.** the Jews opposed in the beginning of Xerxes (Ezra 4:6)
- 483 B.C.** Xerxes holds a feast (Esther 1)
- 479 B.C.** Esther is made queen (Esther 2)
- 474/73 B.C.** Haman plans to kill the Jews (Esther 3-10)
- 464-423 B.C.** the Jews opposed in Artaxerxes' reign (Ezra 4:7ff)
- 458/57 B.C.** the second return of the Jews under Ezra (Ezra 7-10)
- 445-433 B.C.** Nehemiah returns & rebuilds the walls (Neh. 1-12)
- 433-432 B.C.** Nehemiah's recall and return (Nehemiah 13)
- 432-425 B.C.** the preaching of Malachi (1-4)

* all dates are approximate

Survey of Nehemiah

Reconstruction of the Walls 1:1 – 7:73		Reformation of the People 8:1 – 13:31	
Preparation to Build (1-2)	Reconstruction of the Walls (3-7)	Preparation to Reform (8-9)	Reformation of the People (10-13)
Nehemiah / Jews		Ezra / Nehemiah / Jews	
Physical Construction		Spiritual Instruction	
From Babylon to Jerusalem		Jerusalem	

12 years + (445 – 433 – 425 B.C.)

Applications for Today

1. There will always be those people who are opposed to God's work being done (4:1-3; Lk. 21:15; 1 Cor. 16:9; Phil. 1:28).
2. Opposition can come in the form of verbal mockery, anger, or physical threat, but don't let it detour you from doing the Lord's work (4:1-8; Rom. 12:11; 1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9).

Applications for Today

3. Face your oppositions with prayer to God. Ask him for help with your enemies who oppose you and pray for your enemies themselves (4:5-6, 9; 2 Thess. 3:2; 2 Tim. 4:14-16).
4. God's work will get done when his people have a "mind to work" (4:6; Tit. 2:14; 3:1, 8, 14).

Applications for Today

5. We don't want the Lord's work to stay the same or go backward. We want it to go forward (4:7; Phil. 1:12, 25; 3:13; 1 Tim. 4:15).
6. The enemy wants to fight against you in order to bring about confusion in your life (4:8; Acts 19:29, 32; 21:31; Jas. 3:16).
7. Watch and pray (4:9; Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2).

Applications for Today

8. In difficult and trying times, remember the Lord who is great and awesome (4:14; Deut. 7:21; 10:17; Neh. 1:5; 9:32; Psa. 99:3).
9. Do not be afraid of opposition, adversaries, or enemies (4:14; 2 Tim. 1:7). Fight for your brethren and for your family (4:14; Esther 8:11; 9:16; Eph. 6:10-18).

Applications for Today

10. God can answer our prayers and he can bring to nothing the counsel of the wicked world (4:15; Psa. 33:10).
11. Leaders should stand up for their brethren and stand behind them for support (4:16; Heb. 13:7, 17).
12. Sometimes you have to work and war (spiritually) at the same time (4:16-23; Eph. 2:10; 6:10).

Applications for Today

13. If you fight (spiritually), God will fight for you (4:20; Ex. 14:14; Deut. 1:30).
14. Lead by example (4:23; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; Heb. 13:7, 20).

Nehemiah's Prayer and the Psalms

Nehemiah 4:4-5	The Psalms
1. Hear, O our God	hear my prayer, O God (54:2)
2. We are despised	despised of the people (22:6)
3. Turn back their reproach	let them be covered with reproach (71:13)
4. Give them up for a spoil	stouthearted are made a spoil (76:50)
5. A land of captivity	delivered his strength into captivity (78:61)
6. Cover not their iniquity	add iniquity unto their iniquity (69:27)
7. Let not their sin be blotted out	let not the sin ... be blotted out (109:14)
8. They have provoked thee unto anger	they provoked him to anger (78:58)

Leadership Qualities in Nehemiah 4

1. Regular prayer to God (4:4-5, 9)
2. A mind (attitude) to work (4:6)
3. A plan to continue moving forward in the work and not stop even in the midst of opposition (4:9-23)
4. Encouraging words for others to keep working (4:14, 20)
5. Lead by example (4:23)

Opposition to God's Work (Neh. 2-6)

1. Negative environment (2:10)
2. Ridicule / questioning (2:19)
3. Lack of help among your own people (3:5)
4. External discouragement / questioning (4:1-3)
5. External fighting and internal confusion (4:7-8)
6. Internal discouragement and fear (4:10-12)