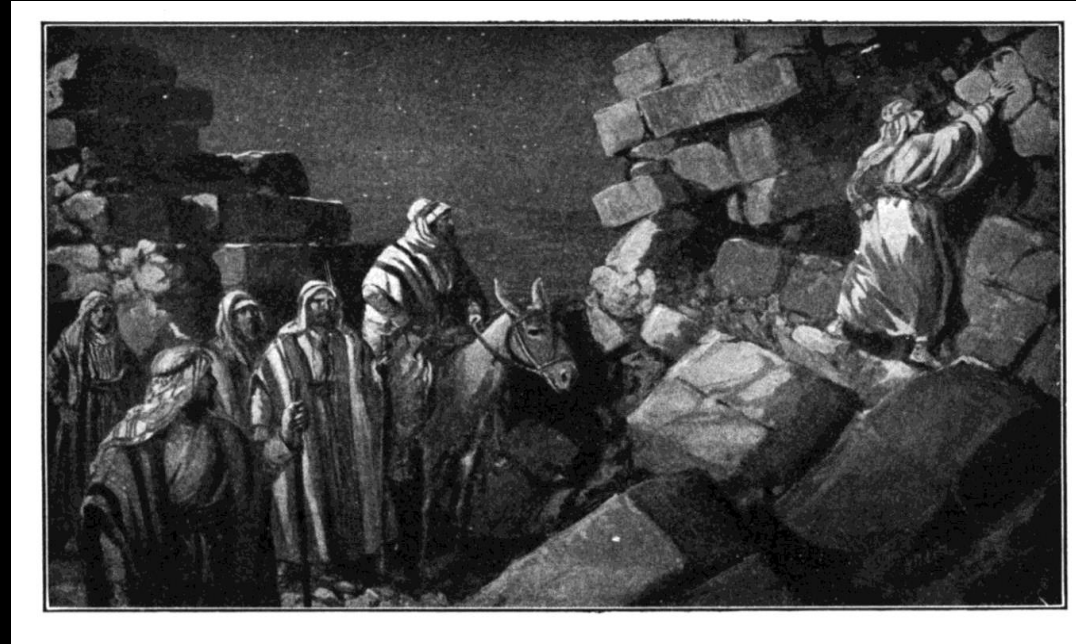


A Time to Build



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. The Lord's people should never compromise with the Lord's enemies (6:1-9; Phil. 1:27; 3:18).
2. The Lord's work is a "great work" and you should never allow the Lord's enemies to sidetrack you from doing it (6:3; 1 Cor. 15:58).
3. Pray to the Lord for strength and don't be afraid or allow your hands to be weakened in doing his work (6:9; Eph. 6:10; 2 Tim. 4:17; 1 Peter 5:10).

Applications for Today

4. Fear can cause you to stop working for the Lord, so don't allow the enemies of the Lord to make you afraid and cause you to fear (6:9, 13-14, 19; 2 Tim. 1:7).
5. Opposition to the Lord's work can come even from among God's own people (6:10, 14, 17; Gal. 5:15).

Applications for Today

6. The Lord's enemies are looking for you to make a mistake, mess up, and sin, so they can bring an evil report against you and reproach you. Don't give them that opportunity (6:13; Rom. 2:24).
7. God will judge people according to the evil deeds (6:14; 2 Tim. 4:14).
8. You cannot overturn God's work (6:16; Acts 5:38-39).

Applications for Today

9. Some even among God's own people are joined to worldly people and they try to undermine the Lord's work (6:17-19; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18).
10. Be someone who is faithful (trustworthy) and who fears God (7:2; 2 Chron. 19:9).
11. All of God's law must be followed at all times and in all places (7:64-65; Phil. 2:12).

Applications for Today

12. The Lord's priesthood is to be pure, not polluted (2:62; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9).
13. The Lord wants us to give free-will offerings to accomplish his work (7:70-72; 2 Cor. 9:6-7).

Leadership Qualities in Nehemiah 6-7

1. Ignore the temptation to be side-tracked and stay focused on the goal and mission (6:1-14)
2. Prayer to God (6:9, 14)
3. Know and communicate your mission clearly (6:3, 11)
4. Answer all false accusations and allegations (6:8, 11)
5. Work until the job is done and never fear (6:9, 14, 19)

Leadership Qualities in Nehemiah 6-7

6. Find and train trustworthy individuals to help you and delegate work for them to do (7:1-4)

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 and questioning (4:1-3)
5. External fighting and internal confusion (4:7-8)
6. Internal discouragement and fear (4:10-12)
7. Internal problems (5:1-13)
8. Compromise ("let us") and mischief (6:1-4)
9. False accusations (6:5-8)

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

10. Fear and discouragement (6:9)
11. False reports in order to cause fear (6:10-14)
12. Letters written to cause fear (6:17-19)