

## BIBLE SYNTHESIS II (BIBLE SURVEY)

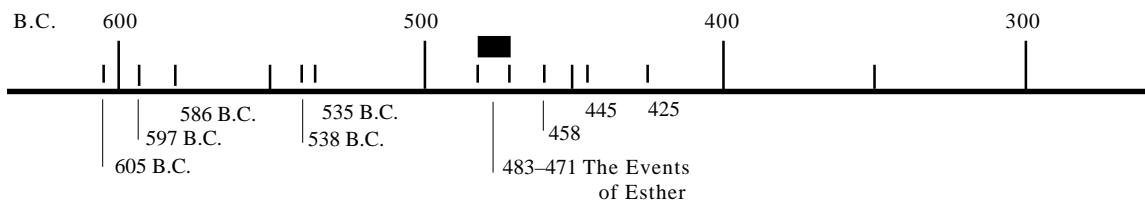
### Introduction to Nehemiah

#### INTRODUCTION

The return of the remnant from Babylonian captivity took place in three major movements:

1. After the decree of Cyrus in 538 B.C. [Ezra 1:1-4], a small group returned under the direction of Zerubbabel [Ezra 2:2] (He was a descendant of David). There were about 50,000 people in this return [49,897 —Ezra 2:64-65].
2. In the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes (458 B.C.) another group returned under the leadership of Ezra [Ezra 7:1-10].
3. Then, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (445 B.C.), Nehemiah was given permission to return and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The book of Nehemiah gives the account of this return and the building of the walls.

#### *TIME LINE OF THE CAPTIVITY AND AFTER*



605 B.C. —The First Deportation to Babylon —Daniel taken.

597 B.C. —The Second Deportation —Ezekiel taken.

586 B.C. —The Final Deportation —The Temple destroyed

538 B.C. —The Edict of Cyrus —Ezra 1:1-4

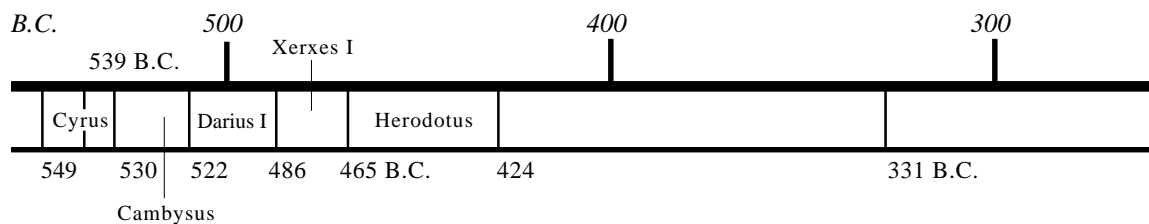
535 B. C. —The First Return under Zerubbabel.

483—471 —The events of the book of Esther.

458 B.C. —The return under Ezra —Ezra 7:1-ff.

445 B.C. —The return under Nehemiah —covered in the book of Nehemiah.

#### *THE PERSIAN EMPIRE*



### Miscellaneous Dates of Interest:

- 549 B.C. — Cyrus united Media and Persia
- 539 B.C. — Cyrus conquered Babylon
- 486—465 B.C. — Xerxes, the Ahasuerus of Esther — Esther’s husband
- 539—331 B.C. —The time of the Persian Empire from start to finish.
- 465—424 —Herodotus, Artaxerxes I, or Atraxerxes Longimanus  
During his reign, Ezra and Nehemiah journeyed to Jerusalem to aid the Jews. They had his blessings.
- 331 B.C. —Alexander the Great broke the power of the Persian army.  
Because of its superior power, the Greek Empire became dominant.

### 1. Author:

Probably Nehemiah himself. The fact that the narrative is written in the first person singular in many places is evidence which supports his authorship. Although there are places where he is mentioned in the third person (8:9; 10:1; 12:26, 47), these do not cast doubt upon his having written it, when we consider them in their context.

### 2. Addressees:

To Israel following the return from Babylonian exile.

### 3. Date:

#### (1) Of Coverage:

A period of at least twenty years, from December 445 B.C. to about 425 B.C., when Nehemiah returned from Babylon to cleanse Jerusalem. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah overlap.

#### (2) Of Writing:

Probably during the time the events were taking place, or shortly thereafter.

### 4. Circumstances:

- (1) Nehemiah served as a cupbearer to Artaxerxes I, who was the son of Ahasuerus (Xerxes), who took Esther to be his queen.
- (2) The Feast of Purim (Esther 9:20-32) was instituted on March 8, 473 B.C., only 8 years before Artaxerxes became king.
- (3) Ezra led an expedition back to Jerusalem in 458 B.C.
- (4) The walls of Jerusalem may have already been started again, but they are in ruin at the time the book of Nehemiah opens. The “walls” of Ezra 4:12 are seen as being the walls of the city (see also 5:3, 9—Notice “and”). Since the people mentioned in Ezra were to build the Temple, it is evident that they concentrated on that work. See Ezra 4:12 for the attempt at rebuilding, and 4:21-24 for the

stopping of all work, especially that of rebuilding the Temple. The “force and power” of Ezra 4:23 *may* have involved burning the gates once more, as well as in tearing down the work so freshly redone. See Nehemiah 1:1-3 for the burden of Nehemiah.

**5. Relationship to Other Books:**

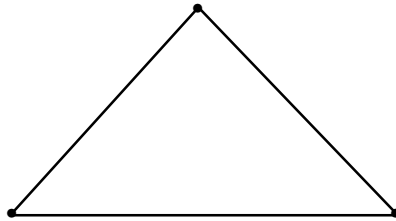
- (1) See Introduction to Ezra —”Relationship to Other Books”
- (2) To record more events which took place during the time of Ezra.
- (3) Malachi is a contemporary and wrote during this time.

**6. Theme of Nehemiah:**

In Nehemiah, we see 3 things: The sword, the trowel, and the bended knee.

*NEHEMIAH’S TRIANGLE  
OF SUCCESS*

THE SWORD



THE TROWEL

THE BENDED KNEE

**7. Key Word:**

“So” occurs 32 times. It denotes Nehemiah as a man of action and few words.

**8. Key Passage:**

Nehemiah 4:9 (1:4; 6:3)

## OUTLINE OF NEHEMIAH

- 1. Reconstruction** **—Neh. 1 — 7**
- (1) Nehemiah's Prayerfulness —Neh. 1
  - (2) Nehemiah's Progress —Neh. 2
    - 1. Request of the king —2:1–8
    - 2. Return to Jerusalem —2:9–11
    - 3. Reconnoiter of the walls —2:12–16
    - 4. Reassurance of the people—2:17–20
  - (3) Nehemiah's Plan of Building —Neh. 3
  - (4) Nehemiah's Problem of Opposition —Neh. 4:1 — 6:14
  - (5) Nehemiah's Performance —Neh. 6:15–19
  - (6) Nehemiah's Poll (Census of Genealogy) —Neh. 7
- 2. Revival** **—Neh. 8 — 10**
- (1) Reading the Word —Neh. 8
  - (2) Revival in Israel —Neh. 9 — 10  
[Note the covenant of Nehemiah 10.]
- 3. Reorganization** **—Neh. 11 — 13**
- (1) Distribution of the people —Neh. 11
  - (2) Descendants of the Priests —Neh. 12:1–26
  - (3) Dedication of the wall —Neh. 12:27–43
  - (4) Designation of the Temple leaders —Neh. 12:44–47
  - (5) Division from sin (separation) —Neh. 13