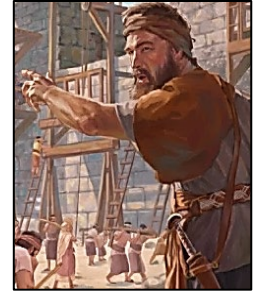


# NEHEMIAH

## Faith in Action

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## PART 1: INTRODUCTION

### A. NEHEMIAH 1:1-3

*"These are the memoirs of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah. In late autumn, in the month of Kislev, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign,<sup>1</sup> I was at the fortress of Susa. <sup>2</sup> Hanani, one of my brothers, came to visit me with some other men who had just arrived from Judah. I asked them about the Jews who had returned there from captivity and about how things were going in Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> They said to me, 'Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire.'" Neh. 1:1-3 NLT*

### B. AN OVERVIEW OF NEHEMIAH

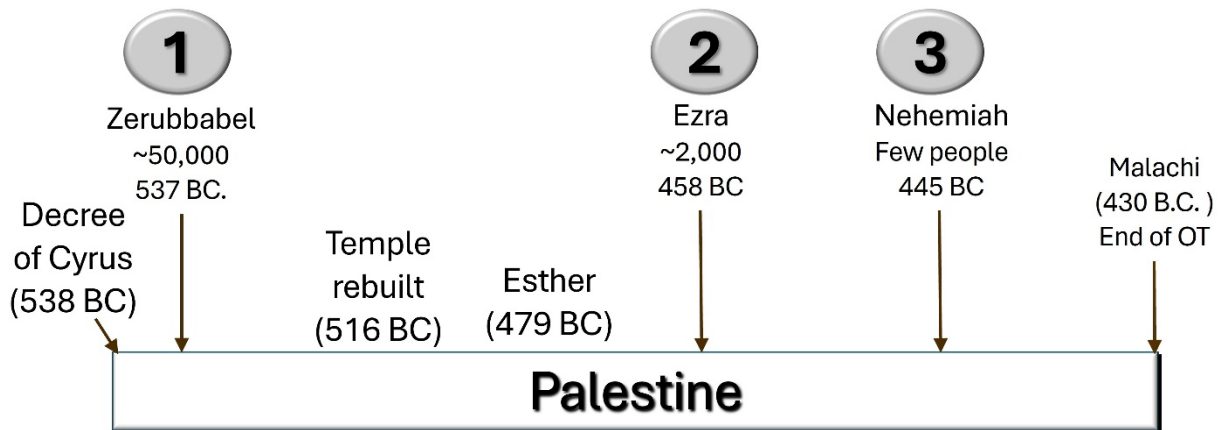


Figure 1: Three waves of returnees to Jerusalem

The book of Nehemiah is a historical account of how God used Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, restore the people spiritually, and implement reforms. It highlights themes of leadership, perseverance in the face of opposition,

prayer, and covenant renewal. Nehemiah's dedication to God's work and his reliance on prayer serve as powerful examples of faith in action.

The book is often paired with Ezra, as both focus on the post-exilic period of Israel's history. While Ezra emphasizes the rebuilding of the temple and the spiritual renewal of the people, Nehemiah focuses on the physical restoration of Jerusalem's walls and the social reforms necessary for sustaining the community.

### **C. FIVE THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN NEHEMIAH**

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1. **Leadership and Prayer** – Nehemiah demonstrates godly leadership through his prayers, strategic planning, and determination.
2. **Opposition and Perseverance** – The rebuilding process faced strong resistance, but Nehemiah led with courage and wisdom.
3. **Spiritual Renewal** – The reading of the Law, confession of sins, and covenant renewal highlight the importance of God's Word in revival.
4. **Social and Economic Justice** – Nehemiah addressed issues of oppression, corruption, and economic inequality among the Israelites.
5. **Commitment to Holiness** – Nehemiah's reforms emphasized obedience to God's commands, including Sabbath observance and purity in marriage.

### **D. BACKGROUND**

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#### **Who Wrote It?**

Nehemiah is traditionally believed to have written the book, as much of it is in the first person. However, some scholars suggest that Ezra or another scribe may have compiled parts of it. The book was likely included as part of a larger historical work that includes Ezra and Chronicles.

#### **When Was It Written?**

The events in Nehemiah took place around 445–432 B.C., during the reign of King Artaxerxes I of Persia. The book was likely written sometime after these events, possibly around 430 B.C.

## **The Setting**

Nehemiah was a high-ranking official in the Persian court, serving as the king's cupbearer. He was deeply concerned about the condition of Jerusalem, which remained in ruins despite earlier efforts to rebuild. The setting of the book transitions from the Persian capital, Susa, to Jerusalem, where Nehemiah leads the effort to rebuild the city walls and restore order among the returned exiles.

## **Why It Was Written**

Nehemiah was written to document the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls and to highlight the spiritual and social reforms necessary to maintain the restored community. The book demonstrates God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises and the importance of godly leadership in times of crisis. It also emphasizes the role of prayer, obedience, and covenant renewal in maintaining a right relationship with God.

## **E. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

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1. How would you respond if God called you to lead a major project in an area where you have no experience?
2. If prayer is powerful, why do we often feel the need to take matters into our own hands?
3. We often think of walls as barriers that divide people and keep others out. Can rebuilding walls ever be a good thing?

## **F. CONCLUSION**

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Building spiritual and personal “walls” is about creating a **strong foundation in Christ, guarding against sin, and staying committed to God’s purposes**. Just like Nehemiah, we should be diligent in **constructing and maintaining** these protective walls so that we can thrive spiritually.