

# OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

---

*Nehemiah*

# INTRODUCTION

---

*Title:* Hebrew: “Ezra”  
LXX: “Esdras B”  
Vulgate: “I Esdras”

*Author:* Ezra? (7:1,6 vs. 7:27-28)

*Date of Events:* From the Decree of Cyrus (538 BC) to the second governorship of Nehemiah (c. 430 BC).

## TEXTUAL TRADITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH EZRA-NEHEMIAH

Version	1 & 2		3	4
MT	Ezra-Nehemiah		(lacking)	(lacking)
LXX	Esdras B		Esdras A	(lacking)
Vulgate	1 Esdras	2 Esdras	3 Esdras	4 Esdras

1 & 2: The canonical text of Ezra/Nehemiah

3: A Greek work containing 2 Chronicles 35-36, Ezra, and Nehemiah 8:1-12, with some differences in order, plus an account not in the canonical text concerning Darius and Zerubbabel

4: A composite apocalyptic work originally in Greek, but now extant only in a Latin text

# INTRODUCTION

---

## Literary Observations

- First person sections in Neh 1:1-7:73a;  
12:27-13:30.

Theme: Rebuilding the wall and reforming  
the people.

# INTRODUCTION

---

## *Purpose of Ezra-Nehemiah:*

Yahweh had been as loyal to the Abrahamic Covenant in the Restoration of Israel as He had previously been in Israel's history, yet post-exilic Israel had been as disobedient to the Mosaic Covenant as the previous generations of Israel; thus the full blessings promised in the Abrahamic Covenant had not come in Israel's immediate past but were still anticipated in the future.

# OUTLINE

---

- I. Rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah (1-7)
- II. Revival of the people under Ezra (8-10)
- III. Reinforcement of the work under Nehemiah (11-13)

# KEY CHAPTERS

---

- 1-2 Nehemiah's prayer, Artaxerxes' decree, Nehemiah visits Jerusalem.
- 3-7 Work on and completion of the walls, opposition, census.

# KEY VERSES

---

- 8:1-12 Presentation of the Law by Ezra to the people.



# KEY DATES

446(5) BC	The Report to Nehemiah concerning Jerusalem	Nehemiah 1:1-11
445(4) BC	The Decree of Artaxerxes The Return of Nehemiah The Rebuilding of the Wall The Repopulating of Jerusalem The Teaching of Ezra The Celebration of Tabernacles The Confession and Covenant of the People The Dedication of the Walls	Nehemiah 2:1-13:3
445(4)-433(2) BC	The First Governorship of Nehemiah	(Nehemiah 5:14-15)
430-423 BC (?)	The Second Governorship of Nehemiah	Nehemiah 13:4-31

# KEY PEOPLE

---

**Artaxerxes** - Persian King who was the son of Xerxes I and Vashti; stepson of Esther. He allowed the Jews to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem under the leadership of Nehemiah

**Nehemiah** - Artaxerxes' cupbearer, Governor of Judea, Supervisor of construction.

**Sanballat** - influential Samaritan; sought to end construction on the walls; sought to assassinate Nehemiah.

**Ezra** - Great reformer, expert in the Law. He had the leadership in Israel put away their foreign wives.

446(5) BC	The Report to Nehemiah concerning Jerusalem	Nehemiah 1:1-11
445(4) BC	The Decree of Artaxerxes The Return of Nehemiah The Rebuilding of the Wall The Repopulating of Jerusalem The Teaching of Ezra The Celebration of Tabernacles The Confession and Covenant of the People The Dedication of the Walls	Nehemiah 2:1-13:3
445(4)-433(2) BC	The First Governorship of Nehemiah	(Nehemiah 5:14-15)
430-423 BC (?)	The Second Governorship of Nehemiah	Nehemiah 13:4-31

# HELPFUL RESOURCES

---

- Gregory Goswell, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (EP Study Commentary).

## WHY THE BOOK OF EZRA-NEHEMIAH IS IMPORTANT TO NEW COVENANT BELIEVERS

This book (Ezra-Nehemiah) teaches and reminds us that:

1. God is gracious, merciful, and keeps His promises.
2. God is sovereign (Ez 6:22; Neh 4:15).
3. God's Word is to be preached and magnified (Neh 8:1-12).
4. Prayer is essential to the people of God.
5. More is needed than a rebuilt city and temple.

# SELECTED INTERPRETIVE PROBLEMS

---

## 1. The Historical Setting of Nehemiah 7:73b-10:39

A. In 458 (or, 428; or, 398) BC after Ez 8:36

B. In 445 BC after Neh 6:15

# SELECTED INTERPRETIVE PROBLEMS

---

## 1. The Historical Setting of Nehemiah 7:73b-10:39

A. In 458 (or, 428; or, 398) BC after Ez 8:36

B. In 445 BC after Neh 6:15

# SELECTED INTERPRETIVE PROBLEMS

## 2. The Chronology of Ezra's Return in relationship to Nehemiah's Return (E, 7:8)

A. Artaxerxes I (458/7 BC) – before Nehemiah

B. Artaxerxes II (398 BC) – after Nehemiah (reasons)

1. Existing Walls (cf. E, 9:9)

2. Jehohanan, son of Eliashib (E, 10:6; N, 3:1, 20-21; 13:28)

3. The Problem of Intermarriage (E, 10:10-14; N, 13:25)

C. Artaxerxes I (428/7 BC) – after Nehemiah



# SELECTED INTERPRETIVE PROBLEMS

2. The Chronology of Ezra's Return in relationship to Nehemiah's Return (E, 7:8)

A. Artaxerxes I (458/7 BC) – before Nehemiah (cf. N 2:1)

B. Artaxerxes II (398 BC) – after Nehemiah (reasons)

1. Existing Walls (cf. E, 9:9)

2. Jehohanan, son of Eliashib (E 10:6; N 3:1, 20-21; 13:28)

3. The Problem of Intermarriage (E 10:10-14; N 13:25)

C. Artaxerxes I (428/7 BC) – after Nehemiah

# SELECTED INTERPRETIVE PROBLEMS

---

## 3. The Unity of Ezra/Nehemiah

- A. One Book (Reasons in subsequent slide)
- B. Two Books (Reasons in subsequent slide)

# ONE BOOK (REASONS)

---

## 1. External Evidence:

- The Masoretic Tradition. (Dr. Essex: (the transcribers of the Hebrew OT text [c. A.D. 500 on]) clearly regarded the work as one because they count Neh. 3:22 as the middle of the book and add their annotations for the whole at the end of Nehemiah.)
- The earliest LXX Manuscripts
- Josephus (ca. AD 90)
- Melito (ca. AD 175)
- The Talmud (ca. AD 500)
- Medieval Jewish Commentators

# ONE BOOK (REASONS)

---

## 2. Internal Evidence - Themes Continued:

- The “twentieth year” (N, 1:1 / E, 7:7)
- The destroyed walls of Jerusalem (N, 1:3 / E, 4:12, 23)
- The Book of the Law (N, 8:1 / E, 7:6, 10)
- “Ezra, the scribe,” “Ezra, the priest” (N, 8:1, 2 / E, 7:1-10)
- Separation from foreigners (N, 9:2; 10:29 / E, 9:1-10:44)
- Temple issues (N, 10:33-40 / E, 1:1-3:13; 6:13-22; 7:15-20; 8:24-36)
- Zerubbabel and Jeshua (N, 7:7; 12:1 / E, 2:1-6:15)

# TWO BOOKS (REASONS)

---

- The Introduction to Nehemiah (N, 1:1; cf. Amos 1:1; Eccl. 1:1)
- The first-person material in Nehemiah
- Distinct Language (ex. “king of Persia” {11x}, “the God of Israel” {13x} in Ezra, but not in Nehemiah)
- Distinct Ideology (religious concerns in Ezra; secular concerns in Nehemiah)
- The repetition of Ezra 2 in Nehemiah 7

# SELECTED INTERPRETIVE PROBLEMS

---

## 3. The Unity of Ezra/Nehemiah

A. One Book

B. Two Books

# SELECTED INTERPRETIVE PROBLEMS

---

## 4. The Relationship of the Book of Ezra-Nehemiah to the Book of Chronicles

- A. Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Were Originally One Book
- B. Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Were Written by the Same Author: "The Chronicler"
- C. Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Were Separate Books Written by Different Authors: Both Authors Are Presently Unknown.

# SELECTED INTERPRETIVE PROBLEMS

---

## 4. The Relationship of the Book of Ezra-Nehemiah to the Book of Chronicles

- A. Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Were Originally One Book
- B. Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Were Written by the Same Author: "The Chronicler"
- C. Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Were Separate Books Written by Different Authors: Both Authors Are Presently Unknown.