

Through the Bible Course

February 1947

Nehemiah

The Reverend Dr. Girard Lowe

Key Word: Rebuilding

Key Verse: 4:6

This is last of historical books in the Old Testament. There is no inspired record from this time to opening of New Testament. This period is known as Intertestamental Period. In early appearances of Bible, Ezra and Nehemiah were known as I and II Esdras.

Chronology of period of Era and Nehemiah, which are records of restoration:

- 536 BC – 49,897 return from Babylon to Jerusalem
- 536 BC – 7th month, they built the altar and offered sacrifice
- 535 BC – Work on the Temple began and stopped
- 520 BC – Work renewed by Haggai, Zechariah
- 516 BC – Temple completed
- 478 BC – Esther becomes Queen of Persia
- 457 BC – Ezra goes from Babylon to Jerusalem
- 444 BC – Nehemiah rebuilds the wall
- 432 BC – Nehemiah returns again from Babylon

I. Rebuilding of Wall – chapters 1-7

1. Nehemiah's grief and prayer – chapter 1
2. Nehemiah receives king's permission to visit Jerusalem. His secret inspection of ruins and his pathetic impressions – chapter 2
3. Names of those who repaired walls – chapter 3
 - Notice: All worked: priests, goldsmiths, apothecaries, women, rulers, and Merchants
4. Opposition and how met – chapters 4-6
 - a. Ridicule met with prayer – 4:1-6
 - b. Anger again resorted to prayer – 4:7-9
 - c. Discouragement met with faith and preparation – 4:10-23
 - d. Greed and heartlessness; they repented and made restitution – 5:1-19
 1. Nehemiah's example – 14-19
 - e. Craft; Nehemiah remained busy – 6:1-14
5. Governors appointed and those who returned on first expedition listed (This list almost identical with Ezra's) – chapter 7

II. The Covenant to Keep the Law – chapters 8-10

1. Law read and explained followed by observance of Feast of Tabernacles – 8:1-8
2. All people repent, make confession, and pray – chapter 9

Note: This chapter reviews God's merciful dealings with His people.

3. Covenant signed and obligations assumed – chapter 10

III. Walls Dedicated and Nehemiah's Reforms – chapters 11-13

1. Population apportioned – chapter 11

2. Various lists of laymen and Temple officials – 12:1-26

3. Dedication of walls – 12:27-43

4. Restoration of Temple order and provision for its support – 12:44-47. It seems that at this point Nehemiah leaves to return to Babylon; but returns again to Jerusalem – 13:6-7

5. Nehemiah reforms

a. Temple again cleansed – 13:7-9

Note: Tobiah, according to 7:61-62, could not prove that he was of seed of Israel; yet, while Nehemiah was away, they established him in priesthood. Nehemiah cast him out, 13:8-9, and it is supposed that he began the Samaritan worship at Mt. Gerzaim (see John 4:20).

b. Rulers again begin support God's house – 13:10-14

c. Restores observance of Sabbath – 13:15-22

d. Rebukes intermarriage – 13:23-31

Note: Ezra and Nehemiah both vigorously oppose intermarriage because all through their history it had continually been the cause of the Jews falling into idolatry.