

# EXILIC & POST-EXILIC PROPHETS OF THE BIBLE

Senior Adults & Friends Bible Study — Summit View Church of Christ  
Fall 2023

## PART 9: REFORMS OF EZRA & NEHEMIAH

Ezra 9:1 to 10:17 • Nehemiah 1-2, 5, 6:15 to 7:3, 7:73b to 10:39, 13

Date: about 457 to between 431 and 407 BC

### EZRA'S FIRST REFORMS — EZRA 9:1 to 10:17

Date: about 457 BC — Ezra 7:9 dates Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem to the seventh year of Persia's King Artaxerxes, which was about 458 BC.

#### Ezra 9 — Bad News

9:1-3 — What sin of many Israelites did the leaders inform Ezra about?

#### KINGS OF PERSIA

**Cyrus (539-530 BC)** — permitted Jews to return to Jerusalem (Ezra 1)

**Cambyses (530-522 BC)**

**Darius I (522-486 BC)** — authorized completion of the temple (Ezra 5-6)

**Xerxes (486-464 BC)** — King in Esther's time (book of Esther)

**Artaxerxes (464-423 BC)** — authorized Ezra's journey to Jerusalem to teach God's law (Ezra 7); appointed Nehemiah governor of Jerusalem & authorized rebuilding of Jerusalem's defensive wall (Nehemiah 2)

#### ***background — prohibited intermarriage***

The Israelites/Jews were not entirely free to marry anyone they wished. God had forbidden them to intermarry with certain peoples—peoples whose idolatry and sin had become so great that God decreed their destruction (and gave their land to Israel instead):

- Deuteronomy 7:1-6 — Why did God forbid intermarriage with these particular nations?
- 1 Kings 11:1-6 — Which Israelite king had blatantly violated this command? How had this sin affected his relationship with God?

9:6-15 — Summarize Ezra's prayer in 1 or 2 sentences:

9:6-15 — What are 2 or 3 traits of God that Ezra mentions in his prayer?

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## **Ezra 10:1-19 — The People's Response**

10:1 — How did the people respond to Ezra's prayer at first?

10:3 — What solution to this sin did Shekariah propose?

- 10:5-11 — Did Ezra and the people accept this plan?

10:13 — The people suggested that they take more than just a day to correct this sin because...  
...and because...

10:18 — *Notice that even several of the priests had been involved in this sin!*

### ***for group discussion...***

What do you think of the Jews' solution to this sin? Was this the right thing for them to do? Why/Why not?

## **NEHEMIAH REBUILDS JERUSALEM'S WALL**

### **Nehemiah 1-2, 5, 6:15 to 7:3**

Date: about 446-445 BC — Nehemiah 2:1 dates these events to the 20th year of King Artaxerxes (about 445 BC).

#### **Nehemiah 1 — Problems & Prayer**

*November-December 446 BC*

1:1 — Where was Nehemiah living? \_\_\_\_\_

- *What was important about that city in the book of Esther?*

1:3 — What problems in Jerusalem did Nehemiah hear about?

- *Recall Daniel 9:25, (about 539 BC). In response to Daniel's prayer for Jerusalem, the angel Gabriel predicted that it would be rebuilt, "but in times of trouble."*

1:11 — What specific request did Nehemiah make of God?

1:11 — What was Nehemiah's occupation?

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## **Nehemiah 2:1-10 — Nehemiah's Request**

*March-April 445 BC*

2:5 — What did Nehemiah ask the king to let him do?

2:7 — What did the king send with Nehemiah?

- verse 7 —

- verse 8 —

- verse 9 —

2:10 — Two officials who were unhappy about Nehemiah coming to help the Israelites:

\_\_\_\_\_ the Horonite (*extrabiblical records say he was later governor of Samaria; he may have been governor there at this time, too*)

\_\_\_\_\_ the Ammonite official

## **Nehemiah 2:11-20 — Spreading the Vision**

*June-July 445 BC*

2:17-18 — How did the Jewish officials respond to Nehemiah's plan to rebuild Jerusalem's wall?

2:19 — How did Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem respond to the Jews' plan?

## **Nehemiah 3 — Rebuilding Commences (June-September 445 BC)**

Nehemiah 3 lists the people and families who courageously helped to rebuild Jerusalem's wall. Some notable persons include the high priest and his fellow priests, some men who came from other cities to help, some craftsmen, several local officials, and some temple servants. But notice 3:5—The nobles from Tekoa "would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors." Perhaps they didn't support Nehemiah's effort, or perhaps they thought they were too good to do manual labor.

## **Nehemiah 4 — Opposition to the Rebuilding**

*June-September 445 BC*

<i>Strategy of Nehemiah's Opponents</i>		<i>Nehemiah's Response</i>
4:1-5	RIDICULE	PRAYER
4:7-8		
4:11-14		
4:16-23	NOTHING NEW	ARMED THE WORKERS DEVELOPED RESPONSE PLAN STAYED READY

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## **Nehemiah 5 — Defending the Poor**

*June-September 445 BC*

5:1-5 — There was a famine at this time (5:3).

- 5:3 — What did some people have to do, to their financial detriment, to get grain?
- 5:4 — What did some people have to do *financially* to pay the king's tax?
- 5:5 — What did some people have to do *to their children* to pay their debts?

Consider Deuteronomy 23:19-20 and Nehemiah 5:6-8. How were the nobles and officials violating God's law? What effect did this have on their people, especially those who were poorer?

5:9-13 — What did Nehemiah command the nobles and officials to do? How did they respond?

5:14-18 — As governor, what rights did Nehemiah have but decline to use because they would have been hard on the people economically?

### ***for group discussion...***

Consider Nehemiah's concern for the poor, the demands he made of the nobles and officials, and the sacrifices he himself made to help his people economically. Also notice his prayer in 5:19. How might we put the godly priorities of Nehemiah here into practice today? What principles might we need to consider? What might we need to do to help people around us who are less economically advantaged?

## **Nehemiah 6:1-14 — Facing More Opposition**

*June-September 445 BC*

6:1-2 — How did Sanballat, Tobiah, & Geshem try to stop the rebuilding of the wall this time?

- 6:3-4 — How did Nehemiah respond?

6:5-9 — The next strategy of Nehemiah's opponents, and Nehemiah's response:

6:10-14 — Another strategy of Nehemiah's opponents, and Nehemiah's responses:

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## **Nehemiah 6:15 to 7:3 — After the Rebuilding**

*August-September 445 BC*

6:15 — The wall was completed in \_\_\_\_\_ days.

6:19 — Official who continued to try to intimidate Nehemiah: \_\_\_\_\_

7:2 — Nehemiah placed \_\_\_\_\_ his brother in charge of Jerusalem (and also a commander named \_\_\_\_\_), because he was a man of integrity and \_\_\_\_\_ more than most people do.

## **NEHEMIAH & EZRA'S FURTHER REFORMS**

### **Nehemiah 8-13**

Date: September/October 445 BC (Nehemiah 8-10), unknown (probably 445-431 BC; Nehemiah 11:1 to 13:3), and sometime in the period of about 431-407 BC (Nehemiah 13:4-31)

### **Nehemiah 7:73b to 8:18 — Relearning God's Law**

*September-October 445 BC*

8:5 — What did the people do when Ezra opened the Book of the Law of God?

8:9-12 — What was the people's reaction when they heard the words of God's law?  
Why do you think they reacted this way?

- What did Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites urge the people to do that day? Why?

### ***background — The Festival of Tabernacles (Nehemiah 8:14-17)***

For information on the Festival of Tabernacles, which commemorated God's care for Israel while they wandered in the desert, read Leviticus 23:33-43.

### **Nehemiah 9 & 10:28-39 — Renewal of the Covenant**

*September-October 445 BC*

- What sorts of actions of God did the Levites and the people recall in this prayer?

- What sorts of sins of Israel did the Levites and the people confess to God?

10:28-39 — What did the leaders and the people pledge to do...  
...with God's law?

...with their sons & daughters?

...with neighboring merchants on the Sabbath?

...with the annual firstfruits of their crops?

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### ***Nehemiah 12:27-47 — Dedication of the New Wall (about 445 BC)***

The now-completed wall was dedicated with a musical celebration and a procession led by Ezra. All the people rejoiced, and great sacrifices were offered to God. Levite musicians were appointed, and the giving of tithes and other gifts in support of the Levites was restored, bringing the Jews closer to full compliance with the regulations God had established for their worship of him in centuries past.

### **Nehemiah 13 — Further Reforms**

*about 445 BC (13:1-3) • sometime between 431 and 407 BC (13:4-31)*

13:1-3 — When the people heard from the law that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God's people, they...

13:4 + 2:19 — Tobiah was an \_\_\_\_\_.

- 13:4-5 — What did Eliashib the priest provide to Tobiah?

- 13:6-9 — What did Nehemiah do about this when he returned to Jerusalem?

13:10 — When the Levites were not given the food portions assigned to them in the law, what did they do?

- What did Nehemiah do about this problem?

13:15-16 — List 2 or 3 unlawful things Nehemiah saw the people doing on the Sabbath:

13:23 — Nehemiah found Jewish men who had married women from \_\_\_\_\_ (a Philistine city), \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ (recall 13:1-2).

13:28 — One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest (that is, one of the high priest's grandsons) was son-in-law to \_\_\_\_\_ the Horonite.

- 13:29 — Nehemiah called on God to \_\_\_\_\_ them for how they had defiled the office and covenant of the \_\_\_\_\_.

### ***for group discussion...***

What types of issues arose from the Jews' failure to obey God's commands, which Nehemiah had to address? Some of these issues continued to be issues of Jewish focus over the next 4 centuries, down to the time of Jesus.

13:1-14 —

13:15-22 —

13:23-31 —