

Introduction / Overview

Book of Nehemiah



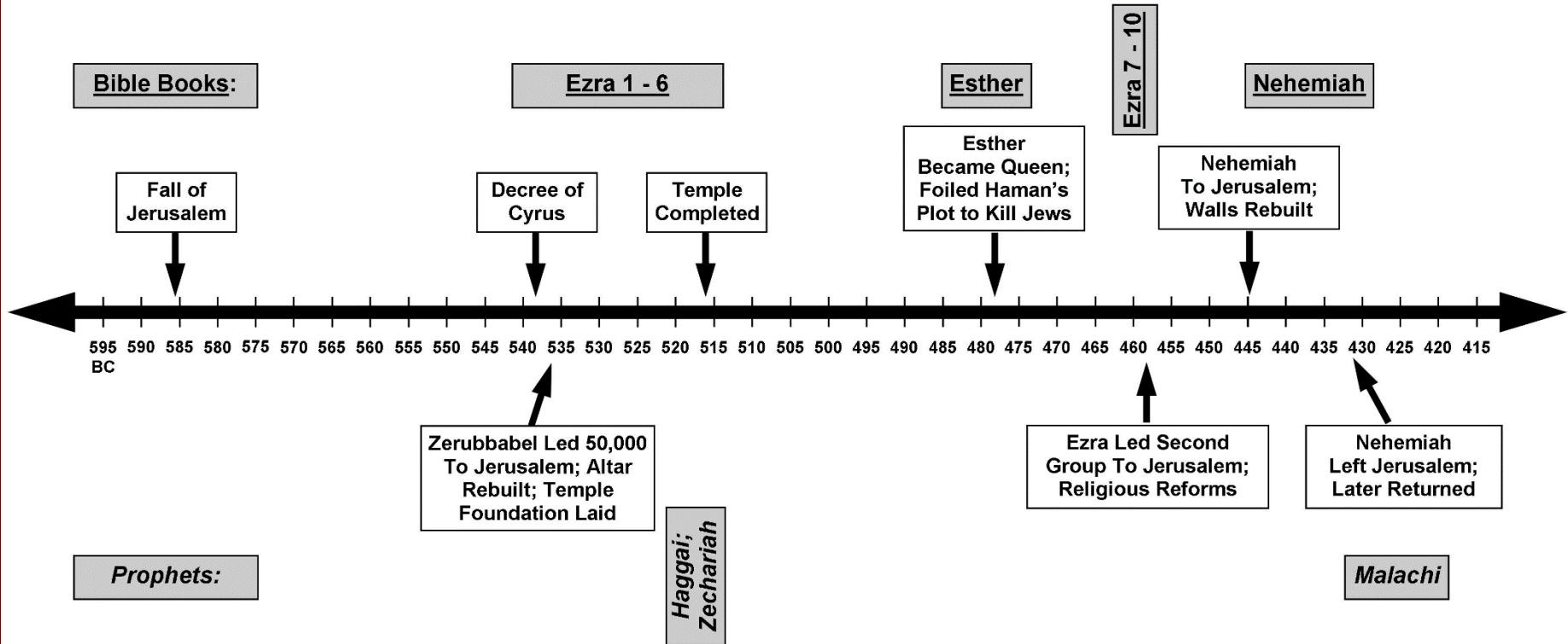
Background



Background

■ Timing

Timeline of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther



Background

■ Timelines

- **3 Waves of Jewish Returns From Babylon**
 - **537 BC Zerubbabel Led Group of 50,000 to Jerusalem**
 - Altar and Temple Completed
 - **468 BC Ezra Arrives with Second Group in Jerusalem**
 - Religious Reformation
 - **444 BC Nehemiah Arrives with Third Group in Jerusalem**
 - Additional Religious Reformation

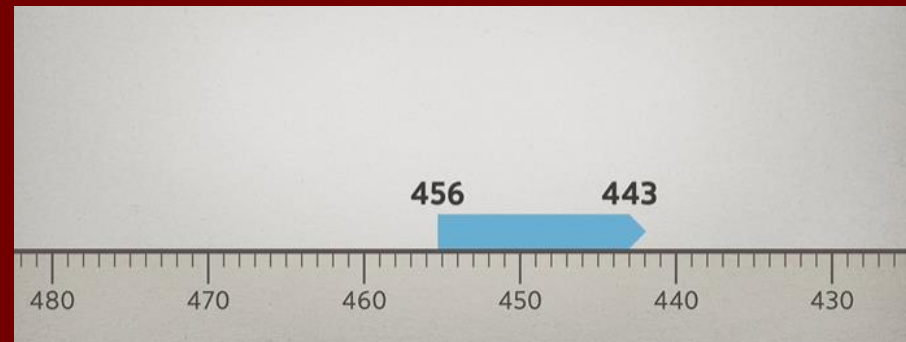
Background



Background

■ Timing

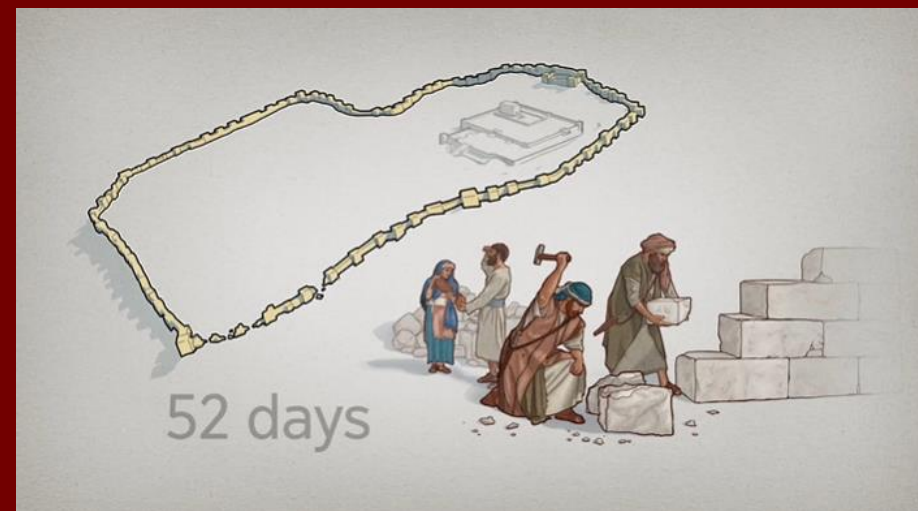
- Nehemiah was likely written some time after 443 BC.
- It begins with events that occur about 12 years after Ezra's account.
- Nehemiah covers events from 456 BC to 443 BC. Most events are in 456 BC.



Background

■ Timing

- The building of the walls began the 70 weeks of years prophecy (Daniel 9) leading to the appearance of Jesus Christ.
- The walls of Jerusalem were completed in 52 days.



Background

■ Structure

- The narrative in the Book of Nehemiah documents the reconstruction and resettlement of Jerusalem and the civil and spiritual rebuilding of the covenant people through the deeds of Nehemiah.
- The focus of Nehemiah mission concerns rebuilding Jerusalem's walls (Preparation, Organization and Overcoming Opposition), the reorganization and restoration of Jerusalem (measures taken to repopulate), and the reaffirming and obedience to God's Law.

Background

■ Archaeology

- Archaeological excavations in Jerusalem have confirmed the description of the configuration of the walls of ancient Jerusalem in the Book of Nehemiah. These walls covered the same area as that of King Solomon's city, but they are about 1/4 the size of the walls during the reign of King Hezekiah.
- Nehemiah probably limited the construction to the earlier foundation with the smaller footprint to finish the construction sooner because of the threat of armed invasion by Judah's neighbors (Neh 4:1-5).

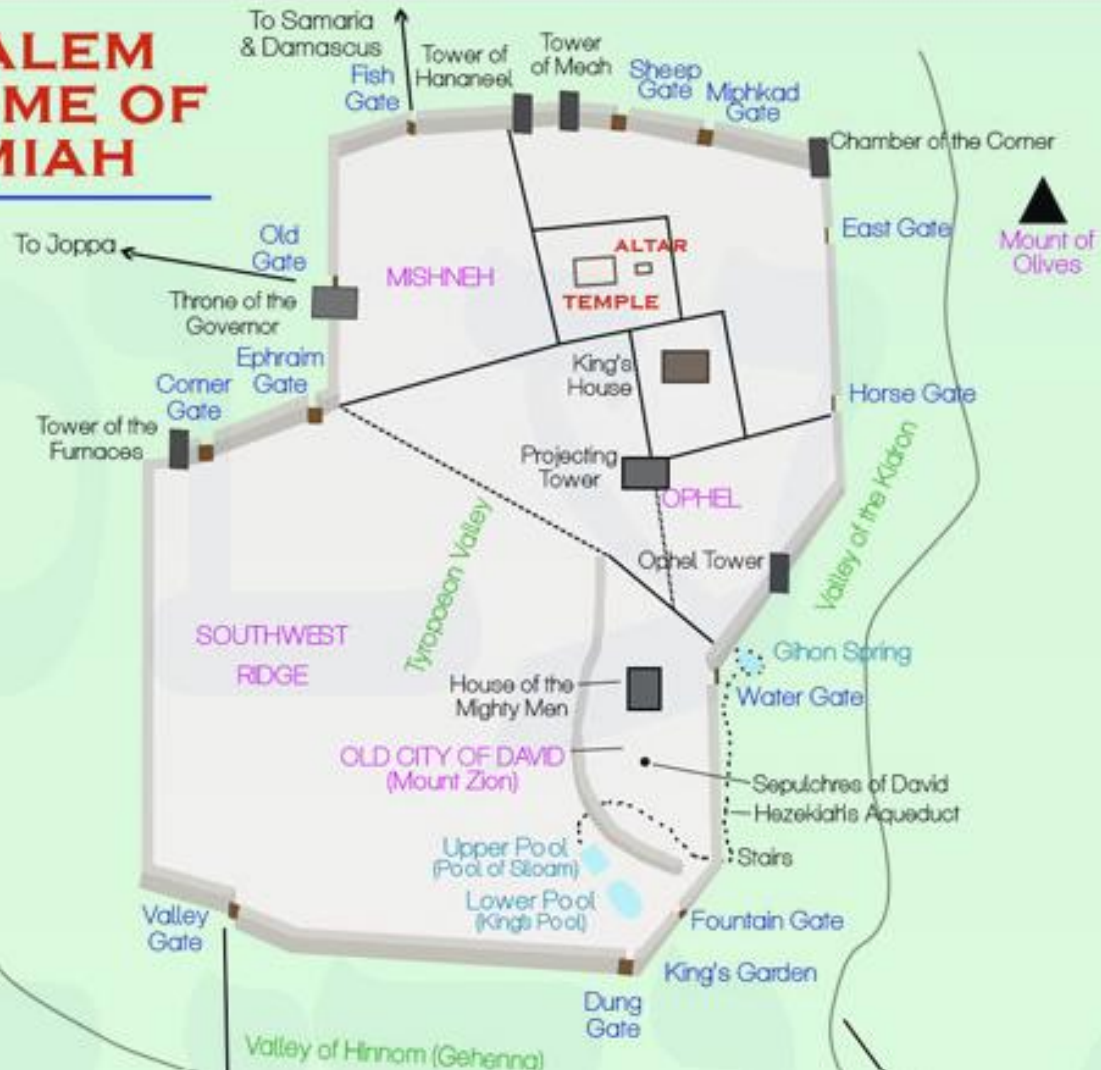
Background

JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF NEHEMIAH

C. 445 B.C.

BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah was governor of Judah under Artaxerxes I of Persia. He rebuilt Jerusalem during the Second Temple period.



Background

■ Author

- **The Book of Nehemiah, like Ezra, is a continuation of II Chronicles.**
- **Many modern scholars, recognizing the similarity in style between I and II Chronicles, as well as Ezra and Nehemiah, believe the books formed a single historical work authored by a person they identify as "the Chronicler."**
- **Other scholars identify Ezra as the author of all four books.**



Background

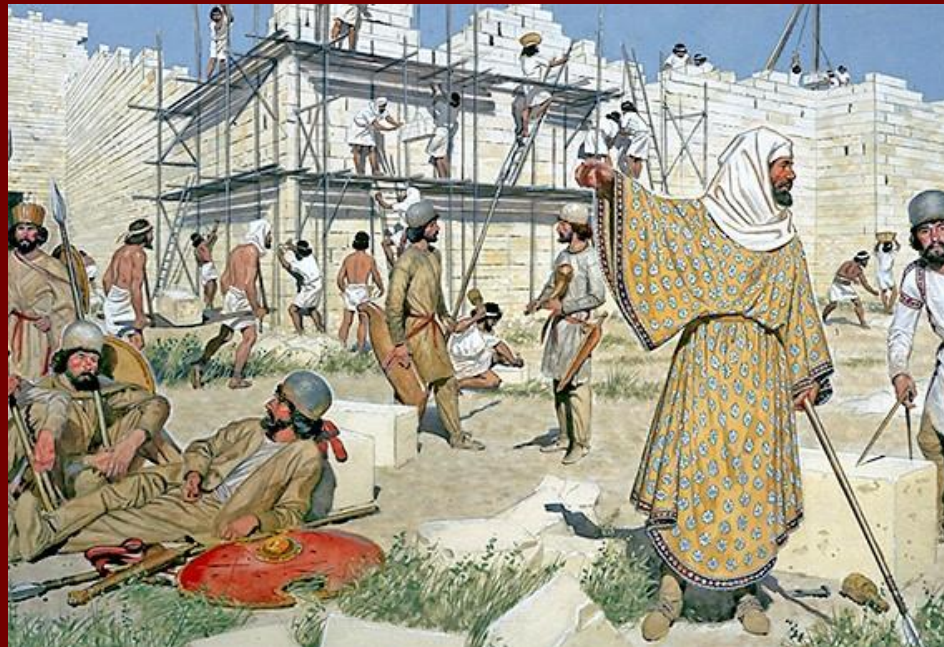
■ Who Was Nehemiah?

- Nehemiah's name in Hebrew means "God Comforts".
- He was an employee of the government of Persia. He was the King's 'cup bearer'. He lived in the palace. According to many historians, a King's 'cup bearer' had to be able to talk politics and know the legal system. He had to be handsome.
- He was government administrator, as the Builder of the Wall and the Governor of the People.

Background

■ Who Was Nehemiah?

- He wanted the Jewish exiles to be reminded of the joy that they once had with God. Though he was born in exile, he was dedicated to Jerusalem's restructure and God's Law.



Background

■ Overview

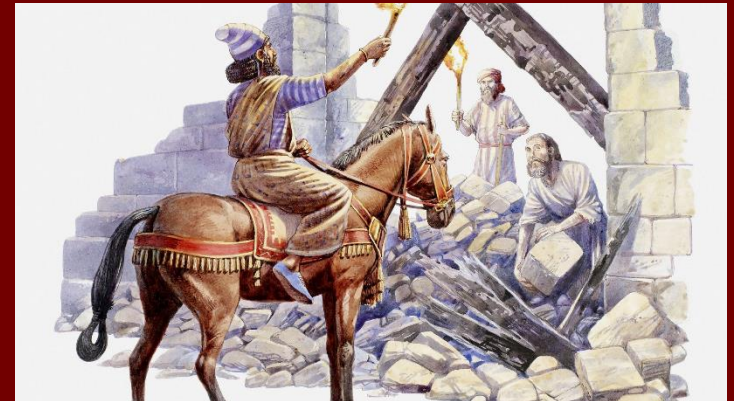
- **At God's direction, the Book of Nehemiah is a continuation of an imperial orders to restore Jerusalem after the seventy-year desolation of Jerusalem and the account of the work done, despite obstacles, to achieve this. (Isaiah 44:24-28).**
- **God purpose was to fulfilled his promises to restore Israel from captivity to Babylon / Perisa and reestablish true worship in Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 29:10-15)**



Highlights

■ Theme

- **The book of Nehemiah is an account of how the walls of Jerusalem (its protection / reliance on God) and how God's worship was reestablished despite opposition and the imperfection of God's people. The account is of great interest to us because we too are living in a time of restoration. (Jeremiah 3:14-17).**



Background

■ Importance of Nehemiah

- **Nehemiah's zealous devotion should be an inspiration to us of right worship.**
- **He left a favored position to become a humble overseer among God's people. He even refused the material contribution that was his right, and he roundly condemned materialism as a snare.**
- **Nehemiah was an example of unselfishness and discretion, a person of action, fearless for righteousness in the face of danger. (4:14, 19, 20; 6:3, 15).**

Background

■ Importance of Nehemiah

- He had the proper fear of God and was interested in building up his fellow servants in the faith. (13:14; 8:9).
- He vigorously applied the law of God, especially as it related to true worship and the rejection of foreign influences (13:8, 23-29).
- Nehemiah's complete reliance on God and his humble petitions should encourage us to develop a like attitude of prayerful dependence on God (1:4-11; 4:14; 6:14; 13:14, 29, 31).