

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH
(Nehemiah 1:1)

- I. Timeline and Historical Setting of *Nehemiah*
 - A. Jerusalem conquered by BABYLON in 587 BC
 - B. Babylon conquered by PERSIA in 539 BC
 - 1. Cyrus permitted people to RETURN to their HOMELANDS (cf. Ezra 1:1-3)
 - 2. He encouraged them to REBUILD their places of WORSHIP
 - 3. He authorized FUNDS to subsidize the COST (Ezra 1:4)
 - C. Darius I reigned from 522 – 486 BC
 - D. In 520 BC, HAGGAI and ZECHARIAH exhorted the people to FINISH the TEMPLE
 - E. The Temple was DEDICATED in 515 BC (Ezra 6:16-18)
 - F. Ahasuerus/Xerxes became king in 486 BC
 - I. Artaxerxes I became king in 464 BC
 - 1. In the SEVENTH year of his reign, he sent EZRA to Jerusalem (457 BC)
 - 2. In the TWENTIETH year of his reign, he sent NEHEMIAH to Jerusalem (445 BC)

II. Background and Overview of *Nehemiah*

- A. The author is probably NEHEMIAH
- B. It was written in JERUSALEM
- C. It provides the LAST historical record before four CENTURIES of SILENCE
 - 1. Probably written around 420 BC (12:22)
 - 2. The prophet MALACHI ministered in Jerusalem DURING Nehemiah's tenure
- D. Its THEOLOGICAL emphases are similar to EZRA'S
 - 1. The preeminence of PRAYER (1:4-11; 4:4-5, 9; 5:19; 6:9, 14; 9:2-3, 5-37; 13:14, 22, 29, 31)
 - 2. God's PROVIDENCE (2:1-20; 3:1-32; 4:1-3, 7-8; 6:1-7, 10-13, 15-16)
 - 4. The need for religious and moral PURITY (7:61-64; 10:28-30; 13:10-13, 23-30)
 - 5. God's FAITHFULNESS to His people (1:5; 9:17, 31-32)
 - 6. The AUTHORITY of God's WORD (5:7, 10-11; 7:63-65; 8:1-13, 14-18; 9:2, 3, 14; 10:29-39; 13:3, 10-13, 22, 23-28)
 - 7. The role of INDIVIDUALS in God's PROGRAM