

A WALK THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT
TIME FRAME #8– RESTORATION TO THE LAND
READING NOTES
538 BC TO 445 BC
SELECTED CHAPTERS IN EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

SUMMARY

As He promised, God not only preserves His people during the captivity but then restores them to the Promise Land. Their 70 years of discipline complete, the Jews begin to return in 537 BC. There will be three primary groups that return over an 80 year period. The first group under Zerubbabel rebuild the Temple. Then the second group under Ezra bring resources to improve the Temple as Ezra instructs the people more fully in the Mosaic Law. Then Nehemiah journeys to Jerusalem and rebuilds the walls. As the final doors are placed in the gates the Jews begin 500 years in the land. This period will include the life and ministry of Jesus and will end when the Roman;s destroy the city in AD 70.

MAJOR EVENTS

EVENT # 64	SCRIPTURE
THE DECREE OF CYRUS	EZRA 1
NOTES	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God had stated that the Babylonian Captivity would last for 70 years. After this the Babylonian’s would be punished and the Jews would be allowed back into the Land, especially Jerusalem. This is recorded in Jeremiah 25:11-14; 32:36-38. After defeating Babylon, the Persian king, Cyrus, is moved by God to issue an official decree allowing the Jews to return to their land and to rebuild their Temple. Ezra 1:1-4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyrus acknowledges that this Jewish God is the God of Israel. This does not mean he believed the Lord was the only true God. (vs.2-3) • The decree not only allows the Jews to return to Palestine, but includes a directive to rebuild the Temple so God can be worshipped. (vs.3) • The decree also includes a directive to collect the needed resources to rebuild the Temple. (vs.4) 2. The leaders of the Jews respond to the decree. The three groups listed, Judah, Benjamin and the Levites were the groups who made up the southern nation of Judah. They begin to collect the resources needed for the resettling and building of the Temple. In addition, Cyrus gives them the Temple Vessels taken by Nebuchadnezzar. Ezra 1:5-10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God’s hand is guiding this whole venture. Not only did God stir the heart of Cyrus to make the decree, but He stirs the heart of the Jewish leaders to respond. While God uses people, He remains the One Who moves hearts and guides people to accomplish His will. When God’s involvement is removed, all you have left is human effort. When His presence and hand are active, we are divinely enabled. (vs.5) • The focus on returning to Jerusalem is to rebuild the Temple. This will place the presence of God back in the Land. This is a priority over rebuilding their cities and homes. (vs.5) • There is time taken to carefully plan and provide the needed resources for this project. 	
PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:	

EVENT # 65	SCRIPTURE
FIRST GROUP RETURNS UNDER ZERUBBABEL – TEMPLE IS REBUILT	EZRA 2-6
NOTES	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ezra 2 records the people who return to Jerusalem and Judah. The people are sometimes identified by their family and other times by their ancestral city or town. There are two primary reasons for this careful documentation: 1) Reclaiming their ancestral lands; 2) Determining the legitimacy of the Levites and especially the Priests who would serve at the rebuilt Temple. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verse 2 lists Zerubbabel as the key leader. He is a descendant of King Jehoiachin, who was exiled to Babylon in 597 BC and later given a place of honor in the Babylonian court (2 Kings 24:15; 25:27-31) • Verse 2 also lists Jeshua as the priest. • The other men listed are leaders, but nothing is known about them. This is not the Nehemiah who rebuilds the wall or Mordecai in the book of Esther, for these men live almost a century later. 2. Verses 3-35 list the non-Levites who return to the land. As noted above, knowing their family ancestry was vital to their settling on the family land. This goes all the way back to the allocation of land by Joshua. 3. Verses 36-58 list the Temple officials. These are listed in order of significance to the worship in the Temple. These are also the men who could verify their lineage with official records. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The priests are listed first. (vs.36—39) • Then the other Levites, who served in various roles in the Temple, are listed. These included singers and gatekeepers. (vs.40-42) • The Temple Servants had been appointed by King David to help the Levites in their duties. Their descendants continued to serve in these roles. (vs.43-54) • Solomon’s servants may have been connected to foreigners Solomon drafted to help build the Temple. Their descendants remained associated with Israel. (vs.55-57) 4. Verses 59-63 record the names of men who claimed to be Levites and priests, but who could not produce official records to prove it. They are to refrain from performing their duties or eating the food given by those making sacrifices until God could be consulted by use of the Urim and Thummim. 5. Verses 64-70 summarize the number of people who return to Judah, and resettle in their ancestral towns and land. 6. As September arrives, the people who have returned to Judah gather in Jerusalem for the first time. The altar is rebuilt, and for the first time in 70 years sacrifices are offered for the nation of Israel. Ezra 3:1-7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is apparent they know the location of the altar built by Solomon and destroyed by the Babylonians. Being able to offer sacrifices is a priority for the people. (vs.1-3) • They offer the morning and evening sacrifices as written in Exodus 29:38-42. Then they celebrate the Feast of Booths, which remembered the exodus from Egypt. After that they begin to offer all of the sacrifices written in the Law. (vs.3-5) • They begin to make preparations for building the Temple itself. (vs.6-7) 7. The following Spring, the foundation of the Temple itself is laid. This event is celebrated with worship. This reflects the worship that was developed for the Temple by Kings David and Solomon. The year is 536 BC. Ezra 3:8-13 	

- The writer wants to verify that the construction work on the Temple was done properly. It is supervised by the lead priest, Jeshua and the Levites. This will ensure the work being done is according to what was directed in the Law. **(vs.8-9)**
 - The Levites who led the music lead the worship, using the Psalms written by David. These had been used at the Temple for over 400 years. **(vs.10-11)**
 - There is a mixture of celebration and weeping in sorrow. The men who were old enough to have seen Solomon's Temple as children. It is apparent that this new Temple will not approach the beauty of the original one. Also, they may have been thinking of the grandeur of the city of Jerusalem before the Babylonians destroyed it. As they celebrated the laying of the foundation of this new Temple, the walls and most of the city still lay in ruins.
8. The land of Israel and Judah had been resettled by people from other conquered nations. As the Jews come from Assyria to rebuild and resettle Jerusalem and the surrounding area they soon encounter opposition from this group, many of whom are of mixed Jewish/Gentile blood. This opposition will last through four kings over a period of almost 100 years. **Ezra 4:1-4** summarize this opposition. Then **Ezra 4:6-23** jumps some years ahead to give an example of this opposition that took place under Artaxerxes, who ruled from 464 BC and 423 BC. **Ezra 4:24** then brings us back to the present, and the rebuilding of the Temple. **Ezra 4**
- The people who were living in Palestine as the Jews return are called 'People of the land'. Their ancestors had been taught about worshipping God when they arrived. However, they mixed this with worshipping other gods as well. **(2 Kings 17:29-41)**
 - The Jews decline, saying Cyrus had charged them with this task. **(vs.3)**
 - Sometime later, the descendants of these officials will write to Artaxerxes warning him of Israel's history of rebelling against foreign kings. In fact, this rebellion was why Babylon destroyed the city in the first place! The official records of Persia would have included the records of Babylon and Assyria as well. **(vs.11-18)**
 - This ploy will succeed, as the king orders the work being done on the wall and other buildings in the city to cease. This would not have included the Temple, which was completed in **516 BC**.
9. The Jews lost focus on finishing the Temple, and for a period of years build their homes and other buildings in the city instead. This is recorded in **Haggai 1:4-6**. With the encouragement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah the work on the Temple resumes. **Ezra 5**
- This draws the attention of the Persian governor and other officials, who ask who granted them the authority to build. The Jews answer that King Cyrus had. **(vs.3-5)**
 - The officials write a letter to King Darius (522 BC to 486 BC) asking him to search the records to see if his predecessor, Cyrus (539 BC to 530 BC) had indeed made this decree. By God's hand, the governor allows the work on the Temple to continue while they wait for a reply **(vs.5)**. **(vs.5-17)**
10. King Darius orders a search for this decree of Cyrus, and record of it is found at a summer palace called Ecbatana. Darius adds his own decree, ordering the governor and his officials to not impede the Jews, and to provide whatever is needed to complete the Temple. This includes providing the needed animals for sacrifices. The penalty for failing to do this was death. **Ezra 6:1-12**
11. The Jews then complete the Temple and dedicate it. They then organize the priests and Levites into divisions, which rotate in serving at the Temple, according to the instructions given by Moses in **Numbers 3 and 8**.
- The government officials supplied the needed funds and materials. The prophets supplied spiritual renewal that caused the Jews to prosper. **(vs.13-14)**
 - The Temple is completed in 516 BC, having taken 20 years to complete. Most of this delay was caused by the Jews losing focus. Some of the delay was the result of the pressure brought by 'the people of the land'.

12. The Jews then observe the Passover, followed by the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread.

- These were observed by the Jews who had returned to the land. They are joined by the ‘people of the land’ who dedicated themselves to God while separating themselves from the practices of mixing the worship of the Lord and other gods. **(vs. 21)**
- They were filled with joy over how God had watched over them in the rebuilding of the Temple. In a very real way, this had been a second Exodus, only from Babylon instead of Egypt. Undoubtedly this made celebrating this Passover that much more meaningful for them.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT # 66	SCRIPTURE
SECOND GROUP RETURNS UNDER EZRA	EZRA 7-10
NOTES	
<p>1. Some 57 years after the dedication of the Temple Ezra leads a second group of Jews back to Jerusalem and Judah. The context indicates he requested permission to go to Jerusalem to bring improvements to the Temple and to teach the people living in Judah the Law. Artaxerxes, the Persian king grants the request, and sends a letter with Ezra to show the officials at the Treasury and those in Judah, called ‘Provinces Beyond the River’. Three times, the writer tells us that the success of this project was because ‘the hand of his God was on him’ (vs. 6, 9, 28). Ezra 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ezra is introduced to us as a priest whose lineage can be traced back to Aaron. As we saw earlier, having official records of your ancestry was essential if you were going to serve as a priest at the Temple. (vs.1-5) • Ezra is also a Scribe, with an in-depth knowledge of the Law and the ability to teach it to others. This is the first mention of the office of Scribe in the Bible. This office developed during the captivity out of the desire to educate the Jews in captivity so their Jewish faith was not lost. They made copies of the Law; studied it carefully, which included memorizing large sections of it; taught others in the schools held in local Synagogues. Though most of the Scribes of Jesus’ time opposed Him, the office itself was an honorable one. After the destruction of Jerusalem and dispersion of the Jews in AD 70 the office of Scribe morphed into that of Rabbi. (vs.6) • Ezra led a second group of exiles back to Jerusalem. This group was composed primarily of Levites to serve at the Temple. Ezra’s intent was to teach the people in Judah the Law of the LORD. This teaching ministry came out of his own diligent study of the Law and commitment to live it out in his own life. (vs.7-10) • Artaxerxes sends a letter, written to Ezra giving him permission to lead this group to Jerusalem. It also states that resources were to be given to him from the official Treasury in Persia as well as from the Treasury in Judah (The Land Beyond the River). (vs.11-26) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Permission is given for the journey. (vs.11-13) ○ Gold and silver were to be given to Ezra to purchase sacrifices for the Temple. In addition, they have discretion to use the money left after this for whatever projects they deem best. This undoubtedly included making improvements on the Temple itself. (vs.14-20) ○ The letter then addresses the officials in Jerusalem/Judah, telling them to provide silver and other needed commodities, up to a set limit. It is estimated that this was 25% to 33% of a year’s collection. One motivation of the King is to avoid God bringing judgment on him and his sons. Undoubtedly the writings of Daniel and the influence of 	

Esther on the royal family influenced this. The defeat of the Babylonians in Daniel 5 would have been well known history to the Persians! **(vs.21-24)**

- Ezra is then given authority to appoint officials whose primary responsibility would be to judge over the people in keeping with the Law of the LORD. **(vs.25-26)**
 - Ezra concludes **chapter 7** with a benediction of praise to God for putting all of this into the heart of the king. This is received as an expression of God's love for him. **(vs.27-28)**
2. **Ezra 8** provides more details about Ezra's journey to and arrival at Jerusalem. His primary focus was on the Temple and the worship of God. His intent is to bring additional priests and Levites to serve there and treasure to provide for the sacrifices and to bring needed improvements to the Temple itself.
- **Ezra 8:1-14** gives the genealogy of the people who join Ezra. Of special note are two lines of priests (Phinehas and Ithamar) and of King David (Hattush).
 - When they gather to begin the trip to Jerusalem Ezra discovers that while he has priests with him there are no Levites. He sends for some of these servants for the Temple to join them. **(vs.15-20)**
 - Ezra had told the king that God would protect them during their travel, and there was no need for an armed escort. They were carrying a large amount of treasure, making them a target for robbers along the 900 mile route to Jerusalem. So Ezra calls for time of fasting and prayer for God's protection before leaving. **(vs.21-23)**
 - Ezra entrusts the treasure to 12 of the leading priests to take on the journey. There is accountability, for each of the 12 portions are carefully weighed before leaving. It will be weighed again when they arrive in Jerusalem. This was not a lack of trust, for accountability acts as a protection if the temptation to take a portion of the treasure arises. **(vs.24-34)**
 - As they arrive in Jerusalem, Ezra's group sees the Temple for the first time in their lives. They have never experienced Temple Worship. The thrill of doing so must have run deep for this group of priests and Levites who now had the opportunity to serve there. They worship with burnt offerings. **(vs.35)**
 - The king's letter is delivered to the officials, who obey by aiding the Jews and their project at the Temple.
3. It is then brought to Ezra's attention that some of the Jews living in Judah had intermarried with other people's living in the land. These were idolaters, worshiping other gods and living the sensual life styles of the Canaanites. It was this kind of intermarriage that had compromised Solomon and introduced idolatry to Israel some 500 years earlier. The judgement of God on both Israel and Judah had come as a result of idolatry, brought on by intermarrying with the other nations. This history explains Ezra's response and solution to the problem. In no way do these chapters condone divorce, or teach that we, the people of God in the 21st century should divorce our spouse if they are not a Believer. This is a very unique situation that demanded a unique response. The captivity had cured the Jews of idolatry. This intermarrying threatened to re-introduce it. **Ezra 9 and 10**
- What makes this problem even worse is the fact the leaders have taken on these foreign wives. This sets an example for others to follow over time. **(vs.2)**
 - Ezra first responds to this news with sorrow, fasting and prayer. **(vs.3-15)**
 - Ezra confesses the sin to God. He acknowledges that God's judgement of the Captivity was just, caused by their sin. Note he identifies with the people. **(vs.6-7)**
 - He then acknowledges God's mercy in bringing them back to the land, rebuild the Temple and worship God. **(vs.8-9)**
 - Now Ezra moves to their present situation. The very sin that was foundational to their earlier deportation and exile was being repeated. This was in direct disobedience to God's commands. **(vs.10-12)**
 - Ezra concludes by praying what they should do – repent of this sin. His words show Ezra knows they need God's mercy. **(vs.13-15)**

- As we move into **Ezra 10**, the people join Ezra in his prayerful confession and repentance. It is important to see that it is Ezra's heartfelt response to this situation that strikes at their own hearts. Our example is always more important than our words! They determine that these foreign wives and any children they have born should be separated from the Jews and sent away – back to their own people. After making this determination, Ezra has them swear an oath to follow through. It is important that this not be an emotional moment that is not followed through on. **(10:1-5)**
- Ezra calls for a special assembly of all the men living in Judah. The penalty for not coming was being banned from living with the Jews. Ezra calls for the people to confess this sin and to then repent by separating from the foreign wives and the children they have had. The people agree, but ask for time, so this matter can be properly resolved. **(10:6-15)**
- Leaders from among the families are told to examine the issue and determine who has married foreign women. They do so, and submit a list of those who have done so. There are approximately 100 men on the list. While this shows the problem of intermarriage was not wide-spread, it was one to be dealt with swiftly, before the example of these leaders was followed by others. **(vs.16-44)**

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

EVENT # 67	SCRIPTURE
THIRD GROUP RETURNS UNDER NEHEMIAH AND REBUILD THE CITY WALLS	NEHEMIAH 1-6
NOTES	
<p>1. Approximately 13 years after Ezra traveled to Jerusalem, Nehemiah hears about the condition of the city and its defenselessness. Without proper walls to fortify it, Jerusalem is vulnerable to any force that would choose to march against it. Hearing about this situation, Nehemiah responds with prayer and a plan. When God opens the opportunity, he appeals to King Artaxerxes for permission to go to Jerusalem to continue the rebuilding process. With permission granted. Nehemiah prepares for the journey. Nehemiah 1:1-2:8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nehemiah learns of the condition of Jerusalem through the report of Hanani. The situation could reflect a period of opposition by officials in Judah. These periods of opposition were frequent during this time. This often resulted in orders to stop the rebuilding project. It is possible that Artaxerxes himself had ordered this halt. The result is discouragement and a sense of shame, because of their defenseless position. (vs.1-3) • Nehemiah's response is to go to prayer. (vs.4-11) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nehemiah first worships God. ○ He then reminds God of His covenant relationship with Israel. ○ Then he confesses that he and the people are sinners ○ Then he reminds God that He had brought the people back to the Land, as He had promised through Moses. ○ Then He asks God to be with him. The context shows he plans to ask the king for permission to rebuild Jerusalem, but needs God to open the opportunity. 	

- Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the king. This was a very trusted position, for Nehemiah insured that the king's food and drink were not poisoned. He did this by tasting everything first. However, as a servant, he had no right to make any requests to the king. In fact, to do so would have probably resulted in death. **(vs.11)**
- The king notices that Nehemiah was sad. The reason this strikes fear in Nehemiah is it was against the law to be sad around the king. To do so was punishable by death. **(Nehemiah 2:1-2)**
- Nehemiah collects himself and realizes this might be the opportunity God was providing. He takes a chance, and is honest with the king. Note that while Nehemiah had been fasting and praying, he had also been planning! He knows exactly what he wants to say when the opportunity arose. **(vs.3)**
- Artaxerxes opens the door by asking a question, 'What are you requesting'. Notice the brief prayer before he makes his request to the king! **(vs.4-5)**
- The only question the king has is when Nehemiah will return to the palace. It appears that Nehemiah will make several trips between Susa and Jerusalem over the next 20 years. Pleased with Nehemiah's answer, he grants permission for the project. **(vs.6)**
- Knowing the opposition the people of Judah are under, Nehemiah asks for an official letter from the king for the materials he will need. **(vs.7-8)**
- Like Ezra, Nehemiah recognizes that his success was from God's good hand. **(vs.8)**

2. As Nehemiah arrives in Judah, he first goes to the government officials. These are not full Jews, and have been among those who have resisted the work in Jerusalem. Despite Nehemiah's official status, they are greatly displeased. As Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem, he says nothing about his mission. The first thing he does is perform an inspection of the wall to determine what needs to be done. Then, having sized up the situation Nehemiah exhorts the Jewish leaders to join him in rebuilding the walls of the city, encouraging them by sharing how God's hand was with him during the conversation with King Artaxerxes. The response of the Jews is excitement to start; the response of the government officials is to accuse them of planning to rebel against the king. This sets the stage for the next few chapters.

Nehemiah 2:9-20

- The large number of army officers and horsemen would have been proof of Nehemiah's status with the king and validity of the letters he would have shown these officials. **(vs.9)**
- It is clear the Nehemiah is a man who carefully planned out his projects. He doesn't want to say anything to the Jews about the walls until he has a clear picture of what needs to be done. **(vs.11-16)**
- Note the connection between Nehemiah sharing what God had done back in Susa in **verse 18** and the response of the Jews in **verse 20**, where their trust is not in the letters of King Artaxerxes but in God.

3. **Nehemiah 3** describes the coordinated effort of the people to rebuild the gates and wall sections located near their homes. This shows the widespread support of the people as well as Nehemiah's leadership skills. Here are a few key points from the chapter.

- Eliashib the high priest is the grandson of Jeshua, the priest in Zerubbabel's time. **(vs.1)**
- The Sheep Gate was located on the northern side of the city, near the Temple. It was probably where the sheep used as sacrifices came through. Note this is where the priests work, and the only gate that is consecrated. **(vs.2)**
- The work on the wall then went counterclockwise. Sometimes the work is described as repairing and other times as building. This shows the various states of disrepair they found. **(vs.3, 4)**
- Some of the work crews were made up of craftsmen guilds (unions), such as the goldsmiths and perfumers. **(vs.8)**
- The Jewish governmental leaders joined in the rebuilding project. **(vs.7, 9, 12)**
- As we get to **verse 32** we see the wall completed. As we will see, while it completely surrounds the city, it has not yet reached its full height.

4. As the work continues, the opposition intensifies. The Jerusalem and the surrounding area of Judah are surrounded by enemies on three sides – east, west and south. These three groups come together in an attempt to first intimidate and if possible, to attack the workers themselves. Nehemiah responds with prayer and preparation that thwarts this plan and allows the building to continue. **Nehemiah 4.**
 - Sanballat was an official over the area around Judah and Tobiah was from Ammon. Their taunts are ironic, for the answer to each question they pose is yes! **(vs.1-3)**
 - Nehemiah’s response is to pray. The response of the people to these taunts is to continue to work, for they trusted God was with them. **(vs.4-6)**
 - Then their enemies determine to attack the workers to stop them. This becomes known, and at this the people begin to get discouraged. Once again we see Nehemiah combine praying and trusting God with being prepared to fight. **(vs.7-14)**
 - Then we learn the plan of Nehemiah in more detail, as the men arm themselves and are diligent in watching out for an attack. They are told to be prepared to go to any spot attacked to repel it. This diligence included a night guard. **(vs.15-23)**

5. **Nehemiah 5** shows another side of Nehemiah’s leadership and character. Because of the combination of a poor harvest and the men working full time on the wall, the poorer families are struggling. They have become debtors to their wealthier fellow Jews, who are exacting interest, which was against the Mosaic Law. They also oppressed the poor in other ways as well. Nehemiah confronts this, telling the wealthy to not only pay back the interest they illegally collected but to forgive the debt itself. Nehemiah leads by example, not only forgoing his allotment of food as governor but using his own money to feed many others. The response of the people is positive, as they follow the example of Nehemiah.
 - The cry of the people includes the lack of food, the mortgaging of their land, the high taxes owed the Persians and the indentured service of their children. **(vs.1-5)**
 - Nehemiah responds with righteous anger. He also acknowledges he was part of the problem. He was lending money to the people without interest, which was within the Mosaic Law. However, in the times they are in, this still contributes to the struggle of the people. **(vs.6-10)**
 - He then tells the wealthy to be gracious, and forgive the actual debts. This will allow the poor to take care of their own needs and get out of the cycle of debt. **(vs.11-13)**
 - **Nehemiah 5:14** reveals Nehemiah held the position of governor over Judah and Jerusalem. Unlike his predecessors, not only does he not take financial advantage of the people, but refuses his rightful food allowance, using his own money to feed himself and the others at his table. He leaves it to God to reward his faithfulness to the people. **(vs.14-19)**

6. The work of the wall has continued. The wall itself is completed and the last step is to set the doors in the gates. The enemies of Nehemiah make three last attempts to stop Nehemiah. The first is to lure him outside of the city where they can kill him. When that fails they try once again to accuse him of sedition, perhaps making him fear word of this will reach the king. Finally, they hire a man within the city to try to get Nehemiah to show fear by entering the Temple and closing its doors to protect himself. In addition to showing the Jews fear, this would have also broken Mosaic Law, for Nehemiah was not a Levite and therefore not allowed in the inner part of the Temple. All three attempts fail, and the wall is completed in a remarkable 52 days. Remember, the people have been back in the city for 80 years! **Nehemiah 6:1 – 7:4**
 - The first attempt to lure Nehemiah fails, as do the next three attempts to do so. Nehemiah remains focused on the task, while being fully aware of their intent. **(vs.1-4)**
 - Then they send an open letter accusing him of sedition. An open letter was one that was read and distributed publicly. It is probably they hope that eventually this will reach King Artaxerxes himself. Nehemiah simply refutes the letter, though he is not drawn into a protracted debate about it. Again, he remains focused on his God given task. **(vs.5-9)**

- Then they hire a man to convince Nehemiah to hide in the Temple. They no longer are trying to harm Nehemiah, but seek to discredit him in the eyes of the people. Doing this would have shown fear and broken the Mosaic Law. Nehemiah sees through this at once. **(vs.10-14)**
- The wall is completed, striking fear in the hearts of Tobiah and the other enemies in the Land. The city has gone from being ridiculed for being defenseless to being the strongest city in the region. It is God Who receives the glory for being with the Jews. For the first time, we are told there were Jewish officials in Jerusalem who were allied with Tobiah against Nehemiah.

7. **7:1-4** summarize the situation as Nehemiah completes his task. Rulers are set over the people and orders for being diligent. This now sets the stage for another 500 years of Jewish occupation of Jerusalem, Judah and eventually the northern area of Israel, known in time as Galilee.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS: