



PRECEPT
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English Standard Version

Nehemiah

REBUILDING, REVIVAL, AND
RESTORATION OF THE
PEOPLE OF GOD

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English Standard Version

NEHEMIAH

REBUILDING, REVIVAL, AND RESTORATION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

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HELPFUL STUDY TOOLS

ARTHUR, KAY; ARTHUR, DAVID; DE LACY, PETE

How to Study Your Bible

Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1994/2010

The New Inductive Study Bible—English Standard Version

Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2013

Hebrew Word Study Tools

(The following is a list of helpful Hebrew Word Study Tools:)

HARRIS, R. LAIRD; ARCHER, GLEASON L. JR.; WALTKE, BRUCE K.

Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1980

RICHARDS, LAWRENCE O.

Expository Dictionary of Bible Words

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985

RECOMMENDED COMMENTARIES

GAEBELEIN, FRANK E.

The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 4, 1, 2 Kings, 1, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishers, 1992

WALVOORD, JOHN F., ZUCK, ROY B., EDS.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures

Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983-c1985

CARSON, D. A.

The New Bible Commentary

Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994

KEIL, C. F., DELITZSCH, F.

Commentary on the Old Testament

Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002

RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE

Logos Bible Software

Powerful search engines and up to 4,000 electronic Bible study resources (commentaries, lexicons, Bible dictionaries etc.) make it fast and easy to do simple and complex searches of multiple sources, then pull materials together for orderly presentation—excellent for word and topical studies based on English or original Hebrew and Greek. Available at www.logos.com.



LESSON ONE

Chapters One and Two

THIS LESSON INCORPORATES The following located in the Appendix:
Observation Worksheets of Nehemiah 1–2
“Nehemiah the Man”
“The Times of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther”
“Nehemiah at a Glance”
“The Jewish Calendar”
Cross-references

The Power of One

Is it possible for one person to make a difference?

As much as your heart wants to say “yes,” your mind is probably saying, “No, not really. The problems are too large and too complex to be addressed and changed by just one person.”

Friend, if that’s what you are thinking, you are going to love this study of the book called Nehemiah. In the next few weeks you will see that God can take one individual and make a difference.

The power of one.

One person following hard after the one true God.

One individual making a difference.

DAY ONE

1. As you begin this study, it’s important to remember to start each day with prayer. Why? Because the words you are about to study are God’s Words. He is the author of every book of the Bible. Men wrote what God breathed (2 Timothy 3:16)!

Therefore, as you read, develop the habit of asking God—by His Spirit—to teach you what He has written and preserved all these millennia. Nehemiah, like all books, has a specific purpose. Its words are to be learned, understood, and applied to our lives.



Not only did God the Father say it, but Jesus also confirmed it that we live by “every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4).

2. When you study a book of the Bible, it is important to identify the type of literature you are reading to help you interpret it correctly. Read the first chapter of Nehemiah to familiarize yourself with the way this book begins.

In the Appendix you’ll find **Observation Worksheets**. For those of you new to Precept Upon Precept inductive studies, an **Observation Worksheet** is a printout of an entire book, chapter by chapter. It is double-spaced and has wide margins for easy reading and marking. It’s a worksheet you can mess up.

When you finish, think about the type of literature you read. What does Nehemiah seem to be? Does it sound like history, poetry, wisdom literature, or prophecy?

3. Nehemiah, as you can see, is part of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is filled with history and prophecy. Whenever you study a historical book of the Bible, it is important to look at people, events, timing, and outcomes. This is what history is all about!

When you read history, you must ask **the 5 Ws and H**: who, what, when, where, why, and how. If you look for answers to these questions when you read Nehemiah 1, you’ll discover the setting and purpose of the book. While every text won’t answer all 5 W and H questions, you’ll want to find out which ones are answered.

Let’s begin with **Who**. As you probably observed, Nehemiah is front and center in this chapter—the main **who**. What does God want us to know about him? Does He give us insight into 5 W and H questions with respect to this person?

- a. Read through Nehemiah 1 and mark every reference to *Nehemiah*. Include pronouns (*my, I, me*) and synonyms (for example “your servant” in verse 6). Choose a color for Nehemiah. Colors are more quickly identifiable.

Some of us do our observations in our Bible since we want to have our Bibles marked in this way. The *NISB (New Inductive Study Bible)* is especially designed for this and really is the only true inductive study Bible because it doesn’t run a commentary on the text; rather, it teaches you how to discover truth for yourself, book by book.



- b. After marking Nehemiah, look at your markings and list what you learn about this man on the page in the Appendix entitled “Nehemiah the Man.” This is not busy work, rather it’s part of the learning process. Many times we read the Bible and forget what we read. Marking and listing just what the text tells you will keep you from forgetting what you read.
4. When you finish, ask God to show you if there is anything you can learn from Nehemiah the man and apply to your own life.
 - a. For instance, Nehemiah was grieved because of the distress of his people, the reproach they faced, the broken walls of Jerusalem, the gates burned with fire. Is there distress in your family, community, church, nation? Reproach? Anything “broken” in your life, family, community? Write it down. It’s good to verbalize it.
 - b. Have you wondered how to handle it? What did you observe as you made your list on Nehemiah? Is there anything you can learn from him and how he handled this heart-wrenching news?
 - c. Finally, are you willing to do it? Application consists not of mere knowledge but acting in the light of that knowledge. What do you think God might have you to do?
 - d. When will you begin?



Why don't you finish your study today by talking with the Sovereign Ruler of the universe about what you've learned.

DAY
TWO

1. Today we're going to dig deeper into the details of the 5 Ws and H of this first chapter of Nehemiah. Undoubtedly you saw some of them as you made your list on Nehemiah.

2. Let's begin with **when** and **where**.

a. **When** is Nehemiah 1 happening? _____

As you observe the text—discovering what it says—you need to watch for the “**when**” of things. We recommend that you put a green circle over every reference to time, or words that show a sequence of time, such as *then*, *after*, etc. By the way, there is a perforated **Key Word Bookmark** on the back of your Precept book. One side has suggested markings for observing the Bible in general, while the other is for marking specific words in Nehemiah which we will explain later.

b. Does the text tell you any “**wheres**”? Where Nehemiah is? _____

Where Nehemiah's brother and the men came from? _____

Mark anything that tells you *where* by double underlining it in green. Then, if you don't know where the place is, see if you can locate it on the map.





3. Now let's look for a **what**. According to chapter 1, **what** is the situation in Jerusalem?
4. **How** does Nehemiah respond to the news from Jerusalem? You've already seen it by marking Nehemiah, haven't you? And who does Nehemiah turn to when he gets this news about Jerusalem?

5. Now let's mark references to another **Who**—*the Lord God*. By the way, when studying the Bible in general, don't feel obligated to mark every reference to God as too many markings can be confusing. Mark the essential ones—truths that reveal who God is or that tell you something you didn't know about God.

However, in Nehemiah 1, we suggest you mark every reference to *the Lord God*, including all pronouns and synonyms. Use a color like yellow, or if you want a suggestion for a symbol, see the Key Word Bookmark.

6. Look at the references to the Lord God that you marked. On a separate sheet of paper or in the margin of your worksheet make a list of what you learn. This is the way you get to know God and understand His holiness and His ways. This is how you develop a biblical theology on the Person of God! Go for it!
7. Finally, as you read chapter 1, did you notice any important repeated words like *prayer* and *sin*? They are repeated and key to understanding the meaning of the text, aren't they?
 - a. We call these key words. **Key words** are important repeated words that help unlock the meaning of the text. It is good to mark key words and their synonyms and pronouns with distinctive colors and/or symbols.
 - b. Mark the references to *prayer* and to *sin* distinctively. Also mark synonyms like "said" for *prayer* in verse 5 and "acted very corruptly" in verse 7 for *sin*. See the front of the bookmark for marking suggestions. Put these two key words along with *Nehemiah* on the back of your Key Word Bookmark with the markings you will use throughout this course.
 - c. In the margin of your Observation Worksheet, write "prayer" and list what the text tells you about prayer. Then do the same for "sin." Don't add a thing—just get down the facts!



- d. Now, when making lists on *prayer* and *sin*, did you notice who is being prayed for and why? Mark references to these people, including pronouns. Then list what you learn about these people from marking the references. You can make this list on your Observation Worksheet or record it below.
- e. Did Nehemiah pray anything for himself individually? If so, what? And what did he mean by it?
8. Interesting, isn't it? We will explore it more tomorrow. Bring today to a close by reflecting on what you learned from marking the references to prayer. You are going to see many more as you continue your study. However, for today, did you learn anything about the role prayer played in Nehemiah's life and how he prayed?

By the way, Beloved (as God calls you in verses 1 and 3 of Jude), we want you to know that our hearts are filled with rejoicing at the thought of not only what God is going to teach you, but also the difference it can make in your life and then in the lives of those you reach out to and urge to follow Jesus Christ—to become His disciple.



DAY
THREE

Let's get back to Nehemiah 1 as there is more to see and understand. This first chapter is the setting for what follows, so you need to know it well. By knowing it, you will grow and become more and more like the Son of Man, the Son of God, who truly lived by every word of God.

1. After you pray for God's help in studying His Word, read through Nehemiah 1 again, this time aloud. Reading aloud helps Scripture go deeper, penetrating, as Hebrews 4:12 says, the joints and marrow of your being, judging the thoughts and intentions of your heart.

When you finish reading through the chapter, review your lists from yesterday. What did you record about the people? What did Nehemiah pray?

Did you notice that Nehemiah asked the Lord God of heaven to be attentive to his prayer and to remember "the word" the Lord commanded them?

2. You need to understand what that "word" was. Let's let Scripture interpret Scripture. In his prayer Nehemiah is reaching back to the Torah, the first five books of the Law, the statutes, commandments, and ordinances the nation of Israel was to live by—and the covenant God made with them. Nehemiah is asking God to stand by His Word.
 - a. Deuteronomy is the last book of the Law. In its final chapters God tells Israel of the blessings that obedience brings and the curses disobedience brings. This is part of the covenant of the Law. Did you notice the mention of **covenant** in 1:5? Everything God does is based on covenant. A covenant is a solemn binding agreement—sometimes made by passing through the pieces of the flesh of a sacrificed animal. Because of its importance, we suggest you always mark *covenant*. See your bookmark for a marking suggestion.
 - b. After revealing blessings and curses in Deuteronomy 28 and 29, God speaks promises in Deuteronomy 30:1-5. Read Deuteronomy 30:1-5 and list the main things God promises.



- 4) When did they finish?
 - b. Now according to the chart, what book of the Bible records this history and in what chapters? If you studied our Precept course on Ezra/Haggai, this is review. Aren't you thrilled with what you learned? Studying inductively really makes the difference, doesn't it?
 - c. Now look at the chart again. Note when the book of Ezra ends and the book of Nehemiah begins. If Ezra is about the rebuilding of the temple, what concerns Nehemiah since the temple is already built? Or to put it another way, what caused Nehemiah to mourn, weep, fast, and pray?

6. What do you learn from the following verses about city walls?
 - a. Joshua 6:5, 20

 - b. 2 Samuel 11:18-24

 - c. 2 Samuel 18:24-26; Ezekiel 33:1-6

 - d. 1 Kings 3:1



DAY
FOUR

1. Let's begin our study today with one more read through Nehemiah 1, but let's do it by paragraph.
 - a. Read Nehemiah 1:1-3 aloud. When you finish, summarize the content of these verses—what is happening? Write the summary in pencil in the margin of verses 1-3 on your Observation Worksheet.
 - b. Read Nehemiah 1:4-11 and record a summary in the margin of your Observation Worksheet near verse 4.
 - c. Now you are ready to summarize in as few words as possible a theme for Nehemiah 1. Use words from the text.

Record a chapter theme at the heading of your Observation Worksheet and in the designated place on the “Nehemiah at a Glance” chart in the Appendix. An At a Glance chart is an incredibly valuable tool that helps you systematically record key elements you want to remember from each book of the Bible. (You'll find these in the *NISB* at the end of every book.)
2. Now read Nehemiah 2 to familiarize yourself with the content. It's history and history involves people.
 - a. We are looking at what “one individual” can do, so color-code the references to *Nehemiah* in this chapter as you did in chapter 1.
 - b. Add to the list on Nehemiah you began when you observed chapter 1.
 - c. When you finish, write down your first impression of what this chapter is all about.
3. Let's go even deeper and observe this chapter—discover what it says for ourselves.
 - a. Observe Nehemiah 2. Add the following words to the back of your Key Word Bookmark. Pick a color and/or symbol for your marking. Words with suggested markings on the front of the bookmark have an asterisk*.
 - 1) *Jerusalem* and *city* (when it refers to Jerusalem)
 - 2) *wall* (mark it in Nehemiah 1:3 also)
 - 3) *temple** (*house of God*)
 - 4) *Sanballat*, *Tobiah*, and *Geshem*—Mark each in a distinctive color; you will encounter these three men in other chapters of Nehemiah.
 - 5) *build* and *rebuilding*



Good job, faithful one! We will finish chapter 2 tomorrow. In the meantime, think of what you learned simply from marking references to Nehemiah. What manner of man is this cupbearer?

DAY
FIVE

1. Now that you have marked the text, we want to move through Nehemiah 2. Read Nehemiah 2:1-8 picturing what's happening. Put yourself in Nehemiah's place. He was the king's cupbearer—a servant. And those who served the king were not to be sad, down, depressed in the presence of the king; nothing was to upset the king! When you finish, summarize 2:1-8 in the margin of your Observation Worksheet.
 - a. First of all, God wants you to see the timing of 2:1; this is why it is included in the text, so we must pay attention to it. How does 2:1 compare with Nehemiah 1:1? Understanding the Jewish Calendar will help. There's one in the Appendix. Look at it and record the time interval between the two chapters. Write it below or on your Observation Worksheet.
 - b. Do events in Nehemiah 2:1-8 give you insights into the following, and if so, what?
 - 1) Nehemiah's prayer in chapter 1?
 - 2) God?
 - 3) Nehemiah the man?



2. Did you notice Nehemiah said he was “very much afraid” when the king asked him **why** he was sad? Artaxerxes, as you know from your chart on “The Times of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther,” reigned from 464 to 423 B.C. The twentieth year of Artaxerxes was 445 B.C. Ezra 4:7-23 speaks of a decree of Artaxerxes that was issued before Nehemiah’s request to the king.
 - a. Read Ezra 4:7-23; note what happened and why.
 - b. Now, if Nehemiah knew of Artaxerxes’ decree, could that have caused some trepidation?
 - c. How significant is the event in the throne room of the king and queen? Stop and reflect how it happened. Is there anything for you to learn and apply in your life?
 - d. Look at Proverbs 21:1. How does this relate to Nehemiah? To you?
 - e. Finally, let’s take a quick read of what happened to Ezra in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes. If Nehemiah knew about it, it would have been an encouragement, as it often is to us when we hear of the good hand of the Lord upon others who have been willing to step into difficult situations for the sake of God’s kingdom. Read Ezra 7:6-28. When you finish, list any similarities to what you see in Nehemiah 1–2.



What does God want you to know? Are there truths you can incorporate into your knowledge of God? What do you learn for your life from the examples of the characters you read about—both good and bad?

Did you see any truths that reveal wrong thinking and less than godly behavior and character? Anything that inspires you? Did God put anything in your mind (heart) (Nehemiah 2:12)?

To apply scripture is to take what God says and let it impact your life so that it conforms you to His plumb line of truth. List your insights.

8. Feel free to consult commentaries, but please don't read beyond Nehemiah 2. We don't want you to miss the joy of discovery or prematurely interpret. Remember, accurate observation is essential for correct interpretation.



NEHEMIAH 1

Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

THE words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah.

- Now it happened in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the citadel,
- 2 that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem.
 - 3 And they said to me, “The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire.”
 - 4 As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.
 - 5 And I said, “O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,
 - 6 let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father’s house have sinned.
 - 7 “We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses.
 - 8 “Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples,
 - 9 but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.’



- 10 “They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand.
- 11 “O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.”
- Now I was cupbearer to the king.



NEHEMIAH 2

Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

- I**N the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence.
- 2 And the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart.” Then I was very much afraid.
- 3 I said to the king, “Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers’ graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?”
- 4 Then the king said to me, “What are you requesting?” So I prayed to the God of heaven.
- 5 And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ graves, that I may rebuild it.”
- 6 And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), “How long will you be gone, and when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time.
- 7 And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah,
- 8 and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king’s forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy.” And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.
- 9 Then I came to the governors of the province Beyond the River and gave them the king’s letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen.



- 10 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek the welfare of the people of Israel.
- 11 So I went to Jerusalem and was there three days.
- 12 Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. And I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. There was no animal with me but the one on which I rode.
- 13 I went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Dragon Spring and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire.
- 14 Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal that was under me to pass.
- 15 Then I went up in the night by the valley and inspected the wall, and I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned.
- 16 And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, and I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest who were to do the work.
- 17 Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision."
- 18 And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work.
- 19 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they jeered at us and despised us and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?"
- 20 Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem."



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NEHEMIAH AT A GLANCE

Book Theme:

Author:

Date:

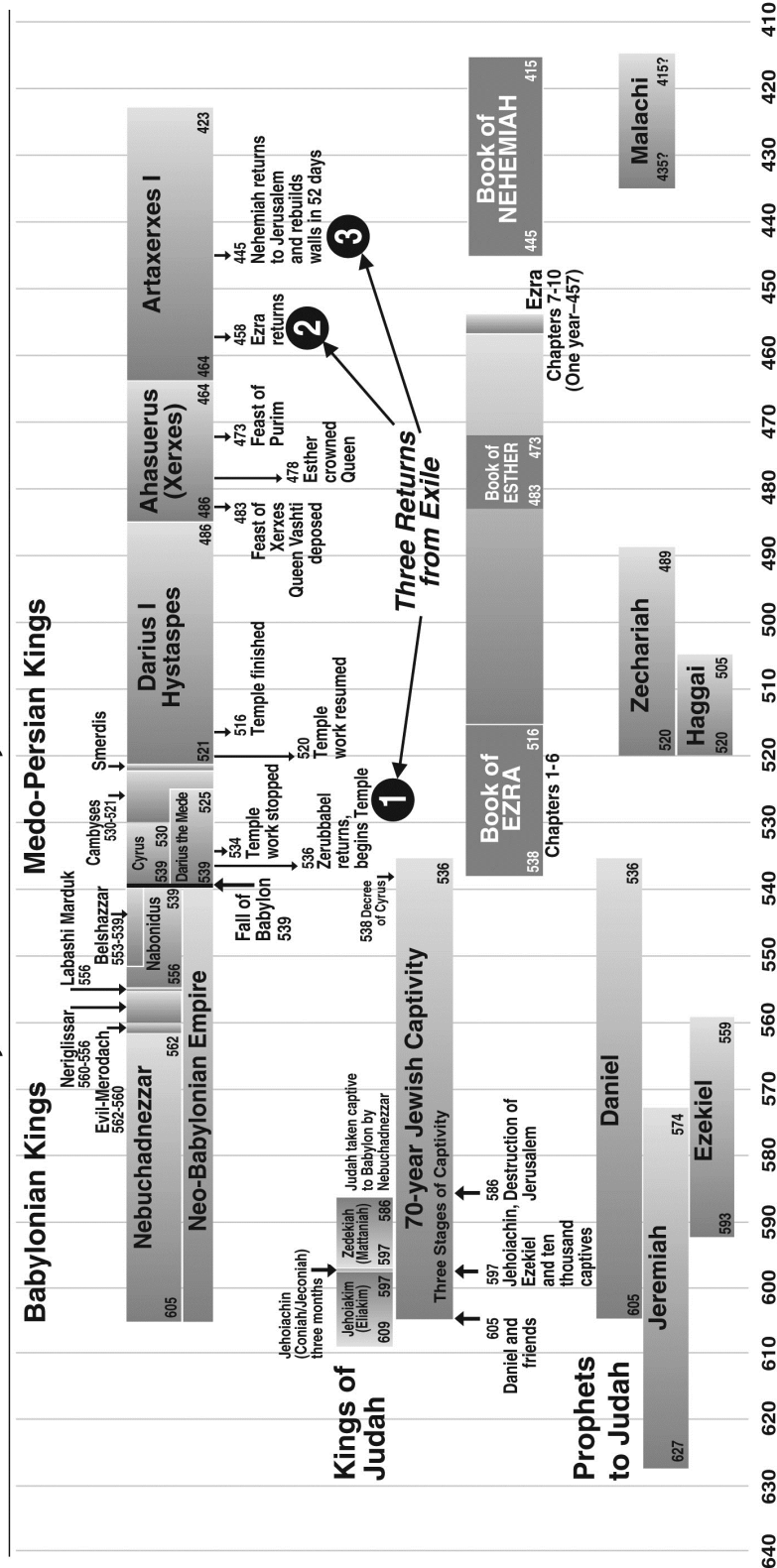
Purpose:

Key Words:

Segment Divisions		Chapter Themes
		1
		2
		3
		4
		5
		6
		7
		8
		9
		10
		11
		12
		13



THE TIMES OF EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND ESTHER





The Jewish Calendar

Babylonian names (B) for the months are still used today for the Jewish calendar. Canaanite names (C) were used prior to the Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. Four are mentioned in the Old Testament.

Adar-Sheni is an intercalary month used every two to three years or seven times in 19 years.

1st month	2nd month	3rd month	4th month
Nisan (B) Abib (C) March-April	Iyyar (B) Ziv (C) April-May	Sivan (B) May-June	Tammuz (B) June-July
7th month	8th month	9th month	10th month
5th month	6th month	7th month	8th month
Ab (B) July-August	Elul (B) August-September	Tishri (B) Ethaniam (C) September-October	Marcheshvan (B) Bul (C) October-November
11th month	12th month	1st month	2nd month
9th month	10th month	11th month	12th month
Chislev (B) November-December	Tebeth (B) December-January	Shebat (B) January-February	Adar (B) February-March
3rd month	4th month	5th month	6th month

Sacred calendar appears in black • Civil calendar appears in gray