"Nehemiah and the Wall" by Justin Gerard
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St Marks Sunday School,
2010

Author, Date & Purpose

- Author: Nehemiah +/- Ezra

- Date: Approx 445-432 BC

- Purpose:
  - Last of OT Historical books
  - Records history of 3rd return to Jerusalem after captivity
  - Tells how walls were rebuilt and renewal of faith.

Setting & Blueprint

- Setting:
  - Judah had been conquered by Babylon and the people taken to Babylon
  - King Cyrus allowed there return from exile
    - Zerubbabel led the first return to Jerusalem in 538 BC
    - Ezra led the second return 458 BC
    - Nehemiah led the third return 445 BC

- Blueprint:
  - Rebuilding the Wall (1-7)
    - Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem
    - Nehemiah leads the people
  - Reforming the People (8-13)
    - Ezra renews the covenant
    - Nehemiah establishes policies

Summary

- The book is set in the 5th century.

- Judah is one of several provinces within the larger satrapy (a large administrative unit) within the Persian empire. The capital of the empire is at Susa.

- Nehemiah is a cup-bearer to king ArtaxerxesII.

- At his own request Nehemiah is sent to Jerusalem as governor of Judah.

- Jerusalem had been conquered and destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE, and Nehemiah finds it still in ruins. His task is to rebuild the walls and to re-populate the city.

- He faces opposition from three powerful neighbours, the Samaritans, the Ammonites, and the Arabs, as well as the city of Ashdod, but manages to rebuild the walls.

- He then purifies the Jewish community by enforcing its segregation from its neighbours and enforces the laws of Moses.

The Man - Nehemiah

- Nehemiah is a hero in the way he was able to re-establish the walls of Jerusalem, and also the people's hope in God as His chosen people.

- He was truly dedicated to the service of God (read his prayer Neh1:4-10). Asked God to use him as his servant.

- He left his position of comfort, and against all odds and ridicule from others, helped restore Israel

- Because of his love, fervent prayers, and dedication to service, God was able to use him as an inspiration to His chosen people.