

----- Nehemiah -----

3550a AM, 4259 JP, 455 BC

1227. In the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, in the ninth month called Chisleu, Nehemiah was at Susa, the winter quarters of the Persian kings. {*Athenaeus, l. 12. (514f) 5:311} When he received news of how the wall of Jerusalem was still broken down and the gates burned with fire, he mourned, fasted and prayed to God. He asked that God would forgive the people's sins and give him grace in the eyes of the king. {#Ne 1:1-11}

3550c AM, 4260 JP, 454 BC

1228. In the same twentieth year of the king, in the month of Nisan, Nehemiah's turn came to serve as cupbearer to the king. [L196] Both the king and queen (whom I suppose to be she whom Ctesias called Damaspia) noticed his sorrowful appearance. He presented his request to them and obtained permission from the king to be the governor of Judah and to rebuild Jerusalem. {#Ne 2:1-6} This event marks the start of Daniel's seventy weeks. {#Da 9:24,25} (For the starting date of Artaxerxes' reign, {See note on 3531b AM. <<1184>>} Editor.)

1229. Nehemiah, with a commission and supplies from the king, came to Jerusalem in spite of the opposition from two governors, Sanballat, the Horonite of Moab, and Tobiah, the Ammonite. He began the work and replied wisely to those who laughed at him for undertaking such foolish work. {#Ne 2:7-20}

3550d AM, 4260 JP, 454 BC

1232. Eliashib, the son of Joiakim, the son of Jehu (or Jehoshua) the high priest, together with the rest of the Jews, started to build the wall of Jerusalem {#Ne 3:1-32} on the fourth day of the fifth month, called Ab. {#Ne 6:15}

1233. Sanballat and Tobiah, with the Samaritans and other enemies of the Jews, first laughed at this new work. When they saw the wall half up, they stopped mocking and consulted how to destroy the builders. When Nehemiah found out about this, he first prayed to God and then ordered his men to make ready for a battle, thus thwarting the plans of their enemies. {#Ne 4:1-23}

1234. When Nehemiah heard the outcries of the people, he ordered them to be freed: the slaves from their bondage and the debtors from their debts. Those who had mortgaged their lands or goods were to be freed from their debt. He set a

good example by releasing his debts and all engagements of lands or goods made to him, and freed the poor from public taxes. He gave liberally to those in need. {#Ne 5:1-19}

1235. Nehemiah was not only in danger from Sanballat and other enemies abroad, but also from false prophets and false brethren at home. They tried to hinder the work as much as the others did. In spite of these difficulties, the wall was finished in fifty-two days, on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month, called Elul. {#Ne 6:1-19}

1236. The dedication of the wall was performed with much celebration and great joy. {#Ne 12:27-43}

1237. Nehemiah took care of the various offices belonging to the house of the Lord. [L197] He appointed governors over the city and controlled its guards. He called the congregation together and numbered those who had returned from captivity. He selected a number of people to live in the city alongside its few remaining inhabitants, to rebuild it with the rest of its inhabitants. Everyone, according to his ability, made their various offerings to God. {#Ne 7:1-73}

3562 AM, 4272 JP, 442 BC

1262. In this year, all wars ceased throughout Asia, Greece, Sicily, Italy, Gaul, Spain and almost the entire world. {*Diod. Sic., l. 12. c. 26. s. 4. 4:427}

1263. After Nehemiah had governed Judah for twelve years, that is from the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes to the thirty-second of the same, he returned to the king. ({#Ne 5:14 13:6})

1264. In Nehemiah's absence, Eliashib, the priest, who was in charge of the chamber of the house of God and had made an alliance with Tobiah, prepared a room for him in the court of the temple, in the place where the gifts and tithes had formerly been kept. The son of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, (who was a different man from the Eliashib whom I just mentioned) became son-in-law to Sanballat, the Horonite, after he married his daughter. When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem with a new commission, he quickly redressed and severely punished these and other wrongdoings. {#Ne 13:1-31}

1305. Eusebius made the following observation concerning the 32nd year of Artaxerxes, with whom the continued history of Nehemiah ended: {*Eusebius, Chronicles, l. 1. 1:196}

"Hitherto, the divine scriptures of the Hebrews contain the annals of the times. Those things which were done among them after this time, we must derive from the books of the Maccabees and from the writings of Josephus and Africanus. He wrote a general history of things done among them down to the Roman times."

1306. Malachi, the last of the prophets, was a contemporary of Nehemiah. This we gather from the fact that he nowhere exhorted the people to build the temple, as Haggai and Zechariah did. Since the temple was now built, he reproved those same disorders among the Jews which Nehemiah also reproved at his second return with a new commission. These are: the marriages with foreign women, {#Ne 13:23-29 Mal 2:11} withholding of tithes, {#Ne 13:10-14 Mal 3:8} and abuses in the worship of God. {#Ne 13:15-22 Mal 1:13 2:8} They were no longer to expect a continual succession of prophets, as before. Therefore Malachi, in the last words of his prophecy, exhorted them to hold fast to the law of Moses

until Christ, that great prophet of the church, should appear with his forerunner, John the Baptist:

"In the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the rebels to the wisdom of the just." {#Mal 4:5 Lu 1:17 Mt 11:14 17:12}