



III. THE COMPLETION OF THE WALL (Nehemiah 6:15)

A. The Statement of Completion—*“So the wall was finished”*

B. The Calendar Date of Completion

1. The twenty-fifth day
2. The month Elul
 - a. The calendar breakdown
 - (1) Sacred calendar—sixth month
 - (2) Secular calendar—twelfth month
 - b. The calendar comparison (August to September)
 - c. The noteworthy events—the time of processing grapes, figs, and olives

C. The Numerical Days of Completion

1. The days of completion—*“the wall was finished...in fifty and two days”*
2. The interpretation of days considered
 - a. There is no doubt that the wall was finished in fifty-two days; however, this leads to a question of fifty-two days from when?
 - (1) From the start of building the wall (Nehemiah 3:1)
 - (2) From the completion of the wall, through the setting up of the doors upon the gates (Nehemiah 6:1)
 - b. Could it be from the start of building the wall?
 - (1) Consider the dates.
 - a) Nehemiah was in Shushan in Artaxerxes’ twentieth year, more specifically in the month Chisleu (Nehemiah 1:1).
 - i) Chisleu is the ninth month of the sacred calendar.
 - ii) Chisleu is the third month of the secular calendar.
 - b) Nehemiah contemplated the Jews’ predicament for approximately four months and faced the king with his concerns in the month Nisan, still in Artaxerxes’ twentieth year (Nehemiah 2:1). Note: One would imagine that Nehemiah needed a day or so to pack and start the journey.
 - i) Nisan is the first month of the sacred calendar.
 - ii) Nisan is the seventh month of the secular calendar.
 - c) We are not told how long the trip took Nehemiah, but, as a means of comparison, the journey from Babylon to Judah could take up four months (see Ezra 7:9).
 - i) Nehemiah was travelling with fewer people, so his pace would likely be better.
 - ii) However, he was travelling from Shushan which would likely take longer than the trip from Babylon.
 - iii) In the end, it could average out and be the same.
 - d) When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, he took three days to survey the work ahead (Nehemiah 2:11).
 - e) The wall was finished in Elul, on the twenty-fifth day.



- (2) Consider a scenario.
- a) Nisan 1—the earliest date Nehemiah could leave Shushan to begin his journey toward Jerusalem
 - b) Ab 1—the earliest date Nehemiah could have arrived in Jerusalem if the trip were exactly four months
 - c) Ab 3 or 4—the earliest date Nehemiah could have started building the wall
 - d) Elul 25—the actual date of the completion of the building
 - i) Each month had thirty calendar days.
 - ii) If the building began on the third day of Ab, twenty-seven days remained in the month.
 - iii) The next month was Elul.
 - iv) If the building of the wall took a total of fifty-two days, and began on Ab 3, it would have been completed on Elul 25.
- (3) Consider the problems.
- a) While this is possible, it demands that Nehemiah left at the beginning of Nisan, took no more than four months to journey to Jerusalem, and began working immediately after the three days of surveying the work.
 - b) Nehemiah was governor “*in the land*” for twelve years from Artaxerxes’ twentieth year to his thirty-second year (Nehemiah 5:14). If the work only encompassed fifty-two days total, what did Nehemiah do for the other 4,200-plus days?
 - c) If the wall was complete in Elul of Artaxerxes’ twentieth year, why did they wait twelve years to dedicate the wall?
 - i) Prior to the dedication of the wall, Eliashib set up a chamber in the temple for Tobiah and stopped the service of the temple.
 - ii) Nehemiah clearly states that while Eliashib was doing that, he was in Shushan in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes [based on “On that day” (Nehemiah 13:1) which refers to the dedicating of the wall and “*And before this*” (Nehemiah 13:4) which would be before the day they dedicated the wall as these two verses and events are connected].
 - iii) So, Eliashib set up a chamber for Tobiah prior to the dedication of the wall while Nehemiah was in Shushan. If the wall was completed in fifty-two days shortly after Nehemiah’s arrival, this would mean they waited nearly twelve years after the completion of the wall to have a dedication ceremony for the wall.
 - iv) This seems highly unlikely and very unrealistic. Beside all the events, and opposition, and internal conflict, and disheartening that took place from chapter four through six.



- c. Could it be from the completion of the wall, through the setting up of the doors upon the gates?
- (1) Consider the context.
 - a) Nehemiah 6:1 states that the wall was re-built except that the doors were not yet put upon the gates.
 - b) If this context is considered, the finishing of the wall (Nehemiah 6:14) could simply be the placing of the doors upon the gates.
 - c) This would mean the overall building of the wall took much of Nehemiah's twelve years spent in the land as governor.
 - (2) Consider the problems.
 - a) Why would it take so long to build the wall?
 - i) The statistics for the size of Nehemiah's wall vary, but it was probably a much larger structure than what we imagine as we read the account.
 - ii) As for a historical comparison, we are told that in the Ottoman period, the walls around Jerusalem were built between the years 1537 and 1541, taking four years to complete.
 - iii) It seems strange that the account of Nehemiah would speak so highly of the good hand of God upon a work that took three times the amount of time as what it would take around 2,000 years later.
 - iv) Maybe the consistent conflict Nehemiah faced as well as the inferior tools would explain the time difference.
 - b) How would so many of the conditions remain consistent over the period of twelve years of building?
 - i) How could the builders of the wall continue on the work day in and day out for twelve long years?
 - ii) How could the foes opposing the work of the wall be the same men over the period of twelve years? How could these men maintain their consistency in opposing the wall for so long?

IV. CONFLICT AFTER THE WALL (Nehemiah 6:16-19)

A. The Defeat of External Conflict (Nehemiah 6:16)

1. The timing of their defeat—*“And it came to pass”*
 - a. The wall had been completed except the doors had not yet been placed upon the gates (Nehemiah 6:1).
 - b. Now, the doors were up and there was no breach left in the wall.
2. The discovery of their defeat—*“when...our enemies heard...and...the heathen...saw”*
 - a. The enemies heard.
 - b. The heathen saw.



- c. Note: The wording differences in how the people learned of the Jews' success is quite telling.
 - (1) The enemies learned of the Jews' success by hearing. In other words, somebody had to bring word to them that the work was complete.
 - (2) "*All the heathen that were about us*" speaks of those of non-Jewish descent who lived in the land and were able to first-hand see the work completed. While they were not necessarily actively opposing the work of the Jews in the same manner in which the enemies were doing so, these people too will be said to be cast down because of the Jews' success. The "*these things*" of Nehemiah 6:16 likely includes both the Jews' success in building and the enemies' failure in deterring the building.
 3. The discouragement of their defeat
 - a. They were much cast down in their own eyes.
 - b. They perceived that this work was wrought of God.
- B. The Discovery of Internal Conflict (Nehemiah 6:17-19)
1. The timing of the conflict—"*in those days*" (Nehemiah 6:17)
 2. The people causing the conflict—"*the nobles of Judah*" (Nehemiah 6:17)
 3. The deeds causing the conflict (Nehemiah 6:17, 19)
 - a. They corresponded with Tobiah (Nehemiah 6:17).
 - (1) The nobles of Judah sent MANY letters unto Tobiah.
 - (2) The letters of Tobiah came unto them.
 - b. They shared information with Tobiah (Nehemiah 6:19).
 - (1) They reported Tobiah's good deeds before Nehemiah.
 - (2) They uttered Nehemiah's words to Tobiah.
 4. The reason for the conflict (Nehemiah 6:18)
 - a. The general reason—"*there were many in Judah sworn unto him*"
 - b. The specific reason
 - (1) Tobiah was the son in law of Shecaniah the son of Arah.
 - (2) Tobiah's son, Johanan, had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. Note: This Meshullam appears to be the same man who worked on two different sections of the wall (Nehemiah 3:4, 30).
 - c. Practical considerations
 - (1) Tobiah was an Ammonite (Nehemiah 2:10; Nehemiah 4:3). As such, he should not have been intermingled with the Lord's congregation (Deuteronomy 23:3).
 - (2) By allowing the intermingling of the Ammonites and Jews through familial relationships, the Jews made themselves vulnerable to compromise. Should they side with family, or with God (see Matthew 10:35; Luke 12:53; Luke 14:26)?
 5. The result of the conflict—"*Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear*" (Nehemiah 6:19)



The Book of Nehemiah

Nehemiah's Preparations and Departure for Persia

Nehemiah 7:1-5

- I. THE WORK COMPLETED (Nehemiah 7:1)
 - A. The Passing of Time—“*it came to pass*”
 - B. The Accomplishment of Work
 1. The wall was built.
 2. The doors had been set up.
- II. THE ASSIGNMENTMENTS GIVEN (Nehemiah 7:1-3)
 - A. The Assignments in Worship (Nehemiah 7:1)
 1. The porters were appointed.
 - a. A *port* is a point of entry.
 - b. Porters were those who guarded the points of entry. This could include:
 - (1) The gates of the city (Nehemiah 12:25)
 - (2) The doors of the king’s palace (2 Chronicles 23:5)
 - (3) The doors of the temple (2 Chronicles 23:4)
 2. The singers were appointed.
 3. The Levites were appointed.
 - a. Levites were descendants from Levi.
 - b. They ministered about the things of the temple.
 - B. The Assignments in Governance (Nehemiah 7:2-3)
 1. The people charged (Nehemiah 7:2)
 - a. Hanani
 - (1) His genealogy—“*my brother*”
 - (2) His character
 - a) He was a faithful man.
 - b) He feared God above many.
 - b. Hananiah, the ruler of the palace
 2. The work charged (Nehemiah 7:2-3)
 - a. Generally—“*I gave...charge over Jerusalem*” (Nehemiah 7:2);
Note: There seems to be no doubt that Nehemiah had the authority to assign leadership roles over Jerusalem and over the people therein.



- b. More specifically (Nehemiah 7:3)
 - (1) Work assigned to the leaders
 - a) Their identities
 - i) Hanani
 - ii) Hananiah
 - b) Their work
 - i) Opening the gates—*“Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot”*
 - ii) Closing the gates—*“while they stand by”*
 - (a) Let them shut the doors.
 - (b) Let them bar the doors.
 - (2) Work assigned to the inhabitants
 - a) Their identities—*“of the inhabitants of Jerusalem”*
 - b) Their work
 - i) Generally—*“appoint watches”*
 - (a) They were to watch the gates.
 - (b) Most likely, this was to be accomplished overnight.
 - ii) Specifically
 - (a) Every one in his watch
 - (b) Every one to be over against his house

III. THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED (Nehemiah 7:4-5)

A. The Population in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 7:4)

- 1. The need of the city
 - a. The city was large.
 - b. The city was great.
- 2. The scarcity within the city
 - a. Of the people—*“the people were few therein”*
 - b. Of the houses—*“the houses were not builded”*

B. The Genealogy of the People (Nehemiah 7:5)

- 1. The presentation of the desire—*“that they might be reckoned by genealogy”*
- 2. The source of the desire—*“my God put into mine heart”*
- 3. The effort of the desire—*“to gather together”*
 - a. The nobles
 - b. The rulers
 - c. The people
- 4. The assistance of the desire—*“I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first”*; Note: The reference to *“the first”* points to the return under Zerubbabel’s leadership (see Ezra 2:1-70).
- 5. Note: From this point through Nehemiah 12:26, Nehemiah shifts from chronicling his present ministry to doing the work of a historian.



The Book of Nehemiah

Nehemiah's Recounting of Historical Events

Nehemiah 7:6—Nehemiah 12:26

- I. THE NUMBERING OF THE FIRST RETURN (Nehemiah 7:6-73; Ezra 2:1-70)
 - A. The Historical Account (Nehemiah 7:6-73; Ezra 2:1-70); Note: The * identifies a discrepancy between the accounts in Ezra and Nehemiah.
 1. The introduction to the accounting (Nehemiah 7:6-7; Ezra 2:1-2)
 - a. The identity of those returning (Nehemiah 7:6; Ezra 2:1)
 - (1) Their carrying away
 - a) These are children of the province, that went out of captivity.
 - b) They had been carried away by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.
 - (2) Their return
 - a) They came again to Jerusalem and to Judah.
 - b) They returned to their own cities.
 - b. The identity of the leadership (Nehemiah 7:7; Ezra 2:2)
 - (1) Their number—twelve
 - (2) Their names
 - a) Zerubbabel
 - b) Jeshua
 - c) Nehemiah
 - d) Azariah
 - e) Raamiah
 - f) Nahamani
 - g) Mordecai
 - h) Bilshan
 - i) Mispereth
 - j) Bigvai
 - k) Nehum
 - l) Baanah
 2. The account of the congregation (Nehemiah 7:7-38; Ezra 2:2-35)
 - a. By families (Nehemiah 7:7-25; Ezra 2:2-20)
 - (1) The children of Parosh equaled 2,172 (Nehemiah 7:8; Ezra 2:3).
 - (2) The children of Shephatiah equaled 372 (Nehemiah 7:9; Ezra 2:4).
 - (3) The children of Arah equaled 652 (Nehemiah 7:10; Ezra 2:5)*.
 - (4) The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, equaled 2,818 (Nehemiah 7:11; Ezra 2:6)*.
 - (5) The children of Elam equaled 1,254 (Nehemiah 7:12; Ezra 2:7).
 - (6) The children of Zattu equaled 845 (Nehemiah 7:13; Ezra 2:8)*.
 - (7) The children of Zaccai equaled 760 (Nehemiah 7:14; Ezra 2:9).
 - (8) The children of Binnui or Bani equaled 648 (Nehemiah 7:15; Ezra 2:10)*.



- (9) The children of Bebai equaled 628 (Nehemiah 7:16; Ezra 2:11)*.
- (10) The children of Azgad equaled 2,372 (Nehemiah 7:17; Ezra 2:12)*.
- (11) The children of Adonikam equaled 667 (Nehemiah 7:18; Ezra 2:13)*.
- (12) The children of Bigvai equaled 2,067 (Nehemiah 7:19; Ezra 2:14)*.
- (13) The children of Adin equaled 655 (Nehemiah 7:20; Ezra 2:15)*.
- (14) The children of Ater of Hezekiah equaled ninety-eight (Nehemiah 7:21; Ezra 2:16).
- (15) The children of Hashum equaled 328 (Nehemiah 7:22; Ezra 2:19)*.
- (16) The children of Bezai equaled 324 (Nehemiah 7:23; Ezra 2:17)*.
- (17) The children of Hariph or Jorah equaled 112 (Nehemiah 7:24; Ezra 2:18).
- (18) The children of Gibeon or Gibbar equaled ninety-five (Nehemiah 7:25; Ezra 2:20).
- b. By cities (Nehemiah 7:26-38; Ezra 2:21-35)
 - (1) The men of Beth-lehem and Netophah equaled 188 (Nehemiah 7:26; Ezra 2:21-22)*.
 - (2) The men of Anathoth equaled 128 (Nehemiah 7:27; Ezra 2:23).
 - (3) The men of Beth-azmaveth equaled forty-two (Nehemiah 7:28; Ezra 2:24).
 - (4) The men of Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth equaled 743 (Nehemiah 7:29; Ezra 2:25).
 - (5) The men of Ramah and Geba equaled 621 (Nehemiah 7:30; Ezra 2:26).
 - (6) The men of Michmas equaled 122 (Nehemiah 7:31; Ezra 2:27).
 - (7) The men of Beth-el and Ai equaled 123 (Nehemiah 7:32; Ezra 2:28).
 - (8) The men of the other Nebo equaled fifty-two (Nehemiah 7:33; Ezra 2:29).
 - (9) The children of Magbish equaled 156 (Ezra 2:30)*.
 - (10) The children of the other Elam equaled 1,254 (Nehemiah 7:34; Ezra 2:31).
 - (11) The children of Harim equaled 320 (Nehemiah 7:35; Ezra 2:32).
 - (12) The children of Jericho equaled 345 (Nehemiah 7:36; Ezra 2:34).
 - (13) The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono equaled 721 (Nehemiah 7:37; Ezra 2:33)*.
 - (14) The children of Senaah equaled 3,930 (Nehemiah 7:38; Ezra 2:35)*.
3. The account of those over the worship (Nehemiah 7:39-45; Ezra 2:36-42)
 - a. The priests (Nehemiah 7:39-42; Ezra 2:36-39)
 - (1) The children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua equaled 973 (Nehemiah 7:39; Ezra 2:36).
 - (2) The children of Immer equaled 1,052 (Nehemiah 7:40; Ezra 2:37).
 - (3) The children of Pashur equaled 1,247 (Nehemiah 7:41; Ezra 2:38).
 - (4) The children of Harim equaled 1,017 (Nehemiah 7:42; Ezra 2:39).



- b. The Levites—The children of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, and of Hodevah equaled seventy-four (Nehemiah 7:43; Ezra 2:40).
- c. The singers—The children of Asaph equaled 148 (Nehemiah 7:44; Ezra 2:41)*.
- d. The porters—The children of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai equaled 138 (Nehemiah 7:45; Ezra 2:42)*.
- 4. The children of the servants (Nehemiah 7:46-60; Ezra 2:43-58)
 - a. The identities of the Nethinims (Nehemiah 7:46-56; Ezra 2:43-54)
 - b. The identities of Solomon’s servants (Nehemiah 7:57-59; Ezra 2:55-57)
 - c. The totals—The Nethinims and the children of Solomon’s servants equaled 392 (Nehemiah 7:60; Ezra 2:58).
- 5. Those with incomplete genealogies (Nehemiah 7:61-65; Ezra 2:59-63)
 - a. From the common people (Nehemiah 7:61-62; Ezra 2:59-60)
 - (1) Their hometowns—From Tel-melah, Tel-haresha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer (Nehemiah 7:61; Ezra 2:59)
 - (2) Their troubles—They could not show their father’s house, nor their seed, whether they were of Israel (Nehemiah 7:61; Ezra 2:59).
 - (3) Their identities—The children of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda (Nehemiah 7:62; Ezra 2:60)
 - (4) Their numbers—642 (Nehemiah 7:62; Ezra 2:60)*
 - b. Children of the priests (Nehemiah 7:63-65; Ezra 2:61-63)
 - (1) Their identities—The children of Habaiah, Koz, and Barzillai (Nehemiah 7:63; Ezra 2:61)
 - (2) Their troubles—These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood (Nehemiah 7:64; Ezra 2:62).
 - (3) Their ruling—The Tirshatha said that they should not eat of the most holy things until a priest stood up to confirm with the Urim and Thummim (Nehemiah 7:65; Ezra 2:63).
- 6. The results of the numbering (Nehemiah 7:66-72; Ezra 2:64-69)
 - a. The congregation—42,360 (Nehemiah 7:66; Ezra 2:64)
 - b. The servants—7,337 (Nehemiah 7:67; Ezra 2:65)
 - c. The singers—245 (Nehemiah 7:67; Ezra 2:65)*
 - d. The animals (Nehemiah 7:68-69; Ezra 2:66-67)
 - (1) Horses—736 (Nehemiah 7:68; Ezra 2:66)
 - (2) Mules—245 (Nehemiah 7:68; Ezra 2:66)
 - (3) Camels—435 (Nehemiah 7:69; Ezra 2:67)
 - (4) Asses—6,720 (Nehemiah 7:69; Ezra 2:67)
 - e. The offering (Nehemiah 7:70-72; Ezra 2:68-69)
 - (1) Of the leadership (Nehemiah 7:70-71; Ezra 2:68-69)*
 - a) The Tirshatha—1,000 drams of gold, fifty basons, 530 priests’ garments (Nehemiah 7:70)
 - b) The chiefs—20,000 drams of gold, 2,200 pounds of silver (Nehemiah 7:71)



- (2) Of the people—20,000 drams of gold, 2,000 pounds of silver, and sixty-seven priests' garments (Nehemiah 7:72)
7. The residing of the people (Nehemiah 7:73; Ezra 2:70)

B. The Supposed Conflicts

1. Agreeing chronicles
 - a. Both Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 record those who came in the first return under Zerubbabel.
 - b. The two accounts agree on the total number of the congregation (42,360) and of the servants (7,337) (see Ezra 2:64-65 and Nehemiah 7:66-67).
2. Seemingly problematic details
 - a. On lesser details, there are a number of differences (for instance, cp. Ezra 2:5 with Nehemiah 7:10).
 - b. Why would this be the case?
 - (1) Ezra's account
 - a) Ezra gave the number of those *"that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city"* (Ezra 2:1).
 - b) That is, he gave the original list of people who left Babylon and joined the trip to Israel.
 - (2) Nehemiah's account
 - a) Nehemiah *"found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first"* (Nehemiah 7:5).
 - b) Nehemiah came to build the walls of Jerusalem years after the original return of the Jews under Zerubbabel.
 - c) What Nehemiah found was the official registry of the returning Jews that had been kept for the establishment of genealogical lines.
 - d) As the official registry, it was probably updated for a time to include the effects of births, deaths, marriages, etc.
 - e) The total numbers of those who returned did not change, but their numbers in the official registry did change for a time.
 - (3) Generally speaking
 - a) In neither of the accounts is everyone listed according to family, city, or occupation.
 - b) Those particularly mentioned in Ezra add up to only 29,818; in Nehemiah to only 31,089.
 - c) There are over 10,000 people who are not mentioned by family or city but are included in the total.
 - d) These people probably included those who made up very small groups and those who were from tribes other than Judah, Benjamin, or Levi.