

NEHEMIAH

The Beauty of Generosity

Deuteronomy 14:28-29

²⁸ “At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns.

Deuteronomy 14:28-29

²⁹ And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

2 Corinthians 9:7-11

⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7-11

⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:7-11

⁹ As it is written,
“He has distributed freely, he has given to
the poor;
his righteousness endures forever.”

2 Corinthians 9:7-11

¹⁰ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

1 Timothy 6:17

¹⁷ As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

Matthew 5:43-45

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Matthew 5:43-45

⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

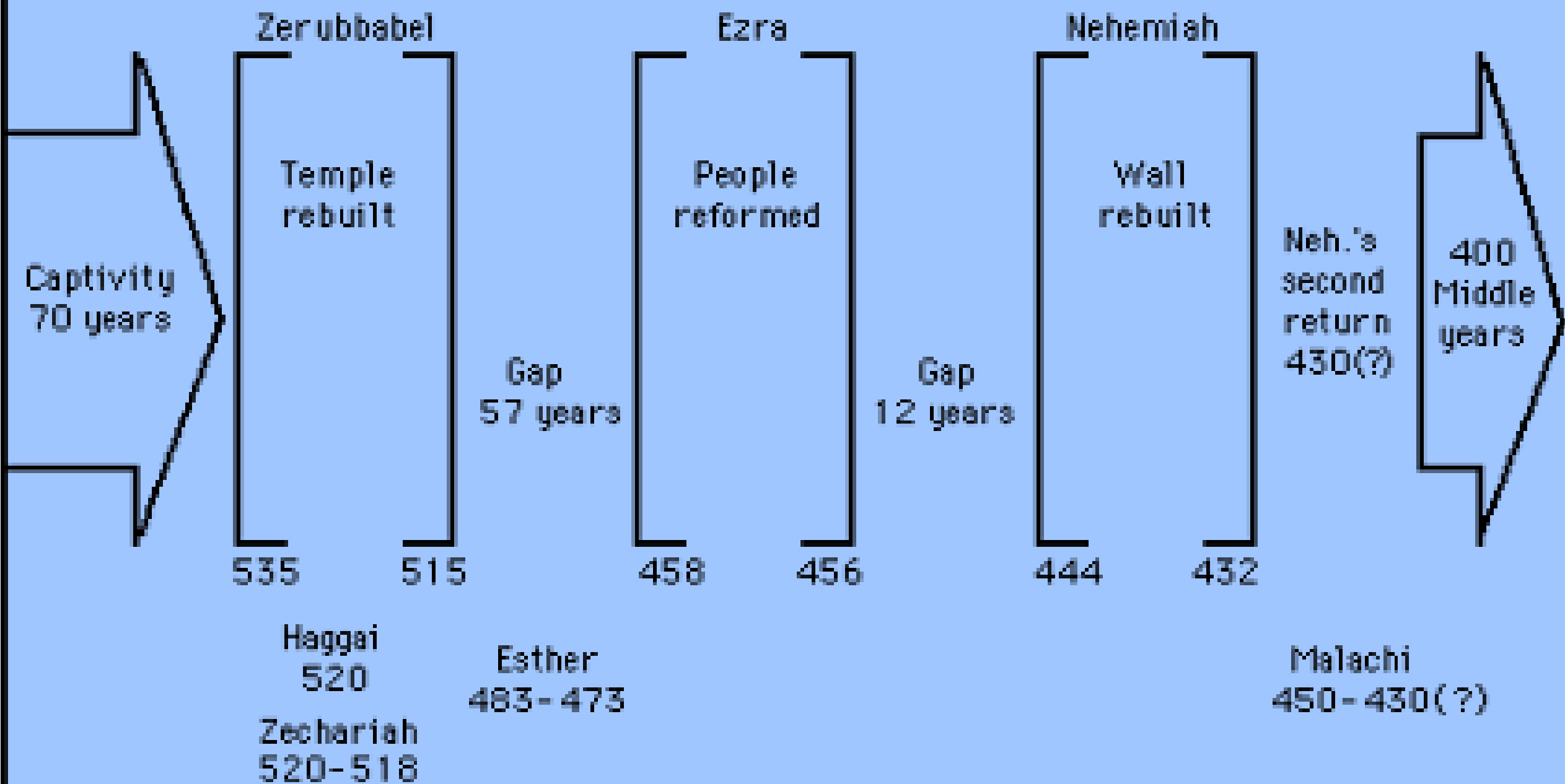
Historical Setting

- 931 B.C. - Kingdom of Israel split
- 722 B.C. Northern Kingdom fell to Assyrians
- 586 B.C. – Southern Kingdom fell to Babylonians
- 539 B.C. – Babylon broken by Medes and Persians

Historical Setting

- 538 B.C. – first group returned to Judah under Zerubbabel
- 515 B.C. – temple rebuilt
- 458 B.C. – second group of Jews return under Ezra
- 444 B.C. – third group returns under Nehemiah

The Three Returns from Exile



“Nehemiah had risen to a position of prominence in his pagan environment. He was serving King Artaxerxes as his personal cupbearer (1:11; cf. 2:1). This important position in the king’s court gives insight into Nehemiah’s life and character. A mighty monarch such as the king of Persia would select for that position a man who was wise and discreet, and consistently honest and trustworthy.” G. A. Getz

Nehemiah 5:1-13

¹Now there arose a great outcry
of the people
and of their wives
against their Jewish brothers.

Nehemiah 5:1-13

² For there were those who said,
“With our sons and our daughters, we are
many.

So let us get grain,
that we may eat and keep alive.”

Nehemiah 5:1-13

³ There were also those who said,
“We are mortgaging our fields,
our vineyards,
and our houses
to get grain because of the famine.”

Nehemiah 5:1-13

⁴ And there were those who said,
“We have borrowed money
for the king’s tax
on our fields
and our vineyards.

Nehemiah 5:1-13

⁵ Now our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers, our children are as their children. Yet we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but it is not in our power to help it, for other men have our fields and our vineyards.”

Nehemiah 5:1-13

⁶ I was very angry
when I heard their outcry
and these words.

Nehemiah 5:1-13

⁷ I took counsel with myself,
and I brought charges against the nobles
and the officials.

I said to them,
“You are exacting interest,
each from his brother.”

And I held a great assembly against them

Nehemiah 5:1-13

⁷ I took counsel with myself,
and I brought charges against the nobles
and the officials.

I said to them,
“You are exacting interest,
each from his brother.”

And I held a great assembly against them

Nehemiah 5:1-13

⁸ and said to them,

“We, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations, but you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us!”

They were silent and could not find a word to say.

Nehemiah 5:1-13

⁹ So I said, “The thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies?”

Nehemiah 5:1-13

¹⁰ Moreover, I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain.

Let us abandon this exacting of interest.

Nehemiah 5:1-13

¹¹ Return to them this very day
their fields, their vineyards, their olive
orchards, and their houses,
and the percentage of money,
grain, wine, and oil
that you have been exacting from them.”

Nehemiah 5:1-13

¹² Then they said, “We will restore these and require nothing from them. We will do as you say.”

And I called the priests and made them swear to do as they had promised.

Nehemiah 5:1-13

¹³ I also shook out the fold of my garment and said, “So may God shake out every man from his house and from his labor who does not keep this promise. So may he be shaken out and emptied.” And all the assembly said “Amen” and praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.

Nehemiah 5:14-19

¹⁴ Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allowance of the governor.

Nehemiah 5:14-19

¹⁵ The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them for their daily ration forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God.

Nehemiah 5:14-19

¹⁶ I also persevered in the work on this wall,
and we acquired no land,
and all my servants were gathered there for
the work.

Nehemiah 5:14-19

¹⁷ Moreover, there were at my table 150 men,
Jews and officials,
besides those who came to us from the
nations that were around us.

Nehemiah 5:14-19

¹⁸ Now what was prepared at my expense for each day was one ox and six choice sheep and birds, and every ten days all kinds of wine in abundance.

Yet for all this I did not demand the food allowance of the governor, because the service was too heavy on this people.

Nehemiah 5:14-19

19 Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people.

THE BEAUTY OF GENEROSITY

NEHEMIAH

I. Generosity gives, it doesn't take

Nehemiah 5:14

¹⁴ Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, twelve years,

Nehemiah 5:14b-15

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¹⁵ The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them for their daily ration forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God.

The food allowance (14, 18), although assigned to him by higher authority, would have been a charge on the local population; and just how big a charge emerges in the hospitality account set out in verses 17 and 18. That Nehemiah should have shouldered all this himself is proof—if such were needed—that to him the whole enterprise was a labour of love.

Derek Kidner,
Ezra and Nehemiah: An Introduction and Commentary,

Nehemiah 5:15b

Even their servants lorded it over the people.

Matthew 20:25-28

²⁵ But Jesus called them to him and said,
“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles
lord it over them, and their great ones
exercise authority over them.

Matthew 20:25-28

²⁶ It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave,

Matthew 20:25-28

²⁸ even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Romans 8:31-32

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things

I. Generosity gives, it doesn't take

II. Generosity fears God

Nehemiah 5:15

¹⁵ The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them for their daily ration forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God.

Psalm 36:1

¹ Transgression speaks to the wicked
deep in his heart;
there is no fear of God
before his eyes.

Psalm 36:1-4 (CSB)

¹ An oracle within my heart
concerning the transgression of the wicked
person:
Dread of God has no effect on him.'

Psalm 36:1-4 (CSB)

² For with his flattering opinion of himself, he does not discover and hate his iniquity.

³ The words from his mouth are malicious and deceptive;
he has stopped acting wisely and doing good.

Psalm 36:1-4 (CSB)

⁴ Even on his bed he makes malicious plans.

He sets himself on a path that is not good,
and he does not reject evil.

THE BEAUTY OF GENEROSITY

NEHEMIAH

I. Generosity gives, it doesn't take

II. Generosity fears God

III. Generosity works to help

Nehemiah 5:16

¹⁶ I also persevered in the work on this wall,
and we acquired no land,
and all my servants were gathered there for the work.

THE BEAUTY OF GENEROSITY

NEHEMIAH

I. Generosity gives, it doesn't take

II. Generosity fears God

III. Generosity works to help

IV. Generosity shares joyfully

Nehemiah 5:17-18

¹⁷ Moreover, there were at my table 150 men,
Jews and officials,
besides those who came to us from the
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Nehemiah 5:17-18

¹⁸ Now what was prepared at my expense for each day was one ox and six choice sheep and birds, and every ten days all kinds of wine in abundance. Yet for all this I did not demand the food allowance of the governor, because the service was too heavy on this people.

Philippians 2:3

³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

"He supported himself rather than charge the people with his maintenance. He did not take advantage of his position to acquire **land** or feather his nest for the future. His time was devoted to making Jerusalem safe for his **brothers**, not to building his own personal fortune."

"He supplied his own **table** and welcomed strangers to share his hospitality. He did all this because he feared **God**. If **God** kept track of his sacrifices, that was sufficient for Nehemiah."

William MacDonald,
Believer's Bible Commentary

THE BEAUTY OF GENEROSITY

NEHEMIAH

I. Generosity gives, it doesn't take

II. Generosity fears God

III. Generosity works to help

IV. Generosity shares joyfully

V. Generosity trusts our good God

Nehemiah 5:19

19 Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people.

Hebrews 6:10

¹⁰ For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.

The Beauty of Generosity