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EZRA AND NEHEMIAH: A REVIEW OF
THE RETURN AND REFORM

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH; Leeseberg; Th.D., 1961

of Southern University, St. Louis,
Department of Theological Studies
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Theology

by

Martin Walter Leeseberg

May 1961

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Approved by:

James R. ...
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...

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EZRA AND NEHEMIAH: A REVIEW OF
THE RETURN AND REFORM

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Theology

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The post-exilic period in the history of the Jews is a fascinating study. The paucity of information gives a jig-saw-puzzle aspect to the events. Many general histories of Israel pass over these times with but a few paragraphs.

The problems of this era are of an historical and a theological nature. Actually these two aspects were so closely intertwined in that period that it is hard to separate them. Yet to deal with both simultaneously would require more time than is presently at the disposal of the author. For this reason this investigation will concentrate upon the historical problems of this era.

The two most vexing historical questions of the post-exilic times concern the relationship of Sheshbazzar to Zerubbabel and that of Ezra to Nehemiah. The latter problem is of vastly more importance in the understanding of the history and therefore assumes a central position in this study, while the former will be treated as background material.

This question of the relationship of Ezra and Nehemiah has been answered during the past seventy years from two extreme points of view. Some of the attempted answers are predicated upon the assumption that the Scriptural records of their activity are a complete falsification of history.

Others are based upon an understanding of the origin and transmission of Scripture which reflects a rather mechanical theory of inspiration. Neither of these assumptions is satisfactory for a solution of the problems.

Since the Church claims to be rooted solidly in history, such an historical question as the relation of Ezra and Nehemiah to one another must be explained on the basis of facts. On the other hand, while the Church accepts the truth of Scripture, it must not overlook the possibility that mistakes were made in the transmission of the text. It must also take seriously such evidence from other sources as may furnish information about or has bearing upon the historical problems of Scripture. These general axioms must also be applied in dealing with the post-exilic period in general and with the Ezra-Nehemiah question in particular. God's actions through men are important also in this period of the history of God's people and merit incessant search for the truth which God has revealed.

In this study the question of the relationship of these two men is approached on the basis that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God. This proposition is accepted as true whether the author of a particular book is known or not. At the same time it is assumed that misunderstandings of later scribes may have rearranged the text or that simple errors of dittography and haplography may have occurred. Aside from the possibilities of such textual errors, the

original writer is given credit for knowing what he was trying to write. The attempt will be to understand the text in its present form and to resort to reconstructions only if absolutely necessary.

The first part of this study consists of a brief presentation of the story of Ezra and Nehemiah, based solely on the Scriptural account. Then questions are raised which emerge from a close reading of the text, followed by a discussion of other literature which is concerned with these events. Next the technical problems of Introduction to the books are considered. At this point a short résumé of the history of the Persian Empire during this period is added.

The solutions offered by three well-known Old Testament scholars--Charles C. Torrey,¹ Julius Morgenstern,² and

¹Charles C. Torrey, "The Chronicler as Editor and as Independent Narrator," American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, XXV (January, 1907; April, 1907), 157-173, 188-217; The Chronicler's History of Judah (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954); "Medes and Persians," Journal of the American Oriental Society, LXVI (January, 1946), 1-15; "Sanballat 'The Horonite,'" Journal of Biblical Literature, XLVII (1928), 380ff. Because of the large number of shorter articles by Torrey available, no attempt was made to obtain his Ezra Studies in which he combined much of what he had already published. This view of his work was stated by the author himself in The Chronicler's History of Judah, p. xxviii.

²Julius Morgenstern, "Jerusalem--485 B. C.," Hebrew Union College Annual, XXVII (1956), 101-179; XXVIII (1957), 15-47; XXXI (1960), 1-29; "The Message of Deutero-Isaiah in its Sequential Unfolding," Ibid., XXIX (1958), 1-67; XXX (1959), 1-102; "A Chapter in the History of the High Priesthood," American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, LV (1938), 1-24, 183-197, 360-377.

Adam C. Welch³—were found to be of such nature as to require separate discussion. The theories of each of these men are therefore presented and subjected to a critique. Following this solutions are sought to the several difficulties arising out of the Biblical narrative. In each case the suggestions of various scholars are considered and evaluated. This chapter comprises the major part of the study. Finally there is a recapitulation of the history of Ezra and Nehemiah and a short statement of their importance in the history of God's people.

Until nearly the end of the nineteenth century the traditional view of the chronological relationship of Ezra and Nehemiah was scarcely questioned. In 1889, however, Maurice Vernes opened a new trail with his suggestion that Ezra probably was not an historical character, but that if he were, he should be dated under Artaxerxes II.⁴ Van Hoonacker maintained the historicity of Ezra but also placed

³Adam C. Welch, Post-Exilic Judaism (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons Ltd., 1935); "The Source of Nehemiah IX," Zeitschrift fuer die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des nachbiblischen Judentums, XLVII (1929), 251-253; "The Share of N. Israel in the Restoration of the Temple Worship," Ibid., XLVIII (1930), 175-187; The Work of the Chronicler; Its Purpose and its Date (London: Oxford University Press, 1939).

⁴This statement is cited from Harold H. Rowley, "The Chronological Order of Ezra and Nehemiah," Harold H. Rowley, The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), p. 137. The work of Vernes was unavailable.

him in the reign of Artaxerxes II.⁵ This general viewpoint was championed by such scholars as Loring Woart Batten,⁶ W. O. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson,⁷ Norman H. Snaith,⁸ Adolphe Lods,⁹ and Harold H. Rowley.¹⁰

The traditional view that Ezra came to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I and Nehemiah in the twentieth year of the same king has been upheld by many scholars during these years: Hans Heinrich Schaeder,¹¹ Artur Weiser,¹²

⁵Ibid., p. 133. The works of Van Hoonacker were unavailable, but in addition to the statement of his views by Rowley, most scholars who treated the subject stated his views in substantially the same language as did Rowley.

⁶Loring Woart Batten, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah (International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), pp. 28-30.

⁷W. O. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson, An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament (London: SPCK; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), pp. 127-129.

⁸Norman H. Snaith, "The Date of Ezra's Arrival in Jerusalem," Zeitschrift fuer die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des nachbiblischen Judentums, LXIII (1951), 63.

⁹Adolphe Lods, The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism, translated from the French by S. H. Hooke (London: Routledge and Kegan, Paul, 1955, reprinted from edition of 1937), pp. 296-304.

¹⁰Rowley, op. cit., p. 159.

¹¹Hans Heinrich Schaeder, Esra der Schreiber (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1930).

¹²Artur Weiser, Einleitung in das Alte Testament (2te Auflage, Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1949), pp. 235-237.

Paul Heinisch,¹³ J. Stafford Wright,¹⁴ W. M. F. Scott,¹⁵ Edward J. Young,¹⁶ Julius Morgenstern,¹⁷ and Samuel J. Schultz.¹⁸

Variations of the view of Van Hoonacker have been advanced by some scholars. William Foxwell Albright wavered in his view between a date for Ezra in the seventh year of Artaxerxes II and the thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes I, but in his last writings he stands committed to the earlier date.¹⁹ Sidney Jellicoe assumed that the scribe deliberately changed the chronology so that Nehemiah should be dated in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I and Ezra in the twentieth

¹³Paul Heinisch, History of the Old Testament, translated by William Heidt (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, c.1952), p. 331.

¹⁴J. Stafford Wright, The Date of Ezra's Coming to Jerusalem (London: Tyndale Press, 1947).

¹⁵W. M. F. Scott, "Nehemiah--Ezra?" The Expository Times, LVIII (1946-47), 263-267.

¹⁶Edward J. Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament (London: Tyndale Press, c.1949), pp. 369ff.

¹⁷Morgenstern, op. cit., XXXI, p. 24.

¹⁸Samuel J. Schultz, The Old Testament Speaks (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. 265.

¹⁹William Foxwell Albright, "The Biblical Period," The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion, edited by L. Finkelstein (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), pp. 53, 64; "A Brief History of Judah from the Days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," Biblical Archeologist, IX (1946), 10ff.; "The Date and Personality of the Chronicler," Journal of Biblical Literature, XL (1921), 104-124; cf. John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), pp. 385f.

year of the same monarch.²⁰ Charles C. Torrey simply rejected the historicity of Ezra completely.²¹ In this he was followed by Robert H. Pfeiffer.²²

The evidence is sufficiently ambiguous that none of the solutions offered can be substantiated to the point of being a demonstration. In spite of the effort expended during recent years, the problems of the post-exilic era are still open questions. However, a combination of interpretation which was not met with in research has inclined the author to offer a solution closely approximating that of Albright.

The primary sources used were the canonical books of Ezra and Nehemiah, the apocryphal book of I Esdras, the relevant portions of the Antiquities of Josephus, and the Elephantine Papyri. Secondary sources available are too numerous to mention, but it should be acknowledged that the greatest amount of help came from Snaith, Rowley, and Albright.

The solution suggested in this study is briefly the following: Sheshbazzar was the first Persian governor of Judah, but Zerubbabel was leader when the temple was built.

²⁰Sidney Jellicoe, "Nehemiah-Ezra: A Reconstruction," The Expository Times, LIX (November, 1947), 54.

²¹See note 1.

²²Robert H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1941), pp. 831ff.

Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem in 444 B. C. with the commission to build the wall of the city. He completed that task and returned to Babylon in 432 B. C. In his absence the reactionary group gained control of the city. With the help of Nehemiah, the Babylonian golah sent Ezra to Jerusalem in 427 B. C. The governor returned to the city in 426 B. C., and in cooperation with Ezra destroyed the opposition and made the reform a living reality. over Babylon he issued a decree permitting the Judean exiles to return to their homeland to rebuild the country and to reestablish worship in the temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1-4). During that year Sheshbazzar, a prince of Judah (Ezra 1:8), led a group of Jews to Jerusalem and rebuilt the altar. The foundations of the temple were laid in the following year (Ezra 3:16). When the people-of-the-land offered to help in the rebuilding of that edifice, they were rebuffed. They responded by causing difficulties which delayed the project for about fifteen years (Ezra 4:1-5).

Some time later another caravan led by Zerubbabel, the governor, and Jeshua, the priest, arrived. Just when this happened is not made clear, but this group was present in Jerusalem in the second year of Darius I, 520 B. C. at that time the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah gave impetus to a fresh start to build the temple (Ezra 5:1-2). This new

CHAPTER II

THE BIBLICAL PRESENTATION

The books of Ezra-Nehemiah present an account of the history of the Judean nation from the time of the Exile until the transition to Judaism was well on its way. Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire, captured Babylon in October, 539 B. C.¹ In the first year of his reign over Babylon he issued a decree permitting the Judean exiles to return to their homeland to rebuild the country and to reestablish worship in the temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1-4). During that year Sheshbazzar, a prince of Judah (Ezra 1:8), led a group of Jews to Jerusalem and rebuilt the altar. The foundations of the temple were laid in the following year (Ezra 5:16). When the people-of-the-land offered to help in the rebuilding of that edifice, they were rebuffed. They responded by causing difficulties which delayed the project for about fifteen years (Ezra 4:1-5).

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¹A. T. Olmstead, History of the Persian Empire (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c.1948), pp. 49ff.

attempt brought a quick investigation by Tattenai (Ezra 5:3), the Persian governor of Aber-Nahara, a province which included Judah at the time. In the face of a claim that the structure had been authorized by Cyrus, he merely collected the pertinent facts and sent the problem to Darius for settlement (Ezra 5:17). The latter ordered an investigation of the court records and, upon finding the original of the decree of Cyrus, ordered the project to be completed with aid from the imperial revenues (Ezra 6:1-12). With this help the temple was finished in the sixth year of Darius, 516 B. C. (Ezra 6:15).

After mentioning this event, the record remains silent about the happenings of over half a century. Then, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, 457 B. C., Ezra led a group of returnees from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:1-5). He had been sent by the Great King to inquire into the religious life of the people of Jerusalem and to teach them the Law of God (Ezra 7:14,25). Through his efforts the people were led to repentance, and the evil of mixed-marriages with foreigners was attacked (Ezra 9, 10). This reform, apparently without permanent results, seems to have been carried out during the first year of Ezra's presence in Jerusalem, and nothing more is said of him until thirteen years later (Neh. 8:9).

In the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I, 444 B. C., Nehemiah, the king's cupbearer, was appointed governor of

Jerusalem and given special orders to rebuild the wall of the city (Neh. 2:1-10). This undertaking had been prevented by the opposition of the people-of-the-land. To make sure that this decree would be carried out, Nehemiah was provided with a body of troops (Neh. 2:9). The work on the wall was so well-organized that it was completed in the short time of fifty-two days (Neh. 6:15). With the help of Ezra, the problem of the mixed-marriages was again faced, while certain economic and religious questions also received care (Neh. 8, 9, 10). Then, in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes I, Nehemiah returned to Babylon to resume his duties as cupbearer (Neh. 13:6).

When he later paid an undated second visit to Jerusalem, he found that his reforms had lasted only as long as his presence in the city enforced them (Neh. 13:7). The problem of mixed-marriages was still present, since even the son of the high priest had married the daughter of Sanballat of Samaria, Nehemiah's most active opponent during the building of the wall (Neh. 13:28). Furthermore, Tobiah, the Ammonite, another of his opponents, had been installed in the temple precincts (Neh. 13:5), while the Levites had gone without their just dues (Neh. 13:10-13). Tobiah and the son of the high priest were expelled (Neh. 13:8,28), while the rest of the people were forced into compliance with the Law (Neh. 13:25-27). Thus the reform ended in success.

CHAPTER III

PROBLEMS RAISED BY THE BIBLICAL PRESENTATION

At the first glance, this straight-forward account appears to present no problems in establishing the course of events during the period. A closer study of the material, however, raises questions which call for an answer. There are apparent inconsistencies in the narrative which the careful reader cannot fail to notice:

- a. The edicts of the Persian kings preserved in the book of Ezra are written in such definitely-Jewish style that their authenticity has been questioned.¹
- b. The relationship of Sheshbazzar to Zerubbabel is unclear since both are credited with laying the foundations of the temple.²
- c. From the story of the building of the temple in Ezra it appears that the primary problem was the opposition of the people-of-the-land, while the book of Haggai implies only internal difficulties caused by spiritual lassitude.³
- d. Essentially the same list of those who returned from Babylon is presented in both Ezra and Nehemiah.⁴
- e. A story of an attempt to build the walls of Jerusalem is inserted in the midst of the account of the building of the temple.⁵

¹Ezra 1:2-4; 6:3-12; 7:12-26.

²Ezra 1-5, especially 1:8; 3:2-8; 5:14,16.

³Ezra 4:1-5; Hag. 1:2,9; 2:16-19.

⁴Ezra 2; Neh. 7.

⁵Ezra 4:6-24.

- f. The record states that Ezra and Nehemiah were in Jerusalem at the same time with apparently overlapping authority and commissions. In spite of this the two men seem to have had very little connection with each other.⁶
- g. Ezra apparently thanked God for a wall in Jerusalem thirteen years before Nehemiah built it.⁷
- h. The Ezra narrative presupposes a settled city with comparative safety for the inhabitants. Thirteen years later Nehemiah tells of a semi-deserted place with danger surrounding the people.
- i. The lack of correlation between the list of those who returned with Ezra and the list of those who helped Nehemiah build the wall is odd if the group which Ezra led came only thirteen years before the arrival of Nehemiah.⁸
- j. The attitude of Ezra toward foreign wives was one which insisted upon divorce, while that of Nehemiah was milder, except in the case of Sanballat's son-in-law, demanding only the promise not to allow children to marry foreigners. At the same time Ezra apparently had no enemies, but Nehemiah was surrounded by them.⁹
- k. Eliashib, the high priest, is presented as a contemporary of Nehemiah. On the other hand, Johanan, a son or grandson of Eliashib, is portrayed as one who had a room in the temple precincts during Ezra's first year in Jerusalem.¹⁰
- l. The contents of the Law which Ezra brought are not made clear.

Unfortunately, there is little help in solving these

⁶Ezra 7:12-26; Neh. 2:1-10 and his governmental acts, passim; cf. Neh. 8:9; 12:26,36.

⁷Ezra 9:9; cf. whole story of Neh. 1-7.

⁸Ezra 8:1-20; Neh. 3:1-32.

⁹Ezra 10:1-5; Neh. 13:23-28.

¹⁰Ezra 10:6; cf. Neh. 12:10,22; also Neh. 3:1; 13:4-6.

difficulties just mentioned by studying two other ancient accounts of these events, namely the book of I Esdras¹¹ and the pertinent sections of the Antiquities of Josephus.¹² Neither is there support for the Biblical sequence of events in the records of the contemporary Jewish community in Egypt, known from the Elephantine Papyri.¹³ In fact, these documents aggravate some of the problems of the Biblical narrative and raise additional questions. For an over-all view of the period, however, these extra-Biblical sources require consideration.

I Esdras is a Greek account of the last years of the Judahite Kingdom, the Exile, the return, and the work of Ezra. It is roughly parallel to the contents of 2 Chronicles 35 and 36, and the canonical book of Ezra. It closes with a few verses from the book of Nehemiah, 7:35-8:13, the story of the reading of the Law by Ezra after his attack upon the mixed-marriages. However, there is no mention of

¹¹Any references will be to Alfred Rahlfs, editor, Septuaginta, id est Vetus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX Interpretes (Editio Quarta; Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1950).

¹²Flavius Josephus, "Antiquities of the Jews," The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus, translated by W. Whiston (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, n.d.). Hereafter cited as Ant.

¹³A. E. Cowley, editor, Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B. C. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923); also Emil G. Kraeling, editor, The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953).

Nehemiah. The story of the three youths,¹⁴ used to introduce Zerubbabel, is an expansion of the Biblical narrative. It is quite likely that I Esdras antedates the Septuagintal text of Ezra-Nehemiah. The evidence for this conclusion is well-summarized by Thackery.¹⁵ (1) The book was called I Esdras in distinction to II Esdras, a Greek translation of the present Massoretic Text of Ezra and Nehemiah. While both books appear in the earliest manuscripts of the Septuagint, I Esdras is always given a position preceding II Esdras. (2) The contents indicate that it was translated before Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah appeared as separate books. There is no evidence in I Esdras that the translator changed sources between the sections of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah from which he had made his version. (3) While Josephus shows no knowledge of the present II Esdras text, he includes the story of the three youths, which is included in I Esdras. (4) Many of the Fathers of the first five centuries quote I Esdras as if it were canonical. (5) In places I Esdras implies a better Hebrew text of Ezra than does II Esdras.

Torrey suggests that the present I Esdras is really the original, and the present Massoretic Text a deliberate reworking. This revision was made to eliminate the

¹⁴I Esdras 3:1-5:6.

¹⁵Henry St. John Thackery, "I Esdras," Dictionary of the Bible, edited by James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1901-1923), I, 760. This evidence is summarized, not quoted.

unacceptable story of the three youths and to rearrange other sections in conformity with a preconceived theory of the return and the work of Ezra.¹⁶ This position, however, has no explanation for the existence of those parts of Chronicles which do not appear in I Esdras, nor for the book of Nehemiah. Torrey also assumes that the story of the three youths originated sometime in the reigns of Seleucus and Ptolemy, that is after the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B. C. Such an assumption requires a date for the book well after the end of the Persian period.

Much more likely is the suggestion that I Esdras is the revision of an earlier Greek translation of Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah into good literary Greek. The translator, however, was not accurate in preserving the proper sequence of the Persian kings. According to I Esdras, Cyrus published the edict allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem.¹⁷ Then Artaxerxes is named in connection with the wall-building incident.¹⁸ Next, Darius is mentioned in connection with the story of the building of the temple.¹⁹ Finally, Cyrus appears once more as the immediate predecessor

¹⁶Charles C. Torrey, "The Nature and Origin of 'First Esdras,'" American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, XXIII (January, 1907), 116-141, passim.

¹⁷I Esdras 2:2.

¹⁸I Esdras 2:12.

¹⁹I Esdras 2:26.

of Darius.²⁰ Xerxes is omitted completely. This confusion eliminates the claim that I Esdras is an independent account of the history of the period based upon a better knowledge of Persian chronology than that offered in the Bible.

The chief value of I Esdras is the evidence that the histories of Ezra and Nehemiah circulated in at least two differing forms before the canonization of the Hebrew text. It is also cited as support for the suggestion that Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah was once an extended and unified history of the people of God.

Since Josephus wrote the Antiquities circa 93 A. D., the assumption that I Esdras may have been based upon Josephus is untenable. A number of factors point to a literary dependency of Josephus upon I Esdras. He mentions the building of the temple as a part of the letter of accusation against the Jews as does I Esdras.²¹ This reference is not in the book of Ezra. He also includes the story of the three youths from I Esdras and uses the sequence of events of that book when telling the story of the building of the temple. Both accounts place the rebuff to the people-of-the-land after the story of the accusation.²² Ezra reverses the relation of these two stories, citing the refusal of help

²⁰I Esdras 5:70f.

²¹Josephus, Ant., xi, 2, 1; cf. I Esdras 2:14.

²²Josephus, Ant., xi, 4, 3; cf. I Esdras 5:63-66.

as the cause of the people's enmity.

However, Josephus recognizes that the kings of Persia were not mentioned in the correct order of their succession in I Esdras. When he tries to correct matters, however, he introduces even greater confusion. He identifies Cambyses with Artaxerxes as the king to whom the letter of accusation was written.²³ Darius, correctly placed immediately after Cambyses, is also mentioned in connection with the erection of the temple under Zerubbabel and Jeshua.²⁴ But since Xerxes followed Darius, Josephus transfers the stories of Ezra and Nehemiah to the reign of the former. Evidently the mention of the temple in the accusation led him to assign events which were correctly placed under Artaxerxes I in I Esdras into the reign of Cambyses. He knew that this edifice had been completed during the reign of Darius, so an accusation containing a reference to a contemporary temple-building project must precede the latter king. It is impossible to conjecture why he places the reformers in the reign of Xerxes unless there were a lacuna in his copy of the record of Nehemiah. In his Memoirs the latter expressly says that he returned to the king in the thirty-second year of his reign, but Xerxes ruled only twenty

²³Josephus, Ant., xi, 2, 1; cf. I Esdras 2:12.

²⁴Josephus, Ant., xi, 4, 1-9; cf. I Esdras 6:1-2.

years.²⁵ Whatever the reason, his attempts to rectify the chronological errors only made them worse.

There are other deviations from the Biblical account in Josephus. Ezra and Nehemiah are not represented as contemporaries since he depicts Ezra as dead before Nehemiah appeared on the scene.²⁶ The fifty-two days required, according to the Biblical portrayal, for the building of the wall are prolonged to two years and four months.²⁷ The marriage of the high priest's son to the daughter of Sanballat is placed in the years immediately preceding Alexander the Great.²⁸

The account of Josephus may be questionable as an aid in determining the chronology of the period. At the same time it would be hazardous to regard the whole history as useless. He preserves details which cast light on some of the events, if their proper chronological position can be determined.

The Elephantine Papyri are a group of contemporary

25

Josephus, however, speaks of the twenty-fifth and twenty-eighth years of Xerxes, while relating the story of Nehemiah, so a theory of a lacuna is hardly sufficient to explain this chronological misplacement; cf. Ant., xi, 5, 7 and 8.

²⁶ Josephus, Ant., xi, 5, 5; cf. xi, 5, 7 and Neh. 8:9; 12:26,36.

²⁷ Josephus, Ant., xi, 5, 8; cf. Neh. 6:15.

²⁸ Josephus, Ant., xi, 8, 1; cf. Neh. 13:28.

Aramaic documents which were found on the Island of Assuan, in upper Egypt, during the years from 1893 to 1906 A. D. Most of them are personal letters and contracts, but several are concerned with public figures and events of the late fifth century B. C. Their greatest importance is their aid in establishing the date of certain high priests and Persian officials in Palestine, as will be shown later.

Most modern scholars accept this fact as evidence that the books were originally one.¹ Moreover, their style and vocabulary is so like that of Chronicles that these three books are regarded as the work of one author. As such, these books are a brief history of the Israelite nation from Adam to the end of the Reform under Ezra and Nehemiah. The long period from Adam to David is bridged by a series of genealogies, while other eras are covered quite completely. Their common concern with the Davidic Kingdom, the temple and its cult, and the Law, is advanced as pointing in the same direction.

Some scholars, however, take the position that these books were originally separate works. The fact that the Jews counted Ezra-Nehemiah as one work is regarded as an artificial attempt to make the number of the books correspond to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet.² As

¹See the standard Introductions.

²Edward J. Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament (London: Tyndale Press, c. 1939), p. 382; cf. Carl F. Keil,

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY OF AUTHORSHIP AND DATE OF COMPOSITION OF EZRA-NEHEMIAH

The books which are called Ezra and Nehemiah in the English Bible were counted as one by the Jews. The Massoretic notes for both books are found at the end of the combined volume. Most modern scholars accept this fact as evidence that the books were originally one.¹ Moreover, their style and vocabulary is so like that of Chronicles that these three books are regarded as the work of one author. As such, these books are a brief history of the Israelite nation from Adam to the end of the Reform under Ezra and Nehemiah. The long period from Adam to David is bridged by a series of genealogies, while other eras are covered quite completely. Their common concern with the Davidic Kingdom, the temple and its cult, and the Law, is advanced as pointing in the same direction.

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¹See the standard Introductions.

²Edward J. Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament (London: Tyndale Press, c.1949), p. 382; cf. Carl F. Keil,

Keil points out, one could just as easily argue for a theory of unitary authorship of the minor prophets because the Jews called it "The Twelve."³ Moreover, the diction of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles is not sufficiently alike to necessitate a serious consideration that they may be parts of a longer work.⁴ Young agrees that Ezra may have written Chronicles, but avers that it always was a separate book. He states his position thus:

Here appears the great problem which faces those who think that the books were originally one. How did these books come to be separated and placed in their present order, and how did it happen that the conclusion of Chronicles and the beginning of Ezra are so similar? Up to this time no satisfactory answer to these questions has been given.⁵

It likewise is evident that Chronicles as well as Ezra-Nehemiah are based on sources. In Chronicles some of these are named.⁶ None are explicitly mentioned in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, but it is possible to isolate sections which look like such sources. In doing so, however, it is sometimes hard to set exact limits. The author probably did

The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, translated from the German by Sophia Taylor (Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament in Clark's Foreign Theological Library, fourth series; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1888), VIII, 6; hereafter cited as Ezra.

³Keil, Ezra, p. 8.

⁴Ibid., p. 14.

⁵Young, loc. cit.

⁶1 Chron. 29:29; 2 Chron. 9:29; et al.

not name his sources when writing Ezra-Nehemiah because he was working with untitled documents. Moreover, for the largest part of his work he was dealing with practically contemporary events. There was no need to define his sources for the story of the reform.

If the writer of Chronicles is also the author of Ezra, then he has incorporated in his account the so-called Ezra Memoirs.⁷ These sections are identified by the use of the first person in the narration and consist of Ezra 7:27,28, and 8:1-34. In addition, Ezra 7:1-10, 9:1-10:34, and Nehemiah 7:73b-10:39 are based on a record by Ezra. In a literary study of these parts of the two books, Arvid S. Kapelrud⁸ comes to the conclusion that the language of both the first- and third-person sections of the narrative is the same. He rejects the material of Nehemiah 9 and 10 as not being a genuine part of the Ezra-narrative, his designation of the story of Ezra. Moreover, he concludes that the literary similarity of this Ezra-narrative to both Nehemiah and Chronicles proves that all three had originated among a school of writers he calls the

⁷For a list of varying limitations on the Ezra Memoirs see the standard Introductions, and especially Loring Woart Batten, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah (International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), pp. 15ff.

⁸Arvid S. Kapelrud, The Question of Authorship in the Ezra-narrative (Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1944).

"Chronicler circles."⁹ Torrey takes the results of this careful study as confirmation of his contention that the whole Ezra story was pure fiction.¹⁰ Albright, however, concludes that this study simply confirms the Jewish tradition that Ezra was the author of Chronicles.¹¹

The position of Torrey has been made untenable by archeological discoveries which will be mentioned later.¹² Kapelrud, to establish his position, must assume a long period of time after the death of Ezra and Nehemiah for the development of an oral tradition and its fixing in writing. Since the genealogies of Chronicles end in the high priesthood of Johanan, or, at the latest, in that of Jaddua, this assumption is questionable. Albright's view that Ezra is the Chronicler remains as probably essentially correct. This solution does not rule out the possibility of a dislocation of the original writing at a later date.

The Nehemiah Memoirs¹³ are more extensive, consisting

⁹Ibid., pp. 95ff.

¹⁰Charles C. Torrey, The Chronicler's History of Judah (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. xxviii.

¹¹William Foxwell Albright, "The Biblical Period," The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion, edited by L. Finkelstein (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), pp. 54ff.

¹²Infra, pp. 47f.

¹³For a list of varying limitations on the Nehemiah Memoirs see the standard Introductions and especially Batten, op. cit., pp. 14ff.

of Nehemiah 1-7, 11:1-2, and 13:4-31, and are regarded as the source for the account in Nehemiah 12:27-13:3. From the topical arrangement of some parts, for example, the fifth chapter, it appears that Nehemiah wrote his account near the end of his governorship. The lists contained in chapters 11:3-12:26 are usually not regarded as a part of Nehemiah's own record, but their historical accuracy is accepted. Chapter eleven may merely be a summary of the census mentioned in chapter seven, but this assumption cannot be demonstrated.

Torrey dates Nehemiah in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes II, 386 B. C., and the Memoirs near the end of his term as governor, about ten years later. He ascribes nothing after Nehemiah 6:19 to the author; all the rest is the fiction of the Chronicler.¹⁴ Snaith describes the Memoirs as a memorial of a hero-worshipping follower of Nehemiah. This originally independent book was later included by the Chronicler in his history.¹⁵

The Aramaic sections are found in Ezra 4:7b-6:18 and 7:12-26. These are largely correspondence and edicts of the officials of the Persian Empire, but they include also

¹⁴Charles C. Torrey, "The Chronicler as Editor and as Independent Narrator," American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, XXV (April, 1907), 188ff.

¹⁵Norman H. Snaith, "The Date of Ezra's Arrival in Jerusalem," Zeitschrift fuer die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des nachbiblischen Judentums, LXIII (1951), 56.

a story of the building of the temple.

Since Ezra-Nehemiah is the conclusion of the history begun in the book of Chronicles, its date must be calculated with reference to the latter book. Unless the genealogies of the first nine chapters of Chronicles are disregarded,¹⁶ the writing could not have been done earlier than the time of the last men included.¹⁷ In 1 Chronicles 3:17-24 the genealogy of the Davidic family is carried to a period six generations after Zerubbabel, who led the Jerusalem community circa 520 B. C. If twenty years are allowed to a generation, the date of the last persons would be about 400 B. C. This is supported by the fact that evidence has been found indicating that Zerubbabel was probably well over fifty years old when the temple was built.¹⁸ Two of the six generations could well have been living at that time. In addition to this, the lists of the high priests in Nehemiah 12:10 and 22 point to a time during the pontificates of either Johanan or Jaddua as the time of the writing. One

¹⁶ Adam C. Welch, Post-Exilic Judaism (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons Ltd., 1935), pp. 185ff.

¹⁷ The possibility of additions to the list at a later date is granted but discounted because of the evidence of Neh. 12:22,23.

¹⁸ William Foxwell Albright, "King Jehoiachin in Exile," Biblical Archeologist, V (1942), 52f., quotes the information of a set of tablets found by C. F. Weidner at the Ishtar Gate of Babylon, which shows that five sons of Jehoiachin were born before 592 B. C. Since Zerubbabel was fathered by one of these five, he was likely born before 570 B. C.

other bit of evidence strengthens this supposition. In Nehemiah 12:22,23 the Hebrew text is usually emended from דָּרְיוֹשׁ to דָּרְיוֹ on the assumption that Darius II is the king concerned.¹⁹ Albright has proposed a different emendation on the basis of haplography. He reads דָּרְיוֹשׁ , using the last letter of the immediately-preceding וְיִשְׁרָאֵלִים , and the sentence then reads:

The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua were recorded . . . from the reign of Darius the Persian, . . . even to the days of Johanan, the son of Eliashib.

Darius the Persian is used in distinction from Darius the Mede, and is the first king of that name. Since it is known, on the basis of the Elephantine Papyri, that Johanan was high priest in 408 B. C., it is probable that the time of the Chronicler was about 400 B. C.²⁰ This is then the date of Ezra-Nehemiah also.

Also among the sources of Ezra-Nehemiah there are a large number of lists of men (Ezra 2; 8:1-14; 10:16-44; Neh. 3; 7; 10:1-27; and most of 11:3-12:26). Some of these lists are included in the Memoirs sections, but others are not. They are all, however, very likely copies of official lists of the Jerusalem community.

¹⁹Rudolph Kittel, editor, Biblia Hebraica (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, c.1937), p. 1321.

²⁰William Foxwell Albright, "The Date and Personality of the Chronicler," Journal of Biblical Literature, XL (1921), 112ff.

The purpose of the writer of these books is the hardest factor to determine. Since he does not explicitly tell the reader what his intentions are, these must be gathered from his emphases. As has been stated, the central interests of these books seem to be the institutions of the Davidic Kingdom and its worship, and the narration of their continuation in the post-exilic period. This is, then, a history of God's dealings with His people and His blessings upon their response to His will, not a chronicle of a nation. Attention is centered on those eras in which the obedience of the people to God's Law brought the promised blessings. Nor should the view that these books were written by one man be understood as a rejection of their authority as the inspired record of God's dealing with His people. It is merely evidence of the many ways in which He attempts to bless His people with His promises. It must be approached from that point of view, with an attempt to understand, not merely to criticize.

CHAPTER V

THE HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

It is impossible to complete a study of this nature satisfactorily without placing the action of the Biblical history into the events of world history. In doing so it is necessary to choose a point of departure in a somewhat arbitrary way. For the purposes of this study it will suffice to begin with the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Persian in October, 539 B. C.¹ For several centuries prior to that time the historical events of the Tigris-Euphrates valley had been dominated by the great Semitic empires. These earlier empires had had the advantages afforded by a common linguistic and cultural base throughout the greater part of their dominions. This is not to say that they all spoke the same tongue, but that the linguistic structure of their various dialects was much the same, so that in a greater-or-lesser degree they used the same thought pattern. Yet no one had ever been able to weld these peoples into a nation. The Biblical references to revolts such as Hoshea (2 Kings 17:3-4), Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:13-14), Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24:1), and Zedekiah (2 Kings 24:20), indicate the widespread discontent with imperial rule.

¹A. T. Olmstead, History of the Persian Empire (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c.1948), pp. 49ff. This book is used as the chief source of background material on the Persian Empire.

The last of the neo-Babylonian rulers, Nabu-naid, seems to have had no political acumen whatever. He was much more interested in archeological research than in the complexities of imperial rule. He attempted to revitalize the worship of the moon-god, Sin, and estranged the priests of Marduk in the capital itself. Under the pretext of protecting the statues of the gods of other cities, he carried them to Babylon. This antagonized all the local priesthoods. Thus he washed out the only cement, religious loyalty and satisfaction, which might have staved off disaster. Cyrus was able to turn these acts of Nabu-naid to his own advantage. The latter's army was defeated at Opis on the Tigris and all resistance collapsed. The Persians entered Babylon on October 13, 539 B. C.

The Persian Empire did not change the problems which had plagued the Semitic overlords. The range of local language and culture from the Sanskrit of India, through the Persian of the Iranian plateau and the Semitic dialects of Mesopotamia and Syria to the Greek of Ionia and the Egyptian in Egypt, intensified the task of government. The Persian chancery adopted the lingua franca of the late Babylonian Empire, namely Aramaic, as the diplomatic language to solve their most immediate difficulties in ruling the polyglot population. However, the Persian kings never succeeded in fusing the empire into a nation.

The policies of Cyrus were such as to appeal to all

the peoples of the conquered city and empire. By invoking Marduk, the chief god of the Babylonians, as the great god who had given him the kingdom, he claimed for himself the legitimate rulership in Babylon and gained the support of the Babylonian priesthood. He also sent the idols of other cities back to their homes--in one stroke removing an offence to the priests of Marduk in Babylon and gaining the good will of those people devoted to the worship of the other gods. This religious policy is well set forth in the words of the Cyrus Cylinder:

. . . I am Cyrus, king of the world, great king, legitimate king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four rims (of the earth), son of Cambyses (Ka-am-bu-zi-ia), great king, king of Anshan, grandson of Cyrus, great king, king of Anshan, descendant of Teispes (Si-is-pi-is), great king, king of Anshan, of a family (which) always (exercised) kingship; whose rule Bel and Nebo love, whom they want as king to please their hearts. . . . (as to the region) from . . . as far as Ashur and Susa, Agade, Eshnunna, the towns of Zamban, Me-Turnu, Der, as well as the region of the Gutians, I returned to (these) sacred cities on the other side of the Tigris, the sanctuaries of which have been in ruins for a long time, the images which (used) to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I (also) gathered all the former inhabitants and returned (to them) their habitations. Furthermore, I resettled upon the command of Marduk, the great lord, all the gods of Sumer and Akkad whom Nabonidus had brought to Babylon (Su. an. na. ki) to the anger of the Lord of the gods, unharmed, in their (former) chapels, the places which made them happy.

May all the gods whom I have resettled in their sacred cities ask daily Bel and Nebo for a long life for me and may they recommend me (to him); to Marduk, my lord, they may say this: "Cyrus, the king who worships you, and Cambyses, his son . . ." . . . all of them I settled in a peaceful place . . . ducks and doves . . . , I endeavored to fortify/repair their dwelling places

. . . (six lines destroyed).²

This policy was not merely a pious wish but was carried out. Certain letters and foundation inscriptions testify to the accomplishment of the acts listed on the Cylinder.³ By naming his son and heir, Cambyses, titular king of Babylon, he restored the prestige of the conquered city. Of course, the reason for doing all this was to a large extent enlightened self-interest.⁴ Cyrus wanted peace in the empire and freedom for further conquests. His death came some ten years later while engaged in a military expedition.

The next ruler of the Persian Empire, Cambyses, spent practically his whole reign on his campaign against Egypt. The success of this expedition was assured through the desertion of Phanes, a Greek mercenary general, from Amasis, king of Egypt. Since this traitor was acquainted with Egypt and the route through the desert, his advice enabled Cambyses to move his army safely to the borders of Egypt. He also had the aid of some Arabian chieftains. The date of this campaign is rather precisely set by Diodorus of Sicily:

²James Bennet Fritchard, editor, Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (Second edition, corrected and enlarged; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 315f.

³Olmstead, op. cit., p. 51, notes 100-102.

⁴The relationship of this general policy to the return of the Jews will be discussed, infra, pp. 59-63.

After a reign of fifty-five years he [Amasis] ended [239] his days at the time when Cambyses, the king of the Persians, attacked Egypt, in the third year of the Sixty-third Olympiad, that in which Parmenides of Camarina won the "Stadion." [margin, 526-525 B. C.]⁵

One battle was sufficient to open the entire country to occupation. statement in papyrus 30, that Cambyses found

Cambyses had neither the religious tolerance nor the political ability of his father. When he mistreated the Apis bull he outraged the Egyptian priesthood and made impossible the gaining of their support for his rule in the country.⁶ loyal to the Persian kings.¹⁰

On his military expedition to Upper Egypt, Cambyses found a colony of Jews on Elephantine Island. The papyri which came to light in the remains of the fortress about 1900 A. D. prove that this group existed before his conquest.⁷ It is safe to assume that this force was a military command of the Egyptian kings, but the date of its founding is clouded in uncertainty. Some scholars place it before the fall of Jerusalem, interpreting Deuteronomy 17:16 as a reference to the sale of mercenaries for horses. Others date it immediately after the fall of the Judahite

⁵Diodorus of Sicily, History, edited and translated with an introduction and notes by C. H. Oldfather (Loeb Classical Library; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1933), I, 237f.

⁶Herodotus, History, translated by George Rawlinson (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., c.1928), pp. 156ff.

⁷A. E. Cowley, editor, Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B. C. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), papyrus 30, line 13.

kingdom, when a number of survivors fled to Egypt.⁸ According to the opinion of still others, it may have been organized even later since no documents were found at Elephantine which antedate Darius I. This conclusion, however, ignores the statement in papyrus 30, that Cambyses found the colony in existence.⁹ Whatever the time of origin, it is known that Cambyses treated the colony well. He allowed their worship to continue. This concession had the effect of isolating these Jews from the neighboring Egyptians and making them very loyal to the Persian kings.¹⁰

Cambyses was recalled to Persia by rumors of a revolt. When he reached Syria on his return journey, he died suddenly. His death threw the Persian Empire into a turmoil. From the ensuing confusion and fighting Darius I emerged as victor in 522 B. C.¹¹ Although he was not in the direct line of succession, he was an Achaemenid. He reorganized the empire into a system of satrapies over each of which he placed a triumvirate of administrators. The satrap, chosen from the nobility, had the assistance of a secretary and a military commander who, however, were responsible directly

⁸Jeremiah 43 and 44.

⁹Cowley, op. cit., papyrus 30, lines 13 and 14.

¹⁰The connection between this colony and the reform in Jerusalem will be discussed later, together with the information from the papyri for the problem of the date of Ezra and Nehemiah.

¹¹Olmstead, op. cit., p. 108.

to the Great King. Each military contingent was a unit in itself and could operate within its area without necessity of cooperating with the neighboring satrapies.¹²

The religious policies of Darius were modeled after those of Cyrus, rather than those of Cambyses. Since Egypt had revolted upon receiving the news of the death of Cambyses, Darius had to reconquer that country. He finished this campaign by the spring of 518 B. C.¹³ The settlement of religious and military problems followed the pattern of his general policy of tolerance toward the religion of others. The activity of Darius in Asia Minor brought the Persians into conflict with the Greeks, and set off a war which continued for generations. It ended when the antagonists, weakened by fighting and treachery, fell before a new barbarian, the king of Macedon.

Almost automatically the death of Darius in 485 B. C. resulted in another revolt in Egypt. Xerxes, son and successor of Darius, reconquered Egypt and placed his brother, Achaemenes, in control of Egypt as satrap. Then he marched off to Greece, sustaining the disasters of Salamis in 480 B. C. and Plataea in 479 B. C. After these failures he

¹²G. S. Goodspeed, "The Persian Empire from Darius to Artaxerxes," The Biblical World, New Series, XIV (October, 1899), 252ff.

¹³R. A. Parker, "Darius and His Egyptian Campaign," American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, LVIII (October, 1941), 377.

retired to harem life in Babylonia. After his murder by some attendants in 465 B. C., his son Artaxerxes I became the Great King. The former's death was probably precipitated by the failure of the Persian armies to hold the eastern Mediterranean sea-coast. About 467 B. C. Cimon, the Athenian general, had destroyed the Persian fleet at the mouth of the Eurymedon River in Asia Minor, and in the words of Plutarch:

This exploit so humbled the purpose of the King that he made the terms of that notorious peace, by which he was to keep away from the Hellenic sea-coast as far as a horse could travel in a day, and was not to sail west of the Cyanean and Chelidorian Isles with armored ships of war. And yet Calisthenes denies that the Barbarian made any such terms, but says that he really acted as he did through the fear which the victory inspired, and kept so far aloof from Hellas that Pericles with fifty, and Ephialtes with only thirty ships sailed beyond the Chelidorian Isles without encountering any navy of the Barbarians. But in the decrees collected by Craterus there is a copy of the treaty in its due place, as though it had actually been made, and they say the Athenians [447] also built the altar to Peace to commemorate this event, and paid distinguished honours to Callias as their ambassador.¹⁴

The victories of the Athenians and the change of kings precipitated another revolt in Egypt under Inarus, son of Psammetichus. After defeating and killing Achaemenes in a battle at Papremis in the Delta, he appealed to the Athenians for aid. Athens was quick to oblige since she was in

¹⁴Plutarch, Lives, edited and translated with an introduction and notes by Bernadette Ferrin (Loeb Classical Library; New York: The Macmillan Co., c.1914, reprinted 1928), II, 445f.; cf. William Watkiss Lloyd, The Age of Pericles (London: Macmillan, 1875), II, 74ff.

the process of converting the Delian League into the Athenian Empire, and needed the commercial advantages of a foothold in Egypt. A fleet of two hundred triremes which had been operating near Cyprus was diverted to Egypt. The first assault swept up the Nile to Memphis and captured two-thirds of the city. However, the citadel of that city, the so-called "White Fortress" held out, while the local men of Egypt stood aloof.

In the meantime, other battles of the opening years of the Peloponnesian War were fought largely to the advantage of Athens. As a result her generals were tempted to insist on holding any position they had captured. Southern Egypt, including Elephantine, had remained loyal to the Persians. Finally, after about five years, in 455 B. C., Megabyzus, the satrap of Syria, drove the Athenians out of Egypt by destroying practically the entire armament, including fifty more triremes sent in support. Inarus was captured on the promise of safe-conduct of Megabyzus. When he was executed five years later by Artaxerxes, Megabyzus revolted since he considered that his honor as a soldier had been tarnished by the king's deed. After two years, 448-447 B. C., and two victories over the king's troops, he re-entered the service of the Great King.¹⁵

The events of the reign of Darius II, 424-404 B. C.,

¹⁵The effect of these revolts on events in Jerusalem will be discussed later.

who assumed the throne after the death of Artaxerxes, are of little interest for the purposes of this study. The war with Greece continued with little advantage to either side. Persian satraps, particularly Tissaphernes, used financial subsidies very cleverly to insure that neither the Athenians nor the Spartans could win the Peloponnesian War. Harem intrigues forced the recall of this able official. The successor to Tissaphernes threw full support to the Spartans, so that their general, Lysander, was able to destroy the fleet of Athens at Aegospotami in 405 B. C. and to capture Athens itself a year later. In the meantime Darius had died and Artaxerxes II became king. His younger brother, Cyrus, plotted to gain the throne. Since his intrigues failed, he began an open revolt. The mercenaries of both Greek factions, but particularly of Sparta, now enlisted in the army of Cyrus and marched deep into the heart of Babylonia. The battle of Cunaxa, 401 B. C., was to all effects a draw, but Cyrus was killed and the revolt ended.¹⁶ In the meantime Egypt had again revolted and with Spartan aid freed herself from the Persian Empire, although Elephantine seems to have been loyal as late as 402 B. C.¹⁷ Since this

¹⁶ Augustus William Ahl, Outline of Persian History Based on the Cuneiform Inscriptions (New York: Lemcke and Buechner, 1922), pp. 100ff.

¹⁷ Emil G. Kraeling, "New Light on the Elephantine Colony," Biblical Archeologist, XV (1952), 62.

is the latest possible period for the date of Ezra, there is no purpose in tracing the history of Persia any farther.

CHAPTER VI

THREE UNSATISFACTORY SOLUTIONS

In the following chapter there is a brief discussion of the answers which three scholars offer to the many questions of the Ezra-Nehemiah history. Each of these men has suggested such far-reaching and radical reconstructions of the data offered in the Biblical books that their solutions do not lend themselves readily to a point-by-point consideration. Hence the view of each scholar is outlined and a critique given at the end of his suggested reconstruction.

Adam C. Welch

Adam C. Welch considers that Nehemiah had no part in the religious reconstruction following the exile.¹ Moreover he places the responsibility for continuing true worship among the remanent population following the Assyrian Conquest of 722/721 B. C.² Nehemiah 9 is regarded as a litany and as representing a response of the loyalist Israelites to the dominance of a foreign power.³ On the basis of Jeremiah 41:5f. he points out the probability that

¹Adam C. Welch, Post-Exilic Judaism (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, Ltd., 1935), p. viii.

²Ibid., pp. 19ff.

³Ibid., pp. 26-35.

sacrifice was continued in Jerusalem throughout the exile.⁴ Nehemiah 10 is then viewed as an account of a covenant between the remanent Israelites and Judahites to maintain the worship at this altar.⁵ The natural result of this pact was a rebirth of community worship of both North and South Israel around the old temple site in Jerusalem.⁶

Welch accepts the report of a return of the Jews under Cyrus as a part of a general Persian policy.⁷ In the book of Ezra he finds two versions of the edict of permission, each colored by the purpose of the editor. In his opinion, the Chronicler gave Sheshbazzar a rather secondary role because he was a foreigner. The emergency of Tattenai's investigation, however, forced the Jews to claim him as the one who had laid the foundation of the temple. Sheshbazzar's laying of the foundation stone was all that was accomplished until the time of Zerubbabel. Welch believes this happened because there was insufficient addition to the strength of the Jerusalem community during those years. The report of the Chronicler blaming the people-of-the-land for this delay is polemical fiction.⁸ The list of men in Ezra 2

of such progress among the exiles. He ignores the purpose of the ancient empire. The overlords

⁴Ibid., p. 68.

⁵Ibid., pp. 70-86.

⁶Ibid., p. 88.

⁷Ibid., p. 90.

⁸Ibid., pp. 103f.

⁹Ibid., pp. 267f.

and Nehemiah 7 is regarded as a census of the true Israel for some feast.⁹ On the basis of this understanding of the Ezra-Nehemiah text, Welch concludes that these books are an official account of the events as fabricated by those who returned, after they had gained control of the temple and cult.¹⁰

In further support of his thesis that the real reconstruction was done by the remanent population of Palestine, Welch makes Ezra just a leader of a caravan who had difficulty in keeping his own followers under control.¹¹ The mixed-marriages are described as a problem existing only among his followers. The leaders of those who had never gone into exile are considered to have demanded that Ezra enforce the local ban on such marriages.¹² Thus Welch assigns no real spiritual progress to the exiles, but gives it all to the people who had remained in Palestine.

Welch marshalls his arguments with persuasive skill, but they lack convincing proof. He fails to account for the spiritual advance among the remanent population and the lack of such progress among the exiles. He ignores the purpose of deportation among the ancient empires. The overlords

⁹Ibid., p. 141.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 158.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 245-279.

¹²Ibid., pp. 247f.

used exile of the nobility and religious leaders of conquered provinces as a weapon to destroy resistance. In Israel and Judah it was these more-educated classes which were removed. The people remaining were exactly those groups least likely to be able to preserve the old ways, since they would have known the least about them. The king, the nobles, the artisans, and the priests were gone. Where would the remanent population find the leadership necessary to make the reconstruction with which Welch credits these men? This is not to say that unlearned men cannot preserve faith in God. Yet it is far more likely that the portion of the people who had the knowledge of the Law as taught by the priests, and had been exposed to living in the midst of heathenism and the necessity of working out methods of serving Yahweh while absent from Yahweh's land, would be more able to restore the worship of Yahweh than those who lacked these qualifications. Since Welch's entire reconstruction of the account of the exile and return is based on a misinterpretation of this consideration, his whole approach is undermined.

Charles C. Torrey

During the period from 1896 to 1954 Charles C. Torrey participated in the study of the period of the exile and return. He developed his theory of the literary and historical relationships of the post-exilic era early in his

life, and defended that position vigorously for many years.¹³ He holds that the whole story of the exile and the return was a fiction of the Chronicler invented for apologetic purposes against the Samaritans. At times it seems as if the direction of his research and writing on the problems of the Ezra-Nehemiah history is dominated by his theory.

Torrey's literary studies of the Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah history of Israel are of unquestioned value. His demonstration that these books employ the same language and are interested in much the same topics is accepted by most scholars today.¹⁴ However, his ascription to the Chronicler of a single-minded anti-Samaritan polemic forces him to interpret many Biblical passages one-sidedly. Perhaps it is best to allow Torrey to speak for himself about this subject:

Against the claims of the exclusive party in Jerusalem stood some formidable obstacles. Of these, the most important by far was the tradition, which had grown up, that Jerusalem and Judea were not only completely depopulated by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, but that they remained vacant for a long time. Thus especially

¹³Charles C. Torrey, "The Aramaic Portions of Ezra," American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, XXIV (April, 1908); "The Chronicler as Editor and as Independent Narrator," American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, XXV (January, 1907; April, 1907), hereafter cited as Editor; The Chronicler's History of Judah (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), hereafter cited as History; "The Nature and Origin of 'I Esdras,'" American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, XXIII (January, 1907); "Sanballat 'The Horonite,'" Journal of Biblical Literature, XLVII (1928), hereafter cited as Sanballat; and many others.

¹⁴See the standard Introductions.

II Kings 24:14ff.; 25:8-12, 26; Jer. 25:11ff.; 29:10, etc. This tradition--due chiefly to a misunderstanding of Haggai and Zechariah--was harmless at first; but when the new Israelite sect of worship was established at Shechem, a most effective weapon was put into the hands of the rival sect. The Samaritans could claim, and with much apparent right on their side, that they themselves were the rightful heirs and the true church. . . . The contest of the Jews with the Samaritans was really a life and death struggle, and the latter possessed some external advantages at the start. . . . They could probably prove, in a great many instances, that not only individuals of priestly rank, but also whole priestly families, had migrated into North-Israelite territory when Jerusalem was destroyed, and that their descendants were now pillars of the Samaritan church. These were the sons of Aaron, and with them were Levites; were there any in Jerusalem who could show a clearer title? Probably not, until the Chronicler wrote his history, carrying back through the past centuries the genealogy of the families who in his day constituted the loyal Jewish church in Jerusalem and the neighboring towns, and excluding all others from legitimacy.¹⁵

For Torrey this struggle between the Jews and the Samaritans was the key to the understanding of the whole history of Israel embodied in the Chronicler's work. Each change from the record in Samuel or Kings is seen by Torrey as another attack upon the people living in the former North Israel.¹⁶ Thus the Chronicler's recapitulation of the story of his people is falsified. Moreover, Torrey asserts that the large number of sources cited by the Chronicler were but a figment of his imagination, used to make his statements authoritative. Since Torrey considers

¹⁵Torrey, Editor, p. 158.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 165ff.

that the Chronicler had no sources other than the earlier canonical books, he believes that the latter's literary methods can be ascertained by a comparison of the books of Chronicles with those of Samuel and Kings.¹⁷

On the basis of the knowledge gained by this comparison, according to Torrey, it is possible to estimate the extent of the Chronicler's sources in Ezra and Nehemiah. Such a study discloses that the editor of the work had only two documents for the period of the return and reconstruction. The first of these was the Aramaic story of the temple (Ezra 4:8-6:18) written by a member of his own school. This document was used almost without change in the present book of Ezra. The second source comprised what is now Nehemiah 1:1-2:6; 2:9b-20; 4:1-6:19. All other parts of the two books are the invention of the Chronicler.¹⁸ The use of the first and third persons in the narrative is simply a literary device. Torrey states that in a literary sense the worst work of the Chronicler appears in his redaction of the Nehemiah documents. The editor failed to study the writings of Nehemiah carefully enough to be able to imitate them successfully.¹⁹

In Torrey's view, the ultimate success of the Chronicler

¹⁷Ibid., p. 173.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 188ff. This position was later modified to include all of Nehemiah as part of the Chronicler's work; cf. Torrey, History, p. xii, n. 3.

¹⁹Torrey, Editor, pp. 214ff.

was complete. The original readers knew that this editor's history of Israel was a midrash and ignored it.²⁰ Later readers had forgotten the true history of the period and accepted these books as accurate and finally canonical. In addition, Torrey points out that the fall of the Samaritans, first from political power and then also from spiritual influence, contributed to the acceptance of the Chronicler's fiction. It was not until centuries after the canonization of this work that anyone again suspected its fictitious character.

For Torrey the whole question of the date of Ezra is irrelevant since there never was an Ezra. He affirms the historicity of Nehemiah, but places him in the reign of Artaxerxes II, whose twentieth year was 386 B. C. Since the Elephantine Papyri show that Sanballat was governor of Samaria at a time near the middle of the fifth century B. C., Torrey postulates a grandson by the same name who was the opponent of Nehemiah at this later time.²¹

Torrey's views received little direct support from recognized scholars when they were first advanced. Archeological research has eliminated his basic supposition that there was no evidence of an extensive destruction of Jerusalem and other urban centers in 587/586 B. C. It has been

²⁰Torrey, History, p. xxvii.

²¹Torrey, Sanballat, pp. 380ff.

demonstrated quite clearly that urban life had practically ceased to exist from the time of the Chaldean invasions until well into the Persian period.²² Thus there is no reason to regard the account of the return as fiction and scholars are justified in rejecting Torrey's conclusions.

Julius Morgenstern

Julius Morgenstern²³ approaches the problems of post-exilic history from the viewpoint that the opening verses of Nehemiah prove that the latter received news of a different nature from what he expected. This poses the question whether some event can be discovered to account for the sorrow of Nehemiah. To answer this query Morgenstern erects a structure of great proportion on the basis of a new interpretation of a series of Biblical passages.

²²William Foxwell Albright, "The Biblical Period," The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion, edited by L. Finkelstein (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 49, n. 122. In his latest work Torrey has tried to turn this argument by assuming that the destruction was so vast that there were no cities nor villages to which the exiles might return. He has ignored the possibility that "their cities" of the period of the exile may not be the same places as "their cities" after the return; cf. Torrey, History, p. xxvi.

²³Julius Morgenstern, "Jerusalem--485 B. C.," Hebrew Union College Annual, XXVII (1956), XXVIII (1957), and XXXI (1960), hereafter cited as Jerusalem; "The Message of Deutero-Isaiah in its Sequential Unfolding," Ibid., XXIX (1958), and XXX (1959), hereafter cited as Isaiah; and "A Chapter in the History of the High Priesthood," American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, LV (1938), hereafter cited as Chapter.

Morgenstern begins by stating that the book of Zechariah pictures Jerusalem as rather depopulated in 520 B. C. On the other hand, Psalm 48, which he dates from the period 516-485 B. C., testifies that Jerusalem was well-peopled at that time. On the basis of this evidence he postulates a period of prosperity after the building of the temple in 520-516 B. C.²⁴ Since a community without a fortress would be open to raiders, such prosperity can be understood only if there were the protection of a walled city. Morgenstern further holds that Lamentations was not written in 586 B. C.²⁵ because the nations mentioned there as enemies were allies of Judah in the last war with Babylon.²⁶ In addition, he states that Ezekiel 21:33-37; 25-32; and 35:1-36:15 do not reflect the events of Nebuchadnezzar's rule.²⁷ Because these passages mention the temple they must have originated in a period after that structure had been rebuilt in 520-516 B. C.²⁸ Hence he posits a second destruction of Jerusalem some time after 516 B. C., for which he finds indirect testimony in the surviving records.

Support for this hypothesis is derived from the book

²⁴Morgenstern, Jerusalem, XXVII, 103.

²⁵Ibid., p. 106; cf. Lam. 4:20 and 2 Kings 25:4-7.

²⁶Morgenstern, Jerusalem, XXVII, 107f.

²⁷Ibid., p. 109.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 111ff.

of Obadiah.²⁹ Its rage is directed specifically against Edom, one of the nations allied with Judah during the revolt against Nebuchadnezzar. He also points to the opening verses of Malachi. Since they also speak of Yahweh's hatred of Edom, Morgenstern dates Malachi circa 478 B. C. and sees the book as a reflection of a second destruction of Jerusalem about a century after 586 B. C.³⁰

Morgenstern then turns to some Psalms which he places into the post-exilic period, but not as late as the time of the Maccabees. These Psalms speak of a destruction which he cannot equate with any known capture of the city.³¹ The common element of these Psalms is found in their reference to the doctrine "for His Name's sake." The idea about God contained in this phrase was first expressed by Ezekiel in the latter part of his career, some time after 586 B. C. According to Morgenstern this doctrine was a result of the continuing sin among the Judahite exiles in Babylon. Their actions made God's Name a source of blasphemy to the other nations.³² Their sins forced God to rehabilitate His people in spite of what they were. It was a part of Ezekiel's task

²⁹Ibid., p. 114.

³⁰Ibid., p. 116.

³¹Ibid., p. 117; the Psalms in question are 44:10-17, 23; 60 (=108):3-5, 10-13; 74:1-11, 19-23; 79; 83; 137:7-9.

³²Ibid., p. 120.

to stress this truth of God's promises by formulating the doctrine of "for His Name's sake," first expressed in 36:16-28.³³ Morgenstern regards the mention of this doctrine in earlier books as interpolations.³⁴ In order to make Psalm 83 fit into this circle of ideas he interprets Assur in verse 9 as a circumlocution for Persia.³⁵ Psalm 2, a coronation song, becomes a part of the same pattern by emending verse 12 to read, "Give glory to His Name."³⁶

Morgenstern also finds support for his view in the books of Isaiah and Joel. He assigns a date of between 490-445 B. C. to Isaiah 63:15-64:11. As a statement of grief for Jerusalem it points to the disaster postulated for this period.³⁷ Joel 4:2b β -8,19,20 also speak of a subjugation of the Jews by some of the nations noted in Ezekiel and therefore are found to reflect the same historical situation.³⁸ The combination of this whole group of passages points to a hitherto unknown destruction of Jerusalem.

Morgenstern arrives at the date for this destruction

³³Ibid., pp. 122ff.

³⁴Ibid., p. 126; the passages in question are Exodus 32:11-12; Num. 14:13-20; and 1 Kings 8:41-43.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 132f.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 139ff.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 147f.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 150ff.

on the basis of his interpretation of Ezra 4:7-23.³⁹ Since this letter of accusation was written to Artaxerxes and contained a reference to rebellion under his fathers (Ezra 4:15), this destruction must have occurred before his reign. On the other hand, the story of the rebuilding of the temple under Darius I makes no mention of a wall in Jerusalem (Ezra 6:24) after the failure of a revolt by Zerubbabel. Thus it is likely that the disaster struck the city somewhat later.⁴⁰

According to Morgenstern Nehemiah 1:1-4 confirms this assumption since the implication is clear that he expected a better report than he received from his brother Hanani. He knew of an expedition which had been sent to rebuild the walls, but this was the first intimation that it had failed. It was this disappointment which caused his great grief.⁴¹ He secured permission to go to Jerusalem and succeeded in rebuilding the walls, but his opponents managed to put his actions in such a bad light that he was recalled.⁴² Thus Morgenstern avers that the destruction must have occurred after Darius and before Artaxerxes.

In Ezra 4:6 Morgenstern finds the information which

³⁹Ibid., p. 156.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 159f.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 165.

⁴²Ibid., p. 164.

establishes the date of the fall of the city. This passage speaks of an accusation against the Jews at the beginning of the reign of Xerxes, circa 485 B. C.⁴³ Ezra 4:15,20 mention former rebellions of Jerusalem which Morgenstern interprets as referring to the revolt under Xerxes. He then reconstructs this revolt thus: The failure of Zerubbabel's plans to revolt in 520 B. C. had only driven the Jewish nationalist party underground. The Persian defeat at Marathon in 490 B. C. led them to believe that God would soon bring them freedom. Because they were activists, however, they planned a revolt, timed to begin with the death of Darius. In furtherance of this plot they anointed a king on New Year's Day, 486 B. C. in firm confidence that God would fight for them as He promised in Psalm 2.⁴⁴ Xerxes was busy with a revolt in Egypt and merely gave token aid to seven neighboring nations who destroyed the city and sold many of the inhabitants into slavery.⁴⁵ The unfortunate king leading this rebellion was probably named Menahem, a son of Zerubbabel. Evidence for this identification is found in Lamentations 1, 2, 4, 5. Malachi 2:10-16 indicates that there was a commercial and marriage treaty with Tyre. Psalm 45 is adduced as supporting evidence. The king of Tyre, seeing

⁴³Ibid., p. 166.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 168.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 173.

the futility of the revolt, withdrew his support in time to avoid any serious consequences.⁴⁶

Morgenstern believes that this revolt was precipitated by those activists who misunderstood the message of Deutero-Isaiah.⁴⁷ The hatred of the neighboring nations he explains by the war legislation of Deuteronomy 20 which he dates from this period.⁴⁸ The Davidic covenant of 2 Samuel 7 was used by the revolutionists as the promise of a Jewish World Empire.⁴⁹ The disaster of 485 B. C. crushed the nationalists so that they did not regain influence until the era of the Maccabees.⁵⁰ The universalists, a group who understood Deutero-Isaiah as preaching friendship to foreigners, were undercut by the actions of the neighboring nations and never recovered influence among the Jews.⁵¹ The Servant Songs were written to explain the suffering of Israel. As Menahem had suffered to save Israel, so Israel suffered to save mankind. They were an attempt to explain God's actions

⁴⁶Ibid., XXVIII, pp. 15-47 passim.

⁴⁷Morgenstern, Isaiah, XXIX, 1 contains an arrangement of Second Isaiah as Morgenstern reconstructs it: chaps. 47, 48, 46, 45, 42-44, 41, 40:6-8, 12-18, 21-31. Chaps. 49-55 are denied to Second Isaiah.

⁴⁸Morgenstern, Jerusalem, XXXI, 9.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 13.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 16.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 17.

after the revolt.⁵²

Morgenstern states that the remnants of the people were saved because Dor was captured by the Athenians who held this city during the years 460-450 B. C. Artaxerxes, faced with this threat to his supply lines and the revolt of Inarus in Egypt,⁵³ sent Ezra to rebuild the temple and the city of Jerusalem in 458 B. C.⁵⁴ The latter was a rabid separationist from the golah who carried these ideas to the Jerusalem community.⁵⁵ He built the temple but failed to fortify the city. Nehemiah then built the walls, but was not appointed governor until long after this time.⁵⁶

Morgenstern concludes that the success of this separatistic reform was not assured until Johanan became high priest. The latter had come under the influence of Ezra about 445 B. C.⁵⁷ After the death of Ezra and Nehemiah he became the leader of the separatist party. By killing his brother, Joshua, a good friend of the Persian governor Bogoas, on New Year's Day of 411 B. C., he became high priest. Bogoas then damaged and polluted the

⁵²Ibid., p. 20.

⁵³Supra, p. 36.

⁵⁴Morgenstern, Jerusalem, XXXI, 23.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 24.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 28f.

⁵⁷Morgenstern, Chapter, p. 362, n. 107.

temple.⁵⁸ When Darius II died, 404 B. C., the Persian governor was recalled and the separatists came into full control. The Jews in Babylon now supported the high priest whole-heartedly, enabling him to drive those who disagreed with his policies out of Jerusalem.⁵⁹ The easy-going Yahwism of the Palestineans was repudiated and the particularism of the golah became the norm for all Jews. It was the murder of Joshua, not the work of Ezra and Nehemiah, which crowned this policy with success.

The historical reconstruction which Morgenstern suggests for the post-exilic period is an imposing structure. The logic of his conclusions is irreproachable if one grants his assumptions. It is precisely at that point that his reconstruction is vulnerable.

In the first place Morgenstern assumes dates for Biblical books and parts of books in a rather arbitrary way. His criterion for the date of certain Psalms, that they all contain references to Ezekiel's doctrine "for His Name's sake," is open to serious question. He offers no evidence that Ezekiel was indeed the first person to express this doctrine. He gives no real support to his statement that the references to this doctrine in Exodus 32:11-12; Numbers 14:13-20; and 1 Kings 8:41-43 are interpolations. Thus

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 364ff.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 376, n. 140.

the first step in Morgenstern's attempted proof rests upon some unwarranted assumptions.

The further assumption of Morgenstern that these Psalms refer to a capture of Jerusalem in 485 B. C. is also weakly attested. In fact, Psalm 83 refers to Assur as an enemy, while Psalm 137 refers to Babylon. To read both of these as circumlocutions for Persia goes beyond that which is not probable.

The same lack of objectivity is shown in Morgenstern's assumptions as to the dates of Malachi, Second and Third Isaiah, Obadiah, and Joel. In no case does he offer solid evidence to substantiate the dates he proposes. Perhaps he has such evidence, but it is not present in these articles. Moreover, his assumption that the war legislation of Deuteronomy 20 comes from about 490 B. C. cannot be sustained in the light of the ban of Jericho (Josh. 6:17-27) and the traditional lists of enemy nations.

When one looks at Morgenstern's historical reconstruction, this same method of piling assumption upon assumption is present. He accepts the traditional date of 458 B. C. for the mission of Ezra, but he states that the task of the latter was to rebuild the temple and walls of Jerusalem. The Biblical evidence for such a mission is non-existent. He sets the date of Nehemiah at 444 B. C. but denies that he was a contemporary of Ezra. He further considers that Nehemiah was recalled shortly after building the walls

and was not appointed governor until many years later when he returned to Jerusalem. This assumption, too, has no support in the Biblical record.

When one reads this series of articles by Morgenstern, one gains the impression that this scholar began with a certain theory of post-exilic history. He then sought for evidence in the Biblical text to support his theory, not to let the record speak for itself. As an example, Ezra is dated in 458 B. C. not because the Bible places him in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, but because Morgenstern's hypothesis requires an attempt to rebuild the temple and wall at that time. The same sort of false logic is apparent in identifying Assur in Psalm 83 with Persia.

For the above reasons Morgenstern's reconstruction of the post-exilic times must be rejected. On the other hand, certain of his conclusions are probably correct, for instance, that Nehemiah came to Jerusalem in 444 B. C., and that the success of the reform was assured by the succession of Johanan as high priest circa 411 B. C.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

In a sense all that precedes has been of an introductory nature. As far as possible, the problems which make up the larger questions of the Ezra-Nehemiah history have been defined and isolated. The reconstruction of the recorded events offered by three scholars have been examined and found to be unacceptable. In the discussion which follows, each difficulty will be treated in the order of its mention in Chapter III. The answers of other scholars will be evaluated and an acceptable solution offered.

- a. The edicts of the Persian kings preserved in the book of Ezra are written in such definitely-Jewish style that their authenticity has been questioned.¹

The edicts of the Persians are preserved in three places in Ezra (1:2-4; 6:3-12 and 7:12-26). The first two of these, relating to the return of the exiles and the building of the temple, appear to be variant forms of the same decree. The former is written in Hebrew and the latter in Aramaic. The third one, also written in Aramaic, is concerned with the mission and authority of Ezra.

¹Supra, p. 12.

Some scholars reject both content and form of these edicts as forgeries.² Most, however, agree that there must have been some sort of official statement of permission for the Jews to return to Jerusalem, but there is divided opinion on the question of whether the decrees preserved in the Bible are imperial documents of Cyrus.³ The reasons usually adduced for denying their official character are: the naming of Yahweh instead of Ahuramazda as the god of heaven, since Cyrus, as far as can be determined, was a worshipper of the latter god; the mention of Jerusalem in connection with the temple of Yahweh, thereby recognizing that the only legitimate place for a Jewish temple was in that city; and the orders for neighbors to assist the Jews with gifts of money and goods, for most of those neighbors would have been non-Jews. Moreover, it is sometimes pointed out that the decree as recorded in Ezra 1:2-4 is concerned more with the return than with the temple, while the reverse is true of the edict of Ezra 6:3-12.

The orders concerning Ezra's mission present a different problem to scholars. In this case the objections to its authenticity are based upon the assumption that the Persians would not be concerned with the religious welfare

²Robert H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1941), pp. 824ff.

³See standard Introductions and Commentaries.

of their subjects and the apparent grant of many secular powers to Ezra over non-Jews.

According to Keil the Persian king entered consciously into the purposes of God.⁴ The prophet Daniel had acquainted him with the writings of Isaiah, particularly with those sections naming Cyrus as the deliverer of the Jews. Keil considers both forms of the document authentic.⁵ Wright⁶ and Young⁷ point out that the Cyrus decrees are in full accord with the known policy of the Persian conqueror. Rowley⁸ and Albright⁹ feel that these edicts as preserved are substantially historical, but were probably extracted from older official documents.

The most thorough discussion of the reliability of the

⁴Carl F. Keil, The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, translated from the German by Sophia Taylor (Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament in Clark's Foreign Theological Library, fourth series; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1888), VIII, 21; hereafter cited as Ezra.

⁵Ibid., pp. 82ff.

⁶J. Stafford Wright, The Building of the Second Temple (London: Tyndale Press, 1958), pp. 14ff.; hereafter cited as The Temple.

⁷Edward J. Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament (London: Tyndale Press, c.1949), pp. 371f.

⁸Harold H. Rowley, "Nehemiah's Mission and its Background," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, XXXVII (March, 1955), 535ff.; hereafter cited as Mission.

⁹William Foxwell Albright, "The Biblical Period," The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion, edited by L. Finkelstein (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 49; hereafter cited as Biblical Period.

decree as it is found in the Bible is by Elias J. Bickermann.¹⁰ According to his view, the recorded double form of the decree, each version slightly differing from the other, is exactly what should be expected from a study of the system of publishing decrees in the Persian Empire. When a decree was issued, a copy or memorandum was written down and placed in the court archives. At the same time imperial heralds published the decree orally in the language of the people to whom it was addressed.¹¹ Bickermann continues by arguing that the objection to the authenticity of the decree on the grounds that the Achaemenids never were called simply "King of Persia" is untenable. This title is found in inscriptions of Darius I in Egypt and Babylon. It is also a known fact that he was called by that name among Greek-speaking people.¹²

It is true that the edicts as they are preserved in the Bible have what seems to be a Jewish cast. On the other hand, the Persian chancery normally used the name of the god worshipped by the people to whom a decree was addressed. The ambiguous title "God of Heaven" was also employed as it

¹⁰Elias J. Bickermann, "The Edict of Cyrus in Ezra I," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXV (1946).

¹¹Ibid., pp. 249ff.; cf. Raymond A. Bowman and C. W. Gilkey, The Book of Ezra and The Book of Nehemiah (The Interpreter's Bible); Nashville: Abingdon Press, c.1954), III, 571-573.

¹²Bickermann, op. cit., pp. 254ff.

could be understood in one way by the Persians and another by the recipients.¹³ There is, however, no evidence that either Cyrus or Darius was attracted to Yahwism. Both kings apparently acted from policy. Since the Persians many times consulted the oracles of foreign nations,¹⁴ it is highly probable that they would have considered the religious sensibilities of the Jews. Josephus¹⁵ may be right in asserting that Cyrus issued this decree after being shown a copy of Isaiah with its oracles against Babylon. Bickermann closes his article by concluding that Ezra preserves a genuine edict of Cyrus.¹⁶

The designation of the temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem

¹³Ibid., pp. 256ff.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 269.

¹⁵Flavius Josephus, "Antiquities of the Jews," The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus, translated by W. Whiston (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, n.d.), xi, 1, 2; hereafter cited as Ant.; cf. Adolphe Lods, The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism, translated from the French by S. H. Hooke (London: Routledge and Kegan, Paul, 1955, reprinted from edition of 1937), pp. 185ff.

¹⁶Bickermann, op. cit., p. 275, gives his translation of the edict as it appears in Ezra 1:2-4: "Thus says Cyrus, King of Persia. All the kingdoms of the earth has YHWH, the God of Heaven, given me, and He commanded me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? May his God be with him and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of YHWH, the God of Israel, which is God in Jerusalem. And all who remain, in any place where he sojourns, have to help him, the men of his place, with silver and with gold, and with goods, and with riding-beasts, beside the freewill-offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem."

is simply geographic to distinguish it from other centers of Yahweh worship. It is highly probable that the reissue of the decree by Darius (Ezra 6:6-12) took particular cognizance of the orders concerning the temple. In his reign the return was an accomplished fact. However, since he ordered that the temple be finished with money and materials from the imperial revenues, he would be more concerned with the dimensions of the building than was the writer of the first chapter of Ezra.

In view of these considerations the contents and form of the variant records of the decree of Cyrus are to be accepted as authentic.

The decree of Artaxerxes which authorized the mission of Ezra is also accepted by Keil as authentic.¹⁷ He considers that Ezra was a man "learned in the Law of Moses," primarily a teacher. In addition the latter was endowed with great secular powers. Snaith rejects the viewpoint that Ezra had great governmental authority because the narrative shows that he never exercised it.¹⁸ Albright feels that this edict was issued in a form which reflects Jewish diction because of the influence of Nehemiah at the court.

¹⁷Keil, Ezra, pp. 96ff.

¹⁸Norman H. Snaith, "The Date of Ezra's Arrival in Jerusalem," Zeitschrift fuer die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des nachbiblischen Judentums, LXIII (1951), 58.

In his opinion the contents as recorded are correct.¹⁹ Schaefer explains its Jewish cast by suggesting that the decree was actually written by Ezra himself, since the title "scribe" denoted an official in the Persian Secretariat for Jewish Affairs.²⁰ Wright accepts this proposal.²¹ Kapelrud rejects the view of Schaefer and Wright by pointing out that the usage of the word "scribe" in the Ezra-narrative was restricted to one learned in the Law.²² He also indicates that the use of the term, "God of heaven," is perfectly in order as a phrase for communication between the Jews and Persians in religious matters.²³ Batten assumes that the decree is authentic in the main, but that the last two verses are an addition by the hero-worshipping chronicler, whom he places much later than Ezra.²⁴

Ezra was above all a religious leader. His task was to

¹⁹William Foxwell Albright, "A Brief History of Judah from the Days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," Biblical Archeologist, IX (1946), p. 13; hereafter cited as History.

²⁰Hans Heinrich Schaefer, Esra der Schreiber (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1930), pp. 39-59.

²¹Wright, The Temple, pp. 14f.

²²Arvid S. Kapelrud, The Question of Authorship in the Ezra-narrative (Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1944), p. 20.

²³Ibid., p. 28.

²⁴Loring Woart Batten, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah (International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), pp. 307ff.

lead the Jerusalem community back to the Law of God. That he was also a Persian official as Schaefer and Wright surmise, however, is an assumption which is lacking full substantiation. The Elephantine Papyri show that the Persians were interested in the religious welfare of their subjects.²⁵ Hence there is no valid reason why this decree, also, should not be accepted as authentic.

- b. The relationship of Sheshbazzar to Zerubbabel is unclear since both are credited with laying the foundations of the temple.²⁶

The problem of the relationship of Sheshbazzar to Zerubbabel arises from a comparison of Ezra 1:8; 5:14,16 with Ezra 3:2-8. In the first two passages Sheshbazzar appears as the governor of those who returned and laid the foundations of the temple. In the last reference, however, Zerubbabel is portrayed as one of the leaders of the people at the time the altar was rebuilt and the temple begun. Furthermore, Haggai and Zechariah designate Zerubbabel as governor and do not mention Sheshbazzar.

Keil solves this problem by identifying Sheshbazzar with Zerubbabel. Since both men are called pechah (Sheshbazzar, Ezra 5:14; Zerubbabel, Hag. 1:1), and the same acts

²⁵A. E. Cowley, editor, Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B. C. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), papyrus 38, line 7.

²⁶Supra, p. 12.

are attributed to both, they must be the same man.²⁷ He therefore assumes that Sheshbazzar was without doubt the Babylonian name for Zerubbabel.²⁸ A modification of this explanation, suggesting that one name is a cryptogram for the other, is offered by an unsigned article in Harper's Bible Dictionary.²⁹

Wright comes to the conclusion that Sheshbazzar is the person called Shenazzar in 1 Chronicles 3:18. A son of Jehoiachin, he was appointed pechah because the Persians considered him "safe." He was, however, repudiated by the Jews for exactly the same reason. Wright also agrees with Rudolph that the title pechah for Zerubbabel was one of courtesy only.³⁰ The latter scholar assumes that Sheshbazzar was not a Davidide although he was a Jew. He laid the foundation stone in accordance with the orders of Cyrus and then went home.³¹ Welch supports this view by pointing out that the Persian government would not risk making a Jew, to

²⁷Keil, Ezra, p. 80.

²⁸Ibid., p. 26.

²⁹Madeleine S. Miller and J. Lane Miller, editors, Harper's Bible Dictionary (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), p. 676. No evidence is offered to support such a conjecture.

³⁰Wright, The Temple, pp. 10ff.

³¹Wilhelm Rudolph, Esra und Nehemia mit 3 Esra, herausgegeben von Otto Eissfeldt (Handbuch zum Alten Testament; Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1949), XX, p. xxvi.

say nothing of a descendant of David, the governor of Judah.³² Albright insists that both names are Babylonian (Sin-ab-user = Shenazzar = Sheshbazzar, and Zer-babil, offspring of Babylon = Zerubbabel). In view of this fact he eliminates the possibility of the use of two names for the same man and also identifies Sheshbazzar with the Shenazzar of 1 Chronicles 3:18.³³ I Esdras 2:8 refers to Sheshbazzar as governor of Judea under Cyrus, while I Esdras 4:13 portrays Zerubbabel as one of the guardsmen of Darius. According to this account Zerubbabel was sent to build Jerusalem and the temple (I Esdras 4:47-63) as a reward for winning a contest of wit.

A consideration of the above evidence points to the probability that Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel cannot have been the same man. The identification of the latter is relatively easy because three separate witnesses (Ezra 5; Haggai; Zechariah 1-8) testify that he was a leader of the Jews when the temple was built under Darius I, 520-516 B. C. All three also mention Jeshua the priest as his contemporary and co-worker.

Who then was Sheshbazzar? There appears to be no valid reason against assuming that his name is merely a variation

³²Adam C. Welch, Post-Exilic Judaism (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons Ltd., 1935), p. 107.

³³Albright, History, pp. 7f.

for Shenazzar, a younger son of Jehoiachin. The objection of Welch that the Persians would not have appointed a scion of the Davidic house as governor of Judah is invalid because the Achaemenids followed such a policy in many other instances.³⁴ The fact that Sheshbazzar is called a prince of Judah in the text of Ezra 1:8 lends support to this identification. The silence of Haggai and Zechariah concerning Sheshbazzar has no bearing on the question of who he was. Their intentions were to nerve the Jerusalem community to build the temple. Assuming that Sheshbazzar/Shenazzar had once been unsuccessful in his attempt to do so, these prophets would hardly instill confidence by calling up the memory of a former failure. The identification of Sheshbazzar as the Shenazzar of the Davidic line is therefore adopted. Thus he was an uncle of Zerubbabel.

- c. From the story of the building of the temple in Ezra it appears that the primary problem was the opposition of the people-of-the-land, while the book of Haggai implies only internal difficulties caused by spiritual lassitude.³⁵

As is evident from the preceding section, it is almost impossible to disentangle the problems of the relationship of Sheshbazzar to Zerubbabel from the account of the

³⁴Bernhard W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1957), p. 433; cf. Herodotus, History, translated by George Rawlinson (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., c.1928), p. 151.

³⁵Supra, p. 12.

building of the temple. Yet there are other difficulties in the story beyond the mere relationships of the two men which call for an explanation.

Ezra 4:1-5 blames the people-of-the-land for the long delay in building the temple. When the Jews rejected the latter's offer of aid, concern turned to enmity. Their efforts to check the work on the temple were successful and the building was brought to a halt. This stoppage continued until the second year of Darius I, 520 B. C. Haggai 1:2-4,9 and 2:16-18, however, do not mention this interference by the people-of-the-land, but place the blame for the uncompleted temple on the spiritual lassitude of the Jews themselves. Moreover, as mentioned above, neither Haggai nor Zechariah refers to an earlier attempt to erect the temple.

Keil, since he identifies Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel, states that the temple was begun soon after the first return. The people-of-the-land, descendants largely of polytheistic idolators, were refused permission to help. Such action was perfectly legal because the Cyrus Edict referred only to the men who returned from Babylon. This rebuff, however, angered the people-of-the-land so much that they forced a halt to the program.³⁶ Keil makes no attempt to explain Haggai's failure to mention anything beside the

³⁶Keil, Ezra, pp. 57ff.

spiritual indifference of the people.³⁷

Wright points out that Haggai says definitely that the temple was begun in the second year of Darius, 520 B. C. On the other hand, the Chronicler writes three times (Ezra 4:5,24; 5:16) that the work was stopped before the effort was a success. Sheshbazzar is named as a former leader merely for apologetic reasons because the Jews knew that his name as governor was on the decree of permission to build the temple. Zerubbabel and Jeshua were the real leaders of the project. Still Wright believes there may actually have been two foundation ceremonies and that the account in both sources is correct.³⁸ Young calls attention to the fact that Haggai's statements need not imply that no work on the temple had been done previously, nor does the Ezra record claim that the work had gone on continuously.³⁹

Hoelscher affirms, on the basis of Haggai and Zechariah, that no work had been done on the temple before the time of Darius. In his opinion it was the arrival of Zerubbabel with news of the revolts in the East that touched off a

³⁷Carl F. Keil, The Twelve Minor Prophets, translated from the German by James Martin (Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament in Clark's Foreign Theological Library, fourth series; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1900), II, 178.

³⁸Wright, The Temple, pp. 15ff.

³⁹Young, op. cit., p. 373.

wave of excitement and also precipitated the temple-building project. However, Zerubbabel must have remained loyal to Persia because the temple was finished.⁴⁰ Albright thinks that the number of Jews who returned to Jerusalem during the time of Cyrus was small, and that the attempt to build the temple probably came under Zerubbabel. At the same time, he states that the latter was probably over fifty years of age at the time, old enough to know better than to plan a revolt against Persia.⁴¹

If, as has been assumed, Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel are not different names of the same person, the solution of this problem requires the acceptance of two attempts to build the temple. This is exactly the situation portrayed by the book of Ezra. The first of these under Sheshbazzar led to nothing. The reason for this failure is obscure. The story of the offer of aid by the people-of-the-land in Ezra 4:1-5 correlates this incident with Zerubbabel and Jeshua, who led the second successful attempt to erect the temple. There is no real information about relations with the people-of-the-land during the years from 538 to 520 B. C. Perhaps the best assumption is that it was a combination of local opposition of neighboring peoples, the laxity of the Persian

⁴⁰Gustav Hoelscher, "Les origines de la communauté juive à l' époque perse," Revue d' histoire et de philosophie Religieuses, VI (1926), 112ff.

⁴¹Albright, History, pp. 9f.

officials in enforcing the decree of Cyrus, the lack of means among the returnees, and possibly the death of Sheshbazzar.⁴² Frustration would then lead to the condition of spiritual carelessness which Haggai describes.

The record does not tell when Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Haggai, and Zechariah came to Jerusalem. They were there, however, when the death of Cambyses precipitated a crisis in the Persian Empire.⁴³ It is perhaps impossible to document a causal relationship between the troubles in the empire and the attempt to build the temple, but this concurrence of events does not appear to be pure coincidence. Haggai 2:21-23 states that kingdoms will be destroyed by Yahweh and that Zerubbabel will be God's signet ring. These words may seem to imply that the governor will be God's executor to initiate His judgment on the nations. It is possible that the prophet's words were understood by the people as holding out hope for the reestablishment of the Davidic dynasty. On the other hand, there could not have been an open revolt because, although Zerubbabel disappears from history,

⁴²William Foxwell Albright, "King Jehoiachin in Exile," Biblical Archeologist, V (1942), 52f. quotes some tablets found by Weidner near the Ishtar Gate in Babylon, which indicate that Sheshbazzar (Shenazzar) was born before 592 B. C. It follows that he was at least fifty-four years old when he became governor, so that his death shortly afterward should cause no surprise. This article is hereafter cited as Jehoiachin.

⁴³Supra, p. 34.

the temple was completed several years after Darius had gained control of the whole empire.⁴⁴

It is very probable, therefore, that Wright is correct in assuming two foundation ceremonies a half-generation apart. Also it seems quite likely that the two building projects were headed by different leaders--Sheshbazzar circa 537 and Zerubbabel in 520-516 B. C. These assumptions explain best the obscure statements of the sources.

- d. Essentially the same list of those who returned from Babylon is presented in both Ezra and Nehemiah.⁴⁵

A list of those who returned from Babylon is presented in two places, Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7. Although there are some slight differences between the two, the agreement is so great that there is little doubt that they are but two forms of a single list.⁴⁶ It is an important source of information about the Jerusalem community if the period of its compilation can be determined. Because the roll is not dated, however, it is difficult to establish the time in

⁴⁴If, as Albright, Jehoiachin, p. 53, has pointed out, Zerubbabel were past fifty at the time the temple was started, there is no need to suppose that he died of other than natural causes during the project.

⁴⁵Supra, p. 12.

⁴⁶H. L. Allrik, "The Lists of Zerubbabel (Nehemiah 7 and Ezra 2) and the Hebrew Numeral Notation," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, CXXXVI (December, 1954), 27.

which it originated.

Keil accepts the lists as a correct census of the first caravan which returned under Zerubbabel (Sheshbazzar). He defends all the statistical data on the basis of the close agreement of the two Biblical recensions and I Esdras.⁴⁷ Wright also feels that the rolls belong to the era of Zerubbabel, but makes no attempt to set the exact time of its origin. Since the Jews returned to Palestine very rapidly in modern times, he believes that the Jews flocked to Judah very quickly after permission to return was given by Cyrus.⁴⁸ Albright suggests that the lists are a composite census of the Jerusalem community at the time of Nehemiah, including the descendants of the Jews of the Restoration and those who had never left the district.⁴⁹ Torrey denies the genuineness of the lists because they are apologetic in character.⁵⁰ Hoelscher assumes that the rolls are a census taken by an unknown Persian governor to discover the real extent of the Jewish community. He affirms, without advancing any evidence, that its date should be set at about 400 B. C.⁵¹

⁴⁷Keil, Ezra, pp. 30-47.

⁴⁸Wright, The Temple, pp. 12ff.

⁴⁹Albright, Biblical Period, pp. 52f.; cf. Albright, History, pp. 12f.

⁵⁰Charles C. Torrey, "The Chronicler as Editor and as Independent Narrator," American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, XXV (April, 1907), 214ff.

⁵¹Hoelscher, op. cit., pp. 121f.

Galling's discussion of the relationship of the golah lists to each other and to Jewish history assumes that no real answer to the problems can be secured by literary criticism. His main question is, "For whom was this list made?" The form shows that it is an accurate census taken at a specific time. It includes the names of the leaders and then of the inhabitants and their possessions. The mention of Zerubbabel and Jeshua places it in the general period of their activity. In Galling's opinion the only person for whom Zerubbabel would have needed such a list was Tattenai, the Persian governor. The mention of the families who could not prove their ancestry shows the care with which the census was made in response to the latter's investigation. Only those listed constituted the true Israel, covered by the decree of Cyrus. Since this roll is an ecclesiastical counting, no attempt is made to indicate where each person lived. According to Galling the original list had no date because it was not a roll of a caravan, but the census of a religious community.⁵²

Albright's view that the lists are a record of a census taken at the time of Nehemiah is refuted by the governor himself. He states very clearly that he found this roll among the records of the community (Neh. 7:5). It is

⁵²Kurt Galling, "The Gōlā-list according to Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7," Journal of Biblical Literature, translated from the German by C. R. Simon, LXX (June, 1951), 151-157.

obvious therefore that Nehemiah did not make the original count which he recorded. Hence the list which Nehemiah copied must have originated before he built the wall. In view of all this there is no reason why the lists should not be accepted as genuine.

Is it possible to date the origin of this roll more precisely than simply to place it at some time before Nehemiah? The name of Sheshbazzar does not appear, which gives the impression that he was no longer present when the list was compiled. However, the names of the next important leaders of the Jerusalem community, Zerubbabel and Jeshua, appear at the head of the census. This fact testifies to the origination of the roll sometime in the period of their joint leadership.

At this point Gallings's question, "For whom was the list made?" becomes very important. Since Zerubbabel and Jeshua are named as leaders in this census and since the only event for which they needed such a roll was the investigation by Tattenai, it can be safely assumed that this is a report of the Jerusalem community to the Persian governor and supplies an authentic record of the number of Jews in Palestine late in 520 or early in 519 B. C. Since it would require an average immigration of only about three thousand people each year, the community could easily have reached the number of over fifty thousand during the decade and a half since the Cyrus Edict.

- e. A story of an attempt to build the walls of Jerusalem is inserted in the midst of the account of the building of the temple.⁵³

The account of the offer of aid by the people-of-the-land to build the temple and its refusal by the Jews opens the fourth chapter of Ezra. As a result of this rebuff the former people became angry and opposed the work. Beginning with Ezra 4:6 and continuing to verse 23 there is a section which concerns the building of the walls of Jerusalem. The last verse, 24, then repeats the summary statement of verse 5. In the following chapter the story of the temple-building is resumed.

While it would not be surprising that the Jews should undertake to build the walls, the kings mentioned in Ezra 4:6-23 were not reigning at the time of the temple project. Darius I, in whose reign the temple was completed, was the third king of the Persian Empire. Xerxes and Artaxerxes I were respectively the fourth and fifth kings. Yet this text seems to place them between Cyrus the first king and Darius.

Keil believes that this episode was placed here to demonstrate the continued opposition of the enemies of the Jews.⁵⁴ He finds no evidence that there had been an attempt

⁵³Supra, p. 12.

⁵⁴Keil, Ezra, p. 74.

to build the walls shortly before the time of Nehemiah. Even if there had been, the work was stopped before enough progress had been made to necessitate any destruction.⁵⁵

Young agrees that Ezra placed this story here to complete the topic of opposition before describing the erection of the temple.⁵⁶ Galling supports the view of Young.⁵⁷

Wright sees in this account a picture of events in Jerusalem during the mission of Ezra. The latter was probably implicated in the project. Because of his actions the Persians withdrew his authority and he lost prestige among the Jews. Even though this story reflects disgrace upon his hero, the Chronicler, who was an honest man, included it.⁵⁸ He placed it at this point to show the continued opposition of the enemies of God's people.⁵⁹

Rowley finds in this section three sources which are bound together by the anti-Samaritan bias of the Chronicler. The first two of these sources are fragmentary, consisting merely of verses 6 and 7. The rest (8-23) is all a part of

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 157.

⁵⁶Young, op. cit., pp. 372ff.

⁵⁷Kurt Galling, "Kronzeugen des Artaxerxes?" Zeitschrift fuer die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des nachbiblischen Judentums, LXIII (1951), 73f.

⁵⁸J. Stafford Wright, The Date of Ezra's Coming to Jerusalem (London: Tyndale Press, 1947), p. 25; hereafter cited as Ezra.

⁵⁹Wright, The Temple, p. 6.

the third source. The Chronicler, however, misunderstood the sequence of the events he related.⁶⁰ Rowley argues rather forcefully that Wright's position is impossible, pointing out that Ezra would have been severely punished for an act which looked like rebellion against the king. Moreover, such a reconstruction would be a gratuitous besmirching of the name and character of Ezra.⁶¹ This hypothesis implies that Ezra ignored his religious commission and engaged in political actions against the wishes of the king. The Biblical account gives no warrant for such an accusation against Ezra.

On the other hand, Rowley states that the news brought to Nehemiah by Hanani (Neh. 1:1-3) was a report of the failure of the attempt to build the wall (Ezra 4:8-23).⁶² The implication is that this project had taken place shortly before the arrival of the tidings, otherwise it would have caused no grief to the cupbearer.⁶³ His knowledge of some sort of disaster just preceding his mission explains many of the governor's actions: the secrecy of his plans (Neh. 2:12ff.), the speed of his work (6:15), his suspicion of

⁶⁰ Rowley, Mission, pp. 537ff.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 554.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 554f.

⁶³ Harold H. Rowley, "The Chronological Order of Ezra and Nehemiah," Harold H. Rowley, The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), p. 143; hereafter cited as Order.

Sanballat (6:2ff.), and his fear of military attacks (4:11).⁶⁴ Rowley further states that Nehemiah knew the problems he faced and met them with all the skill and force he had available. However, since Ezra was not concerned in this affair, it is not likely that he was in Jerusalem in the years preceding Nehemiah.⁶⁵ Batten's views are essentially the same as Rowley's, except to lay more stress on the fact that the text does not record an absolute prohibition ever to build the walls of the city.⁶⁶

There is no doubt that Ezra 4:6-23 is a résumé of several deeds of harassment by the enemies of the Jews. Rowley's theory that the account is based on three distinct sources is a definite possibility, although it is more probable that there were only two. Verse 6 obviously refers to a different incident than the attempt to build the walls since the letter of accusation is addressed to Xerxes and is very general. The letter to Artaxerxes in Ezra 4:7-23 is very specific concerning the building of the walls. It also indicates that the ringleaders were men but recently come from Babylon who would know of the many troubles Artaxerxes faced in the opening years of his reign. This account is not concerned with the temple in

⁶⁴Rowley, Mission, pp. 559ff.

⁶⁵See note 63.

⁶⁶Batten, op. cit., pp. 160ff.

any way. The Chronicler very likely placed it here as added evidence of the enmity of the Samaritans. There is no need to assume that he misunderstood the chronology of the Persian kings.

In dating the major incident of this section, the proposals of Rowley and Batten seem justified. Nehemiah's methods in building the wall are explained best if it is assumed that the troubles mentioned immediately preceded his mission. There is no doubt that he expected opposition and was ready for it when it developed. At the same time it should be noted that the opposition was not to the temple, but to the walls. The underlying motive in this case was probably political and not religious.

- f. The record states that Ezra and Nehemiah were in Jerusalem at the same time with apparently overlapping authority and commissions. In spite of this the two men seem to have had very little connection with each other.⁶⁷

The Biblical narrative explicitly connects the work of Ezra and Nehemiah in only three verses, Nehemiah 8:9, 12:26, and 36, and thereby indicates that the two men were active in Jerusalem at the same time. Yet a careful reading of the Ezra and Nehemiah Memoirs shows that except in these three verses there is no other description of contact between the two men. Moreover, their commissions and

⁶⁷Supra, p. 13.

authority seem to overlap and conflict since both apparently exercised supervision of the secular and religious phases of the life of the Jerusalem community.

In keeping with his view that Ezra and Nehemiah wrote the respective books in toto, Keil sees no problem at this point. He accepts the full force of the decree of Artaxerxes appointing Ezra (Ezra 7:12-26),⁶⁸ and, at the same time, affirms that Nehemiah was appointed pechah and was given the necessary means to sustain that position.⁶⁹ All religious decisions of the governor were in accordance with the Law.⁷⁰ Keil assumes the two men were in constant contact with one another after the coming of Nehemiah and finds no difficulty in the fact that the record speaks of their collaboration in only three verses.⁷¹ Scott draws attention to the fact that the Law which Nehemiah enforced on his second visit (Neh. 13) dealt in most cases with the same problems mentioned in the covenant to which Ezra obligated the people (Neh. 10:1ff.). In accordance with the provisions of this compact, Tobiah was ejected; the tithes were restored to the Levites; Sabbath trade was stopped by force; mixed-marriages were ended; the unrepentant priest was

⁶⁸Keil, Ezra, p. 18; cf. pp. 96-102.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 167f.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 284-297.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 142f.

ejected; and a supply of wood was provided for the temple. All this makes sense only if the theorist Ezra preceded the administrator Nehemiah.⁷²

Wright supports Schaefer's position⁷³ that Ezra was some sort of official in the Persian Chancery and was sent to enforce the Law of God among the members of the Jerusalem community. The Elephantine Papyri indicate that the Persians were interested in the religious problems of their subjects. The difficulties with the mixed-marriages were prevalent among both the people of the Jerusalem group and those of Ezra's caravan. Wright does not mention the possibility of a clash between the authority of Ezra and of Nehemiah.⁷⁴

Snaitch feels that Ezra had no authority except moral

⁷²W. M. F. Scott, "Nehemiah-Ezra?" The Expository Times, LVIII (1946-1947), 266.

⁷³Schaefer, op. cit., pp. 39-59 passim argues that Ezra must have been a Persian official. His hypothesis is based upon the fact that in early times the Hebrew scribe was a government official, and that the Aramaic cognate word had this meaning in the period of the Persian Empire. Kapelrud, op. cit., pp. 20ff., points out that the Ezra-narrative does not support this view. Ezra 7:6 continues, "skilled in the Law of Moses," as is stated also in 7:11, and implied in Neh. 8:1,4,9,13. In Neh. 12:26,36 the combination "the priest, the scribe" is found. The necessity of the priests to study the Law very carefully after the loss of the chance to sacrifice in Jerusalem points also toward the meaning of scribe as one who was learned in the Law. This is the understanding of the word adopted in this study.

⁷⁴Wright, Ezra, p. 23.

suation. He resembled Gandhi in modern India, fasting and praying while others acted (Ezra 10:2f.; Neh. 8:1-14). In addition, for one who accepts the present Biblical account there is no possibility of a clash of authority since Ezra preceded Nehemiah by thirteen years.⁷⁵ Since Snaith, however, rejects as interpolations the three passages which mention the two men as contemporaries, he dates Ezra later than Nehemiah. In Nehemiah 8:9 he deletes Nehemiah's name because it does not appear in the parallel passage of I Esdras. In the case of Nehemiah 12:36 the name of Ezra is to be regarded as a scribal embellishment. He remarks on the third instance:

The remaining case (Neh. 12:26) is, in the Hebrew, as clear a case of editorial interpolation as could be found anywhere. An editor has added "and of Ezra the priest the scribe," presumably because he did believe the two to be contemporaries.

Having thus removed Nehemiah from Nehemiah 8:9 and Ezra from the other two places, Snaith has eliminated from the record every indication that the two men were in Jerusalem at the same time. Since they were not contemporaries, there could be no question of conflicting authority.⁷⁶

Rowley takes much the same position as that of Snaith. He assumes that the interpolations in the text were made by the Chronicler in accordance with the latter's belief that

⁷⁵Snaith, op. cit., p. 58.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 60-63.

Ezra and Nehemiah were contemporaries. He further states that postulating the whole story of Ezra as a fiction is of no help in explaining the few instances in which Nehemiah and Ezra appear together. If the Chronicler were a novelist he could easily have invented further incidents of joint activity for his heroes.⁷⁷ Rowley accepts the rather wide authority attributed to the two men as genuine, but thinks it was exercised at different times. Nehemiah also carried out religious reforms to support his political program. The fact that both men had to settle the problem of mixed-marriages can be explained only by assuming that Nehemiah arrived during the reign of Artaxerxes I, 444 B. C., while Ezra was active under Artaxerxes II, 397 B. C. No other assumption provides a period between them sufficiently long to allow the problem of mixed-marriages to have arisen again.⁷⁸

The view of Hoelscher that the reform of Nehemiah endeavored to enforce a clergy-oriented law follows Torrey's theory of denying the historicity of Ezra.⁷⁹

Before proposing a solution of these rather involved problems, an examination of the texts which make Ezra and Nehemiah contemporaries is in order. The first of these

⁷⁷Rowley, Order, p. 152.

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 154f.

⁷⁹Hoelscher, op. cit., pp. 120f.

passages reads:

Then Nehemiah, the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest, the scribe, and the Levites, the ones who explained to the people, said to all the people, "This day is a holy day to Yahweh, your God! Do not mourn nor weep!" because all the people were weeping as they heard the words of the Torah (Neh. 8:9).

In I Esdras 9:49, the parallel passage, Nehemiah's name does not appear, but another, Attarates, does. Obviously the latter is merely a transliteration of the Hebrew אַתָּרָטָא . This omission of Nehemiah's name in I Esdras points to its omission in the Hebrew text used by the translator of the former version. On the other hand, the text of II Esdras follows the Massoretic Hebrew. The critical apparatus of Biblia Hebraica gives no evidence of any textual variants for this verse.⁸⁰ Since there is a conflict between the evidence of I Esdras and the Hebrew text, the question of the inclusion of Nehemiah's name in this verse must be decided on the basis of evidence from other parts of the books.

The second passage under consideration is Nehemiah 12:26:

These [list of men preceding] were in the days of Joiakim, son of Jeshua, son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the Pechah, and Ezra the priest, the scribe.

The II Esdras translation of this passage is useless for

⁸⁰Rudolf Kittel, editor, Biblia Hebraica (8te Auflage; Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1937), p. 1313.

purposes of comparison. Beginning with Nehemiah 12:24, it reads:

The rulers of the Levites . . . singing and praising after the commandment of David the man of God, course by course, (25) while I [Who is he?] entered the gates (26) in the days of Joiakim, son of Jeshua, son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah, and Ezra the priest, the scribe.

On the surface this purports to be an account of an eyewitness, but it is hardly a translation of the Hebrew text. There is no parallel text from I Esdras for comparison. Since in general II Esdras seems to be a translation of the present Massoretic text, and since the critical apparatus of the Biblia Hebraica indicates no textual variants at this point, one is forced to assume that the translator of II Esdras, or a copyist, reworked this passage to strengthen the witness to Ezra and Nehemiah as contemporaries. The use of the first person in the sense of an eyewitness is best explained in the same way.

The third passage is a verse in the story of the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, Nehemiah 12:36:

. . . and his brothers Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, Hanani, with the instruments of music of David the man of God. And Ezra the scribe was in the front.

This verse is a part of the Nehemiah Memoirs, written in the first person. There is no possibility that the original writer made a mistake. This is either a true historical statement or a flat interpolation. There is no parallel passage in I Esdras for comparison, just as in the case of

Nehemiah 12:26. Since there is no textual evidence upon which to decide the authenticity of these passages, the text itself must be examined to determine the issue.

There are four possibilities of explaining the failure of Ezra and Nehemiah to mention one another except in the three passages examined. (1) Ezra preceded Nehemiah and was dead before the latter's arrival, as Josephus tells the story.⁸¹ (2) Nehemiah preceded Ezra and had completed his work before Ezra arrived in Jerusalem.⁸² (3) The two men were personally antagonistic and avoided any mention of one another unless absolutely necessary. (4) The two men were in Jerusalem together for only a relatively short time, doing different work, so that they did not cross each other's paths in an official manner, except for the three incidents which are mentioned.

Modern scholars for the most part have implicitly denied the possibility of Ezra's having died before the arrival of Nehemiah in Jerusalem. Since Josephus is unreliable in many details, they are very likely correct in this attitude. The suggestion that the two men, while allies in their work for their nation, disliked one another personally casts an unwarranted reflection upon the integrity and work

⁸¹Josephus, *Ant.*, xi, 5, 5.

⁸²This is the position of a large number of scholars who have worked on the problem. See Rowley, *Order*, pp. 135f. for a list of these scholars.

of the two men. The other two possibilities, that Nehemiah arrived first and finished his work before Ezra arrived, or that because of differing work the two men's paths crossed infrequently while both were in Jerusalem deserve further attention.

Is the apparent overlapping authority of the two men sufficient to force a conclusion that they could not have been in Jerusalem at the same time? A careful examination of the Biblical account discloses that the overlapping of authority is not as great as many times assumed. The work of Ezra was based upon a rescript of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:12-26).⁸³ Except for the last two verses, this is actually a very moderate grant of privileges and power. Verse 13 states that all Jews who wish to do so may go to Jerusalem with Ezra. Verse 14 gives Ezra the authority to inquire concerning the religious life of Jerusalem. Verses 15-19 order the transportation of the king's gift to Jerusalem and specify the way it was to be used. Verses 20-23 direct the western satraps to support the temple within specified limits in order to assure the kindness of the God of Jerusalem. Verse 24 excuses the temple personnel from taxation. So far there is nothing in the rescript which should cause one to doubt the authenticity of the

⁸³ Many modern scholars reject this decree for the same reasons mentioned, supra, pp. 60f.

document.

As already stated, there is some evidence that the Persian kings were interested in the religious welfare of their subjects.⁸⁴ Thus the sending of an emissary to check upon conditions and the granting of a specific allowance to help in the work is well within the usual interests of the Persian kings. Also, as already pointed out, the use of the terms "your God," and "God of heaven," is perfectly in keeping with Persian imperial practice.⁸⁵ The mission of such inspectors was made necessary also by the fact that local satraps many times obeyed the orders of the king only when it suited their purposes. It is quite likely that the king's grants through the satraps to local temples, including others than that in Jerusalem, were paid spasmodically by the Persian officials.

The last two verses, 25-26, however, present a more serious problem. The text seems to indicate that Ezra was given authority to appoint judges and magistrates over all the people in Aber-Nahara. The penalties for disobedience equate the "Law of your God," with the commands of the king. If such were the intent of the decree, it must be taken as an order given with the king's tongue in his cheek or as a rank forgery. But need the order have this meaning? Could

⁸⁴Cowley, *op. cit.*, papyrus 21, line 4ff.

⁸⁵Bickermann, *op. cit.*, pp. 256ff.

it not apply merely to the Jews who lived beyond the immediate area of Jerusalem? Its purpose then would simply be a directive to exempt the Jews from the jurisdiction of the local satraps as far as their religious life was concerned. The added provision that they were to be taught the Law of God lends strength to this proposal.

Therefore it may be concluded that the power granted Ezra was in reality confined to the religious life of the people, and that the decree need not imply that Ezra had satrapal functions. This view is also substantiated by the fact that there is no mention that he exercised secular authority in his work with the people. Ezra was not a secular reformer, but a teacher of the Law of God.

In the case of Nehemiah, on the other hand, it is quite evident that he was sent on the secular mission of building the wall of Jerusalem. To accomplish this task he was given letters to the western governors and a military force. These provisions imply his appointment to the governorship (Neh. 2:6-9). Thus, the authority granted him by the king was completely secular.

In his dealings with the people, however, he seems to have made decisions on religious questions. Several passages are cited as indicating his interference in religious affairs (Neh. 7:65; 10:33; 13:10ff., 15ff., 23ff.). The first of these is irrelevant since it is contained in a list which Nehemiah himself says he found. The governor

there mentioned was not Nehemiah.

The second passage reads thus: "We imposed upon ourselves to give one third shekel a year for the service of God's house." This regulation was not a law which Nehemiah issued because the verb form used is a first person plural. It was rather a mutual agreement by the members of the community to provide for the services of the temple. It was not imposed from above,⁸⁶ but was no doubt based upon an agreement from earlier times. The enforcement of this provision by Nehemiah therefore cannot be used to demonstrate his interference in the strictly religious affairs of the community.

The reforms mentioned in chapter 13 were all the result of the enforcement of laws known to the people which had been allowed to fall into disuse. There is no hint that Nehemiah instituted something new. He simply acted as a good administrator of the laws of the community.

Thus it can be seen that there was no essential conflict of authority between Ezra and Nehemiah. The former used moral force in leading the people into the right paths,

⁸⁶Welch, *op. cit.*, pp. 80ff. Welch interprets this as a covenant between the remanent population in both North Israel and Judah for the provision of the sacrifices between 586 and 520 B. C. This was the only time such a provision was needed since before 586 the royal house provided the sacrifices and afterward the Persian royal house did so, according to the orders of Darius at the time of Zerubbabel. That such an assumption is dubious can be seen from the fact that Artaxerxes had to repeat the gifts and the orders.

while the latter used physical power to enforce the laws.

The study thus far does not eliminate the inherent possibility that Ezra and Nehemiah were together in Jerusalem at some time as demanded by the texts which state that they appeared together on three occasions. The question remains, however, why neither of the men mentions the other as participating in joint endeavors.

First of all it is noted that the three passages linking their work are found in Nehemiah 8:9 and chapter 12 of the same book. Furthermore, no precise date is given for any of the three incidents. While it is mentioned that the assembly in Jerusalem met to consider the problem of mixed-marriages on the twentieth day of the ninth month, no year is specified (Ezra 10:9). The conclusion of the investigation came on the first day of the first month; but again no year is given (Ezra 10:17). The reading of the Law by Ezra is placed on the first day of the seventh month (Neh. 8:2), without mentioning the year.

It is often assumed that Ezra 10:9 and Nehemiah 8:2 refer to the same year and that the events of the latter passage precede those of the former one. This inference does not necessarily follow. In fact, the very position of the passages in the sequence of the record militates against such conclusions. Their validity requires the demonstration that the people in Jerusalem did not know about the prohibition of foreign marriages before Ezra

brought the Law. In the face of evidence in the Bible ignorance of such a law at this time cannot be maintained (Judges 14:3; 1 Kings 11:1-2; 16:31). The probability suggests itself that the formal reading of the Law took place in Jerusalem during Ezra's second or still-later year. If this is the case, it is furthermore quite possible that the events of Ezra 7-10 took place at a time when Nehemiah was not in Jerusalem, while the events of Nehemiah 8-10 occurred in a later year when both men were present.

Support for this possibility comes from an examination of the account of the dedication of the wall. It is generally assumed that the walls were dedicated immediately after their completion. Normally this sequence would be expected, but it is not required by the account. In fact, it may be concluded that the dedication of the walls did not take place until after Nehemiah had gone back to Babylon in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes and had returned to Jerusalem. The description of the dedication of the walls begins, "At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem . . ." (Neh. 12:27). Following the story of the dedicatory procession and praise to God there is a description of certain arrangements stating, "On that day appointments were made . . ." (Neh. 12:44). Then the record of events on that day closes with a story of reading the Law to the people with the introductory note, "Also on that day . . ." (Neh. 13:1). This whole story of the dedication of the wall relates a

sequence of events which is perfectly normal. There was first the procession along the walls and the formal dedication with praise to God. There followed the appointments to ecclesiastical positions which were vacant, and the celebration was closed with a formal reading of the Law to the people.

In the verses immediately following the description of the dedication day, there is this significant note:

Now before this, Eliashib the priest . . . had made for Tobiah a large room. . . . When this happened I [Nehemiah] was not in Jerusalem . . . I had returned to the king, (Neh. 13:4-6).

These notices seem to state in unmistakable terms that the wall was not dedicated until Nehemiah had gone to Babylon and returned. It is when one reads into the account that the dedication followed immediately upon the completion of the building project that the text becomes confusing.⁸⁷

It is true that no reason for this delay is explicitly mentioned in the text. It is also clear that the dedication of the temple, under Solomon (1 Kings 8), and again under Zerubbabel (Ezra 6:16), was held very soon after the completion of the building. What could be the reason for a delay in this case? The suggestion already made by George Rawlinson⁸⁸ seems to answer the question adequately. He points

⁸⁷It was when a chart of all dates in Ezra-Nehemiah had been made that this conclusion regarding the dating of the dedication was reached. See Appendix A, p. 173.

⁸⁸George Rawlinson and G. Wood, The Book of Nehemiah

out that in the midst of the opposition by the neighboring peoples and in the face of a continuing accusation of treachery and rebellion against the king of Persia (Neh. 6:5-7), Nehemiah simply did not dare to dedicate the wall until he had received permission to do so from the king. In view of the dangerous situation he did not even dare to send such a request to the king by letter. He feared that his words could be twisted by the clique at court as indicating that a rebellion was the real motive behind the building of the wall. At the same time he did not dare to leave Jerusalem himself until he was sure that affairs were safe both from external and internal enemies.

If Ezra and Nehemiah were in Jerusalem together only in the latter part of Nehemiah's governorship, the question arises whether it is possible to fix Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem as occurring between Nehemiah's return to the king and his second visit to Jerusalem. Such an hypothesis would explain why there is no further mention of their joint activity in the record. The sequence of events would be as follows: Nehemiah arrived first, built the wall, governed for twelve years, and returned to the king. During this time it is quite likely that he enforced no great changes in the religious life of the people. All the notices of

(The Pulpit Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d., reprint, 1950), VII, section 2, 132.

religious reform in the text occur after he came to Jerusalem the second time. Ezra arrived in the period of Nehemiah's absence and was faced immediately with the necessity of reforming the spiritual life of the people, particularly in the area of marriages with foreign women. His first efforts were partially successful, but the problem could not be settled completely because of opposition within the high priest's family. Joiada's son had married Sanballat's daughter (Neh. 13:28), but there is no mention that this case was investigated.

During the absence of Nehemiah there was no authority sufficient to keep the high-priestly family in line. With his return to Jerusalem, however, the circumstances changed. The governor dedicated the walls, giving Ezra a prominent place in the ritual, but seemingly excluding the high priest (Neh. 12:27-43). As part of the ceremony, the Law against marriage to foreigners was read (13:1-3). Then, with the prestige gained by this successful political accomplishment, Nehemiah enforced the measures against spiritual evils. He drove out the son-in-law of Sanballat and demanded obedience to other provisions of the Law.

This hypothesis may be charged with overlooking the fact that the text records Ezra's arrival at Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:7,8). To obviate this objection only a slight emendation of the text is necessary. It is proposed that the reading of "the seventh

year" be changed to either the "twenty-seventh" or "thirty-seventh year," involving the accidental dropping-out of only one word. Since in the assumed original text there were three successive words beginning with the same letter (י), such an omission on the part of the copyist is quite likely.⁸⁹ The probability of such haplography is much greater than the conjecture of the interpolation of names at three different places which is necessary if it is assumed that Ezra and Nehemiah were not contemporary. The question whether the original read twenty-seventh or thirty-seventh year is decided in favor of the latter by the very fact that Ezra and Nehemiah are placed together after Nehemiah's return to the king in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes. Ezra then arrived five years later.

This sequence of events raises one more difficulty. An explanation must be given to the question how Ezra 7-10 became separated from Nehemiah 8-10. In accepting the authorship of Ezra for the whole Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah history, it is not necessary to assume that the text has been preserved in the exact order in which he left it. A later scribe, who did not realize that the word "thirty" had dropped out of the "thirty-seventh year," could have decided to rearrange the order of the text. If Ezra came

⁸⁹There is at least one such loss of a part of a number known in the Bible (1 Sam. 13:1).

in the seventh year of Artaxerxes and Nehemiah in the twentieth, he could have concluded that obviously Ezra should precede Nehemiah in the record. Yet the text named the two men together in the incident now recorded in Nehemiah 8. So the scribe simply moved that part of the story of Ezra which contained no reference to Nehemiah to a position preceding the history of Nehemiah.

This section began with an inquiry into the three passages which mention Ezra and Nehemiah as contemporaries. Since there was insufficient textual evidence to decide whether the conjunction of the two names is authentic, the investigation shifted to the question of the overlapping authority of the two men. When it was found that there was no essential clash of authority, another explanation of the linking of Ezra and Nehemiah on three, and only three, occasions was sought. This was found in the fact that apparently the two men were present together in Jerusalem only after Nehemiah had gone back to Babylon and returned again to Jerusalem. Their joint activity centered about the dedication of the wall and a religious reform, especially the problem of mixed-marriages.

- g. Ezra apparently thanked God for a wall in Jerusalem thirteen years before Nehemiah built it.⁹⁰

⁹⁰Supra, p. 13.

At the same time of the mixed-marriage difficulty, Ezra mentioned the relationship of Israel to Yahweh in prayer. In the course of this devotion he thanked God for many benefits. Among them he mentioned a wall. This would seem to indicate that Nehemiah had already finished his work before Ezra arrived.

Keil takes the term וְיָגֵן , wall, in the figurative sense of divine protection and not as a reference to an actual wall.⁹¹ Wright affirms that Ezra was praying about a wall which was being built at that time. According to him, prayer by Ezra during the actual work on the wall was more likely, psychologically, than to pray for a wall built by Nehemiah some forty years earlier as dates of 444 B. C. for Nehemiah and 397 B. C. for Ezra would require.⁹² Scott makes the point that only in Micah 7:11 does this word mean a city wall. Its real meaning is a vineyard fence. In Psalm 80:13 it may be understood figuratively of Yahweh's protection.⁹³ In commenting upon Scott's article, Wood insists that the word in Ezra means the actual city wall. Since it took only fifty-two days for Nehemiah to finish the wall, he concludes that it must have been standing,

⁹¹Keil, Ezra, pp. 120f.

⁹²Wright, Ezra, p. 18. This interpretation is based upon his connecting Ezra with the wall-building project of Ezra 4:6-23.

⁹³Scott, op. cit., p. 264.

needing only repair. Ezra, he believes, exceeded the authority of his religious mandate because he saw his religious reforms would be useless unless he had firm political control. As a result Artaxerxes relieved him of his position but inflicted no further punishment. Ezra was still the de facto religious leader in Jerusalem at the time that Nehemiah arrived.⁹⁴

Snaith infers that the whole argument about $\gamma\tau\lambda$ is pointless. Since it can be understood both figuratively and concretely, there is no possibility of deciding which Ezra meant.⁹⁵ Since I Esdras translates $\gamma\tau\lambda$ with $\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega\nu\alpha$ (foundation, stronghold),⁹⁶ Rowley feels that the word does not mean city wall.⁹⁷ Kapelrud discusses the usage of the word on the basis of other occurrences. Although the word can be interpreted figuratively, he insists upon its use in a concrete understanding here. He says that any other interpretation destroys its meaning in this context.⁹⁸

⁹⁴C. T. Wood, "Nehemiah--Ezra," The Expository Times, LIX (November, 1947), 53f.

⁹⁵Snaith, op. cit., pp. 58f.

⁹⁶Alfred Rahlfs, editor, Septuaginta, id est Vetus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX Interpretes (Editio Quarta; Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1950), numbers the verse in question 8:78.

⁹⁷Rowley, Order, pp. 140ff.

⁹⁸Kapelrud, op. cit., pp. 66f.

In the entire Old Testament the root $\text{ך } \text{ך} \text{ך}$ occurs twenty-three times as a noun and ten times as a verb. There is one more instance in which it is conjectured that a word should be emended to $\text{ך } \text{ך} \text{ך}$ (2 Sam. 22:30 = Ps. 18:30). Of these occurrences, seven in the nominal form (Is. 5:5; Hos. 2:8; Ps. 80:13; Ezek. 13:5; 22:30; Mic. 7:11; Ps. 62:4) and eight in the verbal form (Is. 58:12; Ezek. 13:5; 22:30; Hos. 2:8; Amos 9:11; Lam. 3:7; Job 19:8; Lam. 3:9) appear to be figurative. In six of these examples the word occurs twice in a cognate accusative construction. Thus there are actually twelve passages in which the word is used figuratively. At the same time it should be noted that in all but one of these cases (Mic. 7:11), the figure is that of vineyard wall or fence. As most of these were built of stone in Palestine, this word probably means simply such a fence built for protection against wild animals or small-time thieves.

In eight cases of the nominal form (Num. 32:16,24,36; 1 Sam. 24:4; Jer. 49:3; Nahum 3:17; Zeph. 2:6; Ps. 89:41) the word refers to actual fences built to protect small cattle, although the parallel line of Psalm 89:41 could imply a city wall. In two cases the nominal form (Num. 22:24, Prov. 24:31) can refer only to an actual stone wall of a vineyard. In two cases the participial form (2 Kings 12:13; 22:6) is clearly used to denote stone masons, supporting the idea that a $\text{ך } \text{ך} \text{ך}$ was built of stone. In the

case of three occurrences of the nominal form (Ezek. 42:7,10,12) it is impossible to determine absolutely whether the term is used figuratively or in a real sense. However, it is more likely that they are meant in the sense of real walls since the vision of the temple was not described in a figurative sense.

The usage of the word is ambiguous enough to make it impossible to decide in which way Ezra was using it in his prayer. Even a study of the reasons for his thankfulness to God does not help to decide the meaning here. In Ezra 9:8,9 there are four blessings named which are concrete: "a remnant to return from captivity," "life might be renewed a little in bondage," "the opportunity to erect the house of God," and "to set up the ruins once more." Conversely, two of the blessings named are figurative, "that we might have a nail in His Holy Place," and "that our eyes might be enlightened." The final blessing is the

נִיִּיִן. Again there is no possibility of attaining a demonstrated interpretation. This difficulty is of such a nature that it cannot be resolved on the basis of what knowledge is available at this time.

The fact that it is impossible to define the usage of נִיִּיִן as either figurative or actual, however, does not affect the suggested dates for Ezra and Nehemiah. Since Nehemiah arrived in 444 B. C., he had already built the wall before Ezra came in 427 B. C. The wall was built at

the time he prayed; therefore, the precise meaning of the word does not affect the understanding of the relationship between Ezra and Nehemiah.

- h. The Ezra narrative presupposes a settled city with comparative safety for the inhabitants. Thirteen years later Nehemiah tells of a semi-deserted place with danger surrounding the people.⁹⁹

The Ezra narrative reflects a settled city with comparative safety for the inhabitants (Ezra 10:1). The story of Nehemiah and his work tells of a city which did not have enough inhabitants to fill its own space (Neh. 7:4). Moreover, the builders were in danger from the surrounding people. The situation should be the reverse if Ezra preceded Nehemiah.

Keil does not treat this aspect of the problem. According to him the city had been inhabited for ninety years since the first return.¹⁰⁰ The notice about the city not being built implies only that there were empty spaces. No attempt is made to explain how the temple was protected in an open city, nor how the treasures which Ezra brought were safeguarded.¹⁰¹ Wright points out that there is a great difference between a temporary crowd such as is mentioned

⁹⁹Supra, p. 13.

¹⁰⁰Keil, Ezra, p. 226.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 113.

in Ezra 10:1 and a settled city. In addition, Ezra 10:9 and 13 refer to many people standing in the open during a rainstorm, which indicates a certain lack of accommodation in which to hold the assembly.¹⁰² Scott assumes that the crowd at prayer with Ezra was relatively large in relation to the space occupied, and besides it came from all Israel. Jerusalem need not have been heavily populated. As an example Scott cites a certain Easter Sunday service he attended in Plymouth, England, during World War II. Although the city had been practically leveled by bombing, a sign "All seats taken" hung on the church door.¹⁰³ Young seems to have missed the point here. He speaks of the need of support for the temple worship in the time of Ezra, while during Nehemiah's days no help was necessary. Then he states that "the language of Ezra 10:1 and 13 need not be pressed to conflict with other statements of the book."¹⁰⁴

Snaith accepts the explanation of Scott as satisfactory, adding only that I Esdras 8:88 states that the congregation came from Israel, not only from Jerusalem.¹⁰⁵ Rowley believes that nothing can be proved from the facts given in these passages. One may either assume that Ezra

¹⁰²Wright, Ezra, p. 19.

¹⁰³Scott, op. cit., pp. 263f.

¹⁰⁴Young, op. cit., p. 374

¹⁰⁵Snaith, op. cit., pp. 58f.

arrived after Nehemiah had built and populated the city, or that some disaster had wiped out a large number of the inhabitants between the time of Ezra and that of Nehemiah.¹⁰⁶

The arguments advanced by Scott offer the simplest explanation of this problem. At the same time it cannot be demonstrated that the city was depopulated in Ezra's days. Since the relatively large crowd mentioned in Ezra 10:1 could have come from a semi-deserted city or from a heavily-populated one, or even from the outlying community, it is impossible to draw any conclusions from these circumstances regarding the relationship of Ezra and Nehemiah.

- i. The lack of correlation between the list of those who returned with Ezra and the list of those who helped Nehemiah build the wall is odd if the group which Ezra led came only thirteen years before the arrival of Nehemiah.¹⁰⁷

The lack of correlation between the lists of those who returned with Ezra (Ezra 8:1-33) and the list of those who helped Nehemiah build the wall (Neh. 3:1-32) is odd if the group which came with Ezra arrived only thirteen years before Nehemiah became governor. It is fairly certain that not all the leaders are listed on either roll, so that no absolute comparison can be made. On the other hand, if the lists are as close to being contemporary as the account

¹⁰⁶Rowley, Order, pp. 143f.

¹⁰⁷Supra, p. 13.

states, one would expect a greater number of identical leaders to be named in both.

Keil is more interested in the topography of Jerusalem than he is in the names. Still he identifies Hattush, son of Shecaniah of the house of David (Ezra 8:2) with the Hattush of Nehemiah's builders (Neh. 3:10).¹⁰⁸ He mentions also the Meremoth ben Uriah who appears in Ezra 8:33 and again in Nehemiah 3:4 and 21 and asserts that the same person is referred to in Nehemiah 12:3.¹⁰⁹ Wright begins by mentioning Meremoth, son of Uriah, who appears in both accounts. He also calls attention to a Malchijah, son of Harim, who according to Ezra 10:31 married a foreign wife. While this man's name does not appear in the list of Ezra's caravan, it is mentioned among Nehemiah's builders (Neh. 3:11). In addition he points out that a man by the name of Hattush appears in Ezra 8:2 as well as in Nehemiah 3:10. He believes the correspondence between the lists of names is so slight because only the leaders are enrolled.¹¹⁰ Scott agrees that the correspondence is small because only the leaders are named. In support of this view he points out that only sixteen men are actually named as members of

¹⁰⁸Keil, Ezra, p. 103. This identification is impossible since in Ezra 8:2 his name is listed as Hattush, son of Shecaniah, and in Neh. 3:10 as Hattush, son of Hashabneiah.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 212.

¹¹⁰Wright, Ezra, pp. 21f.

Ezra's caravan. Nevertheless he believes the Meshullam of Ezra 8:16 may well be the same person as the one who is listed as a builder in Nehemiah 3:4 and 30. Meremoth, son of Uriah (Ezra 8:33), is probably the builder of Nehemiah 3:4 and 21. This correlation of two men from such a small number indicates a fairly close chronological relationship between the two lists.¹¹¹

Snaith affirms that these lists are a real difficulty to one who holds to the traditional dates for Ezra and Nehemiah. The correlation is so small that it is hopeless to hold to that chronology. If it is assumed that Ezra arrived in 397 B. C., however, no correlation between the lists need be expected. Such an hypothesis also explains why Ezra found treasurers in the temple (Ezra 8:33). Nehemiah installed these officers previously (Neh. 13:13), thereby apparently creating a new office. This solution assumes a dislocation of the text and involves the removal of the name of Nehemiah as an emendation in Nehemiah 8:9, and that of Ezra in Nehemiah 12:26 and 36.¹¹² Rowley takes the position that the correlation between the lists is so slight as to make a positive connection almost impossible to prove. Apparently the only man surely named by both leaders is Meremoth, son of Uriah, who as a young man built

¹¹¹Scott, op. cit., p. 265.

¹¹²Snaith, op. cit., pp. 58ff.

two portions of the wall under Nehemiah (Neh. 3:4,21), and as an old man received the treasures of Ezra in the temple (Ezra 8:33).¹¹³ Albright remarks that if Ezra preceded Nehemiah, it is astonishing that of all the prominent men named only one can be found who is certainly mentioned by both of the principal leaders.¹¹⁴

A collation of the two lists shows that there is little correlation between them. Names which appear in both lists are Meshullam (Ezra 8:16; Neh. 3:4,6,30), Shecaniah (Ezra 8:5; Neh. 3:29), and Shemaiah (Ezra 8:16; Neh. 3:29). The second of these names can almost certainly be ignored, since in Ezra 8:5 it appears rather as a clan name than a personal name. Meshullam appears in the list of Ezra's leaders with no further identification.¹¹⁵ A certain Meshullam, son of Berechiah, appears among Nehemiah's builders as an enthusiastic workman, laboring on two portions of the wall. In addition another Meshullam, son of

¹¹³Rowley, Order, pp. 156ff.

¹¹⁴William Foxwell Albright, "The Date and Personality of the Chronicler," Journal of Biblical Literature, XL (1921), 123. This statement was made at a time when Albright held to a date of 398 B. C. for Ezra. He has since changed his mind and now dates Ezra about 428 B. C. (Biblical Period, p. 64, n. 133). Nehemiah, whom he dates in 444 B. C., still precedes Ezra, and the logic of this statement remains.

¹¹⁵In Ezra 10:15 a Meshullam opposed the action on divorce. Perhaps a follower of Ezra became an opponent and was left unidentified.

Bosedeah is noted as a builder. Since there is no attempt to specify the Meshullam of Ezra, and the ancestry of both of those mentioned by Nehemiah is stated, it would be hazardous to identify Ezra's follower with either of the others. In the case of Shemaiah the same factor is present. His father's name is given in Nehemiah 3:29, but not in Ezra 8:16. In addition to the men named in these lists, a few others also appear in both the Ezra and Nehemiah stories. However, in their case also a positive identification is impossible. Hence, as far as any conclusion can be drawn from the lists of names, they point toward little or no contact between the two men.

The one man who seems to have had a part in the work of both Ezra and Nehemiah is a certain Meremoth, son of Uriah, son of Haqqos. Haqqos seems to be a clan name since it appears in both the golah lists (Ezra 2:61; Neh. 7:63) as that of a family which claimed priestly status, but could not prove its right to that position. Thus it is fairly certain that the man's name was Meremoth, son of Uriah. He appears in the story of Nehemiah as a stalwart builder of two parts of the wall and in the Ezra story as a priest in charge of the temple treasury. That a priest should lead a gang of workmen on the walls is not surprising since Eliashib, the high priest (Neh. 3:1), and other priests are credited with work on the walls (Neh. 3:22,28). The question, then, is which of these two

incidents occurred first. Since, according to the law of the priests, a man took active part in the office only after he was thirty years of age (Num. 4:3), Meremoth very likely was at least middle-aged when he supervised the temple treasury. If, as the first possibility, it is assumed that Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in 457 B. C., Meremoth must have been born at least by 510 B. C. This would be only ten years after the list had been compiled which states that priestly status was denied to his family. It is hardly to be expected that the family should have attained the position of priests in such a short time. In such circumstances Meremoth would not have been born a priest. It is unlikely that a man would go from a lay status to that of temple treasurer in one generation. In addition, if the thirteen years to 444 B. C. are added to his age, he would be an elderly man for whom it would have been a burden to head the workmen on two portions of the wall.¹¹⁶

If, as a second possibility, it is assumed that Ezra arrived in the seventh year of Artaxerxes II, 397 B. C., Meremoth could easily have been an old man in charge of the temple treasury. At the same time he could easily have been an enthusiastic builder under Nehemiah forty-seven

¹¹⁶It is true that Eliashib, the high priest, was probably of an advanced age at this time, but it is unlikely that anyone else could be named supervisor of the building in and around the temple.

years earlier. Moreover he need not have been born until 470 or 460 B. C., which allows fifty to sixty years for the Haqqos family to have attained priestly status. This sequence of events would not make it necessary to assume a change of status from layman to supervisor of the temple treasury in one generation.

There is a third possibility. If the proposed emendation of the thirty-seventh year for the seventh year of Artaxerxes I (Ezra 7:7,8) is accepted,¹¹⁷ the situation is as follows: Meremoth headed workmen on two sections of the wall in 444 B. C. under Nehemiah in the full-flush of his strength as a young priest. Since his birth would have been about 480 B. C., the family of Haqqos would have had forty years to establish its priestly status after the golah list (Ezra 2; Neh. 7) had been presented to Tattenai. Thus it is quite possible that he was born a priest. It is quite likely that such an enthusiastic worker as Meremoth demonstrated himself to be should be advanced to more responsible positions. His attaining the position of temple treasurer by 427 B. C. in the thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes should occasion no surprise. He was probably in his early fifties at that time. While this solution has fewer difficulties than either of the first two, none of the three has completely answered all possible questions.

¹¹⁷Supra, p. 99.

- j. The attitude of Ezra toward foreign wives was one which insisted upon divorce, while that of Nehemiah was milder, except in the case of Sanballat's son-in-law, demanding only the promise not to allow children to marry foreigners. At the same time Ezra apparently had no enemies, but Nehemiah was surrounded by them.¹¹⁸

The Biblical accounts show that Ezra had a severe attitude toward the foreign wives, demanding that they be divorced (Ezra 10:1-5). Nehemiah had a milder approach. Except in the case of Sanballat's son-in-law, he insisted only upon the promise not to allow children to marry foreigners (Neh. 13:23-28). At the same time the records disclose strong opposition to the work of Nehemiah, while Ezra apparently had no enemies.

Keil states that Ezra certainly demanded an oath from the people to put away their foreign wives.¹¹⁹ However, it was impossible to convince all the Jews that the mixed-marriages were a danger, because some of the foreigners worshipped Yahweh in a syncretistic manner. For this reason the problem of foreign wives continued until the time of Nehemiah.¹²⁰ The marriage with Sanballat's daughter was a pollution of the priesthood.¹²¹ According to

¹¹⁸ Supra, p. 13.

¹¹⁹ Keil, Ezra, pp. 126f.

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 135f.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 295.

Keil the enmity of Sanballat and Tobiah toward Nehemiah was a result of their being chiefs of enemy nations.

Wright points out that Nehemiah took action twenty-five years later than Ezra. This time-span was sufficient to allow for another outbreak of the evil.¹²² Scott assumes that the measures of Ezra were too drastic. The opposition of the people brought an end to his policy. Since the methods of Nehemiah were more reasonable, he rescued the program. Ezra met with no real opposition because he was in Jerusalem only fourteen months. He stirred up the hornet's nest which the later governor had to fight. While Ezra's work was religious and Nehemiah's political, the two facets were so closely allied that they actually formed a single complex of life.¹²³

Snaith writes that if Nehemiah 13:6-30 is accurate, Ezra failed in his mixed-marriage policy (Ezra 10). Furthermore, he states that it is intrinsically more likely that Nehemiah's cursing and smiting would raise more resistance than Ezra's praying and fasting. It should also be noted that in the former's time as governor, the high priests Eliashib and Joiada opposed the separatist policy in regard to foreign marriages (Neh. 13:4,28). Thus the true situation was that Nehemiah's reform was successful on

¹²²Wright, Ezra, p. 21.

¹²³Scott, op. cit., p. 266.

the surface, but temporary, while Ezra's work was final and complete.¹²⁴ Rowley takes the position that Nehemiah's action in driving out the son-in-law of Sanballat was more political than religious. It was the political enmity of these two governors which opened a wider breach between the two racial and religious communities. However, all social relations were not broken off.¹²⁵ In addition, he points out that Samaritan tradition is much more bitter against Ezra than Nehemiah. This antagonism can only be understood if the Samaritans knew that the basis for the expulsion of Sanballat's son-in-law had been political, while the divorces forced by Ezra had a religious reason.¹²⁶

The reason for the reactions of contemporaries to the work of the two reformers can only be conjectured. There is no doubt that religious and political life was so intertwined that it is impossible to separate one aspect from the other. Yet Rowley is probably correct in assuming that Nehemiah concentrated his attention on making the Jerusalem community politically strong, protected by a military force and the walls of the city. His chief opponent in this task was Sanballat (Neh. 2:1,19; 4:1; 6:1), who probably wanted

¹²⁴Snaith, Ezra, pp. 61f.

¹²⁵Harold H. Rowley, "Sanballat and the Samaritan Temple," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, XXXVIII (September, 1955), 184f; hereafter cited as Sanballat.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 192.

the Jerusalem community added to his own province. Moreover, this policy of the governor crossed the apparent ambitions of Eliashib and Joiada to build up political influence in the surrounding provinces (Neh. 13:4,28). If this were the case, it would explain his obduracy in the case of Tobiah and Joiada's son. It would also cast light upon the enmity of such other families as put personal gains above the welfare of the community. At the same time this would explain Nehemiah's harshness toward the opposition to the reform among the leaders of the people and his more lenient solution of accepting the present foreign marriages among the other members of the community. These people were not politically dangerous, and with them the religious question of absolute separation could be postponed for a generation.

Ezra seems to have been of a different temperament. Personally, he preferred to fast and pray while letting others take action (Ezra 10:1-2). Yet on basic issues he was much less likely to accept a compromise than Nehemiah. In his zeal and enthusiasm for religious reform, he wanted all Jews to worship Yahweh with the same single-mindedness which he displayed. On the surface he may have appeared to have been a man more easily dealt with than the fiery Nehemiah, but such a conclusion is based on a false impression. The Samaritans were probably right in ascribing to him the policy which led to their final excommunication by the

Jerusalem group.

The historical and religious situation made these two men allies. The marriage policy of the high-priestly family ran counter to the religious ideals of Ezra and the political plans of Nehemiah. Together they destroyed the connections of Joiada with the outside world. Then Nehemiah tempered the demands of Ezra to the extent that they would be possible of attainment, but he let the ideals stand as the goal for the future. His activist policy made him the target for all internal obstructionists as well as for external opponents such as Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem. The seemingly more passive policy of Ezra protected him from personal attacks during his lifetime. The actual working out of his ideals exposed him to the hatred of future generations as the real instigator of Nehemiah's more drastic actions.

- k. Eliashib, the high priest, is presented as a contemporary of Nehemiah. On the other hand, Johanan, a son or grandson of Eliashib, is portrayed as one who had a room in the temple precincts during Ezra's first year in Jerusalem.¹²⁷

While Eliashib, the high priest, is presented as a contemporary of Nehemiah (Neh. 3:1; 13:4-6), Johanan, his son or grandson, is portrayed as having had a room in the temple precincts during Ezra's first year in Jerusalem

¹²⁷Supra, p. 13.

(Ezra 10:6; cf. Neh. 12:10,22). Such a synchronization does not seem congruent with Ezra's preceding Nehemiah by thirteen years.

According to the statement of the Elephantine Papyri,

. . . In the month of Tammuz in the 14th year of Darius the king, . . . at the time this evil was done to us, we wrote to your lordship and to Johanan the high priest . . . 128

it is evident that a certain Johanan was high priest in Jerusalem in 408 B. C. In fact it is highly probable that he was high priest already by 410 B. C. The only Johanan named in the Bible as high priest during this period is the grandson of Eliashib (Neh. 12:22).

This identification is based upon the assumption that the Johanan of Nehemiah 12:22 is the Jonathan of Nehemiah 12:10. These two are not the same name, as a quick check will show. $\text{יְהוָה יָתַן$ is a variant of $\text{יְהוָה יָתַן$ which means "Yahweh gave." $\text{יְהוָה יָתַן$ on the other hand, is a variant of $\text{יְהוָה יָתַן$ which means "Yahweh favored." However, it is apparent that $\text{יְהוָה יָתַן$ can be readily mistaken for $\text{יְהוָה יָתַן$ when written in the Aramaic square characters of late Biblical times. The fact that the two lists of Nehemiah 12:10,22 are exactly alike except for this one name indicates the possibility of such a scribal error.

The next data to be considered are the notices

¹²⁸Cowley, *op. cit.*, papyrus 30, lines 4, 17, and 18.

concerning Eliashib and Joiada, father and grandfather of Johanan. The first of these helped Nehemiah build the wall in the opening year of his governorship (Neh. 3:1). He appears once more as the one who allowed Tobiah the Ammonite a room in the temple precincts (Neh. 13:4-5). This latter passage, however, does not state that this high priest was still alive when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem. Since Joiada is mentioned as high priest in Nehemiah 12:28, it is likely that Eliashib had died during the governor's absence. These data indicate that Nehemiah was active in Jerusalem during the end of the pontificate of Eliashib and the beginning of that of Joiada. It is certain that Nehemiah was no longer the administrator by 408 B. C. because the Elephantine Papyrus names Bagohi (Bigvai) as the Persian ruler.¹²⁹

This evidence shows quite conclusively that the only Artaxerxes under whom Nehemiah could have served was the first of that name. Since he ruled from 465-425 B. C., the twentieth year of his reign (Neh. 2:1-10) was 444 B. C. This then was the date of Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem. According to Nehemiah 13:6 the governor went back to the king in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes I, or in 432 B. C. Thus the death of Eliashib and succession of Joiada took place some time after this date, but before

¹²⁹Ibid., line 1.

Nehemiah's return.

In Ezra 10:6 the simple statement is made that Ezra spent the night in the room of a man named Jehohanan (Johanan). Nothing further is added to identify this man definitely as the high priest. Kapelrud states that the very lack of particulars of identification points to a well-known official, probably the high priest.¹³⁰ Scott argues in exactly the opposite way. Since he is not mentioned as the high priest, and in the case of other incumbents of this office such identification is expressly noted, it follows that this Johanan was not the pontiff.¹³¹ Although it is supported by a rather tenuous argument, the decision tips slightly toward the position of Kapelrud. Johanan is not merely a name among others as part of a list, but it is mentioned as involved in an event and was so well-known that no further identification was needed. Assuming that some years may have elapsed before the story was recorded, it is likely that this man was the high priest at the time the account was written.

The opinion of Keil concerning the succession of the high priests was written before the publication of the Elephantine evidence. Yet his dating of the high priests is surprisingly accurate, largely because he placed Nehemiah

¹³⁰Kapelrud, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

¹³¹Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 264f.

and Eliashib in the reign of Artaxerxes I. He also posited a long life for Jaddua, extending it to the time of Alexander.¹³² On the other hand, he makes the bald statement that the Johanan of Ezra 10:6 was not the son of the high priest.¹³³ This interpretation ignores the problem since it assumes that the later high priest did not play a part in the work of Ezra. Young takes essentially the same position. He dates Nehemiah at 445 B. C. on the basis of the Elephantine and Biblical evidence. He thinks that the Johanan of Ezra 10:6 was probably not the later high priest.¹³⁴

Wright seeks a solution by pointing out that Eliashib could have had both a son and a grandson with the name Johanan. Then the son who had a room in the temple at the time of Ezra need not have been the future high priest. Wright also points out that Josephus names Joiakim as the high priest during the time of Nehemiah.¹³⁵ Scott adds the fact that Nehemiah was contemporary with a grandson of Eliashib, who was old enough to be married (Neh. 13:28).

¹³²Keil, Ezra, pp. 147ff.

¹³³Ibid., p. 127. Young, Wright, and Scott all

¹³⁴Young, op. cit., pp. 374ff.

¹³⁵Wright, Ezra, p. 20. The fact that Josephus, Ant., xi, 5, 5, makes Joiakim the high priest during the governorship of Nehemiah is not good evidence. As has been shown supra, p. 18, Josephus shifts the work of Nehemiah into the time of Xerxes, at which time Joiakim was high priest.

Hence it is highly likely that Ezra was contemporary with a son of Eliashib twenty-five years earlier.¹³⁶

Snaith takes the position that since only one Johanan is named in the lists of high priests, he is also the man mentioned in the Ezra incident. Then, since only one further high priest, Jaddua, is named as holding the office until the time of Alexander the Great, 332 B. C., he considers it highly unlikely that Johanan was old enough to participate actively in the affairs of the temple in 457 B. C. Hence these circumstances can be better explained if Ezra came to Jerusalem in 397 B. C.¹³⁷

Rowley gives much the same explanation as Snaith. In his opinion the Elephantine and Biblical evidence place the work of Nehemiah in 444 B. C. He feels that Joiada became high priest around 432 B. C. At about the same time one of his sons, who must have been a comparatively young man, married the daughter of Sanballat. This scholar further points out that if Johanan had been active as a priest in 457 B. C., the disparity of age between the brothers is too great to be probable. Rowley therefore also solves these problems by dating Ezra at 397 B. C.¹³⁸

The views of Keil, Young, Wright, and Scott all

¹³⁶Scott, op. cit., p. 264.

¹³⁷Snaith, op. cit., p. 62.

¹³⁸Rowley, Order, pp. 145-150.

ultimately hinge upon the denial that the Jehohanan (Johanan) of Ezra 10:6 was the later high priest. While this is a possible solution, it is not completely satisfactory, because it does not explain why this Jehohanan (Johanan) was not identified more clearly. Kapelrud's comment that the man was so well-known that there was no need for further clarification appears valid.

Snaith and Rowley both show the difficulties of the traditional chronology of the period. However, the solution they offer necessitates the three emendations discussed above, namely, the removal of Nehemiah from Nehemiah 8:9 and of Ezra from Nehemiah 12:26 and 36. Thus their suggestion is also not completely satisfactory.

The problem is complicated by our ignorance of the rule for the succession of the high priests. Nowhere is it stated that the first-born son followed his father in the office. Hence it is impossible to make accurate computations on the basis of generations. Such calculations can only demonstrate the possibility of a certain sequence of events. It is in full knowledge of that weakness that the following tables are offered for consideration. That it was possible for Johanan to have been a young priest in 457 B. C. is shown by the following table:

457 B. C. Johanan 30 years old, priest in temple.

432 B. C. Birth of Jaddua. This birth can be explained quite easily by postulating a young second wife. The high priest

was forbidden to marry any woman who was not a virgin (Lev. 21:14).

411 B. C.

Johanan became high priest. On the basis of the story in Josephus that Johanan killed his brother, it is very possible that the former was not the eldest son of Joiada.¹³⁹ Johanan would have been 76 years of age at this time, a far-from-impossible assumption.

? On the basis of Jaddua became high priest.

332 B. C.

Jaddua was still high priest during the conquests of Alexander the Great. Josephus speaks of him as a man of venerable age and the assumption of his being a centenarian is possible.

The Johanan of Ezra 10:6 could therefore have been the later high priest as far as the time element is concerned.

Dating the coming of Ezra in 397 B. C., however, offers a more probable solution, as the following table shows:

442 B. C. Birth of Johanan.
or earlier

412 B. C. Birth of Jaddua.

411 B. C. Johanan became high priest; at least 30 years old.

397 B. C. Johanan as high priest allowed Ezra to use his room.

332 B. C. Jaddua, high priest at time of Alexander the Great; assumed to be 80 years old.

The advantage of this suggestion consists in reducing considerably the age of Johanan at the birth of Jaddua. This

¹³⁹Josephus, Ant., xi, 7, 1.

schedule, however, requires unnecessary textual emendations.

Since neither of these solutions is completely satisfactory, the data concerning the high priests will be checked also against the suggestion that Ezra arrived in Jerusalem between the two visits of Nehemiah, presented in section f.¹⁴⁰

On the basis of the evidence adduced from the Bible and the Elephantine Papyri, Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem during the year 444 B. C. At that time Eliashib was high priest. In 432 B. C. the governor returned to the East. Eliashib took advantage of this absence to install Tobiah in the temple precincts. Shortly thereafter the former died, and Joiada succeeded as high priest. According to Nehemiah 12:10,22, Johanan was his son. Another unnamed son married Sanballat's daughter.

In the thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes I, Ezra arrived in Jerusalem with his caravan. When the question of the mixed-marriages presented itself, probably during his first year in the city, he spent a night in the room of Johanan in the temple. About half a year later Nehemiah returned and Johanan's brother was exiled. Jaddua succeeded to the high priesthood at an unknown date and held the position until Alexander the Great in 332 B. C. The following table presents the data within the framework of

¹⁴⁰Supra, p. 99.

this suggestion:

- 457 B. C. Johanan born.
or earlier
- 427 B. C. Johanan a priest in the temple; 30
years old.
- 412 B. C. Birth of Jaddua.
- 411 B. C. Johanan became high priest.
- 332 B. C. Jaddua still high priest at the age
of 80 years when Alexander the Great
conquered Palestine.

This interpretation removes the need of postulating a rather abnormal age for Johanan at the time of the birth of Jaddua as well as assuming that Jaddua was a centenarian at the time of Alexander the Great. At the same time it makes major textual emendations unnecessary.

1. The contents of the Law which Ezra brought are not made clear.¹⁴¹

The Law which Ezra brought with him is not fully defined. The question of its scope and contents has affected the estimate of the work of these reformers ever since radical criticism of the Pentateuch began. Some scholars even go so far as to claim that the Torah was not completed until the post-exilic prophets became interested in the cult. This interest changed the "common law" from a lay-centered to a clergy-centered outlook.¹⁴² Others take the

¹⁴¹Supra, p. 13.

¹⁴²Hoelscher, *op. cit.*, pp. 117f.

position that there is no problem because Ezra taught the Pentateuch, which was revealed to Moses and composed by him substantially in its present form.¹⁴³

There is neither time nor space here to enter into a discussion of Pentateuchal criticism.¹⁴⁴ One point, however, must be elucidated. In Jewish literature there is the tradition that Ezra restored the Law, indeed, that he rewrote it.¹⁴⁵ Is there any real connection between Ezra and the writing of the Law?

Kapelrud, in commenting on Nehemiah 8:15, points out that the regulations for the Feast of Tabernacles are found in Leviticus 23. He adds that it follows from this fact that the Priestly Code was already a part of the Pentateuch. Ezra was not interested in introducing something new, but in securing obedience to the old, the Law of God.¹⁴⁶ This particular Feast of Tabernacles, described in Nehemiah,

¹⁴³Young, *op. cit.*, p. 152; cf. Keil, *Ezra*, p. 228; and Carl F. Keil, *The Pentateuch*, translated from the German by James Martin (*Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* in *Clark's Foreign Theological Library*, fourth series; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, n.d.), I, 17-28.

¹⁴⁴See standard Introductions for the various theories of the origin of the Pentateuch.

¹⁴⁵Ezra 14:21-46. The edition consulted is in R. H. Charles, et al, editors, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English; With Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books*, II (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1915).

¹⁴⁶Kapelrud, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

differed from earlier celebrations only in the use of booths. This form of observing the Feast, however, was not something new, it was a return to the old. At the same time Kapelrud warns against basing any far-reaching theory of the origin and growth of the Pentateuch on this passage.¹⁴⁷

Montgomery,¹⁴⁸ Rowley,¹⁴⁹ and Albright¹⁵⁰ have about the same opinion, stating that the only conclusion which can be drawn from the history of Ezra and Nehemiah is that their work occurred after the canonization of the Law and before that of the Prophets. This judgment is based upon the fact that the Samaritans¹⁵¹ accepted the Pentateuch as canonical, but rejected the Prophets. Rowley adds that it is highly improbable that the Samaritans borrowed the Pentateuch after the breach with the Jews was complete.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 91f.

¹⁴⁸James Alan Montgomery, The Samaritans; the Earliest Jewish Sect, Their History, Theology, and Literature (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1907), p. 73.

¹⁴⁹Rowley, Sanballat, p. 195.

¹⁵⁰Albright, Biblical Period, p. 54.

¹⁵¹The Samaritans are generally believed to be the descendants of the Israelites left in the former Northern Kingdom, who merged to some extent with the foreign populations brought in by the Assyrian kings (2 Kings 17:6, 24-33). They worshipped Yahweh, but with syncretistic tendencies caused by the mixed religious background.

¹⁵²Rowley, Sanballat, p. 195.

Albright makes the definite statement that Ezra did not write nor edit the Pentateuch. It was probably known in Palestine some generations earlier, but Ezra made it normative for Judaism.¹⁵³

Gaster mentions that the Samaritan traditions are anti-Jewish, but that Ezra stands out as the one hated the most. They accuse him of changing the writing of the Law from the sacred script, ancient Hebrew, to the Aramaic square characters. They further charge that he changed the Ten Commandments, eliminating the last one, which orders worship on Mount Gerizim.¹⁵⁴ Whatever the truth of the charges, this tradition testifies that the Pentateuch had assumed canonical authority before the coming of Ezra. It further indicates that originally the Judean and the Samaritan recensions of the Pentateuch were very much alike. If they had not had a close affinity, no charge of tampering with the text would have been advanced.

Scott assumes that in 457 B. C. Ezra brought a new Law of which the Samaritans had no knowledge. They accepted this Law, not realizing that it was directed against their inclusion in the people of God. This must have occurred

¹⁵³Albright, Biblical Period, p. 54; cf. also his History, p. 14.

¹⁵⁴Moses Gaster, The Samaritans, Their History, Doctrines and Literature (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), pp. 28f.

before the coming of Nehemiah, in 444 B. C. because after he insulted Sanballat by exiling his son-in-law, the acceptance of the Law would have been impossible.¹⁵⁵ This theory assumes that the Samaritans were unable to recognize the separatistic tendencies of this new Law until the action of Nehemiah brought it into the open. It further assumes that in the twenty-five years from the arrival of Ezra to the return of Nehemiah, the Samaritans accepted as canonical a Law which excluded them from the true people of God. In addition to that improbability, Scott has no explanation for the hatred of Ezra and the comparatively mild attitude toward Nehemiah disclosed by the traditions of the Shechem community.

Any attempt to define what Law Ezra taught must take cognizance of the following points. The similarity between the Jewish and Samaritan laws certainly points to their origin and completion in a period preceding Ezra. The application of regulations (Neh. 8:15) from the Priestly Code, theoretically the last document to be added to the Pentateuch, points in the same direction. The matter-of-fact acceptance of the people of the binding force of the Law (Neh. 8:1,6,9), also adds strength to this position. Thus it is safe to say that the Law which Ezra had was substantially the Pentateuch as it now exists.

¹⁵⁵Scott, op. cit., p. 276.

When the view that the Law which Ezra taught is the present Pentateuch is adopted, however, the further question arises: When did the Samaritans receive the Law? There is no mention of relations between the golah and Samaria from the time of the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. until the building of the temple in 520 B. C. The keeping of the Passover (Ezra 1:19-22) at that time indicates that the Jews knew the Law. Moreover verse 21 refers to some of the people-of-the-land as eating with the Jews and indicates a successful attempt to spread the Law among those people. In addition, the claim of the "enemies of Judah and Benjamin," that they worshipped the same God as the Jews, shows a knowledge of Him and His cult. These data imply that the Samaritans had the Pentateuch as early as the first attempt to build the temple. Since the first return was under Sheshbazzar in 538 B. C., the fact that by 520 B. C. the Samaritans could claim that they worshipped the same God as the Jews points to the introduction of the present Pentateuch into Palestine during that period or earlier. The work of Ezra was not that of introducing the Law; rather his task was to teach a Law which was already known, but neglected.

military force with which to reconquer the land

For a chronological table of the events of the period see
 Dix, B., p. 176.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RETURN AND REFORM: A RECONSTRUCTION

Thus far this study has been concerned with isolating the various problems of the Ezra-Nehemiah narrative and analyzing each one. This process has led to certain conclusions concerning the relationship of the various events of the period of Return and Reform. In the following reconstruction of this period of history an attempt will be made to present a solution which is consistent with the Biblical narrative as illuminated by the information gained from other sources.¹

When Cyrus gave permission to the Jews to return to Palestine (Ezra 1:1-4) in late 539 or early 538 B. C., there were very likely two types of responses. A number of people immediately joined Sheshbazzar, the designated governor of Judah, ready to make the journey to the homeland. Others held back, drawn by the riches they had gathered in Babylon or fearful of the dangers of the long route to Jerusalem. In the light of the provisions which Artaxerxes I made for Nehemiah when he appointed the latter as governor (Neh. 2:6-9), it is practically certain that Sheshbazzar had a military force with which to protect both the caravan and

¹For a chronological table of this period, see Appendix B, p. 176.

the treasure he was taking to the temple.

Upon their arrival in the ruined and semi-deserted city, the Jews rebuilt the altar and offered sacrifices. The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated and the foundation of the temple was laid (Ezra 5:16). Since Sheshbazzar was most likely the Shenazzar of 1 Chronicles 3:18, this event seemed to promise a restoration of the Davidic line in accordance with the promises of 2 Samuel 7:8-14a. This prospect rapidly faded for some unknown reason. The most probable explanation is that Sheshbazzar died,² and the new governor had no interest in the temple.

During the next fifteen or sixteen years many Jews returned to Jerusalem and Judah in a steady stream. This naturally caused trouble because the land was not totally vacant. Other people had moved into the semi-deserted land in the fifty years between the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C., and the permission of Cyrus to return. The conflicting claims of the people-of-the-land and the returning Jews had to be settled. Ways of earning a living had to be found. Most of the wealthier Jews remained in Babylon.³

²William Foxwell Albright, "King Jehoiachin in Exile," Biblical Archeologist, V (1942), 52f.; see supra, p. 73, n. 42.

³Flavius Josephus, "Antiquities of the Jews," The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus, translated by W. Whiston (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, n.d.), xi, 1, 3; hereafter cited as Ant.

Thus the financial means of the returnees were limited. In the face of all these problems it was quite natural that the building of the temple languished.

The second attempt to erect the temple took place under a different set of leaders. Just when these four men--Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Haggai, and Zechariah--came to Jerusalem is unknown, but they were all present by 520 B. C. in the second year of Darius I. The political situation of the Persian Empire was fluid as this king struggled for the throne.⁴ The dream of a free Jewish state, no doubt, played a part for some in the attempt to build the temple at precisely this time; but to make those hopes the center of all events is a mistake.⁵

The books of Haggai and Zechariah⁶ give a general view of conditions in the Jerusalem community just prior to the erection of the temple. The city itself needed rebuilding (Zech. 1:16). The population of Judah was scattered (Zech. 1:19; cf. 7:14), with many former villages denuded of inhabitants (Zech. 7:7). The temple lay waste (Hag. 1:4), although some people had well-built houses (Hag. 1:4).

⁴Supra, p. 34.

⁵P. R. Ackroyd, "Two Old Testament Historical Problems of the Early Persian Period," Journal of Near Eastern Studies, XVII, (1958), 13f.

⁶The book of Haggai is dated in the second year of Darius by the text itself, as are the first eight chapters of Zechariah; see the standard Introductions.

Agriculture was the main-stay of employment and wealth (Hag. 1:6), but there had been a series of bad crops (Hag. 1:11; 2:17), a sign of Yahweh's displeasure (Hag. 2:17). Unemployment was rife and there were unhappy social relationships among the Jews themselves (Zech. 8:10). Into this situation first Haggai and then Zechariah injected the Word of God, a call to rebuild the temple. Jeshua and Zerubbabel supported the appeal and the work started, probably late in 520 B. C.

With the whole world in a tumult, the news that the Jews of Jerusalem were building the temple spread rapidly (Ezra 4:1). The neighboring peoples came with their friendly offer of help. Zerubbabel and Jeshua gave them what appears to be a polite refusal, citing the decree of Cyrus which authorized the Babylonian returnees to build the temple (Ezra 4:3). To those people-of-the-land who considered themselves to be true worshippers of Yahweh, however, no excuse could erase the insult of rejection. They turned upon the Jerusalem community and appealed to Tattenai,⁷ the governor of Aber-Nahara, to stop the work.

Tattenai was in a difficult position. Actually, he hardly knew who was his overlord. Amid the series of revolts in the eastern provinces, the western provinces with

⁷For a good discussion of the identity of this man, see A. T. Olmstead, "Tattenai, Governor of 'Across-the-River'," Journal of Near Eastern Studies, III (1944), 46.

the exception of Ionia had remained firm in their loyalty to the Achaemenids. It was Tattenai's task to keep that peace, and this temple-building project would look to him like a hornet's nest. If the complaints of the Samaritans that the Jews would revolt as soon as they were able should prove true, and he had done nothing to prevent it, his head was forfeit. On the other hand, if he interfered at Jerusalem illegally, and were later accused at court, it could go just as badly with him. He did what any good bureaucrat does in such a situation--he made an investigation, and forwarded the results of this inquiry to Darius.

A fortunate by-product of this inspection is the golah list of the Biblical narrative (Ezra 2; Neh. 7). This list gives solid evidence that there were upwards of fifty thousand members of the Jerusalem community at this early date. This fact helps to explain the unemployment and the social troubles mentioned in Haggai and Zechariah. The returnees had come too fast for the community to absorb them or to provide living space for all.

Darius was in as much of a quandry as Tattenai. The western people had been loyal and deserved good treatment, but the king's decision for either side would offend someone. He ordered a search of the records and found the memoranda of the Cyrus Edict, which he then reissued, but with a significant addition--an order that prayers be said there for the welfare of the king and his family (Ezra 6:10).

The intervention of Darius was probably entirely because of political interest, but it assured the completion of the temple. It is probable that Zerubbabel finished his term as governor since there is no indication that he actually intended to lead a revolt, although it is likely many Jews understood that Haggai and Zechariah were urging him to do so. On the other hand, he seems to have disappeared from history even before the temple was finished in the sixth year of Darius, 516 B. C.

The temple was dedicated with the normal sacrifices in connection with the Passover Festival of that same year. Significant at this point is the notice that those who separated themselves from their own countrymen to follow Yahweh were permitted to eat the Passover (Ezra 6:19-22).

The completion of the temple ended the first phase of the return. The historian records nothing of the events between that time and the coming of Nehemiah. One book, the short prophecy of Malachi, comes from this period.⁸ Since there is no echo of the attempt to build the wall of Jerusalem, it was probably written before that time.

The conditions in Judah at the time were not good. Economically things were better than in the Zerubbabel era, but spiritually there had been a decline. The Commandments

⁸For a discussion on the date of this book see the standard Introductions.

of God were scorned; He was not worthy of a perfect sacrifice (Mal. 1:7); worship was merely a form (Mal. 1:10); the priests were despised (Mal. 2:9); divorce and marriage to strange women was condoned (Mal. 2:11); God was robbed (Mal. 3:8); and to set the capstone, the people called Yahweh a God of injustice (Mal. 2:17). Allowing for the polemical stress of prophecy, this is a very fair picture of affairs as Nehemiah found them. It was no accident that the reformers had to recall the people to the Law.

This outlook on life reflected the unstable conditions of the Persian Empire during the period. The constant drain of taxation and of manpower caused by the seemingly endless war with Greece, and the constant series of defeats made the future look dark. Everyone thought first of caring for himself, and the provincial governors were very jealous of their prerogatives and portions. Such an attitude filters down rapidly, and among subject people takes one of two forms--a passive acceptance of the state of affairs or a plan for revolt. There was much of the latter in the Persian Empire during those years.⁹

It is quite possible that the attempt to build the wall of Jerusalem (Ezra 4:7-23) was sparked by thoughts of revolt. If the charges brought against the Jerusalem community are taken at face value they indicate such plans

⁹Supra, pp. 35ff.

(Ezra 4:12). The accusations mentioned Jews who recently had come from Babylon as ringleaders in the wall-building. This is precisely what one would expect since those men would know first-hand of the difficulties of the Empire. Xerxes had been murdered in 465 B. C. because of his misgovernment, and the early years of Artaxerxes I were filled with problems of wars and revolts.¹⁰ This would have been the time to stir up the Jerusalem community to build the wall and then revolt. Thus it is likely that the accusations of the local Persian officials were not too far from the truth. In any case, the work was forbidden, and the local officials stopped the wall-building with force. Still Artaxerxes was troubled about the affairs of Jerusalem (Ezra 4:21). He did not issue a blanket prohibition ever to build the wall, only a "cease and desist until further notice."

Such was the condition of the Jerusalem community just prior to the mission of Nehemiah. The people were seeking economic betterment by divorce and remarriage. They were contemptuous of God, an attitude likely promoted by the failure to build the wall. They were spiritually at a low ebb, with the effects showing all through their lives. From the human point of view, the community was on the verge of dissolution, but God was not yet finished with

¹⁰Ibid.

His people. As was shown above, it was news of the sad condition of the Jerusalem community, made more desperate by the abortive attempt to build the wall of Jerusalem (Ezra 4:7-23), which prompted Nehemiah, the cupbearer of Artaxerxes, to request permission from the Persian king to build the walls of the Holy City. This news seems to have reached him almost by accident. He was stationed in Susa, a city in the mountains of Elam, a rather undesirable place to live in winter. In December 445 B. C. (Neh. 1:1-2), a group of Jews led by Hanani, his brother, came to this city. They told Nehemiah the story of the latest troubles in Judah. The king was very likely in Babylon, his usual winter capital. This circumstance gave Nehemiah time to consider his resolution to aid Jerusalem and to plan how best to make his program effective.

With the coming of spring the king moved the court to Susa, thus avoiding the heat of the Babylonian summer (Neh. 2:1). At a certain meal the king noticed that Nehemiah was troubled about something. The latter well knew the danger of presenting an incautious request to Artaxerxes, but the initiative had been given by the king's attention. After a quick silent prayer to God, he requested permission to rebuild the walls of the city of his fathers (Neh. 2:5). In spite of the fact that Artaxerxes had recently forbidden the building of the walls until further notice, he granted

Nehemiah's petition and supplied the authorization together with a military guard (Neh. 2:6-9).

From a human point of view, what had caused the change in the mind of Artaxerxes? No doubt one factor was his regard for the man whom he was sending on this task. But was this sufficient to explain his sudden reversal of an earlier order? Actually, the situation in western Asia was precarious. According to the terms of the Peace of Callias the Persians were forbidden to fortify any city which stood nearer the coast than a three days' journey by horse.¹¹ In addition to this, the revolt of Megabyzos in the satrapy of Aber-Nahara had come to an end only two or three years before.¹² Since the attitude of the Jerusalem community during the course of that revolt is unknown, no conclusions may be drawn in regard to their loyalty to the throne. The very form of the order to cease the building of the walls until further notice (Ezra 4:21) bespeaks some indecision in the mind of the king. The request of Nehemiah presented him an opportunity to fortify Jerusalem under the governorship of a man personally loyal to himself. It would be highly advantageous to have a fortress under such a commander as a strong point against both the Greeks and the unreliable satraps within his own realm. He provided Nehemiah with

¹¹ Supra, p. 36.

¹² Supra, p. 37.

the necessary rescripts and sufficient military force to insure the completion of the task.

This fluid political situation, together with the knowledge that the leaders of the neighboring peoples would oppose any attempt to build the walls of Jerusalem, made Nehemiah act as a benevolent despot. He had no confidant since many of the inhabitants of the Jerusalem community itself opposed him (Neh. 6:17-18; cf. 6:10). Upon his arrival in Jerusalem he rested for three days, and then made his own estimate of the local situation. To avoid awkward questions until he was ready to act, he made his inspection of the walls during the night (Neh. 2:11-15). Only after he was convinced that the work was possible by the community itself, did he call the elders together and disclose his reason for coming to Jerusalem (Neh. 2:16-18). This first overt move brought quick reactions from the neighboring lands. The principal opposition was led by three men: Sanballat, the Horonite; Tobiah, the Ammonite, the servant; and Geshem, or Gashmu, the Arabian (Neh. 2:10, et al.).

Who were these opponents, and what was the source of their opposition? It is likely that all three of them were either Persian appointees as governors over provinces, or chiefs of tribes who were vassals of the Empire. Sanballat¹³

¹³Charles C. Torrey, "Sanballat 'The Horonite,'" Journal of Biblical Literature, XLVII (1928), 380ff. postulates a theory of two Sanballats, but Harold H. Rowley, "Sanballat

seems to have been the ring-leader of the group, as he is mentioned each time specific acts of opposition are told by Nehemiah (Neh. 2:10, et al.). His name is Babylonian, Sinuballit, but he seems to have been a worshipper of Yahweh, according to the evidence of his sons' names--Shelemiah and Delaiah,¹⁴ and the marriage of his daughter to the son of the Jewish high priest. The epithet, "Horonite," very likely comes from his association with the village of Beth-horon¹⁵ in Samaria.

Although he is not called the governor of Samaria by Nehemiah, he probably held that office according to the Elephantine Papyri.¹⁶ Thus it seems rather certain that his enmity was not religious, and another origin of his opposition may be suggested. The history of the two provinces, Samaria and Judah, provides this source.

When the Assyrian kings conquered North Israel in 722/721 B. C., they organized that nation as a province of

and the Samaritan Temple," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library XXXVIII (September, 1955), 172ff., indicates the impossibility of the theory, since it would require also two Eliashibs, and two daughters married to sons of the high priest. The latter article is hereafter cited as Sanballat.

¹⁴A. E. Cowley, editor, Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B. C. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), papyrus 30, line 29.

¹⁵For another view see Nathaniel Schmidt, "Nehemiah and His Work," Biblical World, New Series, XIV (November, 1899), 336f., who feels he was from the village of Horonaim in Moab.

¹⁶Cowley, op. cit., papyrus 30, line 29.

the empire. This status remained the same throughout the Neo-Babylonian era, and was in turn taken over by the Persians. In order to keep the provinces quiet, the Assyrians usually deported the upper classes while leaving the lower classes to till the soil and to pay the taxes. Then upper classes from some other province were moved in to become the police force,¹⁷ relieving the Assyrian troops from guard duty. An Assyrian nobleman was placed in the province as governor. The Biblical record (2 Kings 17) indicates that this system was applied to Israel, and that the official name of the province was changed from Israel to Samaria.

When Judah fell to Nebuchadnezzar, the upper classes were deported, but instead of being scattered in the provinces, they were kept in Babylon (2 Kings 24:14; 25:11; Ezek. 3:15). At the same time no upper classes were introduced into Judah. There is no direct information concerning its government after the death of Gedaliah (2 Kings 25:22-26). It was probably made a part of the province of Samaria, and the upper classes from there provided the officials for its government. The Persians took over this arrangement, but allowed the exiles from Babylon to return to Judah.

¹⁷Neh. 3:34, cf. parallel use of op. cit., passim, indexed, p. 287.

אֲחֵי הַמִּלִּיטָרִים in Cowley,
7:-

For the governor in Samaria this became a political problem since the exact line of command seems not to have been made clear. Seemingly the governor of Samaria was still governor of Judah at most times. At the time of Zerubbabel there had been a local governor in Jerusalem and trouble had arisen. Under the governorship of Nehemiah the same thing happened. Sanballat was no doubt trying to defend his political rights by insisting that Jerusalem should not be fortified. The Babylonian golah proved to be too much for him and his successors.¹⁸ Even while he fought the Jews about the wall, he allowed his daughter to marry the high priest's son. What started primarily as a political feud between the two governors, ended in a religious schism which Sanballat seemingly did not intend nor desire.¹⁹

In some respects Tobiah, "the Ammonite, the slave," (Neh. 2:10 RSV), is the most interesting of Nehemiah's opponents. There is no question but that the name is Jewish and theophoric. In both the recensions of the golah list (Ezra 2:60; cf. Neh. 7:62), the clan of Tobiah is mentioned as one which was unable to prove the purity of its blood lines. Many scholars are agreed that this Tobiah, Nehemiah's

¹⁸James Alan Montgomery, The Samaritans; The Earliest Jewish Sect, Their History, Theology, and Literature (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1907), p. 63.

¹⁹Rowley, Sanballat, p. 184.

enemy, was a Jew.²⁰ The record of Nehemiah supports this conclusion since it states plainly his relationship to highly-placed Jewish families (Neh. 6:18), possibly even to the high priest.²¹

Evidently this Tobiah was a man whose ability had brought him to the notice of the Persians, who had made him governor of Ammon. Is it possible that he was a member of that clan which had not been able to prove its Jewish ancestry, and had thus been rejected by some of the Jews? Nehemiah's use of the appellation "Ammonite" may have been an attempt to deny Tobiah's Jewish origin. The title 'ebed, servant, was a title of honor among the ancient Near Easterners. As applied to Tobiah (Neh. 2:10), it probably was an official title.²² Such an hypothesis cannot be proved, yet it explains better than any other theory the twin facts of Tobiah's political opposition to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and his attempt to identify himself with the Jews

²⁰George Adam Smith, "Nehemiah's Jerusalem," The Expositor, seventh series, II (1906), 122-125; cf. William Foxwell Albright, "A Brief History of Judah from the Days of Josiah to Alexander the Great," Biblical Archeologist, IX (1946), 12f.; C. C. McCown, "The Araq-el-Amir and the Tobiads," Biblical Archeologist, XX (September, 1957), 71; Rowley, Sanballat, p. 168; and Albrecht Alt, "Judas Nachbarn zur Zeit Nehemias," Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israels (Muenchen: C. H. Beck, 1953), II, 341f.

²¹Neh. 13:4. The verb is the same one used to describe Naomi's relationship to Boaz in the book of Ruth.

²²McCown, op. cit., p. 72.

religiously (Neh. 13:4-5).

The third of the opponents, Geshem, has been the hardest to identify. Since Ammon lay east of the Jerusalem community, Samaria to the north, and Ashdod to the west, his dominion must have been to the south to have had a common frontier.²³ The best evidence concerning his identity and territory are the inscriptions on three silver vessels in the Brooklyn Museum. There he is named King of Qedar, a principality on the northern edge of the Arabian desert--nominally under Persian control, but usually acting in an independent manner.²⁴ The Ashdodites were probably the remnants of the Philistines.²⁵

Nehemiah supervised the work on the walls in a very able manner. He appointed heads of clans or other groups to build various sections of the wall so that the work would be going forward on the whole periphery of the city. This allowed more efficient employment of the men by giving plenty of room to the builders. On the other hand, it laid the laborers open to attack since they toiled in scattered groups. The first reaction of the opposition was one of ridicule tinged with concern (Neh. 4:1-3). Sanballat and

²³Alt, op. cit., pp. 343ff.

²⁴F. M. Cross, "Geshem, the Arabian Enemy of Nehemiah," Biblical Archeologist, XVIII (1955), 46-47.

²⁵Alt, op. cit., p. 343.

his friends realized that they did not dare attack unless they were sure of a quick victory. The presence of the military guard of Nehemiah made such a result almost impossible. Those men were trained soldiers, not local policemen, and, in addition, an attack on them would constitute rebellion against Artaxerxes. With all due credit to the ability of Nehemiah and his plans for defense (Neh. 4:11-22), it was very likely the king's orders to build Jerusalem which restrained Sanballat from open violence. Probably the greatest factor in keeping the people of Jerusalem at the task was the sight of Nehemiah doing more than he asked of any of them (Neh. 4:23).

The failure to stop the work by a show of force caused the opponents to resort to strategem. Since they were also Persian officials, they approached Nehemiah as an equal--expressing concern about certain rumors. Sanballat reported that charges had been brought to him that the cupbearer-governor intended to lead a rebellion against the king as soon as he had completed the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 6:5-7). Nehemiah was suspicious of this change in attitude by his enemies, and their former actions gave him every right to take that attitude. They had already succeeded once in stopping the building of the walls (Ezra 4:7-23), and Nehemiah knew as well as they that he alone could push the wall to completion. Hence, he put them off with excuses while the work continued (Neh. 6:2-4).

Just exactly what is meant by the notice that the walls were finished in fifty-two days (Neh. 6:15) is a problem, especially since Josephus states that the work took two years and four months.²⁶ Actually both statements need some interpretation, since under somewhat the same circumstances it took four years to build the temple under Jeshua and Zerubbabel. Perhaps both of these statements contain different aspects of the truth, that the wall was made defensible in fifty-two days, and that towers and ramparts were added as time went on. Once the city was safe, there was no longer need for haste, and the wall could be strengthened almost constantly.

In any case it is very likely that it was unnecessary to rebuild the wall from its foundations. Chapter three of Nehemiah is good evidence for that since the verbs vary from "build" to "repair" and back again. This can easily be explained because the verb $\eta\psi\downarrow$ (2 Kings 25:10) does not mean to destroy completely. All that was necessary at that time to make the city indefensible was to breach the walls in various places. In the case of the abortive attempt to rebuild the walls, the record merely reports that the building was stopped with force (Ezra 4:23).

With the completion of the walls of Jerusalem, a new

²⁶Josephus, Ant., xi, 5, 8. Josephus must be used with care as his whole history of this period is inaccurate.

political situation was created in Palestine. Judah became a province within the Persian Empire on an equality with Samaria and Ammon. Nehemiah then filled certain administrative posts and appointed Hanani, his brother, commandant of the city (Neh. 7:2).²⁷ Thus he completed the emergency tasks which had drawn him to Jerusalem.

Nehemiah's further activities during the twelve years of governing seem to have been rather routine. At some time during this period there was a complaint against the landlords--money-lenders who foreclosed on their debtors and took the land (Neh. 5:1-13). It is very possible that the beginning of this problem did arise at the time of the wall-building. On the other hand, Nehemiah became involved in the affair himself (Neh. 5:10), which would necessitate his presence in Jerusalem for some time before the settlement he records. This report then looks like a résumé of a continuing difficulty which Nehemiah wrote down near the end of his governorship. The mention of his attitude toward the type of taxation and its administration shows his concern

²⁷For a full discussion of this man and his relationship to Nehemiah, see Raymond A. Bowman and C. W. Gilkey, The Book of Ezra and the Book of Nehemiah (The Interpreter's Bible); Nashville: Abingdon Press, c.1954), III, 663; also William Foxwell Albright, "The Biblical Period," The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion, edited by L. Finkelstein (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 51; and C. G. Tuland, "Hanani-Hananiah," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXVII (June, 1958), 157-161. He was probably a blood brother of Nehemiah.

for the poorer people of the land (Neh. 5:14-19).²⁸ He reminded the people of the Law (Neh. 5:7), and called on all to return to a fuller obedience to God's will (Neh. 5:10). When he had the assent of the landlords, he asked the priests to put all under oath that they would in the future follow the Law.

Another task which probably consumed more time than is indicated by the brief account was that of populating the city. Immediately after finishing the wall he intended to take a census of the people (Neh. 7:5). What follows (Neh. 7:6ff.) is the golah list from the time of Zerubbabel--not an enumeration of his own time. No further mention of the population and places of residence is found until after the section which deals with the work of Ezra (Neh. 11:1-2). The peopling of the city was likely a long-range project, with the government officials and temple personnel moving to Jerusalem first. The need for defense, however, would force some method of getting enough people into the city to make it safe. To make the capital secure, the drastic method of forcing one family in ten to move to Jerusalem may have been used at some time during the twelve years of Nehemiah's control. On the other hand, this measure could have been the final attempt to settle the city before the

²⁸See A. T. Olmstead, History of the Persian Empire (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 297ff. for a discussion of Persian system of taxation.

walls were dedicated. Such a sudden shift of people from the land to the city would have aggravated the problems of money-lending and taxation at any time.

Some time in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah returned to Babylon without stating a reason for his visit (Neh. 13:6). It is likely that one of his purposes was to obtain permission to dedicate the walls. He had succeeded in making the city a provincial capital, but he had not won the support of all the people. Although Eliashib had given his help to build the wall, it must have been obvious to such a keen administrator as Nehemiah that support from that quarter was not enthusiastic for the solution of other problems.

One fact should be noted rather carefully--there is no mention in the text that any religious reform had been attempted during these twelve years. In the case of the money-lenders, the governor had appealed to and enforced the Law against usury (Deut. 23:19,20), but he had made no attempt at rigid enforcement of the Sabbath Law or the prohibition of mixed-marriages. Even the close marital connections of Tobiah with prominent Jewish families (Neh. 6:17-19) are mentioned without a hint of censure. Whether this was cool calculation on the part of the governor in order first to secure the safety of the community, or whether Nehemiah was not essentially interested in the religious reform of the people during this time is impossible

to tell. His drastic actions during his second visit, after the arrival of Ezra, indicate that the former reason is the more probable.

Since Ezra did not arrive until the thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes I,²⁹ a period of five years intervened between the departure of Nehemiah and the coming of the teacher of the Law. During this time Eliashib, the high priest, probably because of his close connection with Tobiah (Neh. 13:4), had arranged a room for him in the temple courts (Neh. 13:4-5). He had also agreed to the marriage of his grandson with the daughter of Sanballat (Neh. 13:28). This move toward a lessening of the tension between the small provinces could be made safely because of the protection provided by the walls of the city. Jerusalem now was impregnable to any but a large, well-equipped army. In addition, since these men professed to worship the same God, peaceful relations with them appeared advantageous. This compromising attitude of the leaders set the tone for the rest of the people, and very likely no social or religious penalties were inflicted upon Jews who contracted mixed-marriages.

Since Hanani was the military commandant, he very likely sent tidings of these affairs to Nehemiah in Babylon. From the experience of living in the midst of the

²⁹Supra, p. 99.

seat of empire, the Babylonian golah knew that such inter-marriage and social relations could lead only to the destruction of the worship of Yahweh, as they understood that worship. Even though Nehemiah was at the court, it took time to make plans for a religious reform of Judah and to secure permission to initiate them.

The man chosen by the golah to recall the Jerusalem community to its true mission and worship was Ezra, the priest, the scribe.³⁰ He was an excellent choice because of his knowledge of the Law and his own deep piety. The influence of Nehemiah very likely secured his appointment to settle the religious affairs of the Jerusalem community and of those Jews living in other parts of Aber-Nahara. Having received this authorization, Ezra set out without military escort. He was accompanied by a fairly large caravan which transported the gifts of the king for the temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 8:31). He came to the city in the late summer of 427 B. C., the thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes I, King of Persia (Ezra 7:8).

Ezra began his work carefully because he needed the support of some of the men of the community. Although the caravan added strength to Judah, particularly to the supporters of his reform, some of Ezra's own group objected to

³⁰ See supra, p. 65 for a discussion of the term "scribe."

his attitude toward mixed-marriages (Ezra 10:15). The actual break with the religious authorities of the temple came over what was probably the most urgent problem of the day, that of marriages with non-Jewish people.³¹

Whoever these foreigners might be, the problem of the marriages was both political and religious. Nehemiah had felt the political implications in his feud with Tobiah since the latter's Jewish relatives kept him informed about affairs in Jerusalem. However, these marriages could not be broken up until the people were convinced that they were religiously evil. Some of the princes of the community soon joined Ezra by complaining against these mixed-marriages on religious grounds. Their chief charge was that some people, including priests and Levites, were "conducting themselves after the wicked practices of the Canaanites, . . ." (Ezra 9:1-2). Such close relations were forbidden by Law (Ex. 34:11-16; cf. Deut. 7:1-4), but since the high priest condoned such marriages in his own family, it was not surprising that many others took the same view of such infractions.

This complaint gave Ezra an opening to attack the

³¹Moses Gaster, The Samaritans, Their History, Doctrines, and Literature (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), pp. 25 and 29, argues that since the Jews certainly would not have married idolators, these could have been marriages only with Samaritans. It is impossible to sustain this opinion because the text clearly states that the Ashdodite wives were teaching their children their own language.

liberal policies of the high priest in a way which made it very hard to turn the blow. The attitude of the party of Joiada, who had probably succeeded Eliashib as high priest, was an offense against the Law. Ezra chose to attack the mixed-marriages on this basis, and expressed horror at this violation of God's Commandments. He needed a rallying point for the reform party in Jerusalem, and he used the opportunity of this public complaint to the best advantage.

When a crowd had gathered and it was time for the evening sacrifice, Ezra began to pray. This prayer was a confession and a plea for mercy which was no longer deserved because the people had turned away again from God. In spite of His giving them the chance to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple and the wall (Ezra 9:6-15), they had intermarried with the people-of-the-land. One could possibly say that this prayer was really a sermon, but the need was great. Those who had gathered to him were impelled to action, and Shecaniah, son of Jehiel, led the way in proposing a method of correcting the situation. He suggested that they join in making a covenant to put away the foreign women according to the Law.

This response was the mood which Ezra desired and he acted to take advantage of it. He required an oath of the leaders that they would join such an undertaking and then left the temple. However, he did not go far, only to one of the rooms of the temple court which had been assigned to

Johanan, son of Joiada, who was then high priest (Ezra 10:6). Joiada was of the same mind as his father in regard to the reform and had allowed another son to contract a foreign marriage. Johanan thought differently, and his support for Ezra at this time was of utmost importance. It aligned the heir to the high-priesthood with the reform and pressured other priests to support it against their natural inclinations.³²

Ezra did not allow the resolution to cool but demanded an assembly of the people within three days. In a way he was favored also by the weather which had turned cold and rainy--a typical December day in Jerusalem. Since the people were uncomfortable in the rain (Ezra 10:9), it was easy to get an agreement to have the heads of families and leaders make the investigations and decisions. This work was done during the next three months in spite of some opposition (Ezra 10:15). Significantly, there is no mention of the investigation's touching the high priest's family,

³²Julius Morgenstern, "A Chapter in the History of the High Priesthood," American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, LV (1938), 364ff., argues that it was the murder of his brother Joshua by Johanan in 411 B. C. which secured the success of the reform. This would mean that Johanan's support at this time (445 B. C. by Morgenstern's dating) would likely have had little effect upon the work of Ezra and Nehemiah. For the story of the murder of Joshua, see Josephus, Ant., xi, 7, 1. If, however, the dating adopted in this paper is substantially correct, only fifteen years intervened between the end of the work of the reformers and the succession of Johanan.

although other priests and Levites are named.

The refusal of the high priest to take part in the reform was dangerous. Unless his opposition could be neutralized, he needed only to wait until the wave of reform had spent itself. Then he could have reinstated the former liberal policies much as had been done in the five years between Nehemiah's return to Babylon and the arrival of Ezra in Jerusalem. It was probably when Ezra saw that he was going to need force that he sent a message to Nehemiah to come back to Jerusalem. The latter received permission to go to Jerusalem once more. He probably arrived there in the summer of 426 B. C., one year after Ezra's coming.

From the time of the close of the investigation of the mixed-marriages (Ezra 10:17), it was only six months until the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. This Feast began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, following very quickly the Day of Atonement on the tenth of that month (Lev. 23:26-28). On the first day of the month the people asked Ezra to read from the book of the Law of Moses. This request was probably prearranged by Ezra and Nehemiah because a wooden platform was ready for the scribe as well as for those who were to explain the reading to the people. Evidently this reading was not concerned so much with the marriage problem as with the commandments of God in general and with the laws of the feasts in particular. The nearness of the Day of Atonement would make the people conscious of

their own unworthiness. The discovery that they had not been celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles quite right would explain the weeping which followed. The leaders had to remind the people of the joyful nature of Tabernacles to quiet them. The feasts were then kept in their fullness (Neh. 8).

The second day after the close of Tabernacles the people assembled again for a fast. Actually there was no command in the Law to keep a fast at that time, and no reason is given for this special observance. The prayer of confession has a distinct Deuteronomic flavor, which is not surprising (Neh. 9:5-38). The phraseology of Deuteronomy lends itself to devotion much better than that of other parts of the Law. During this fast the people made an agreement which was very likely a covenant-renewal service. The leaders of the people placed their seals upon a copy of a covenant which may have originated somewhat earlier. The problem of the foreign wives was reviewed, and the promise was made that no daughters would be given to strangers nor their daughters received. In addition, the keeping of the Sabbath was spelled out as it applied to relationships with foreigners. Finally, the finances of the temple and sacrifices were cared for by arranging for a regular offering (Neh. 10:28-38).

Nehemiah and Ezra were now sure of the support of a sufficient number of the people to risk a direct clash with the high priest and his party. Nehemiah had returned with

permission to dedicate the walls of Jerusalem. Since the Day of Atonement was past,³³ the plans for the dedication of the walls did not include Joiada. Nehemiah led one procession and Ezra led the other (Neh. 12:36,38). Joiada may have been in the temple awaiting the coming of the dedicatory processions, but this is unlikely because he is not named even in connection with the sacrifices which followed. This omission of his name is significant, furthermore, in view of the fact that Eliashib and the priests who had worked with him had dedicated their portions of the wall immediately after they were finished (Neh. 3:1). These factors indicate that the high priest was refused a part in the ceremonies for the express purpose of testing the power and influence of the two parties in Jerusalem.

The results were decisive. The dedication was a clear demonstration of the waning power of the high priest. Since he had not been included in the plans, Joiada had the option of sulking in his home or taking his place among those who had no official part in the rites. Even the appointments for administrative posts in the temple precincts seem to have been made without consulting him.

³³ Lev. 16 describes the ritual for the Day of Atonement. This was the one regular rite which required the presence of the high priest. To challenge him just before this service would be to risk his refusal to make atonement for the nation. With such a threat he could have rallied opposition to Nehemiah's ignoring him during the wall dedication.

Now, with the high priest stripped of local support, and with the authority of the Persian Empire vested in Ezra and Nehemiah, the reformers could attack Joiada and his family personally. Tobiah, no doubt, was unwilling to face a show-down in Jerusalem. He was a capable politician and would not have risked an arrest in his opponent's capital. Joiada's son, however, probably remained in the city, confident that he could not be touched because he was a member of the high priest's family. Nehemiah took drastic action against both. The personal goods of Tobiah were cast out to the weather (Neh. 13:8), and Sanballat's son-in-law was driven from the city (Neh. 13:28). Joiada was completely neutralized by these actions, and it became only a matter of time until, with his death, Johanan of the reform party should inherit the high priesthood and seal the triumph of the reform.³⁴

The rest of the reform measures were mostly anti-climactic. The tithes and portions of the Levites were restored and regularized (Neh. 13:10-14). The habit of Sabbath-profanation by foreigners was checked by driving them away and thus eliminating them as a temptation for the Jews (Neh. 13:15-22). Finally, force was used to prevent future marriages to non-Jews (Neh. 13:23-27). Actually, this was a more conciliatory policy than the action of the

³⁴Cowley, *op. cit.*, papyrus 30, line 18.

previous year when divorce was made mandatory. Only in the case of Joiada's son was the disruption of present marriages demanded. Thus, the history of these two men closes in the full flood of their success.

Epilogue

It is impossible to close this chapter without a notice of two movements which were in a sense the result of the reform in Jerusalem: the final Samaritan Schism and the loss of the Elephantine outpost. Since the latter is less well-known it will be covered first.

As has been mentioned above,³⁵ the origin of the Jewish military colony at Jeb, or Elephantine, is unknown. That the worship of these Jews had polytheistic tendencies is known from the papyri which were discovered there.³⁶ Moreover, there was a distinct willingness to adjust their own worship to the religious sensibilities of their neighbors.³⁷

It seems to have been this tendency toward adjustment which brought them to the notice of the reformers. Undoubtedly the failure of these colonists to make a distinction between the Jews of Jerusalem and those of Samaria

³⁵ Supra, pp. 33f.

³⁶ Cowley, op. cit., pp. xviii f.

³⁷ Ibid., papyrus 33, lines 10 and 11.

was another intolerable affront.³⁸ The outline of the attempt to reform the worship of the Elephantine colony and its final destruction can be traced from the papyri.

In the fifth year of Darius II, 419 B. C., a certain Hanani-Hananiah was sent by the Persian king to Egypt with orders for the colony to keep the Passover.³⁹ The identity of this man with Nehemiah's brother (Neh. 1:2) and later the commandant of Jerusalem (Neh. 7:2) has been fairly well demonstrated by Tuland.⁴⁰ It seems safe to assume, on the basis of the identification of Nehemiah's brother with the attempted reform of the Elephantine colony, that the reform party had been able to influence the Persian king to add royal authority to the program of reform in all parts of the empire.

This Passover reform in Egypt was met by opposition

³⁸ Ibid., papyrus 30, line 29.

³⁹ Ibid., papyrus 21.

⁴⁰ Tuland, op. cit., pp. 157-161; cf. Cowley, op. cit., papyrus 21, lines 2 and 11; papyrus 38, lines 4, 7, and 8. Tuland shows that since the man Hor of papyrus 38, lines 4 and 8 is called a servant of Hanani and Hananiah, the latter are probably variant names of the same man. He argues further that, since this same juxtaposition of these two names occurs in Neh. 7:2, if the] is read "even" (a common usage in Hebrew), and since this same man appears to be connected always with the reform party in Jerusalem or Elephantine--it is the same man. He further points out that for Hanani-Hananiah to have been commandant in Jerusalem in 444 B. C. and bearer of the Passover letter in 419 B. C. gives no particular chronological difficulties.

from the priests of Knum,⁴¹ who stirred up Waidrang the governor to destroy the Elephantine temple.⁴² The report by the Jews to the high priest Johanan was ignored. Later they appealed to the Persian governor of Syria, Bigvai or Bagohi, and received permission to rebuild the temple on the condition that only cereal offerings be used in the worship.⁴³ The Jewish colony accepted these terms⁴⁴ and the temple was rebuilt.⁴⁵

As soon as the Egyptians managed to free themselves from the Persian Empire the colony disappeared from history. Quite likely it was destroyed by the resurgent nationalism of the Egyptians, stirred up by the priests of Knum. Animal sacrifices, a necessary part of the Jewish reform, could not be maintained in Elephantine without the support of the Persians, and after about 401 B. C. such assistance ceased.⁴⁶

In the case of the Samaritans, there is less definite evidence as to when and how the final break was made with

⁴¹Cowley, *op. cit.*, papyrus 38, line 7.

⁴²*Ibid.*, papyrus 30, lines 8-13.

⁴³*Ibid.*, papyrus 32, line 9.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, papyrus 33, lines 10-11.

⁴⁵Emil G. Kraeling, editor, The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), papyrus 12, lines 18-19.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 111f.

the Jerusalem community. Undoubtedly the work of Ezra and Nehemiah was a major event in the process of the schism, but the Biblical record establishes no connection between the reform during their lifetimes and the building of the Gerizim temple. Josephus dates the final break at the time of Alexander the Great. He also relates the expulsion of the high priest's son for marrying Sanballat's daughter in this same context.⁴⁷ While his date may be right for the building of the temple on Mount Gerizim, the rest of the story has too many chronological difficulties to be worthy of credence.⁴⁸

Montgomery thinks that the reform of Ezra and Nehemiah was only the beginning of the split and that both social and religious connections continued until the time of Alexander the Great.⁴⁹ As has been said above, Gaster points out that the Samaritans thought fairly well of Nehemiah, but hated Ezra bitterly.⁵⁰ The evidence does not allow a

⁴⁷Josephus, Ant., xi, 8, 2 and 4.

⁴⁸The evidence of the Elephantine Papyri definitely places Sanballat in the middle forties of the fifth century B. C. as an opponent of Nehemiah. If, as governor of Samaria, he were only thirty years of age, he would have been one hundred forty-eight years of age at the time of Alexander. Moreover, Rowley, Sanballat, p. 185, points out that there is no tradition of Zadokites among their high priests. Since the Manasseh of the Josephus account was a Zadokite, this whole form of the story is suspect.

⁴⁹Montgomery, op. cit., pp. 72f.

⁵⁰Gaster, op. cit., pp. 28f.

hard and fast decision. One point, however, is beyond dispute: the work of the reformers in their dealings with the Samaritans left wounds which never healed.

The conclusion of this study has opened two other areas for investigation. The first of these is a fuller study of the theology of Ezra and Nehemiah. A close reading of the recorded prayers of these leaders (Ezra 9:5-15; Neh. 1:4-11) indicates that they were influenced more by Deuteronomy than by other parts of the Pentateuch. What was the significance of this reliance upon Deuteronomy in their aims and methods? The second area of investigation should be an inquiry into the possible relationships between this reform and the later emergence of Jewish sects such as that of Qumran.

From the perspective of about twenty-five hundred years, we can see the era of Ezra and Nehemiah as one of the times when God's plans were being fulfilled. God had called Abraham (Gen. 12) to found a people. He had chosen Moses (Ex. 3:10) to bring that people out of Egypt. He had selected David (2 Sam. 7:8-9) to rule His nation. He had given Solomon (2 Sam. 7:13; cf. 1 Kings 8:12-21) to build the temple for His Name. Each of these choices defined more precisely what His people were to be and do. The future of Israel looked bright.

CHAPTER IX

THE FULLNESS OF TIME

The work of men such as Ezra and Nehemiah can be seen only in perspective. Enough time must elapse between the era under discussion and the viewer to enable him to judge clearly. For the Christian there is another greater dimension--the eternal purposes of God in human history. He has His plans and methods of work. In some periods these are masked by man's utter disregard of His revelation. At other times His handiwork appears quite openly among His people. This view of history may be subsumed under the statement of St. Paul, "In the fullness of time, God . . ." (Gal. 4:4). Paul is speaking of the coming of Christ as the culminating event of all history, but the same principle applies to all other of God's works.

From the perspective of about twenty-five hundred years, we can see the era of Ezra and Nehemiah as one of the times when God's plans were being fulfilled. God had called Abraham (Gen. 12) to found a people. He had chosen Moses (Ex. 3:10) to bring that people out of Egypt. He had selected David (2 Sam. 7:8-9) to rule His nation. He had given Solomon (2 Sam. 7:13; cf. 1 Kings 8:12-21) to build the temple for His Name. Each of these choices defined more precisely what His people were to be and do. The future of Israel looked bright.

The history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, however, was a series of rejections of the glorious intentions of God. Instead of rendering to Yahweh the obedience and love He asked, this double nation Baalized Him. God fought this religious demoralization by sending prophets who, however, were largely rejected by the people. Finally God brought this phase of the development of His people to an end (Jer. 25:1-11) with the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile. Yet in God's providence, the monarchy had preserved the nation while the prophets did their work.

The period of the exile was a time of quiet change. There is no absolute certainty that such developments as the synagogue and the scribes, learned in the Law of Moses, came into being during the captivity of Babylon, but the likelihood is great. Older religious commands, such as circumcision and the Sabbath, became more important as signs of separation from the idolators. It is also quite likely that the emphasis upon the strictures against foreign marriages dates from the exile. The Law, with its control over all phases of the life of the individual, became the guiding light for the people. The Will of God that His nation should be holy, in the sense of a people separated from idolatry, seemed on the way to realization in Babylon.

In Palestine affairs appeared different. In spite of the enmity aroused when the people-of-the-land were refused

a share in building the temple, there seem to have been quite friendly relations between all the inhabitants of Palestine. As the record in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah plainly shows, there was enough intermarriage to constitute a danger for the true worship of God. The temple was rebuilt, but the high-priestly family was tolerant of the mixed-marriages. It is highly probable that this attitude resulted from the syncretistic Yahwism of the people-of-the-land. Since a tolerant type of Yahwism was unable to preserve true knowledge of the God in the Elephantine colony, the misgivings of Babylonian Jews over this situation could easily have proved to be true.

Such was the fullness of time for Ezra and Nehemiah. The temple stood as a center of world Jewry and the only legitimate place for sacrifice. The truest worship of God and the most accurate observance of the Law had been preserved in the Babylonian golah. God raised up these two men to do His work. He sent them to Jerusalem to call His people back to His task. As has been shown above, that mission was crowned with success both in the reform of the spiritual life and the rebuilding of community life. Once more, as when Solomon finished the first temple, the future looked bright with promise. God's people had again entered into their inheritance.

But promise was to fail of fulfillment. Ezra and Nehemiah had built well. The keeping of the Law which they made

normative for the largest number of the Jews was a strong wall of defense. Behind its protection the communal life was regulated and preserved. A fanatical love of the Law became the power of world Jewry. It became so strong that it leaped over even such a barrier as language when the Old Testament was translated into Greek, and later into other tongues.

The strength of this reform is also indicated by the hatred of any form of crass idolatry. The heroic struggle of the early Maccabees was rooted in the love for the Law. Since it commanded that only Yahweh should be worshipped, the demands of Antiochus Epiphanes that the Jews worship the Greek gods met with stubborn resistance. Humanly speaking, it is quite safe to say that the reform of Ezra and Nehemiah preserved Judaism and the Jews in the clash with Hellenism.

Unfortunately, its success carried in it the seeds of disaster. Because the Jews had become the people of the Book, they slowly lost the sense of prophecy as a living reality. This is not to say that the recorded words of the past were rejected or that the hope of further revelation in the future had ceased, but that prophecy was not a part of the present age. The more important aspects of Jewish life were correct sacrifice and the right interpretation of Scripture. The dominance of the priests and the scribes slowly strangled the hope of God's acting through history

as He had in the past. The emergence of apocalyptic dreams was a protest against this one-sided view of God. In actual fact and in a more subtle way, Yahweh had again been Baalized. When a statement such as that attributed to one of the rabbis, "If all Israel should keep the Law perfectly for twenty-four hours, then will Messiah come," could be put forward for serious consideration, God was no longer considered free. For the Jews He had become a prisoner of His own revelation. Such was the final result of the reform, and God acted again by sending the Christ.

The reform of Ezra and Nehemiah is then an episode in the story of God's dealing with man. It is an integral part of the Heilsgeschichte. These two men gathered the strands of the previous development and laid the foundations for that which followed. Yet their work cannot be considered simply an episode in world history. The attempt to date their work by the use of all the possible information is legitimate, but their significance is bound up in God's own plans. They came in the fullness of time and helped to prepare a people for the Christ. This is their accolade, and this alone.

Description of Ezra's career	7th year of Artaxerxes	Ezra 7:7
Ezra arrived Jerusalem	5th mo., 7th year of Artaxerxes	Ezra 7:8
Ezra left Babylon	1st day of 1st mo., no year stated	Ezra 7:9

APPENDIX A

TABLE OF DATES IN EZRA-NEHEMIAH

<u>Event</u>	<u>Biblical Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>
Cyrus Edict	1st year of Cyrus	Ezra 1:1
Building of altar	7th mo., no year stated	Ezra 3:1
First offering	1st day, 7th mo., no year stated	Ezra 3:6
Temple begun	2nd mo., year following return	Ezra 3:8
Temple hindered	All days of Cyrus, to reign of Darius	Ezra 4:5
Letter of accusation (general)	Early days of Ahasueres (Xerxes)	Ezra 4:6
Letter of accusation (city walls)	Days of Artaxerxes	Ezra 4:7
Temple-building stopped	Until 2nd year of Darius	Ezra 4:24
Letter to Darius. This temple-building is dated by the books of Hag. and Zech.	Undated 2nd year of Darius	Ezra 5:1-6:12
Temple completed	3rd Adar, 6th year of Darius	Ezra 6:15
Passover	14th of first mo., no year stated	Ezra 6:19
Description of Ezra's caravan	7th year of Artaxerxes	Ezra 7:7
Ezra arrived Jerusalem	5th mo., 7th year of Artaxerxes	Ezra 7:8
Ezra left Babylon	1st day of 1st mo., no year stated	Ezra 7:9

<u>Event</u>	<u>Biblical Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>
Ezra departed Ahava	12th of 1st mo., no year stated	Ezra 8:31
Assembly on mixed-marriages	20th of 9th mo., no year stated	Ezra 10:9
Investigation of mixed-marriages begun	1st of 10th mo., no year stated	Ezra 10:12
Divorces completed	1st of 1st mo., no year stated	Ezra 10:17
Hanani to Susa	Chislew, 20th year, no era stated	Neh. 1:1
Nehemiah receives permission to go to Jerusalem	Nisan, 20th year of Artaxerxes	Neh. 2:1-6
Disclaimer of perquisites	20th to 32nd year of Artaxerxes	Neh. 5:14-15
Finishing of wall	25th Elul, no year stated	Neh. 6:15
Assembly to read the Law	1st of 7th mo., no year stated	Neh. 8:2
Reassembled	2nd of 7th mo., no year stated	Neh. 8:13
Feast of Tabernacles	15-22nd of 7th mo., no year stated	Neh. 8:18
Feast closed	8th day, no mo. or year stated	Neh. 8:18
Fast and confession	24th day of this mo. (7th); no year stated	Neh. 9:1
Dedication of wall	No date given	Neh. 12:27
Appointments for service	"On that day"	Neh. 12:44
Reading of Law	"On that day"	Neh. 13: 1-3

<u>Event</u>	<u>Biblical Date</u>	<u>Reference</u>
Tobiah's room incident	"Before this"	Neh. 13: 4-5
Nehemiah to Babylon	32nd year of Artaxerxes	Neh. 13:6a
Nehemiah to Jerusalem	"At the end of days"	Neh. 13: 6b-7
Sabbath enforcement	"In those days"	Neh. 13:15
Mixed-marriages	"In those days I also"	Neh. 13:23
526	Temple foundations laid by Sheshbazzar, second month of year after return, late spring	Ezra 3:8 cf. 5:15
536-540	Stopping of temple-building, probably from internal causes	Ezra 4: 5,24
520	Second attempt to build temple, dated from Hag., first day of sixth month, second year of Darius. Offer of help, refusal, and accusation to Tattenai	Hag. 1:1 cf. Ezra 4:1-4
520	Investigation by Tattenai and correspondence, undated, but presumably in same year. Permission to build	Ezra 5:1- 6:12
516	Temple completed, third year, sixth year of Darius	Ezra 6:15
516	Dedication of temple; celebration of Passover; fourteenth Nisan, no year stated, but from form of narrative, presumably sixth year of Darius	Ezra 6:19
485	Letter of general accusation to Xerxes	Ezra 4:6
445/443	Abortive attempt to build walls of Jerusalem under Artaxerxes I	Ezra 4: 7-25
445	Partial breach news to Nehemiah; Chisleav, twentieth year of Artaxerxes I	Neh. 1:1
444	Nehemiah received permission to build wall of Jerusalem; Nisan, twentieth year of Artaxerxes	Neh. 2:1-6

APPENDIX B

CHRONOLOGY OF POST-EXILIC PERIOD

<u>B. C.</u>		<u>Reference</u>
539/538	Capture of Babylon and the Cyrus Edict. Since the Persian throne year began with Tishri, this Edict was probably issued in first year of Cyrus.	Ezra 1:1
537	Building of the altar, first offerings, Tabernacles, all during Tishri of second year of Cyrus	Ezra 3:1,6
536	Temple foundations laid by Sheshbazzar, second month of year after return, late spring	Ezra 3:8 cf. 5:16
536-520	Stopping of temple-building, probably from internal causes	Ezra 4: 5,24
520	Second attempt to build temple, dated from Hag., first day of sixth month, second year of Darius. Offer of help, refusal, and accusation to Tattenai	Hag. 1:1 cf. Ezra 4:1-4
520	Investigation by Tattenai and correspondence, undated, but presumably in same year. Permission to build	Ezra 5:1- 6:12
516	Temple completed, third Adar, sixth year of Darius	Ezra 6:15
516	Dedication of temple; celebration of Passover; fourteenth Nisan, no year stated, but from form of narrative, presumably sixth year of Darius	Ezra 6:19
485	Letter of general accusation to Xerxes	Ezra 4:6
446/445	Abortive attempt to build walls of Jerusalem under Artaxerxes I	Ezra 4: 7-23
445	Hanani brought news to Nehemiah; Chisleu, twentieth year of Artaxerxes I	Neh. 1:1
444	Nehemiah received permission to build wall of Jerusalem; Nisan, twentieth year of Artaxerxes	Neh. 2:1-6

<u>B. C.</u>		<u>Reference</u>
444	Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem, presumably the same year, to take full advantage of king's favor	Neh. 2:11
444	Wall finished, 25 Elul, no year stated, but done in fifty-two days, so probably the same year	Neh. 6:15
444	Appointment of Hanani as commandant, also of singers, gatekeepers, and Levites	Neh. 7:1-2
444	Census begun, old list found	Neh. 7:5ff.
443-432	Slow completion of all the towers and ramparts of the wall, strengthening of first rapid work, repopulation of the city, approximate places of residence of the Jewish community established	Neh. 11
443-432	Slow establishment of social justice in community	Neh. 5
432	Nehemiah went to Babylon	Neh. 13:6
432-428	Eliashib admitted Tobiah to temple	Neh. 13:4-5
432-428	Joiada became high priest; Joiada's son married Sanballat's daughter	Neh. 13:28
427	Twelfth of first month, no year stated, Ezra departed from Ahava. From following data, this was same year as arrival in Jerusalem, hence thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes, accepting the slight textual emendation	Ezra 8:31
427	Ezra arrived in Jerusalem, fifth month, thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes I	Ezra 7:8
427	Public complaint concerning mixed-marriages	Ezra 9:1
427	Assembly in regard to mixed-marriages, twentieth day of ninth month, no year stated, but likely the year of Ezra's arrival	Ezra 10:9
426	Divorce actions completed, first day	Ezra 10:17

<u>B. C.</u>		<u>Reference</u>
	of first month, no year stated; immediate action likely	
426	Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, no date stated	Neh. 13:7
426	First reading of the Law, first of seventh month, no year stated, presumably soon after Nehemiah and Ezra had joined forces	Neh. 8:2
426	Followed by another session the next day	Neh. 8:13
426	Feast of Tabernacles, no year stated	Neh. 8:18
426	Fast and confession, twenty-fourth of this month	Neh. 9:1
426	The sealing of the covenant	Neh. 10
426	Dedication of the walls; no date is given, but presumably after the journey to Babylon	Neh. 12:27
426 and shortly after	Final reforms; Tobiah cast out, tithes and Levites, Sabbath observance, final settlement of mixed-marriages	Neh. 13: 8-31

APPENDIX C

SUGGESTED ORDER FOR READING

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

Bible, Holy. Authorized Version. Oxford: University Press, 1901.

Ezra 1:1-4:5

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Coxon, J. G., ed. *History of the Fifth Century B.C.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923.

Nehemiah 6:1-7:73

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