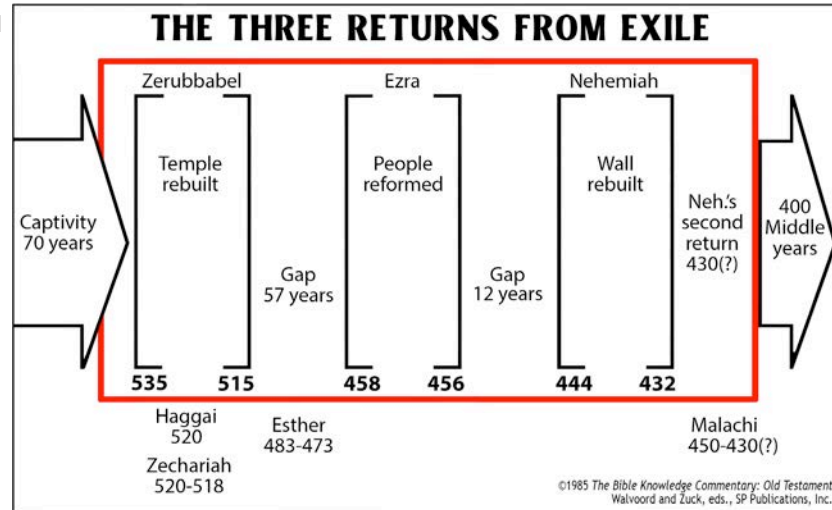




COMING UP... NOV 24: Malachi CLASS ENDS

THE EXILES LEAVE BABYLON



(See "The Return From Exile" table, p. 5)

**NEHEMIAH SUMMARIZED IN A WORD OR PHRASE: "Building Up"**

THE BASICS ...

**Who:** Ezra/Nehemiah **When:** events 445-430 BC; written 425 BC? **Where:** to Jerusalem's spiritual community

**Why:** "Thus the suggestion that Ezra-Nehemiah is mostly about community building is not far off the mark; it is indeed about rebuilding the community of God, based on the religious realities of the past."

—Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart

**LESSON THEME:** God remembers those who build up His spiritual community

**Nehemiah Cares (1)**

- He cares enough to listen
- He cares enough to pray
- He cares enough to sacrifice if required

**He Gets Involved (2-3)**

- He prays for four months (cf. 1:1 with 2:1)
- He has a divine appointment before the king
- He makes a bold ask, though terrified (2:2)
- He moves to a place he's never been before
- He leaves behind comfort, ease and prestige for hardship and the unknown to build up a wall ... and to build up God's people
- He involves others in the work (3)

(See "Nehemiah's Jerusalem" graphic, p. 6)

**He Endures Opposition (4-6)**

- From without
  - Sanballat the Horonite; Tobiah the Ammonite (4)
  - Gesham the Arab (6)
- From within
  - Financial burdens and Tobiah's insiders (6:17)

Neither Nehemiah nor his other leaders took a food allowance for 12 years (5:14)  
Nehemiah inspired others by his work (5:16)

### **He Pursues Changed Lives (7–13)**

He consecrates the people (7–10)

- Registers the people
- Repent, obey the Word of God and celebrate
- Confession, worship and covenant renewal

He consecrates the wall (11–12)

- Joyful dedication led by Ezra and Nehemiah
- To give God's people protection
- To give God's people a renewed identity

And he steps into the "messy-ness" of other people's lives (13)

- By addressing their disobedience
- By seeking their repentance and renewed obedience to the Word of God
- By stressing to them their distinction from those around them

### **Summary of Nehemiah**

- Nehemiah cared
  - He had a sensitive heart toward God
- Nehemiah got involved
  - In spite of the personal sacrifice required
- Nehemiah endured opposition
  - In spite of discouragement and setbacks
- Nehemiah pursued changed lives
  - He stepped into the messy-ness of other's lives

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**APPLICATION:** God remembers those who build up His spiritual community

### **Those Who Are Building ...**

- Care
  - Have a sensitive heart toward God
  - Care enough to listen, to pray and to sacrifice
- Are involved
  - They give their one and only life away to Him
  - They trust God for provision and empowerment
- Endure opposition
  - From within themselves as well as from without
- Relentlessly pursue changed lives
  - They're purposefully leading themselves well
  - They're getting "messy" in the lives of others
  - They prayerfully keep asking God for one more spiritual brick with which to build

### **Building Spiritual Community**

- Where are you asking God to hand you one more spiritual brick?
  - Kids Ministry?
  - Local Outreach in your community or our city?
  - Global Missions overseas?
  - A Home Group?
- God remembers those who give their lives away to build up His spiritual community

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**PODCAST:** <https://feeds.transistor.fm/old-testament-survey>

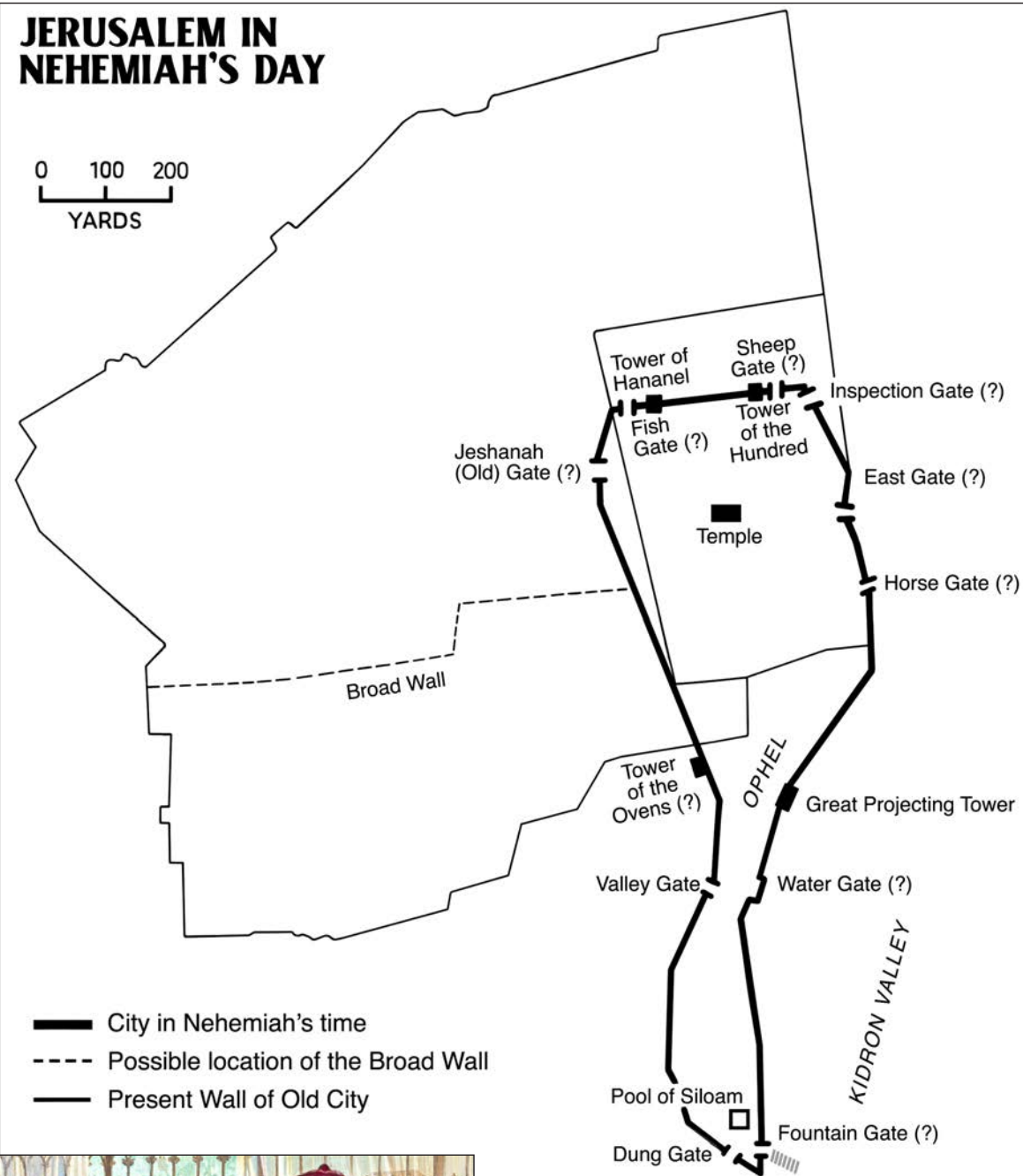
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# JERUSALEM IN NEHEMIAH'S DAY

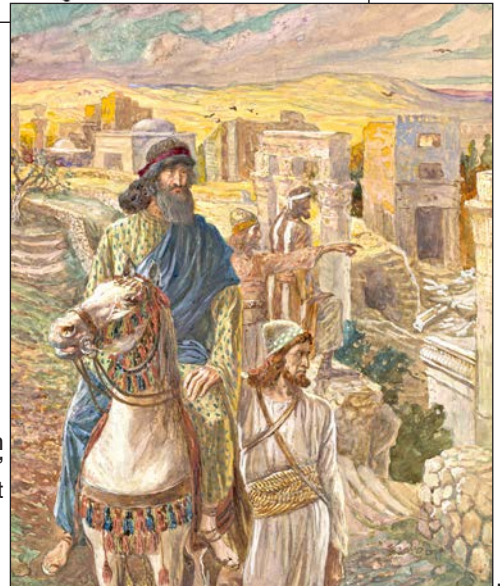
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YARDS



— City in Nehemiah's time  
 - - - Possible location of the Broad Wall  
 — Present Wall of Old City



"Nehemiah and the King" by James Tissot

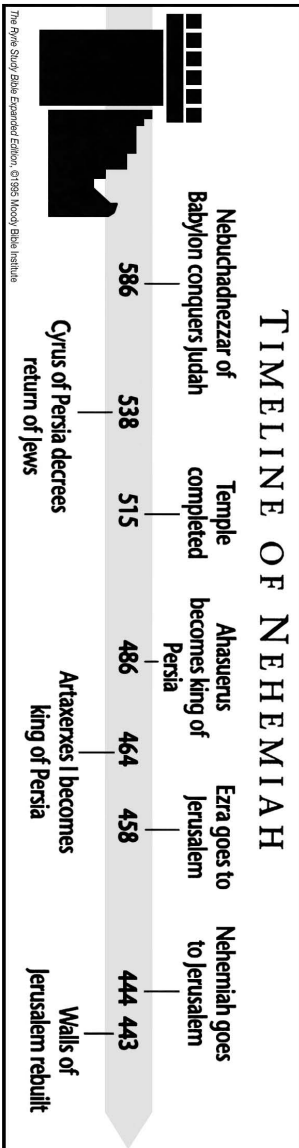


"Nehemiah Looks Upon the Ruins of Jerusalem" by James Tissot

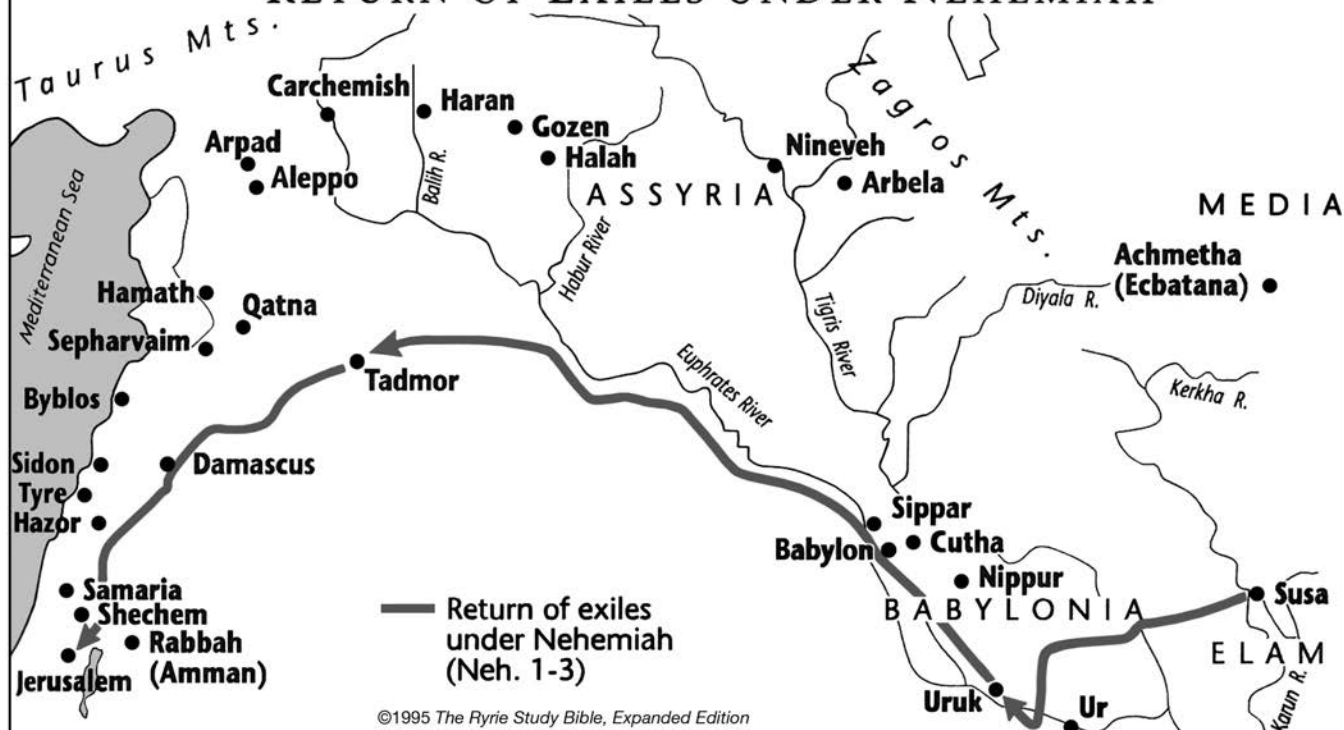
# HOW NEHEMIAH USED PRAYER

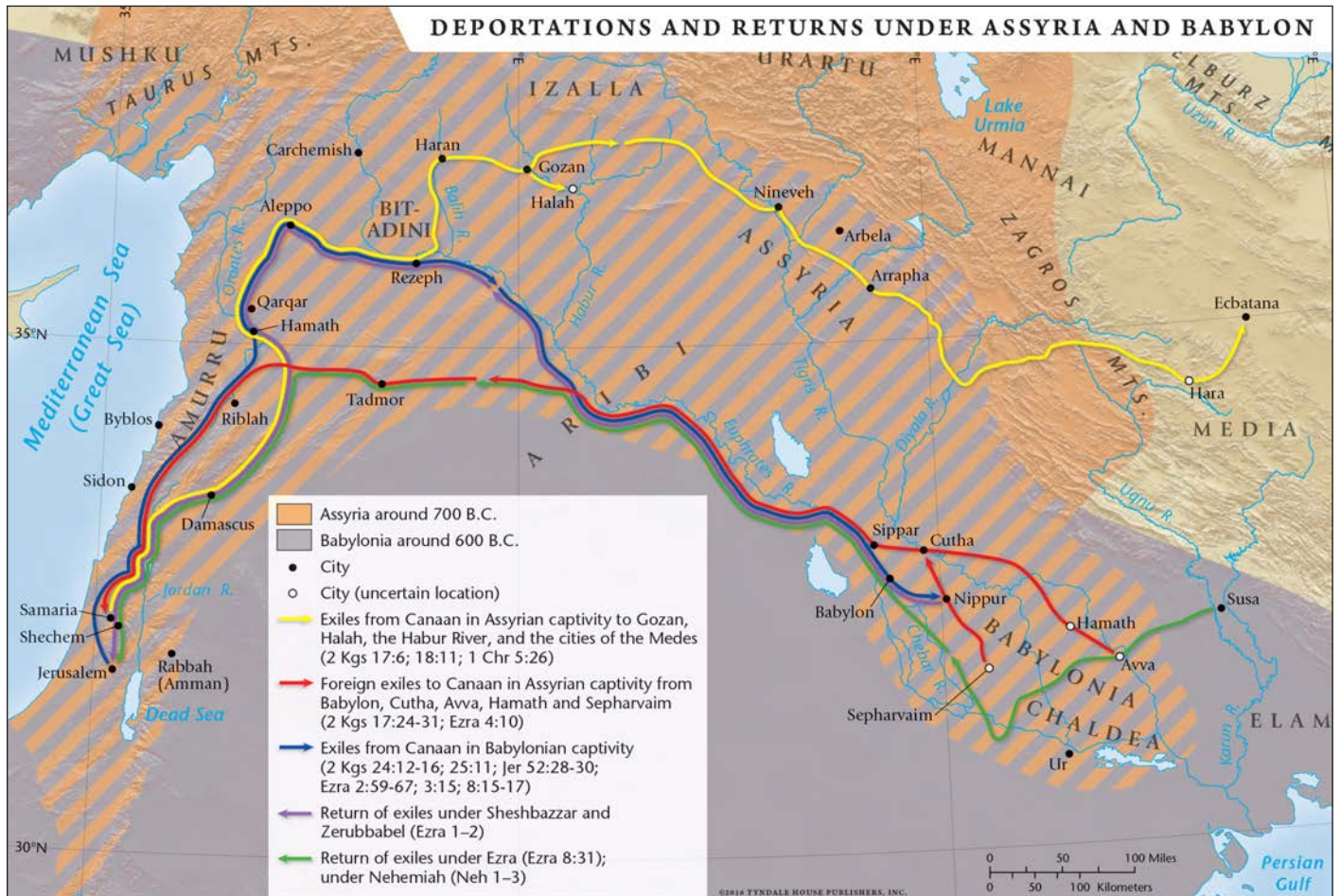
Reference	Occasion	Summary of His Prayer	What Prayer Accomplished	Our Prayers
1:4-11	After receiving the bad news about the state of Jerusalem's walls	Recognized God's holiness. Asked for a hearing. Confessed sin. Asked for specific help in approaching the king	Included God in Nehemiah's plans and concerns. Prepared Nehemiah's heart and gave God room to work	How often do you pour out your heart to God? How often do you give him a specific request to answer?
2:4	During his conversation with the king	"Here's where you can help, God!"	Put the expected results in God's hands	Giving God credit for what happens before it happens keeps us from taking more credit than we should.
4:4, 5	After being taunted and ridiculed by Tobiah and Sanballat	"They're mocking you, God. You decide what to do with them."	Expressed anger to God, but Nehemiah did not take matters into his own hands	We are prone to do exactly the opposite—take matters into our hands and not tell God how we feel.
4:9	After threats of attack by enemies	"We are in your hands, God. We'll keep our weapons handy in case you want us to use them."	Showed trust in God even while taking necessary precautions	Trusting God does not mean we do nothing. Action does not mean we do not trust.
5:9	Responding to threats	"O Lord God, please strengthen me!"	Showed Nehemiah's reliance on God for emotional and mental stability	How often do you ask God for help when under pressure?
13:29	Reflecting on the actions of his enemies	Asked God to deal with the enemies and their evil plans	Took away the compulsion to get revenge, and entrusted justice to God	When did you last settle a desire for revenge by turning the matter over to God?
5:19; 13:14, 22, 31	Reflecting on his own efforts to serve God	"Remember me, God."	Kept clear in Nehemiah's mind his own motives for action	How many of your actions today will be done with the purpose of pleasing God?

## TIMELINE OF NEHEMIAH



## RETURN OF EXILES UNDER NEHEMIAH





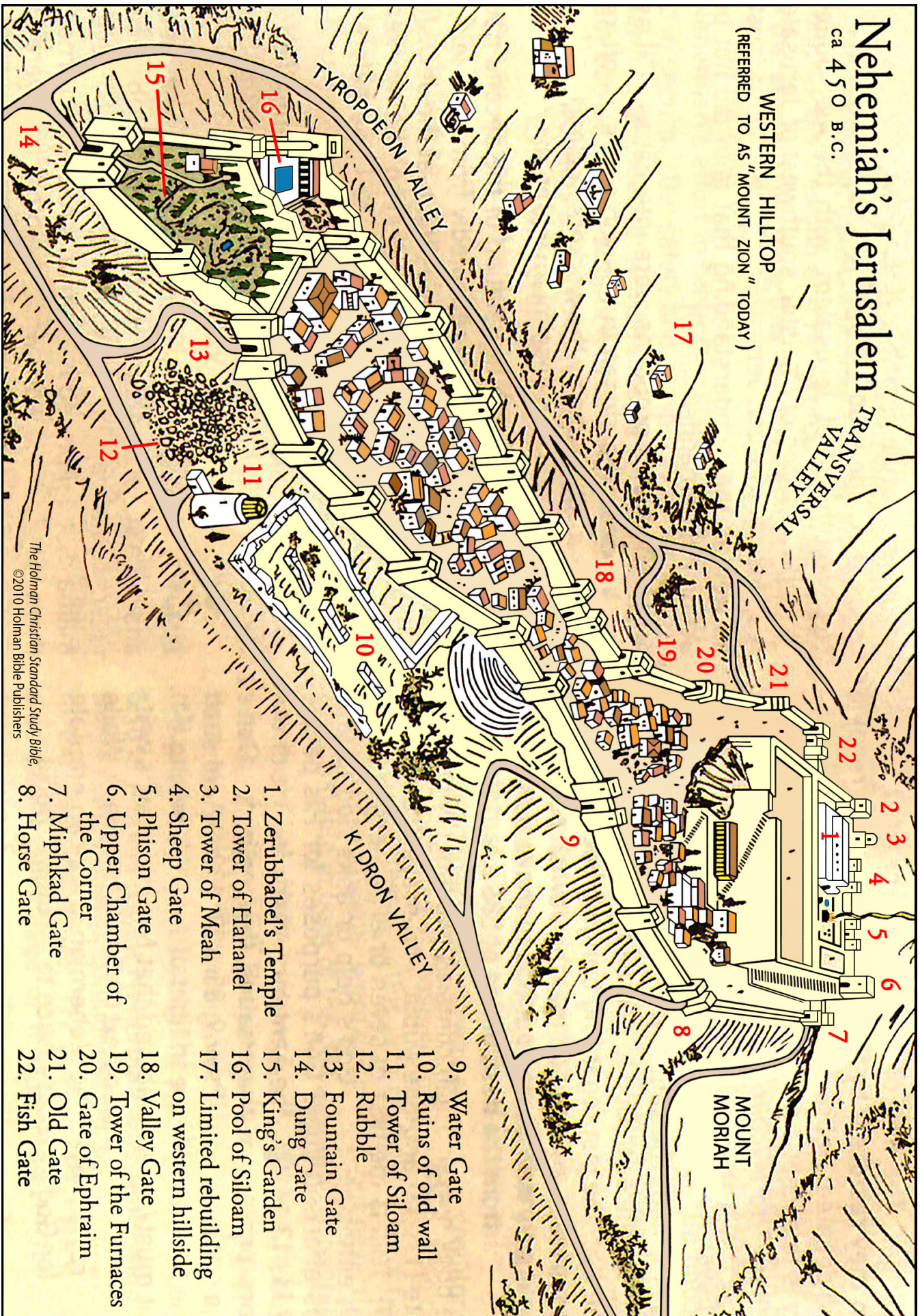
## The Return from Exile

PHASE	DATE	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	JEWISH LEADER	PERSIAN RULER	EXTENT OF THE RETURN	EVENTS OF THE RETURN
First	538 B.C.	Ezra 1-6	Zerubbabel Jeshua	Cyrus	Anyone who wanted to return could go The temple in Jerusalem was to be rebuilt Royal treasury provided funding of the temple rebuilding Gold and silver worship articles taken from temple by Nebuchadnezzar were returned	Burnt offerings were made Festival of Booths was celebrated The rebuilding of the temple was begun Persian ruler ordered rebuilding to cease Darius, King of Persia, ordered rebuilding to be resumes in 520 B.A. Temple was completed and dedicated in 516 B.C.
Second	458 B.C.	Ezra 7-10	Ezra	Artaxerxes Longimas	Anyone who wanted to return could go Royal treasury provided funding Jewish civil magistrates and judges were allowed	Men of Israel intermarried with foreign women
Third	444 B.C.	Nehemiah 1-13	Nehemiah	Artaxerxes Longimas	Rebuilding of Jerusalem was allowed	Rebuilding of wall of Jerusalem was opposed by Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite and Gesham the Arab Rebuilding of wall was completed in 52 days Walls were dedicated Ezra read the book of the law to the people Nehemiah initiated reforms

# Nehemiah's Jerusalem

ca 450 B.C.

WESTERN HILLTOP  
(REFERRED TO AS "MOUNT ZION" TODAY)



The Holman Christian Standard Study Bible  
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- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Zerubbabel's Temple         | 9. Water Gate                              |
| 2. Tower of Hananel            | 10. Ruins of old wall                      |
| 3. Tower of Meah               | 11. Tower of Siloam                        |
| 4. Sheep Gate                  | 12. Rubble                                 |
| 5. Phison Gate                 | 13. Fountain Gate                          |
| 6. Upper Chamber of the Corner | 14. Dung Gate                              |
| 7. Miphkad Gate                | 15. King's Garden                          |
| 8. Horse Gate                  | 16. Pool of Siloam                         |
|                                | 17. Limited rebuilding on western hillside |
|                                | 18. Valley Gate                            |
|                                | 19. Tower of the Furnaces                  |
|                                | 20. Gate of Ephraim                        |
|                                | 21. Old Gate                               |
|                                | 22. Fish Gate                              |