



9b). Nechemiah restored Jewish life in Judah by rebuilding the wall, and of implementing Ezra's and the Great Assembly's (GA) spiritual reforms.

In 586 BCE, the 1st Temple was destroyed, and the Jews were taken captive to Babylonia. However some of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, stayed behind known as the remnant.

Cyrus, conquers Babylonia, who is a kind ruler. He allows freedom of religion, and permits the Jews to return to Judah. However, the first wave of exiles faced extreme problems, as Jerusalem was in ruins, a heap of rubble and stone. This was complemented by a dismal spiritual picture, with intermarriage widespread, and the kohanim accepting bribes and blemished sacrifices.

Nechemiah heard of this, as he



was in Shushan, cup bearer to the king, Artaxerxes I, and upon hearing the news from Chanani, sat, wept, ~~and~~ fainted, and mourned for many days. He prayed to Hashem to forgive the sins of Israel, and to make the king send him to Judah. The King did eventually grant Nehemiah his request, giving broad authority as governor. As Nehemiah entered the land of Judah, he surveyed the ruined walls, and the gates ^{burnt} ~~set~~ by fire, he devised a plan for its reconstruction. Then he ^{encouraged} ~~g~~ the people to build the wall, so no longer "be of reproach". The people responded enthusiastically, however the Samaritan enemies, ~~of~~ ^{apostate} Jews, were a threat, so Nehemiah had half the men working on the wall, the other half holding swords, defending against Sanballat. The success of Nehemiah, in finishing the wall ^{in 52 days} can be seen by the way they Jews now have protection from their enemies.

In the second period of Nehemiah, he enforced Ezra's and EA's spiritual reforms of restoring the Levites to sing, waiving the loans ~~from~~ ^{to} the Nobles, and restoring taxes ~~to~~ ^{for} the upkeep of the Temple.

While Ezra and the GA attended to ~~to~~ ^{to} safeguarding Jewish spiritual safety, Nehemiah ~~is~~ assured the Jewish physical safety, but the building of the wall