**Nehemiah**

As noted in the reading guide for Ezra, Ezra and Nehemiah are components of what was originally a single work. The book of Nehemiah deals with the political and administrative side of the restoration, while the book of Ezra focuses on the establishment of Torah as the guide by which the returned community lived. Besides these varied concerns, there is one striking difference between the two books based on literary form. According to Nehemiah 1: 1, the book is an account for which Nehemiah himself is responsible. A significant portion of the book is written in the first person (1: 1– 7: 5; 12: 31– 13: 31). These sections are called “Memoirs of Nehemiah.”

It is important to see the work of both Nehemiah and Ezra against the challenging conditions in postexilic Judah that the prophets Malachi and Haggai depict (see Malachi 1–1– 2; Haggai 1). Root causes of the impoverishment included the Persian extraction of material resources and partisan wrangling among the various groups of Judeans, including the returnees banded around Nehemiah and Ezra. Although they were allied with the Persians and with their own interest groups, both Ezra and Nehemiah express concern for the common good and seek to provide all Judeans with concrete communal structures that would benefit them.

The book describes the work of Nehemiah (1: 1– 7: 72) and the place of Torah in the restored community of Jerusalem (8: 1– 13: 31).

The Rebuilding of Jerusalem (1: 1– 6: 19)

The Population of Jerusalem (7: 1– 72)

The Public Reading of Torah (8: 1– 10: 40)

The Resettlement of Jerusalem (11: 1– 13: 31)

The book ends with descriptions of three key reform measures begun by Nehemiah in his second tenure as governor

*Donald Senior; John Collins; Mary Ann Getty. The Catholic Study Bible (p. 603-605). Oxford University Press. Kindle Edition.*