

Nehemiah

1. How much time passes between the month of Kislev (or Chislev) in Nehemiah 1:1 and the month of Nisan Nehemiah 2:1?

4 months

In the month of Kislev, Nehemiah receives some sad news about Jerusalem and begins to pray, fast and mourn for the Jewish people.

This is in Nehemiah 1:1

Nehemiah waited through Kislev, Tevet, and Shevet, before arriving at the beginning of Nisan. This is in Nehemiah 2:1

Nehemiah appears before king Artaxerxes and is granted permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city

2. Where is Susa?

The ancient city of Susa (or Shushan) is in Iran. It is in our modern Iran and is called the city of Shush. Shushan is located in the lower Zagros mountains around 250 km east of the Tigris and between the Kharkeh and Dez Rivers. It was not far from the great cities of Mesopotamia.

3. For which empire did Susa serve as one of the three Royal Cities.

Susa served for the Achaemenid Persian Empire, or the First Persian Empire and it was a vast Iranian Empire founded by Cyrus the Great in 550 B.C.E. which became the largest empire of the Ancient World at its height.

Susa was one of the 3 Royal cities. It was one of the most important cities of the Ancient Near East. Susa served as the Capital of Elam and the winter capital of the Achaemenid Empire and remained a strategic centre during the Parthian and Susanian periods.

The other 2 cities were Babylon and Persepolis.

4. What other Biblical character lived in Susa?

Mordecai and Esther.

5. Did this character live before Nehemiah or after?

It is quite probable that Esther lived around the time of Nehemiah. The king was king Artaxerxes I and Esther was the queen to king Ahasuerus I as stated in Nehemiah 2:6.

Some Bible commentaries suggest Esther was married to King Xerxes, his father. Ahasuerus is just another name for him.

6. Which empire did King Artaxerxes rule over, and when (Neh 2:1)

King Artaxerxes ruled over the Achaemenid Empire. There were several kings named Artaxerxes. Artaxerxes I ruled from 465 to 424 B.C.E.

Artaxerxes II ruled from 405/4 to 358 B.C.E.

Artaxerxes III ruled from 340/39 to 338 B.C.E

Ahasuerus (another name for him) was Artaxerxes I and he was the son of another Artaxerxes I and his reign is recorded in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Old Testament. He allowed the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem.

(This information is from Wikipedia)

7. What was the cupbearer's role? (Neh 1:1) What was his Status in the Royal court?

Historically, a cupbearer was a high ranking official in charge of serving the king. It was primarily the responsibility of a cupbearer to serve the wine to the Royal table. Since kings were concerned about plots to poison them, cupbearers had to guard the cup carefully and would sometimes taste the drink to ensure it was safe.

Due to the responsibilities of the position, a cupbearer had to be trustworthy and loyal. A cupbearer had the king's confidence and because of his character he was able to exert influence in the Royal court.

The first cupbearer mentioned in the Bible was in the account of Joseph in Genesis 40:1.

He tells his dream to Joseph while in prison in Gen 40:9-11 and he has his job restored in Gen 40:12-13. The poor butler in this account didn't do so well.

The cupbearer was a very important man to the king

(this information is from Wikipedia except the bits about the Bible I have researched)