

eighth year is not the year of release. The seventh year is a Sabbath year, and is for the purpose of ceasing from debts as well as working the land.

Nehemiah compelled Judah to obey the law of release as, recorded in Nehemiah chapter five. And then a scribe with the personal name of Ezra, but of the family of Seriah, read the Torah at the feast of Tabernacles in chapter eight. This means that the walls of the city were completed in 52 days before the Sabbatical year began.

Now the beginning point was in 445 B.C. This is matched with the rebuilding of Jerusalem in the book of Nehemiah, who states that it was in “the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes” (Neh. 2:1).³¹⁸ Now what was impossible before 1900 and unavailable except to experts before 1950 is now made plain by archaeologists and astronomy. And that is exactly when the 20th year of Artaxerxes was, and exactly when the month of Nisan was. Here is what Parker and Dubberstein show:

Table 12: Artaxerxes I Summary (Parker & Dubberstein)

ARTAXERXES I³¹⁹

YEAR	B.C.	NIS 1	YEAR	B.C.	NIS 1
1	464	4/13	11	454	4/23
2	463	4/3	12	453	4/12
3	462	4/22	13	452	4/2
4	461	4/11	14	451	4/20
5	460	3/31	15	450	4/10
6	459	4/19	16	449	3/29
7	458	4/8	17	448	4/16
8	457	3/27	18	447	4/6
9	456	4/15	19	446	3/26
10	455	4/4	20	445	4/13

³¹⁸ That the reference is to Artaxerxes I is confirmed by the Elephantine Papyri which “show that the sons of Nehemiah’s arch-foe, Sanballat, were active in the last decade of the fifth century [410-401], Sanballat being then apparently advanced in years. They also show that the high priest at the time was Johanan, grandson of Nehemiah’s contemporary, Eliashib (cf. Neh. 3:1; 12:10f., 22). John Bright, pg. 391, *A History of Israel*. See Pritchard, ANET, pg. 492.

³¹⁹ pg. 32, *Babylonian Chronology, 626 B.C. — A.D. 75*, Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein, 1956.