	February							
		Adar	XERXES					
	March		called Artaxerxes	EZRA	ELIASHIB			1st of 62 weeks
Month Abib: also called Nisan			19	c.58	c.46			5
	April			in Babylon				
		Ziv						
	May							
		Sivan						
	June							
		Tammuz						
	July							
		Ab						
	August							
		Elul						
	September							
Month Ethanim: also called Tishri								
	October							
		Bul						
	November							
		Chislev						
	December							
		Tebeth						
466	January							
		Shebat						
	February							
		Adar	XERXES	EZRA		NEHEMIAH	Sanballat	
	March		called Artaxerxes	in Jerusalem	ELIASHIB	in Jerusalem	Tobiah	1st of 62 weeks
		Nisan	20	c.59	c.47	c.30		6
	April							
		Ziv						
	May							
		Sivan						
	June							
		Tammuz						
	July							
		Ab						
	August							
		Elul						
	September							
		Tishri						
	October							
		Bul						
	November							
		Chislev						
	December							
		Tebeth						
465	January							
		Shebat						
	February							
		Adar	XERXES	EZRA		NEHEMIAH	Sanballat	
	March		called Artaxerxes	in Jerusalem	ELIASHIB	in Jerusalem	Tobiah	1st of 62 weeks
		Nisan	21	c.60	c.48	c.31		7

Nehemiah and the 20th year of Artaxerxes

Although three mentions exist of "the twentieth year" of a king relevant to Nehemiah, such refer to different kings. That is, the first two mentions relate to a 20th year at a time of Jerusalem's oppressed state (Nehemiah 1:1, 2:1), when Nehemiah was a "cupbearer" to the king. The third mention of a 20th year specified the time when Nehemiah had been appointed governor for 12 years (over the now restored Jerusalem - ch. 5:14). That is, the first mentions of a 20th year involved organised repair work in Jerusalem with the king querying Nehemiah, "how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return?" (ch. 2:6), such indicating a brief assignment there. The second mention of a 20th year involved Nehemiah's governorship over Judah which occupied a substantial term of 12 years. With this first "twentieth year", being fixed to the reign of one king, the second occasion was in the reign of another Persian king some 21 years later.

Nehemiah in Jerusalem

Only 3 "decrees" were issued concerning the restorative building in Jerusalem, from the primary one of Cyrus, to that of Artaxerxes (also called Xerxes), the latter being associated with Ezra (ch. 7:12,13; Antiquities XI,v,1). None of these decrees or "commandments" (Ezra 6:14) were associated with Nehemiah. Not until some 70 years after the release from captivity did Nehemiah go to Jerusalem, he arriving secretly not with any decree but with only "letters" authorising his journey, and requisitions for the materials needed to repair the city (Nehemiah 2:7- 9).

"In the twentieth year of Artaxerxes", Nehemiah, then "cupbearer to (that same) king Xerxes" (Nehemiah 2:1; Antiquities XI,v,6) left on his first visit to Jerusalem and on arrival, but unknown to the rulers of the city, surveyed the state of the walls and gates (Nehemiah 2:12-16), after which, as he reports, "I told them (the rulers) of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build" (verse 18). "Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests" and began repairing the gates and walls (3:1 ff).

Determined to stop Jerusalem being restored, "Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, having heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up...conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it" (Nehemiah 4:7,8).

Despite the hostility of Sanballat and Tobiah, "the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days" (Nehemiah 6:15).

With Nehemiah's opponents determined to stop Jerusalem being restored, many Israelites as well objected to his work. That is, "in those days the nobles of Judah sent many (conspiring) letters unto (a foreign overlord) Tobiah, (who replied)... For there were many in Judah sworn unto him.... And Tobiah sent (further) letters (intending) to put me in fear" (6:17-19). Notwithstanding the attempted interference, "the wall was built" (7:1). Then Nehemiah advised the people to "appoint watches" (verse 3) with Israel's enemies being "much cast down" by his success (ch.6:16). For some 35 years following, and notwithstanding their failure to stop the rebuilding of Jerusalem, Sanballat and Tobiah made further attempts to gain control of the region with the help of traitorous Israelites, soon joined by the corrupted chief priest, Eliashib (Nehemiah 13:7 etc.).