

Ezra & Nehemiah

Breakdown

- Ezra & Nehemiah (along with Chronicles) were originally one book. We can tell this is true because 2 Chronicles ends with a partial sentence which is finished at the beginning of Ezra. The books were divided when the Hebrew manuscripts were translated into Greek.
- Both Ezra & Nehemiah get their names from the writers of the books. Ezra was a priest and scribe. Nehemiah was not a priest or prophet, but his experience in serving the king equipped him for his future political role as governor in Jerusalem.
- These books cover the time period of about 100 years from 537 B.C. to 433 B.C.

Main Points

- After 70 years in captivity, the Israelites were coming back home. Ezra and Nehemiah tell the story of how God remembered His people and brought them back from exile. The book of Ezra focuses on rebuilding the temple and recommitting to following the Law, while the book of Nehemiah focuses on rebuilding the city of Jerusalem and restoring worship of the one true God and Him alone.
- God has made some very specific covenant promises to His people throughout the Bible. Ezra and Nehemiah show us that God always keeps His promises, even when things look completely hopeless to us. We see how God can and will use anyone and anything to fulfill His plan for bringing us back into relationship with Him.

Did you know?

- Cyrus, king of Persia, made a decree that any Israelites who wanted to could go back to their land and help rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, but only a small number returned. How many people went back to their land?
- Zerubbabel and Jeshua led the construction of the new temple in Jerusalem, but after the foundation was completed, the work had to stop for several years. Why did the work stop and how long did it take for the temple to finally be finished?
- Between both books, there were three separate groups of people who returned to the land God had given them. Who led each group?
- While the people were working on rebuilding the wall, enemies of the Israelites were preparing to attack and stop the construction. What did Nehemiah tell the workers to do?
- While Nehemiah was in Babylon, the priest let Tobiah, an enemy of the wall project, move into one of the store rooms of the temple. What did Nehemiah do when he found out?
- After the wall was rebuilt around Jerusalem, Nehemiah commanded the gates to be locked and guarded every Sabbath. Why did he not let anyone enter on the Sabbath?

Further Thought

- God used a pagan nation and king to fulfill His prophecy of bringing His chosen people back to the land He had given them. What can we learn from this?
- The majority of the book of Ezra is about rebuilding the temple. What is the significance of the temple, and how can we apply it to our lives?
- Nehemiah wasn't a priest or a prophet, yet his book shows us the kind of impact one individual can have on a nation. What does that teach us about our own influence?