

ezra & nehemiah

book introductions & outline

Years after the kingdom of Judah was taken into exile by Babylon, a new world power— Persia—takes control and allows them to return to their land.

In what was originally a single book, Ezra and Nehemiah recount the history of this return of God's people to Jerusalem.

In a series of three separate returns (led by Zerubbabel, Ezra, and then Nehemiah) covering almost 100 years, the people re-settle in Jerusalem and rebuild its temple and city walls.

EZRA 1-2 – First Return

EZRA 3-6 – Temple Rebuilt

EZRA 7-10 – Second Return, Ezra's reforms

NEHEMIAH 1-7 – Third Return, Jerusalem wall rebuilt

NEHEMIAH 8-13 – Covenant renewal and reforms

Watch for these themes:

- God's people had not lived in their own land for many years, so these books are largely about **RE-LEARNING HOW TO LIVE AS GOD'S PEOPLE**. What do you learn about identity as you read?
- Notice how Ezra and Nehemiah highlight **THE AUTHORITY OF GOD'S WORD**.
- These books use many **GENRES**: narrative, first-person memoir, lists, and other records. Pay attention to how these genres shift and work together to tell the story.
- Ezra and Nehemiah are telling **SOME OF THE LAST PARTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT STORY**. How do these stories fit into the metanarrative of the Bible? How do they remind you of God's plan of redemption?

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