

Ezra - Nehemiah

Context - Ezra 1:1-4, Nehemiah 1:1-3, 11

- Ezra and Nehemiah were originally written as one book.
- The history recorded in Ezra-Nehemiah spans from the time the Jews began to return to Jerusalem, around 538 BC to a century after that first return.

God Initiates, People Respond - Ezra 1:1-6

- Jeremiah prophesied that Israel would be in Exile 70 years. (Jeremiah 29:10).
- 70 years later God moved King Cyrus' heart to allow the Jews to return home (Ezra 1:1).
- God moved the hearts of His people to go rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:5).

The People Return and Rebuild -- Ezra 1:7-6:22

- God provides everything the people need to rebuild (Ezra 1:7).
- God preserved David's line, through protecting Zerubbabel in Exile (Ezra 2:2).
- God preserved the priesthood or Levites (Jeshua) who make atonement for sin (Ezra 2:2).

The People Sin and Repent – Ezra 7-10

- The people sin by intermarrying with Pagan nations, threatening the "seed" (Ezra 9:1-3).
- Ezra prays in repentance and confession for Israel's sin (9:6-15).
- The people turn in repentance and confession (Ezra 10).

Nehemiah Returns, People Rebuild the Walls – Nehemiah 1-7

- The first wave of exiles failed to rebuild Jerusalem's walls for nearly 100 years (Neh 1:3).
- The Davidic line and the priest led worship were left physically and spiritually vulnerable to the surrounding enemies. (Neh 1:4)

The People Rejoice and Relapse - Nehemiah 8-13

- Upon hearing God's word read & explained they mourned their sin & celebrated his grace (Neh 8:6-9).
- The people, temple & city were restored, yet they fall into the same cycle of sin (Neh 13).

Ezra-Nehemiah Points to the Eternal Temple of God, City of God & People of God

- Jesus is the true tabernacle of God (John 1:14).
- Jesus is the true temple of God (John 2:18-22).
- Jesus is the cornerstone of the holy temple and the people of God, united to Christ, are being built together into the dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Eph 2:20-22).
- The Church is the holy temple indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16-17)
- The Church is the true spiritual house and holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:4-5)
- God will fully and finally dwell with his people (Rev 21:3-4)
- God's holy people, in a holy city, at a holy temple will become a reality (Rev 21:10, 22-27).

Parallels Between Nehemiah & Jesus' Life

Both had a mission to establish a safe place for the people of God.

- Without the walls, Nehemiah knew God's people would never be safe in Jerusalem. 2:2-8
- Without the resurrection, Jesus knew God's people would never be safe from the power of death. John 11:25-26

Both were builders.

- Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. 4:6
- Jesus was a craftsman by trade, but his ultimate building project was the Church. MT 18:18

Both were devoted to prayer and the will of God.

- Nehemiah's calling to rebuild was a result of prayer and the conviction of the Holy Spirit. 2:17-18
- Jesus' ministry was marked by prayer and submission to the will of the Father. MT 26:36-42

Both were tempted to abandon their mission

- Before and during Nehemiah's building work, people came to oppose him and tempt him to quit. 2:19-20
- Satan tempted Jesus to abandon the mission of our salvation. MT 4:1-11

Both had enemies who plotted to harm them

- Nehemiah's detractors wanted to physically harm him. 6:1-9
- The religious leaders in Jerusalem plotted to kill Jesus John 11:45-54

Both called God's people to join them in their work.

- Nehemiah invited other Israelites to build with him. Neh 3
- Jesus calls his followers to participate in building the Church on earth. MT 28:18-20

Both wept over Jerusalem

- Nehemiah wept at the thought of Jerusalem lying abandoned and exposed. 1:4
- Jesus wept over Jerusalem's refusal to embrace security in Him.

Both cleansed the temple

- Nehemiah cleansed the temple of those who disrespected God's holiness. 13:17-18
- Jesus cleansed the temple of those who sought to turn the temple into a marketplace. John 2:13-22

Both finished the work they set out to do.

- Though tested, tempted, and opposed Nehemiah carried out his calling and finished rebuilding Jerusalem's walls. 6:15
- Though scorned, beaten, and killed, Jesus finished His work of defeating sin and death by rising from the grave. John 19:28-30