

INTRODUCTION:

1) TODAY WE WILL BE LOOKING AT *THE POSTEXILIC BOOKS*

THINGS WE WILL LOOK AT IN THIS LESSON:

- 1) EZRA: THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE
- 2) NEHEMIAH: THE REBUILDING OF THE WALLS
- 3) ESTHER: THE PROTECTION OF THE NATION

PART 1 – EZRA: THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE:

Q 1) LIST TWO REASONS WHY WE STUDY THE BOOKS OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH TOGETHER.

Q 2) WHAT DOES THE BOOK OF EZRA DEMONSTRATE?

FIGURE 1)

The Exile	
605 BC	Daniel and others are taken (Daniel 1:1–7).
597 BC	Ten thousand are taken, including Ezekiel (2 Kings 24:14).
586 BC	The rest of Judah is taken (2 Kings 25:11–21).
The Return	
538 BC	Zerubbabel leads 50,000 from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra 2).
458 BC	Ezra leads 1,700 men and 5,000–10,000 women and children back to Jerusalem (Ezra 8:1-14, 18–21).
445 BC	Nehemiah leads a group from Babylon to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1–10).

OUTLINE OF EZRA...

- I. The First Group Returns from Babylon, 1–2
- II. At Home in Jerusalem, 3–4
- III. The New Temple, 5–6
- IV. The Second Group Returns from Babylon, 7–8
- V. Reform, 9–10

Q 3) WHO PROPHESED THAT A RULER NAMED CYRUS WOULD ALLOW THE JEWS TO RETURN AND REBUILD JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE?

Q 4) WHO LED THE FIRST GROUP IN THEIR RETURN TO JERUSALEM?

Q 5) WHAT TWO PROPHETS URGED THE PEOPLE TO FINISH THE TEMPLE?

Q 6) HOW LONG DID IT TAKE FOR THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE TO BE COMPLETED?

Q 7) WHO LED THE SECOND GROUP OF JEWS BACK TO JUDAH?

Q 8) WHAT DID EZRA LEAD THE PEOPLE TO DO?

FIGURE 2)

Chronology of Events in Ezra and Nehemiah		
Date (BC)	Event	Scripture
539	Cyrus the Persian conquered Babylon.	Daniel 5:30
539–538	Cyrus decreed that the Jews could return home. Daniel saw a vision of the seventy “sevens.”	Ezra 2:64; Daniel 9:2, 24–27
538	Zerubbabel led fifty thousand back to Jerusalem.	Ezra 2
538–537	Jews rebuilt the altar in Jerusalem.	Ezra 3:1
538–537	Jews began rebuilding the temple.	Ezra 3:8
536	Jews completed the foundation of the temple.	Ezra 3:8–10
536–520	Samaritans hindered and stopped work on the temple for sixteen years.	Ezra 4:1–5, 24; Haggai 2:15–19
520	Darius I (Darius the Great) encouraged the Jews to continue rebuilding the temple. Haggai and Zechariah prophesied to encourage the Jews to rebuild.	Ezra 4:24; Haggai 1:14
516	The Jews completed the temple.	Ezra 6:15
483	Esther was queen sometime during the sixty-year gap between Ezra 6 and Ezra 7.	Ezra 6–7; Esther 1–10
458	Ezra led 1,700 men and 5,000–10,000 women and children from Babylon to Jerusalem.	Ezra 7–8
458–457	Ezra mourned over the mixed marriages. He formed a committee to send away all wives and children of mixed marriages.	Ezra 9–10
445–444	Nehemiah received permission from Artaxerxes I to be governor of Jerusalem and led the third group back to Jerusalem. They built the walls in fifty-two days. Nehemiah was governor for twelve years.	Nehemiah 1–6; 5:14
444	When the wall was rebuilt, Ezra and Nehemiah led the Jews in revival. All took an oath to support the house of God and not to marry foreigners. Ten percent of the Jews moved into Jerusalem. All dedicated the wall.	Nehemiah 7–10 Nehemiah 11–12
433–425	Nehemiah returned to Persia in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes. Later, he returned to Jerusalem as governor for a second term. The Jews had stopped supporting the temple, and some had married foreigners. Nehemiah and Malachi led them back to God again.	Nehemiah 13
430–420	Malachi preached to the sinning Jews in Judah and Jerusalem.	Malachi 1–4

PART 2 – NEHEMIAH: THE REBUILDING OF THE WALLS:

Q 9) WHAT WAS NEHEMIAH'S BACKGROUND?

Q 10) WHAT DO NEHEMIAH'S WRITINGS EMPHASIZE?

OUTLINE OF NEHEMIAH...

- I. Nehemiah Sent by King Artaxerxes, 1:1–2:8
- II. Nehemiah's Mission in Jerusalem, 2:9–6:16
- III. Ezra Brings Change, 7–10
- IV. Nehemiah's Program and Policies, 11–13

Q 11) WHAT DOES NEHEMIAH EXEMPLIFY?

PART 3 – ESTHER: THE PROTECTION OF THE NATION:

Q 12) WHO WROTE ESTHER?

Q 13) WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR THE EVENTS FOUND IN THE BOOK OF ESTHER?

Q 14) WHAT MAKES THE BOOK OF ESTHER UNIQUE?

Q 15) WHAT IS THE THEME OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER?

OUTLINE OF ESTHER...

- I. Esther Becomes Queen, 1–2
- II. Haman Seeks to Destroy the Jewish People, 3–5
- III. God Delivers the Jews through Esther, 6–10

HOMEWORK FOR THE WEEK:

Read one of the books we talked about in this lesson. If you need to break them up, read each outline section in one setting. If you choose to use an Audio Bible, that is fine too.

