

STUDY GUIDE FOR BOOKS OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

I. INTRODUCTION.

- a. These books are primary source of Jewish history for period 536-430 B.C.
 - i. Judah came under Babylonian control & first captives taken from land in 606 B.C. (Daniel 1:1-7)
 - ii. Two additional deportations of Jews 597 and 586 B.C.
 - iii. Jeremiah, contemporary of these events foretells the length of captivity to be 70 years. (Jeremiah 25:12)
 - iv. No details of those 70 yrs. Ezra & Nehemiah pick up history of returning exiles (Ezra 1:1-4 and compare II Chronicles 36:22-23)
- b. Books bear names of important characters of the books.
- c. Likely during this period the name "Jew" replaced "Hebrew" as common name for Abraham's descendants.

II. BACKGROUND.

- a. Two books treated as one until 1448 A.D.
- b. Just as the people were taken captive in 3 stages--so was their return.

III. MESSAGES OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

- a. God is faithful to keep His promises.
- b. Emphasize the need for holiness in God's people.
- c. Ministries of Ezra and Nehemiah as reformers and builders.

IV. THEMES/LESSONS FROM EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

- a. King Cyrus of Persia—a lesson in God's Control of History.
 - a. God's Control—"In the beginning..." in "the end", and "in-between".
 - b. Read Ezra 1:1-4 and Isaiah 44:28-45:3
- b. Nehemiah—Great Servant of God and Leader of the [people].
 - a. Man of Prayer—Nehemiah 1:4, 6.
 - b. Man who cared for his people--Neh. 2:9-10.
 - c. Man of Courage—Neh. 6:11.
 - d. Encouraged others by his actions—2:20; 4:14; 4:20.
 - e. Man of "the Word"—Neh. 8:14; 9:1-4.
 - f. Leader who Listened—Neh. 5:1-7.

V. CONCLUSION.

- a. Book of Ezra—the Man and his work.
- b. Book of Nehemiah—the Man and his work.