

His Word in Our Hearts

~ September 2021 ~

“You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.

Nehemiah 9:6

Daily Bible Reading		Reading Ezra and Nehemiah:	
1	Ezra 1-2	Proverbs 18	In the Hebrew Bible, just as Samuel, Kings and Chronicles were written as one book, so also Ezra and Nehemiah were written together. In fact, in some cases, Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah were all written into one book. While you are reading these two books, consider reading Zechariah and Haggai at the same time to get the whole context of the time.
2	Ezra 3	Proverbs 19:1-14	
3	Ezra 4-5	Proverbs 19:15-29	
4	Ezra 6	Proverbs 20:1-15	In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, the new king over defeated Babylon, God moved in the heart of this pagan king to decree that the Jews who had been exiled for 70 years could return to their homeland. The Jews return to Israel in three waves over a period of a hundred years. The book of Ezra records the first two waves of migration back, one under Zerubbabel, the second under Ezra. Nehemiah records the third wave.
5	Ezra 7	Proverbs 20:16-30	
6	Ezra 8	Proverbs 21:1-16	
7	Ezra 9	Proverbs 21:17-29	
8	Ezra 10	Proverbs 22:1-16	
9	Nehemiah 1-2	Proverbs 22:17-29	
10	Nehemiah 3	Proverbs 23:1-18	
11	Nehemiah 4-5	Proverbs 23:19-35	
12	Nehemiah 6	Proverbs 24:1-22	
13	Nehemiah 7	Proverbs 24:23-34	Zerubbabel took up the task of rebuilding the altar and the Temple in Jerusalem. Nehemiah rebuilt the city walls and gates. Ezra rebuilt the people’s spiritual relationship with God through teaching God’s Law and calling them to obedience.
14	Nehemiah 8	Proverbs 25:1-14	
15	Nehemiah 9	Proverbs 25:15-28	
16	Nehemiah 10	Proverbs 26:1-16	Both Ezra and Nehemiah had to do what they did against great opposition, and formidable challenges. Why would God do it this way? Most people read these books as a history of two men who did great things for God despite much resistance and hardship. As you read, change your perspective and think of God building something for God and God building and shaping Ezra and Nehemiah. When we do things for God and face many challenges, consider what God might be doing in you?
17	Nehemiah 11	Proverbs 26:17-28	
18	Nehemiah 12	Proverbs 27:1-14	
19	Nehemiah 13	Proverbs 27:15-27	These books are a great encouragement to God’s people, reminding them that no matter what happens, God is still and always the God of His people and Lord over their history. He can never leave or forsake His own.
20	Esther 1	Proverbs 28:1-14	
21	Esther 2	Proverbs 28:15-27	
22	Esther 3-4	Proverbs 29:1-14	The purpose of these three returns is ultimately to prepare for the coming Messiah and the restoration of the kingdom. However, each return also includes the many reforms that the people must make along the way. God is continuing His work. The work is not just buildings but hearts.
23	Esther 5-6	Proverbs 29:15-27	
24	Esther 7-8	Proverbs 30	
25	Esther 9-10	Proverbs 31	

The story of the Old Testament ends with the book of Nehemiah. All the rest of the books in our Bible after Nehemiah are scattered chronologically throughout Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. After a four hundred year silence God will resume his story with the coming of the Messiah. The end of the Old Testament is one of anticipation, the anticipation of the good news of the gospel in the coming Messiah.

Lessons from Ezra and Nehemiah.

Ezra and Nehemiah each contain one of the great intercessory prayers of the Bible (Ezra 9:5–15 and Nehemiah 9; see Daniel 9 and John 17 for others). We are reminded of the crucial role of prayer in every endeavor, great or small.

Even after 70 years of God's discipline in exile, God's people still struggle with sin. Our old nature doesn't die easily. We must constantly confess and repent and seek God to reform our ways. The people face lots of enemies but their greatest enemy was within their heart. The last books of the OT history don't end riding off into the sunset with a happy ending. Our battle with sin continues to the very end.

Our hearts are the most important temple. God dwells with us in a much more personal and intimate way now by dwelling in our hearts by His Holy Spirit. Don't neglect repairing and rebuilding through repentance, Scripture, prayer and worship. God has created and called His people to be worshipers and He sovereignly works His purposes to that end.

In Nehemiah 8 we see the supreme importance of the preaching of the Word of God to bring reformation and revival to souls. May the Spirit of God bring us under the same conviction as we read and study and hear and love the Word of God.

Outline:

Zerubbabel's return and rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 1–6)

Ezra's later return to teach the law (Ezra 7–10)

Nehemiah rebuilds the wall around Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1-7)

Ezra teaches the law, rebuilds the morals (Nehemiah 8-13)