

OLD TESTAMENT BIBLICAL LITERACY

EZRA and NEHEMIAH

Lesson 30

Biblical-Literacy.com

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TIME PLACEMENT

- Babylonian exile 587 B.C.
- Persia conquest Babylon 539 B.C.
- Ezra and Nehemiah 531-450 B.C.
- Alexander the Great 331 B.C.

Who were they?

- Ezra - a priest, a leader, a teacher
- Nehemiah - a cupbearer, a governor

Where did we get titles?

Early Bibles combined Ezra and Nehemiah

- Hebrew up to 1400's
- Septuagint ("LXX")
- Josephus - only Ezra
- DSS
- Origen - 200's distinguishes 1st & 2d Ezra
- Jerome (Vulgate) *liber secundus Esdrae*
- Wycliffe (1382) 1st & 2d Ezra

Title

- Coverdale (1535)

The First Boke of Esdras

The Second Boke of Esdras, otherwyse
called the Boke of Nehemiah

- Luther - Nehemiah

Who wrote the books?

- Different books (Ez 2 & Neh 7:6-70)
- Ezra first person (7:27-8:34; 9:1-15)
- Nehemiah first person (1:1-7:73; 12:27-43; 13:4-31)
- Both have third person text

Theological Term Du Jour

“COMPILER”

A person who took various texts and combined them to make the text we have today

When Written?

- Many opinions range as late as 200 B.C.
- Most see as contemporaneous or close
 - 440 B.C. Ezra
 - 430 B.C. Nehemiah
- Hebrew and Aramaic (Ez4:8-6:18; 7:12-26)

History

- 722 B.C. Northern gone
- 587/586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar destroys Jerusalem
- Most intellectual and spiritual leaders gone
- King Jehoiakin gone

Jehoiakin



10 sila of oil to la'...kin,
king of lahudu. 2 ½ sila
of oil to the sons of the
king of lahudu. 4 sila to 8
men from lahudu.

Pritchard, ANET, p.205

History

- 722 B.C. Northern gone
- 587/586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar destroys Jerusalem
- Most intellectual and spiritual leaders gone
- King Jehoiakin gone
- Many adjust and flourish (Jer 29:4-5)

EZRA

- Picks up from Chronicles
- Cyrus sends back families and temple goods
- Genealogies important
- Law of Moses with return
- Rebuilding of temple

Rebuilding of Temple

- Foundation celebration with Psalms
- Enemies get TRO
- Temple completion
 - Worship celebration
 - No ark
 - Older ones cry
 - Passover celebrated
 - 516 B.C.

Enter Ezra

- 60 years later (550 ish)
- Established teacher from Babylon
 - Ezra 7: 6 and 7:10
- Sent to oversee administration of governors and magistrates
- Travel issues
- Pagan marriage trubs

NEHAMIAH

- Switch from temple to walls
- Cupbearer to Artaxerxes
- Hears of Jerusalem's disgrace
- Prays and gets answer
- Sent as governor
- Difficulties rebuilding
- Prayer and action

Wall Completion

- Day to celebrate and worship
- Ezra and Law of Moses daybreak until noon
- Weeping to choice food (8:10)
- Feast of Tabernacles - 8 days
- A day of Penance
 - 6 hours law
 - 6 hours worship and confession
 - Neh. 9 - prayer
 - Signed and sealed commitment
- Walls dedicated
- Other reforms

End of Historical OT

Points for Home

- God is faithful even when I'm not
- God can be trusted
- God's plan will not be thwarted
- God's word powerfully changes lives
- Prayer and action
- Confession and singing are important aspects of worship