

Notes & Outlines

**EZRA
NEHEMIAH**

Dr. J. Vernon McGee

POST-CAPTIVITY BOOKS

The post-captivity books record the return and restoration at Jerusalem after the 70-year Babylonian captivity as predicted by Jeremiah. Six books belong to this series. They are divided into two groups:

Historical — Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther;

Prophetical — Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

Although Ezra is a continuation of the historical books begun with Joshua, the pre-captivity and captivity books could be profitably studied before beginning with Ezra. These books include all of the major and minor prophets, with the exception of the last three books of the Old Testament. However, we shall proceed according to the arrangement of the canon of Scripture.

EZRA

WRITER: Ezra

He is one character who has not received proper recognition. He was a descendant of Hilkiah (Ezra 7:1), the high priest who found a copy of the Law during the reign of Josiah (2 Chronicles 34:14). Ezra, as a priest, was unable to serve during the captivity, but he gave his time to a study of the Word of God — he was “a ready scribe in the law of Moses” (Ezra 7:6). Ezra was a great revivalist and reformer. The revival began with the reading of the Word of God by Ezra (Nehemiah 8). Also, he probably was the writer of 1 and 2 Chronicles and of Psalm 119, which exalts the Word of God. He organized the synagogue, founded the order of scribes, helped settle the canon of Scripture and arranged the Psalms.

Let us pay tribute to Ezra who was the first to begin a revival of Bible study. Is this not God’s program for revival?

THEME: The Word of the Lord. (There are eleven direct references — 1:1; 3:2; 6:14, 18; 7:6, 10, 14, 26; 9:4; 10:3, 5.)

The place of the Word of God in the total life of His people — religious, social, business, and political.

KEY PHRASE: Trembled at the words of the God of Israel” (Ezra 9:4; also see 10:3).

“We already have seen that the Babylonian captivity did not bring the Jews to national repentance, and so lead to national restoration. As the reading of Ezra will disclose, when Cyrus, king of Persia, gave permission to the captives to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple, scarcely 50,000 availed themselves of the privilege, a considerable portion of whom were priests and Levites of the humbler and poorer class.”

— Dr. James M. Gray

OUTLINE:

I. RETURN from BABYLON LED by ZERUBBABEL, Chapters 1 — 6

(About 50,000 returned)

- A. Restoration of temple by decree of Cyrus, Chapter 1**
- B. Return under Zerubbabel, Chapter 2**
- C. Rebuilding of temple, Chapter 3**

- D. Retardation of rebuilding of temple by opposition**, Chapter 4
(Decree of Artaxerxes)
- E. Renewal of rebuilding of temple**, Chapters 5, 6
(Decree of Darius)

II. RETURN from BABYLON LED by EZRA, Chapters 7 — 10
(About 2,000 returned)

- A. Return under Ezra**, Chapters 7, 8
- B. Reformation under Ezra**, Chapters 9, 10
 1. Prayer of Ezra, Chapter 9
 2. Separation from heathen is demanded and maintained, Chapter 10

The Books of Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5:1) should be read and studied with the Book of Ezra, for all three were written in the shadow of the rebuilt temple and were given to encourage the people in building.

COMMENT:

- I. RETURN from BABYLON LED by ZERUBBABEL**, Chapters 1 — 6
(About 50,000 returned)

A. Restoration of temple by decree of Cyrus, Chapter 1

v. 1 — “Cyrus, king of Persia” was one of the most enlightened rulers of the ancient world. He was a subject of predictive prophecy. He was named before he was born — almost 200 years before he became king of Persia.

Who saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.
(Isaiah 44:28)

Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut. (Isaiah 45:1)

He is a type of Christ.

Daniel was in the court of Cyrus and evidently led him to a knowl-

edge of the living and true God. It was during the reign of Cyrus that Daniel gave some of his greatest prophecies, including the 70-weeks prophecy concerning Israel. The decree of Cyrus is not the point where the 70 weeks (which pertain to Israel) begin, as they were not yet returned to the land (see notes on Nehemiah).

vv. 2-4 — “The LORD God of heaven” is a designation of God that is peculiar to Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel. You see, after the fall and destruction of Jerusalem, God could no longer be identified with the temple as the One who dwelt between the cherubim. The glory had departed; “Ichabod” was written over the escutcheon of Israel. Ezekiel saw the vision of the departure of the Shekinah glory (see Ezekiel 9 — 11). He returned to heaven. For this reason, in the post-captivity books He is “the LORD God of heaven.”

Cyrus gave permission to the Jews to:

- (1) return to the land,
- (2) rebuild the city of Jerusalem, and
- (3) rebuild the temple.

vv. 5, 6 — Very few avail themselves of this opportunity (see Ezra 2:64, 65). Most of the captives are now settled and satisfied in Babylon. They still their consciences by giving generously to those who do return.

vv. 7-11 — The generosity of Cyrus should be noted. He returns the vessels of gold taken from the temple by Nebuchadnezzar.

B. Return under Zerubbabel, Chapter 2

vv. 1-35 — Particular attention is given to the leadership of those who return.

vv. 36-39 — These are the priests who return. The total is 4,289.

vv. 40-54 — These are the Levites who return. The total is 341. The contrast in number with the priests reveals that the Levites, for the most part, remain in Babylon.

vv. 55-60 — These are listed as the children of Solomon’s servants. His servants were then from all of the 12 tribes (see 1 Samuel 8:11-16). Obviously, some from all 12 tribes return, but very few from any one tribe return.

vv. 61-63 — Some cannot give a clear declaration as to their genealogy. Failure to give a clear title excludes them from the priesthood. This section reveals the value and particular emphasis placed upon the genealogies. This lends importance to the accuracy of the genealogy that opens the New Testament in the Gospel of Matthew which was never challenged by the enemies of Christ at the beginning. They questioned His birth and His resurrection but never His genealogy. The New Testament stands or falls upon the accuracy of it and reveals that He is the only One to fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament in reference to David and his kingdom.

vv. 64, 65 — Total number who return at this time under Zerubbabel:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Total congregation | 42,360 |
| Servants and maids | 7,337 |
| Singers, both male and female | 200 |
| Grand total | 49,897 |

vv. 66-70 — They bring the stock and chattels with them and give generously to rebuild the temple.

C. Rebuilding of temple, Chapter 3

v. 2 — They not only return to the land but also to “the law of Moses.”

vv. 3-6 — Sacrifices and feast days are restored.

vv. 7-9 — Preparation is made for rebuilding the temple.

vv. 10-13 — The foundation is laid with mingled songs of praise and tears of mourning (see notes on Haggai for the explanation of this seemingly contradictory reaction to the rebuilding of the temple).

D. Retardation of rebuilding of temple by opposition, Chapter 4

vv. 1, 2 — The enemies’ first effort at disrupting the rebuilding of the temple is to offer to become allies.

v. 3 — This is absolutely rejected.

vv. 4, 5 — In the second effort to hinder the work, the enemy seeks to disrupt the building by various means.

vv. 6-10 — The third effort to stop the rebuilding of the temple is a letter sent by the enemy to Artaxerxes with false accusations.

vv. 11-16 — The contents of the letter are given (note their estimation of Jerusalem [v. 12] in contrast to God’s in Psalm 87).

vv. 17-24 — The enemy succeeds in sending a letter to Artaxerxes, and he shoots back a reply that the work is to cease. The suspension of work continues until the time of Darius, king of Persia.

E. Renewal of rebuilding of temple, Chapters 5, 6

Chapter 5

vv. 1-6 — Haggai and Zechariah encourage the people to resume rebuilding of the temple. When the leaders are challenged, they appeal to Darius.

vv. 7-17 — Darius grants permission to resume the rebuilding of the temple.

Chapter 6

vv. 1-12 — Darius issues a decree which confirms the original decree of Cyrus.

vv. 13-15 — The temple is rebuilt under the inspiration of Haggai and Zechariah. God is identified here as the God of Israel (not Judah). This means there were some from all tribes in Jerusalem at this time.

v. 16 — Those who returned are likewise identified here as “the children of Israel.”

v. 17 — The language here is more explicit: “all Israel.”

v. 18 — The emphasis again is upon the Word of God (see also v. 14).

vv. 19-22 — The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are observed again.

II. RETURN from BABYLON LED by EZRA, Chapters 7 — 10 *(About 2,000 returned)*

A. Return under Ezra, Chapters 7, 8

Chapter 7

v. 1 — Artaxerxes is the same ruler mentioned in Nehemiah 2:1 (see notes on Nehemiah).

vv. 2-5 — Ezra is descended from the line of Aaron.

v. 6 — Ezra is a student of the Mosaic Law.

v. 7 — This is during the 7th year of the reign of Artaxerxes. Nehemiah comes later in the 20th year of the reign of Artaxerxes.

v. 10 — This is the 6th reference to the law of the Lord or Word of God. Ezra prepared himself to teach the Word of God.

v. 14 — The 7th reference to law of God.

v. 26 — The 8th reference to law of God.

vv. 27, 28 — Ezra expresses gratitude to God and to Artaxerxes for his gifts, generosity and goodness.

Chapter 8

vv. 1-14 — The roll call of those who return with Ezra: 1,496 males are listed.

vv. 15-19 — Twenty priests are added to the list.

v. 20 — Two hundred and twenty Nethinims, who served the Levites, return. A total of 1,736 go with Ezra.

v. 21 — Ezra proclaims a fast and prayer meeting that they might ask God for journeying mercies.

v. 22 — Ezra confesses he was ashamed to ask the king for a guard inasmuch as he had boasted to the king that God would lead them up to Jerusalem.

v. 23 — God hears and grants their petition. Ezra the priest makes the journey without a guard. Later, Nehemiah has ample protection when he makes the trip to Jerusalem.

vv. 24-30 — The valuables are entrusted into the hands of priests.

vv. 31-34 — Ezra makes a safe journey to Jerusalem and the valuables are delivered.

v. 35 — Burnt offerings and sin offerings are made by those who return.

v. 36 — Ezra presents his credentials from the king to the king's

officials.

B. Reformation under Ezra, Chapters 9, 10

1. Prayer of Ezra, Chapter 9

One of the great prayers of the Bible. Compare it with Nehemiah 1:4-11 and Daniel 9.

vv. 1, 2 — The sad plight of the people is reported to Ezra. Inter-marriage (with the surrounding heathen and enemies of God and Israel) leads to a practice of the abomination of the heathen. The lack of separation plunges them into immorality and idolatry. The returned remnant is in a sad, sordid and squalid condition.

v. 3 — Ezra is emotionally involved — he fasts and even plucks the hair out of his head and beard.

v. 4 — The 9th reference to the Word of God. Many who believe the Word of God join Ezra in mourning.

vv. 5-15 — Ezra confesses the sins of the people and identifies himself with his people. Note occurrences of the first personal pronoun plural “we” and “our.” He recognizes the grace of God and pleads with God.

2. Separation from heathen is demanded and maintained, Chapter 10

v. 3 — The 10th reference to the Word of God. Ezra not only reads, studies, and reverences the Word of God, but he also practices it.

v. 5 — The 11th reference to the Word of God.

v. 6 — Ezra continues to mourn for his people.

vv. 7-19 — The remnant that has returned assemble at Jerusalem and pledge to put away their foreign wives.

vv. 20-43 — This is the roll call of those who did.

v. 44 — This works a great hardship upon many, for they have children by these women. This is an example of the high cost of sin.

NEHEMIAH

(Ezra and Nehemiah are one book in the Hebrew canon.)

WRITER: Perhaps Ezra

Nehemiah was a layman; Ezra was a priest. In the Book of Ezra, the emphasis is upon the rebuilding of the temple; in the Book of Nehemiah, the emphasis is upon the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. In Ezra, we have the religious aspect of the return; in Nehemiah, we have the political aspect of the return. Ezra is a fine representative of the priest and scribe; Nehemiah is a noble representative of the businessman. Nehemiah had an important office at the court of the powerful Persian king, Artaxerxes, but his heart was with God's people and God's program in Jerusalem. The personal note is the main characteristic of the book.

DATE: Chronologically, this is the last of the historical books. We have come to the end of the line as far as time is concerned. The Old Testament goes no further. The Book of Ezra picks up the thread of the story about 70 years after 2 Chronicles. The 70-year captivity is over and a remnant returns to the land of Israel. The return under Ezra takes place about 50 years after Zerubbabel. Nehemiah returns about 15 years after Ezra. These figures are approximate and are given to show the stages in the history of Israel after the captivity. This enables one to see how the "70 weeks" of Daniel fit into the picture in a normal and reasonable way. The "70 weeks" of Daniel begin with the Book of Nehemiah (not with Ezra) "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks...." The background of the events of Nehemiah is "...the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times" (Daniel 9:25).

Note: The following dates, suggested by Sir Robert Anderson, seem to be a satisfactory solution to the problem of the "70 weeks" of Daniel:

Decree of Cyrus, 536 B.C. — Ezra 1:1-4

Decree of Artaxerxes, 445 B.C. (20th year of his reign) —
Nehemiah 2:1-8

The "70 weeks" begin.

The first "7 weeks" end, 397 B.C. — Malachi.

(For details see Sir Robert Anderson's *The Coming Prince*.)

KEY WORD: “So” occurs 32 times. It denotes a man of action and few words. Mark this word in your Bible and notice how this ordinarily unimportant word stands out in this book.

KEY VERSES:

And it came to pass when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven. (Nehemiah 1:4)

And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come down to you? (Nehemiah 6:3)

OUTLINE:

I. REBUILDING the WALLS, Chapters 1 — 7

- A. Nehemiah’s prayer for remnant at Jerusalem, Chapter 1**
- B. Nehemiah’s request of the king, return to Jerusalem, and review of ruins of Jerusalem, Chapter 2:1-16**
- C. Nehemiah’s encouragement to rebuild the walls, Chapter 2:17-20**
- D. Rebuilding the walls and gates, Chapter 3**
- E. Nehemiah’s response to opposition, Chapters 4 — 6**
Wall completed, 6:15
- F. Nehemiah’s register of people, Chapter 7**
(Only 42,360 people, 7,337 servants, and 245 singers returned. Compare this with the fact that Judah alone had 470,000 warriors [1 Chronicles 21:5].)

II. REVIVAL and REFORM, Chapters 8 — 13

- A. Great Bible reading led by Ezra, Chapter 8**
- B. Revival — the result, Chapters 9, 10**
- C. Reform — another result, Chapters 11 — 13**

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY: God’s chosen people were called to witness against idolatry, but too often they themselves succumbed and became idolaters. God sent them to Babylon, the fountainhead of idolatry, to take the gold cure. They returned repudiating idolatry.

Their restoration as an independent nation was incomplete. They were not free from this time on to the time of the Roman Empire. The

New Testament opens with them under the rule of Rome.

COMMENT:

This book reveals what God can do through a layman who has a heart for the things of God.

I. REBUILDING the WALLS, Chapters 1 — 7

A. Nehemiah's prayer for remnant at Jerusalem, Chapter 1

vv. 1 — The use of the first person pronoun gives the impression that Nehemiah was the writer. If Ezra was the writer, he was copying from the journal of Nehemiah. This book, as was true in the Book of Ezra, has copies of letters, decrees, registers and other documents. The same man wrote both books — Ezra and Nehemiah are one book in the Hebrew canon.

vv. 2-4 — Visitors from Jerusalem come to the palace, and Nehemiah makes inquiry of them about Jerusalem and the condition of the remnant that had returned. When he learns the sad plight of the people and that the walls and gates of Jerusalem are still in shambles, Nehemiah sits down and weeps, mourns and fasts. Then he prays before the God of heaven (see note on Ezra 1:2 about the term “God of heaven”).

vv. 5-11 — This is the record of Nehemiah's prayer. “Terrible God” (v. 5 KJV) is “reverend God.” “Reverend” should never be used in addressing a pastor or ordained preacher. It should be applied only to God. Someone has expressed it this way:

Call me Mister, call me friend,
A loving ear to all I lend,
But do not my soul with anguish rend,
PLEASE stop calling me “Reverend.”

Nehemiah pleads with God and confesses his sins and those of his people (vv. 6, 7). He reminds God of His promises (vv. 8, 9). Nehemiah casts himself upon the mercy and goodness of God (vv. 10, 11). “This man” refers to King Artaxerxes.

B. Nehemiah's request of the king, return to Jerusalem, and review of ruins of Jerusalem, Chapter 2:1-16

vv. 1-3 — Nehemiah, the cupbearer of Artaxerxes, appears sad

before the king — which evidently is unusual, as the king calls attention to it. Nehemiah explains that it is because of news from Jerusalem.

v. 4 — The king gives him opportunity to make a request. Here begins the use of the little word “so” that occurs again and again.

v. 5 — Nehemiah asks for a leave of absence that he might go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls.

v. 6 — The queen evidently supports Nehemiah in his request, and the king grants it.

vv. 7-9 — Nehemiah makes further request for material assistance and protection, as a government official, along the route. An honor guard from the king accompanies Nehemiah.

v. 10 — The 3 leading enemies of Israel are grieved that Nehemiah has come to help his people.

vv. 11-16 — Nehemiah comes to Jerusalem, immediately makes a secret inspection of the damage, and estimates the extent of the job.

C. Nehemiah’s encouragement to rebuild the walls, Chapter 2:17-20

vv. 17, 18 — Then Nehemiah calls together the leaders of Israel and reveals his plan to rebuild the walls and gates of Jerusalem. The people are encouraged to begin the undertaking.

v. 19 — The 3 enemies use the weapon of ridicule to deter the people from attempting the Herculean project of rebuilding the walls and gates.

v. 20 — Nehemiah’s answer is brief. He would look to God and not to them.

D. Rebuilding the walls and gates, Chapter 3

This chapter is filled with great spiritual lessons (see author’s booklet, “The Gospel in the Gates of Jerusalem”).

E. Nehemiah’s response to opposition, Chapters 4 — 6

Chapter 4

vv. 1-3 — As the work progresses, the enemy continues to use the weapon of ridicule. They make light of the zeal of the workmen and

laugh at their workmanship, saying that even a nimble fox could knock down the wall.

vv. 4-6 — Nehemiah ignores their sarcasm and prays to God, but continues to build.

vv. 7-9 — When the enemy sees that the wall is going up in spite of their ridicule, they become angry and decide to try to destroy the wall. Nehemiah continues to pray and build.

v. 10 — Opposition comes next from within their own ranks — discouragement in the presence of the huge undertaking and the threat of the enemy making a surprise attack. Nehemiah arms the workmen.

v. 17 — They work with one hand and hold a weapon with the other.

v. 23 — Nehemiah injects a humorous note by adding that they did not take off their clothes during this trying experience — except, of course, when they took a bath!

Chapter 5 — Opposition again rises from within their own ranks.

vv. 1-5 — Some of their own brethren take advantage of the hard lot of others and give “help” by taking mortgages at excessive interest and also by buying their sons and daughters into slavery. This display of covetousness is the same as the idolatry which sent them into captivity.

vv. 6-11 — Nehemiah is very angry when this is called to his attention, and he forces these greedy brethren to restore what they had taken.

v. 12 — The brethren take an oath that they will restore what they had taken.

v. 13 — Nehemiah threatens to deal with them severely if they do not carry through with their agreement.

vv. 14-19 — Nehemiah, on a leave of absence from his position as cupbearer for King Artaxerxes, had refused to accept the salary formerly paid to the governor of Israel, which came from taxing the people. His example should have been an inspiration and example to his brethren.

Chapter 6 — In spite of crafty opposition, the wall is finished.

vv. 1-3 — The enemies (Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem) hear that the wall is completed, but Nehemiah honestly admits the report is a bit

exaggerated (the gates are not set up).

The enemy reverses the opposition. Since they could not stop the work, they now propose to get together with Nehemiah and work out a compromise. However, their intention is not to promote the welfare of Nehemiah. This is the satanic method of “when you can’t beat them, join them.” Today it is called the ecumenical movement.

Nehemiah properly turns it down and for the 14th time inserts the little word “so” that tells us much.

v. 4 — The enemy approaches Nehemiah 4 times. It is interesting to note (v. 2) the name of the village where they proposed to meet — Ono. That is Nehemiah’s answer, “O, no!”

vv. 5-7 — On the 5th approach to Nehemiah, they insert a subtle pressure to force him to meet with them. They circulate a false report that Nehemiah is attempting to rebel against Persia and set up a separate state. Gashmu (the gossip) is spreading the report (v. 6).

v. 8 — Nehemiah politely calls them liars.

vv. 9-14 — The enemy then hires false prophets to make Nehemiah and the people afraid.

vv. 15-19 — Without fanfare of trumpets, great ceremony or ribbon cutting, the wall is finished. The brief, expressive word “so” tells the story — “So the wall was finished” (v. 15).

The enemy still persists in its opposition by circulating letters to the nobles of Judah, as Tobiah had evidently married a daughter of one of the nobles.

F. Nehemiah’s register of people, Chapter 7

vv. 1-4 — Nehemiah, having finished the wall, gives Hanani and Hananiah charge of Jerusalem. He instructs them to keep the gates closed at certain times to prevent the enemy from entering. “**Eternal vigilance**” is the price of Christian liberty.

vv. 5-73 — This is a **repetition of the genealogy** given in Ezra 2. Unnecessary though this may seem to us, it is repeated because it is important to God and He challenges us to read it. “The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance” (Psalm 112:6). God never forgets the faithful. This chapter comes from the book of eternity.

II. REVIVAL and REFORM, Chapters 8 — 13

A. Great Bible reading led by Ezra, Chapter 8

Bible reading is essential to revival.

vv. 1-6 — Ezra stands upon a pulpit of wood before the water gate. (The Word of God is spiritual water.) Ezra reads in the Law of Moses from morning until noon.

vv. 7, 8 — Ezra evidently reads a portion and then the Levites, scattered in the crowd, explain it to the people. (Note: The method used here is still God's method. The Word is to be read distinctly and explained so that the people can understand it.)

vv. 9-12 — Many people are overcome with emotion as they had never before heard the Word of God. They weep. Nehemiah urges the people not to weep but to rejoice. Here is the source of Christian strength, "for the joy of the LORD is your strength" (8:10). See also Philippians 4:13.

v. 13 — Ezra instructs the teachers (Levites) in the law.

vv. 14-18 — The Feast of Tabernacles is observed.

B. Revival — the result, Chapters 9, 10

Chapter 9

vv. 1-3 — The ingredients and order of revival are important. Reading the Word of God (studying and understanding it) is essential and basic. Fasting, sackcloth, and ashes reveal their attitude and sincerity. Confession and worship follow.

vv. 4-38 — This is a great prayer of confession — praise and adoration of God as Creator (vv. 5, 6); praise and adoration because of His providential dealings with Israel; recitation and reminder of their long history. (Stephen recited this same history in Acts 7, but it led to murder, not to revival; to his condemnation, not to their confession.) Note the confession of their sins (vv. 34-38).

Chapter 10 — The people make and sign a covenant to serve God.

C. Reform — another result, Chapters 11 — 13

Chapter 11 — The rulers cast lots to see who is to dwell in Jerusalem and who is to live elsewhere in the land.

Chapter 12

vv. 1-42 — **Roster** of priests and Levites who had returned with Zerubbabel.

vv. 43-47 — **Restoration** of sacrifices and temple worship. (Notice the joy of the people.)

Chapter 13 — Nehemiah, who had returned to Persia, comes again to Jerusalem and institutes reforms.

vv. 1-5 — The reading of the law leads to separation.

vv. 6-9 — Nehemiah puts Tobiah out of the apartment he had been given in the temple.

vv. 10-14 — The Levites had not been paid. Nehemiah forces the rulers to see that the Levites receive their portion.

vv. 15-22 — The Sabbath day is observed. Men of Tyre bring fish to sell in Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. Nehemiah forces them to leave and orders the gates of Jerusalem to be closed on the Sabbath.

vv. 23-31 — Intermarriage among the heathen is still practiced. Nehemiah uses extreme means (v. 25) to force them not to intermarry. (Verse 28 would be humorous if it were not so serious.)

Note the humility and dedication of Nehemiah in his desire to please and to serve God (vv. 14, 31).

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Barber, Cyril J. *Nehemiah: The Dynamics of Effective Leadership*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1976.
- Campbell, Donald K. *Nehemiah: Man in Charge*. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1979.
- Darby, J. N. *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.
- Dennett, Edward. *Ezra and Nehemiah*. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.
- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Annotated Bible*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1917.
- Getz, Gene A. *Nehemiah: A Man of Prayer and Persistence*. Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1981.
(Character studies on Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and David have also been published. Excellent for individual or group study.)
- Gray, James M. *Synthetic Bible Studies*. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906.
- Ironside, H. A. *Notes on the Book of Ezra*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
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- Kelly, William. *Lectures on Ezra and Nehemiah*. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.
- Luck, G. Coleman. *Ezra and Nehemiah*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1961.
- Sauer, Erich. *The Dawn of World Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951.
(An excellent Old Testament survey.)
- Scroggie, W. Graham. *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970.
(An excellent survey and outline of the Old Testament.)
- Seume, Richard H. *Nehemiah: God's Builder*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1978.
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Handbook*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966.
(A concise commentary on the entire Bible.)

Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981.

(Volume 1 covers Genesis through Song of Solomon with a fine summary of each paragraph. Highly recommended.)

SAMPLE SUMMARY FOR EACH CHAPTER

(for your personal study)

1. Theme of chapter —
2. Most important verse —
3. Most prominent word —
4. Teaching about Christ —
5. Command to obey —
6. Promise to claim —
7. New truth learned —

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