

SAME OL' STORY?

EZRA/NEHEMIAH



I. The ties that bind us (Ezra/Nehemiah)

A. God Acts: God is providentially acting for His good purposes

1. Ezra 1.1-2 – God stirs in the heart of Cyrus
2. Ezra 1.5 – God stirs in the heart of the people
3. Ezra 6.14 – Finish Temple according to command of God
4. Neh. 2.8 – God's hand is on Nehemiah
5. Neh. 2.12 – God put a mission on Nehemiah's mind

B. Gods Word: Ultimately acting to bring His people in conformity to His word

1. Ezra 1.1 – To fulfill word
2. Ezra 3.2 – Altar completed "as it was written"
3. Ezra 7.10 – Knew the word, did the word, taught the word
4. Neh. 1.4 – Recognizes they have not kept the word
5. Neh. 1.8 – Asks God to act in keeping with His word
6. Neh. 8 – Work hard at understanding word
7. Neh. 10.29 – Covenant to keep the word

C. Enemies of God: As faithfulness comes, so too do the enemies (External/Internal)

1. External
 - a. Ezra 4.1 – Right after Israelites show up and lay foundation, enemies come
 - b. Neh. 2.19 – Opposition come on the scene just after Nehemiah's intentions are known
2. Internal
 - a. Ezra 9.8,10,15 – Just after completing temple fall into
 - b. Neh. 5.7 – Israelites exacting interest upon their own
 - c. Neh. 13 – They fail to keep word

II. The ties that bind us (Bible)

A. God Acts to have a people that display His glory that live in accordance with Word

1. Genesis 1 – Creation
2. Genesis 3.15 – Seed of salvation is coming for His people
3. Genesis 12.1-3 – Abraham...have a people

B. New Testament – Christ comes and initiates everlasting people by being faithful to the word for us...the word became incarnate (John 1.1,14, 2 Cor. 5.21, etc.)

- a. The people He has always wanted for Himself is the church (Matt. 16.18, Eph. 3.10, etc.)

C. Enemies of God: Christ defeats external and internal enemies

1. External (Satan)
 - a. Satan is defeated – Col. 2.15
2. Internal
 - a. Our sinful rebellion is defeated by His faithfulness for us (2 Cor. 5.21, etc.)

III. Ezra/Nehemiah is a book that is the story of our lives

1. Just as it leaves us wanting, so does the world we live in
2. Our want points, like the text, points us to the one that was faithful for us

Questions

1. How do you see God acting today? In you life? In your church? Are we to believe that God continues to "stir" in the hearts of people today for His good purposes? Assuming He does act, does this provide comfort or unrest? Why?
2. Why is God so adamant to bring about faithfulness to the word? What is it about the word that God is pressing into His people?
3. Discuss external/enemies in Ezra/Neh. & their similarities to our day. How does Christ defeat them?