



A BIBLE READING PLAN FOR EZRA - NEHEMIAH

January 4 - February 9, 2016

Mountain Brook Baptist Church
www.mbbc.org



EZRA - NEHEMIAH

Project 119 is a Bible reading initiative of Mountain Brook Baptist Church. Our hope is that every member of our church body would be encouraged in his or her relationship with Jesus Christ through the regular reading of God's Word.

This reading plan will guide you through the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The plan provides you a devotional thought for the week and a suggested Scripture reading and for each day of the week. On the weekends, we suggest that you re-read the Scripture passages that you have been working through during the past week.

Additional devotionals for Ezra and Nehemiah will be posted on the blog portion of the church's website. To access these devotionals, go to www.mbbc.org/blog. To receive email updates when new devotionals are added to the blog, click on "Subscribe to Mountain Brook Blog by Email" and follow the instructions. To learn more about Project 119 and to access previous plans, visit www.mbbc.org/project119.



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Week One: Ezra 1:1 - 4:6 January 4 - 10, 2016

What are your hopes and dreams for 2016? I would venture to guess that most of us have spiritual growth somewhere on our list of goals for the coming year. Perhaps you have started many years with the goal of spiritual growth in mind only to get to the end of the year and find that you haven't experienced as much growth as you would have hoped. It could be that past failures have left you with little reason to believe that 2016 will be much different. What will it take for you to experience true spiritual growth this year?

I believe that Ezra 1 is instructive for us at this point. Ezra contains an account of God's people returning to Jerusalem from exile. How did this work of restoration and redemption begin? In 1:1 and 1:5, the author of Ezra records that God stirred up the spirits of Cyrus King of Persia and some of the people of Israel. As you think about growing in your relationship with Jesus Christ, begin by asking God to stir up your spirit. Ask God to give you a growing desire to pursue Him daily and to experience the abundance of life found only in Jesus.

Monday, January 4 | Ezra 1:1-11

Tuesday, January 5 | Ezra 2:1-70

Wednesday, January 6 | Ezra 3:1-7

Thursday, January 7 | Ezra 3:8-13

Friday, January 8 | Ezra 4:1-6

Saturday, January 9 - Sunday, January 10 | Ezra 1:1 - 4:6



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Week Two: Ezra 4:7 - 7:28

January 11 - 17, 2016

Throughout the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, we find that the people of Israel repeatedly faced opposition to their efforts to rebuild the Temple and reestablish themselves in the land. This opposition surely discouraged the people. There were probably moments when they felt as if they were not going to be able to accomplish all the huge task that lay ahead of them.

However, as we read these books, we are reminded of the powerful truth that God's plans and purposes will surely come to pass. Chances are, you will face opposition as you seek to accomplish all that God has laid on your heart. When you face such opposition, hardship and disappointment, be encouraged by the fact that God will accomplish his good purposes in your life.

Monday, January 11 | Ezra 4:7-24

Tuesday, January 12 | Ezra 5:1-17

Wednesday, January 13 | Ezra 6:1-12

Thursday, January 14 | Ezra 6:13-22

Friday, January 15 | Ezra 7:1-28

Saturday, January 16 - Sunday, January 17 | Ezra 4:7 - 7:28



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Week Three: Ezra 8:1 - Nehemiah 2:20 January 18 - 24, 2016

Confession of sin is an important theme in the chapters you will be reading this week. The people of Israel confess that they have not faithfully obeyed God's laws. In Nehemiah Chapter 1, Nehemiah confesses the role that he has played in the disobedience of the nation. In both instances, it is obvious that the people feel godly grief for their transgressions and are hopeful that God will mercifully forgive them.

Each of us is guilty of sinning against the Lord. We need to spend time in honest reflection before the Lord confessing our sins and asking for forgiveness. The good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that if we confess our sins, God is gracious and merciful to forgive us and to completely cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:5-10). Spend some time in thoughtful reflection and prayer this week. Ask God to reveal the sin in your life. Confess those sins and ask God to forgive you. Rejoice in the truth that God offers complete forgiveness through Jesus Christ!

Monday, January 18 | Ezra 8:1-36

Tuesday, January 19 | Ezra 9:1-15

Wednesday, January 20 | Ezra 10:1-44

Thursday, January 21 | Nehemiah 1:1-11

Friday, January 22 | Nehemiah 2:1-20

Saturday, January 23 - Sunday, January 24 | Ezra 8:1 - Nehemiah 2:20



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Week Four: Nehemiah 3:1 - 7:73 **January 25 - 31, 2016**

In addition to leading the people's efforts to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, Nehemiah also led the people to greater levels of faithfulness in their relationship with God and with one another. One thing Nehemiah addressed was the injustice he saw in the land. The nobles were taking advantage of the poor by requiring them to pay steep taxes and heavy interest. Nehemiah forces the nobles to stop this behavior and leads the way in restoring justice by refusing to take the food that was rightfully his by virtue of the fact that he was the governor.

As we think about growing in faithfulness to God, we often think about the sins that we have committed against the Lord. However, we are prone to overlook the responsibility God has given us to seek justice for the poor and the oppressed all around us. As you read this week, ask God to give you eyes to see the way that people all around you are impacted by injustice and oppression. Ask God to give you courage to be an advocate for the poor and oppressed in our world.

Monday, January 25 | Nehemiah 3:1-32

Tuesday, January 26 | Nehemiah 4:1-23

Wednesday, January 27 | Nehemiah 5:1-19

Thursday, January 28 | Nehemiah 6:1-19

Friday, January 29 | Nehemiah 7:1-73

Saturday, January 30 - Sunday, January 31 | Nehemiah 3:1 - 7:73



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Week Five: Nehemiah 8:1 - 11:36 February 1 - 7, 2016

As you have been reading through Ezra and Nehemiah over the last four weeks, you have probably noticed the many lists of names. I would venture to guess that you did not find these passages very exciting to read. If that's the case, then let me warn you: more lists of names lie ahead. What are we to make of these lists of seemingly insignificant people?

One thing I take from these lists of names is the truth that God uses normal, everyday people to accomplish his purposes in this world. If we were honest, most of us would rather be Ezra or Nehemiah rather than one of the seemingly insignificant people in a long list of names. Wouldn't it be nice for someone to name a book after you and remember you for doing great things for God? The truth is, most of us will never experience such notoriety. Instead, we will be called to quietly and faithfully bear witness to the difference that Jesus Christ makes in our lives as we go about our business in the schools, workplaces and families in which God has placed us. But, if we reflect upon the story of Ezra and Nehemiah for a moment, we will realize that Ezra and Nehemiah could not have accomplished anything of significance on their own. Each of us has an important part to play in God's work of redemption, no matter how mundane it may seem.

This week, ask God to show you how he can use you for His Kingdom purposes in the places he has placed you. Be attentive to His leadership and be faithful to the mission he has given you.

Monday, February 1 | Nehemiah 8:1-8

Tuesday, February 2 | Nehemiah 8:9-18

Wednesday, February 3 | Nehemiah 9:1-38

Thursday, February 4 | Nehemiah 10:1-39

Friday, February 5 | Nehemiah 11:1-36

Saturday, February 6 - Sunday, February 7 | Nehemiah 8:1 - 11:36



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Week Six: Nehemiah 12:1 - 13:31

February 8 - 9, 2016

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah recount a significant time in the life of God's people. God stirred up their spirits to be about His work, He allowed them to find favor among foreign rulers, He protected them from their enemies and He helped them to finish the work of restoration.

Take some time this week to think back over all that you have learned by reading these two books. Ask God to empower you to be faithful to whatever task of redemption and restoration He has for you today. The same God who was at work in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah is at work in your life today. Ask God to give you the grace to faithfully fulfill the calling he has given you to bear witness to Jesus Christ in your lifetime.

Monday, February 8 | Nehemiah 12:1-47

Tuesday, February 9 | Nehemiah 13:1-31