

Later Historical Books Lecture Notes

- a. Events in Esther
 - b. Occurred between the sixth and seventh chapters of Ezra
 - c. Between the first return led by Zerubbabel
 - d. Second return led by Ezra
 - e. Sometime between 470 and 465 BC
- B. Theme and Purpose
- 1. Mordecai
 - a. Queen Esther's cousin
 - b. Persuades Esther to try to save her people
 - c. Risks her own life
 - d. Appealed to the king
 - e. Rescues the Jews
 - 2. Theme - God's Care
 - a. Show God's providential care of His people
 - b. Even in trials and persecution
 - c. Name of God does not appear in this book
- C. Keys to the Book
- 1. Key Words
 - a. Jews occurs 44 times
 - b. In concept key word is providence
 - 2. Key People
 - a. Esther
 - b. Xerxes - Ahasuerus
 - c. Hebrew form of the name of the king of Persia
 - d. Mordecai
 - e. Haman

I. INTRODUCTION

These books detail the last days of Old Testament Israel after the return of Judah from their Babylonian Captivity.

- A. Ezra - Reconstruction of Temple and Restoration of People
- B. Nehemiah - Reconstruction of the City
- C. Esther - Protection of God's People

II. EZRA - RECONSTRUCTION OF TEMPLE AND RESTORATION OF PEOPLE

- A. Author
 - 1. Author is not named
 - a. Jewish tradition (Talmud) ascribes it to Ezra
 - b. Ezra is the author
 - c. Ezra as principal character supports authorship
 - d. Written between 457 BC and 444 BC
 - 2. Hebrew Bible
 - a. Ezra and Nehemiah one book
 - b. Called - Book of Ezra
 - c. Modern Hebrew Bibles two-fold arrangement
 - d. Ezra
 - e. Nehemiah
 - 3. Vulgate (Latin Bible)
 - a. Ezra and Nehemiah named 1 and 2 Esdras
 - b. Apocryphal book called 1 Esdras is 3 Esdra
 - 4. Ezra
 - a. Founded the Great Synagogue
 - b. Old Testament scripture was settled
 - c. Collected the biblical books into a unit
 - d. Originated the synagogue form of worship
- B. Theme and Purpose
 - 1. Ezra continues where 2 Chronicles ends
 - a. Physically
 - b. Traces return of the Jews from Babylonian exile
 - c. Rebuilding of the temple
 - d. Spiritually
 - e. Demonstrates God fulfilling His promise

Next week – Session IV: Historical Books Divided Kingdom



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- f. Returns people to the land of promise
- g. After prophesied seventy year exile
- 2. Begins with the decree of Cyrus
 - a. Allowed a remnant to return
 - b. People enthusiastically began rebuilding the temple
 - c. Delayed for 18 years by enemies from the north
 - d. Decree from Darius let them finish
- 3. Chapters 7-10
 - a. Tell about the return of the priest Ezra
 - b. Taught the people the law
 - c. Reformed the nation's spiritual life
- 4. Theme - Restoration of the Remnant
 - a. Spiritually
 - b. Morally
- C. Keys to the Book
 - 1. Key Words
 - a. Jerusalem - 48 times
 - b. Temple - 25 times
 - 2. Key People
 - a. Cyrus
 - b. Ezra
 - c. Jeshua
 - d. Zerubbabel

II. NEHEMIAH - RECONSTRUCTION OF THE CITY

- A. Author
 - 1. Nehemiah
 - a. Book bears his name
 - b. Presented as first-hand account
 - The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah*
 - Nehemiah 1:1
 - c. Some believe evidence suggests Ezra a author
 - 2. Date
 - a. Last half of book of Ezra
 - b. Written about 445 - 425 BC
 - 3. Title of the Book
 - a. Draws name from the prominence of Nehemiah
 - i. Contemporary of Ezra
 - ii. Cupbearer to the king of Persia
 - iii. Nehemiah means Yahweh consoles or comforts
 - b. Continues history of the returned Jews
 - c. Nehemiah gave up position as cupbearer to Artaxerxes

- d. Became governor of Jerusalem
- e. Lead the people in repairing the city walls

Ezra and Nehemiah	
Ezra	Nehemiah
Priest	Layman
Involved with religious restoration	Governor of Jerusalem
Restored the Law	Rebuilt the Walls

- B. Leadership of Nehemiah
 - 1. Accomplished in fifty-two days
 - 2. What had not been done in the ninety-four years
 - 3. Since the first return under Zerubbabel
 - 4. By faith they overcame insurmountable opposition
- C. Keys to the Book
 - 1. Key Words
 - a. Wall/Walls 33 times
 - b. Build/Building/rebuilding more than 20 times
 - 2. Key People
 - a. Nehemiah
 - b. Artaxerxes
 - c. Sanballet
 - d. Ezra

II. ESTHER - PROTECTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

- A. Author
 - 1. No hint of author
 - a. Knew the Persian culture well
 - b. Account has all the marks of a person who was there
 - c. Described the events as an eyewitness
 - d. Probably a Jew
 - 2. Tradition
 - a. Ezra or Nehemiah wrote the account
 - b. No specific evidence supports that view
 - 3. Title of the Book
 - a. Book takes its name from the chief character
 - b. Hebrew name Hadassah (Myrtle)
 - c. Changed to the Persian name Ester
 - d. Probably means "star"
 - 4. Date