

Introduction

I firmly believe in starting a book at the beginning. None of this flipping to the last page for me. However, the workbook you hold in your hands has been built backwards. I was invited to build several weeks of Bible Study to precede a book-study on Nehemiah for VC Family this fall. Even though Ezra and Nehemiah show up as individual books in our Bible, most Biblical scholars I have read assert that they function as a single literary unit. So it made sense to read Ezra before Nehemiah.

One of the reasons I am looking forward to reading Ezra-Nehemiah is that they are not traditionally books that are frequently used in devotional bible study. Part of that is because they come toward the end of the narrative arc of the Old Testament and require a lot of background knowledge to make much sense of them. They also have rather unsatisfying endings - no pretty bow to tie up these narrative strings or bedtime stories to tell our children.

So, to give context, we are going to start at the very beginning - Genesis 1. The first three weeks of our study will review the stories of some of the central characters in the Biblical story. We will revisit the patriarchs, prophets, judges, priests, and kings and follow the narrative arc of God's presence, promises, and people throughout the whole story. Then, with this story clear in our minds, we will take a deep dive into Ezra-Nehemiah.

May your time invested in study and prayer bear much fruit as you grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Peace be with you!

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