

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A: THEMES

There are various themes in the Bible that run all the way through. This means that the story of Ezra & Nehemiah will have specific themes which weave together. Below are a few of the themes which appear.

Word of God	Spoken & Written. The power of God's word through the prophets, written in the law of Moses, and preached by Israel's leaders.
Covenant	Promise & Faithfulness. The binding contract between God and his people, resulting in blessing or curse.
Exile & Return	The home-leaving and home-coming of God's people from the land of Judah and Israel.
Power	Sovereignty & Rule. The use of power, by human beings or God, to further one's plans for good or evil.
Sin & Guilt	The problem of sin in the hearts of the people of God, including both individual and corporate sin and guilt.
Confession & Repentance	Turning from sin & living differently. The confession of sin to God, seeking his forgiveness, and resolving to live for him.
Joy & Sadness	Joy in God and his salvation. And the longing for something better!
Worship & Ceremony	The corporate and formal worship of God in ceremony, festival, and ritual. The practice of worshiping God in his ways for his glory.
The People of God	The people of God as distinct from the nations. Those set apart for working together for the glory of God in the completion of his will.
City/Temple of God	The city and temple of God as the focus of his plans.

APPENDIX B: GOSPEL GLIMPSES

Since the Old Testament is about Jesus Christ, we should be looking for glimpses of the Gospel! Below are a few ways in which we can better answer the question: “How does this passage point us to Jesus?”

Follow the Plan	The passage might fit into the unfolding plan of God’s redemption from Genesis-Revelation. So follow God’s unfolding master plan through to its conclusion in Christ.
Trace the Fulfillment	The passage could be quoted, paraphrased, or pictured in the New Testament. So go directly to it and talk about Christ!
Expose the Problem	The passage may speak more about the problem of sin. So talk about the problem and how God’s solution is found in Jesus.
Highlight the (Divine) Attribute	The passage may show certain attributes of God that shine in the story. You could talk about how these attributes are seen more visibly in the gospel.
Focus on the Action	The passage may show how God acts in the story. You could talk about how Jesus acts in the gospel.
Explain the Theme	The passage may have a key idea, category, or theme. You could follow this theme throughout the Bible, including the New Testament.
Point out the Consequences	The passage may concentrate on the consequences of choosing obedience or disobedience. You could talk about how this is similar/different in living like Jesus.
Describe the Ideal Human Character	The passage may speak about the ideal human character. Talk about how this ideal character is shown in Jesus!
Satisfy the Longing	The passage may be charged with pain, disappointment, and a longing for God to act. Talk about how these longings are fulfilled for us in Jesus.

APPENDIX C: APPLICATION

Since the Old Testament was written for us, we should always consider how the story applies to ourselves in light of Jesus Christ. Below are some broad categories (by no means exhaustive!) for thinking about how to respond to Ezra & Nehemiah:

Praise	Praise God. Express your admiration of our God by giving glory, honor, and praise for who he is and what he does.
Rejoice/Thanks	Thank God. Show gratitude and appreciation for who God is and what he does. Rejoice in him!
Confess	Confess your sin to God and others. Speak about your sin—the bad things you’ve done and the good things you haven’t done.
Mourn	Express sorrow and sadness. Mourn a particular sin, suffering, or corruption that plagues us and our world.
Rest	Rest in God and his saving work in Christ. Come to Jesus Christ, depending on his saving gifts - rest on him instead of yourself.
Resolve	Resolve to change a certain part of your life. Plan to live differently through the energy of God’s Spirit—Christ in you!
Hope	Hope in God and his saving work in Christ. Find assurance in his promises & word about what is to come.
Obey/Do	Respond to God’s word in obedience. Do what God tells you to do!
Desire	Desire which God desires - love what He loves, hate what He hates and enjoy what He enjoys. Re-align your desires to His.
Think	Change your way of thinking about God, yourself and the world.
Ask	Ask God for things in prayer. Ask that God might work in you through the presence of Christ by the Holy Spirit.
Share	Share a particular truth about God and his saving work in Christ with a friend, colleague, or family member.

How was your growth group experience?
If you've got two minutes,
we would appreciate your feedback.



