

Ezra and Nehemiah.

The Exile Narrative shows us:

1. God will punish and judge sin and disobedience.

-exile is a picture of judgment...

-the constant failings and disobedience of God's children brought this punishment.

-God's judgment is real, certain, and has eternal implications....

-70 years of exile meant time cut off from the promised abundance and blessing of God in the Land.....this time was dark and desolate.....the punishment of God is severe.

-the promises of God along with the commands of God towards sin should send us running from the foolishness of sin and running to God who will dwell with us!

-do you believe God will punish sin?

2. God is committed to preserving his people through judgment.

-you may see the exile and learn of God's judgment and think God is cruel, this is the wrong view of God.....he deserves to exile us and kill us because of our sin.....and he would be just in doing so.....but listen to the story of God's judgment.....

-He is creator and is holy.....authoring all and able to judge all.....

-He chooses a people to show himself to and be God to and they constantly disobey.

-God displays his patience but holiness in judgment through the OT...

-this points to people's need for something new.....namely a new heart

-God ultimately preserves mankind through the gospel by putting the sins of the world on Jesus and judging him in our place.

-this point is a major thread in the story of redemption.

3. God's plan is to bring his people out of the exile of sin into a relationship with him.

-Ezra 1-6 show us God bringing his people out and Ezra leading the people to rebuild the temple so that worship could take place.....

-God does not rescue with aimless intention. Throughout Scripture we see God delivering, bringing out, preserving, and ultimately saving so that people would know him and worship him!

-sin separates us from God and the aim of God's redemptive heart is to take us back to the garden where there is communion with God.....us knowing him and worshipping him.

4. Something more than outward change is needed to make that relationship possible.

-Ezra tries much social and political reform to change the people.....it doesn't work.

-Matt. 5:17-20.....we need a new heart....Matt. 23.

-our works and our trying harder will never be enough.....we need Jesus.

-The whole OT and the behavior of God's people show this is true.

5. Jesus is the only way our exiled hearts can be made new and be brought back to God.

-Jesus the mediator.

-He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. (2 Corinthians 1:10)

-He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, (Colossians 1:13)

-Lets also look back at the Old Testament to see this idea of God's "bringing out" and "delivering" of us!

-And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers. (Deuteronomy 6:23)

-And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders. And he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. (Deuteronomy 26:8-9)

-the exile narrative really points us back and sends us forward.....God will exodus his people.

- This is just the picture of God in his dealings with us through the gospel. God brings us out of our sin to know him, love him, and serve him. He delivers us from the slavery of our sin. These two pictures point us back to how God has dealt with his people in the past and forward to how he continues to deal with sinners today.

Overview:

-2 Kings sees the southern kingdom exiled by the Babylonians.....70 yrs

-King Cyrus comes to power and lets the exiles go!

-Ezra 1-6- first wave of exiles return, 3-6 temple rebuild

-not joy but grief in the temple

-Ezra wants to bring spiritual renewal but does so through social and pol. Reform.....poor results!

-ch.9 is the prayer of confession...

Nehemiah rebuilds the wall of Jerusalem.....he is a model of courage, faith, and integrity

-ch.8-9.....Torah reading, ch.9 another prayer

-ch.11-13 leave us with the sinful people and a frustrated prophet.

-section ends on a downer....exile didn't work, God needs to do something to bring heart change!!!!