

An Annotated Bibliography for Nehemiah

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The following list was compiled to assist pastors who will be teaching the book of Nehemiah during the Southern Baptist Convention's January Bible Study emphasis in 2006. The works range from scholarly to devotional or application-oriented, and are grouped accordingly so that pastors or teachers can find materials suited to their needs and interests. The list is far from comprehensive. For a more complete bibliography, see one of the newer commentaries listed under the Exegetical Commentaries section below, particularly the works of Hugh G. M. Williamson in the *Word Commentary* and F. Charles Fensham in the *New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (NICOT).

Overviews of Nehemiah

For an overview of Nehemiah (and Ezra), refer to the introductory sections of the newer commentaries listed in the commentary sections below.

The following articles provide good synopses of the book of Nehemiah:

Brand, Chad, Charles Draper, and Archie England. Gen. Eds. *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1998.

This dictionary contains a concise overview article on the book of Nehemiah.

Laughlin, John C. H. "Nehemiah: His Life and Times." *Biblical Illustrator* 14 (Summer 1988): 37-39.

Addressing Critical Issues in the Study of Ezra/Nehemiah

Mervin Breneman, in the *New American Commentary* (NAC), listed under Exegetical Commentaries, provides a clear and concise overview of the main debates surrounding Ezra and Nehemiah: 1) authorship (along with Chronicles), and 2) issues surrounding dates, including the date of Ezra's journey to Jerusalem. Other newer commentaries (e.g. Word and NICOT) also cover these issues.

For an in-depth scholarly overview of these issues, see Kyung-jin Min, *The Levitical Authorship of Ezra-Nehemiah*, Part I (listed in the Special Studies section below). Evangelical scholars may not agree with all of his conclusions, but one can follow his arguments.

The following articles address the question of the dating of Ezra and Nehemiah:

Demsky, Aaron. "Who Came First, Ezra or Nehemiah? The Synchronistic Approach." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 65.1 (1994): 1-19.

Demsky is a Jewish scholar. His article is detailed and contains good footnotes.

Kraemer, David. "On the Relationship of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 59 (Sep 1993): 73-92.

Like the previous article, this one also comes from a Jewish scholar.

McFall, Leslie. "Was Nehemiah Contemporary with Ezra in 458 B.C.?" *Westminster Theological Journal* 53.2 (Fall 1991): 263-93.

This article is a good overview of the critical issues from an evangelical scholar's perspective. The footnotes are extensive. The article contains a timeline of Ezra/Nehemiah in chart form which can also be found online at the following URL: <http://www.btinternet.com/~lmf12/EzraChart.pdf> (accessed: September 1, 2005).

Background

For comprehensive background information, refer to the newer commentaries, particularly the *Word Commentary*, NICOT, or NAC. These are listed under Exegetical Commentaries. The following articles contain background material with specialized emphases. In general,

Biblical Illustrator articles are informative, have good pictures and illustrations, and include limited footnotes for further study.

Anderson, William H. U. "Economics After the Return." *Biblical Illustrator* 22 (Fall 1995): 46-48.

Drinkard, Joel F. "Sanballat and Tobiah." *Biblical Illustrator* 12 (Spring 1986): 62-65.

Hockenull, Brenda R. "The Feast of Booths." *Biblical Illustrator* 14 (Summer 1988): 51-54.

Hyatt, Leon. "Nehemiah as a Governor." *Biblical Illustrator* 22 (Fall 1995): 36-38.

Kent, Dan Gentry. "The Office of Cupbearer." *Biblical Illustrator* 12 (Spring 1986): 38-39.

_____. "Early Fifth-Century International Relations." *Biblical Illustrator* 22 (Fall 1995): 53-56.

Lee, Jerry W. "Enemies of Rebuilding Jerusalem." *Biblical Illustrator* 24 (Fall 1997): 64-67.

Matthews, E. LeBron. "The Purpose and Life Situation of Nehemiah." *Biblical Illustrator* 24 (Fall 1998): 50-53.

Redditt, Paul L. "A History of Jewish Beginnings." *Biblical Illustrator* 17 (Summer 1991): 54-59.

Register, M. Dean. "The Arabians." *Biblical Illustrator* 17 (Summer 1991): 23-26.

Tatum, Lynn W. "Nehemiah's Wall." *Biblical Illustrator* 17 (Summer 1991): 14-17.

Vardaman, Jerry. "Sanballat the Horonite." *Biblical Illustrator* 22 (Fall 1995): 63-64.

Exegetical Commentaries

Batten, Loring W. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913, 1949.

This commentary from the International Critical Commentary series (ICC) is included for completeness. The ICC series in general is not written from a conservative perspective. The introductory sections are outdated, and Batten's conclusions can be dogmatic, but he addresses the text responsibly and includes good language notes.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Ezra-Nehemiah, A Commentary*. The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988.

Like many critical scholars, Blenkinsopp believes that the historical books in general are *idealized history* (i.e. not necessarily literal). His treatment of the text and his language notes are good. This volume also includes a large bibliography.

Breneman, Mervin. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. New American Commentary, Vol. 10. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993.

This is a good commentary, particularly for pastors. Breneman interacts with the original languages but he does not presuppose a knowledge of Hebrew (and Aramaic for Ezra) on the part of his readers. The commentary does not include a bibliography (this may be the norm for the NAC series), but the footnotes are good and provide information on other sources.

Fensham, F. Charles. *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.

Like many volumes in the NICOT series, this book is a good overall commentary. It contains technical notes on the original languages but is quite accessible to someone without knowledge of Hebrew. One drawback for the language student is the use of transliterated Hebrew rather than actual Hebrew characters.

Keil, C. F. *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*. Clark's Foreign Theological Library, 4th series, Vol. 38. translated by Sophia Taylor. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1873.

The Keil and Delitzsch commentaries have been used for over 100 years. Although outdated in terms of critical issues, they are conservative and scholarly, and have the advantage of being available online for free as

part of the e-sword Bible software package. For details visit: www.e-sword.net.

Williamson, H. G. M. *Ezra, Nehemiah*. Word Biblical Commentary 16. Waco, Texas: Word, 1985.

This is perhaps the best overall commentary in this list, and can be used profitably both by people with no language expertise as well as experts. It has an excellent introduction and in addition to providing commentary, the author addresses each section of the biblical text from the perspective of form and structure. As is typical with the Word series, Williamson has provided very good original language notes.

Expositional Commentaries

The following commentaries generally deal with the English text of Nehemiah and Ezra.

Clines, D. J. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.

Coggins, R. J. *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*. Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Hamrick, Emmett Willard. "Ezra-Nehemiah." Pages 422-506 in *Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 3. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1970.

Holmgren, Fredrick Carlson. *Israel Alive Again: A Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*. International Theological Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

Kidner, Derek. *Ezra and Nehemiah: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Madison, WI: InterVarsity, 1979.

McConville, J. G. *Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*. The Daily Study Bible Series. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985.

Myers, Jacob M. *Ezra, Nehemiah*. Anchor Bible. Garden City: Doubleday, 1965.

Throntveit, Mark A. *Ezra-Nehemiah. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989.

Throntveit approaches Ezra/Nehemiah from mainly a literary perspective, and this commentary provides good insights into the structure of the books. Although the author does not hold to the strict historicity of the Ezra and Nehemiah accounts, he chooses mainly to avoid historical issues and to focus on the received text.

Homiletical

Redpath, Alan. *Victorious Christian Service: Studies in the Book of Nehemiah*. Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1994.

White, K. Owen. *Nehemiah Speaks Again*. Nashville: Broadman, 1964.

Application/Devotional

Evers, Stan K. *Doing a Great Work: Ezra and Nehemiah Simply Explained*. Durham: Evangelical Press, 1996.

Getz, Gene A. *Nehemiah: Becoming a Disciplined Leader. Men of Character*, Vol. 4. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995.

Packer, J. I. *A Passion for Faithfulness: Wisdom from the Book of Nehemiah*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1995.

Special Studies

Cartledge, Tony W. "Jewish Exclusivism." *Biblical Illustrator* 17 (Summer 1991): 31-33.

Clines, David J. A. "Nehemiah 10 as an Example of Early Jewish Biblical Exegesis." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 21.1 (October 1981): 111-17.

Duggan, Michael W. *The Covenant Renewal in Ezra-Nehemiah (Neh. 7:72B-10:40): An Exegetical, Literary, and Theological Study*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 164. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001.

McCarthy, Dennis J. "Covenant and Law in Chronicles-Nehemiah." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44.1 (Jan 1982): 25-44.

Min, Kyung-jin. *The Levitical Authorship of Ezra-Nehemiah*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 409. New York: T & T Clark International, 2004.

Throntveit, Mark A. "Linguistic Analysis and the Question of Authorship in Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah." *Vetus Testamentum* 32.2 (April 1982): 201-216.