

Study Guide





LifeLight

LifeLight Expands

Available NOW!

The Bible: An Overview
 Genesis, Pt. 1
 Genesis, Pt. 2
 Exodus, Pt. 1
 Exodus, Pt. 2
 Wilderness Wanderings
 Joshua
 Judges
 Ruth/Esther
 1 & 2 Samuel
 Life of David

1 & 2 Kings
 Ezra/Nehemiah
 Job
 Selected Psalms
 Proverbs
 Ecclesiastes/
 Song of Solomon
 Isaiah, Pt. 1
 Isaiah, Pt. 2
 Daniel
 Minor Prophets

Matthew, Pt. 1
 Matthew, Pt. 2
 Mark
 Luke, Pt. 1
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1 Corinthians
 2 Corinthians
 Galatians/Philippians/
 Colossians
 Ephesians/
 1 & 2 Thessalonians
 Timothy/Titus/Philemon
 Hebrews
 James/Jude
 1 & 2 Peter
 1, 2, 3 John
 Revelation

LifeLight Foundations

Baptism
 Bible Feasts
 Creation, New Creation

The Christian's Mission
 Heaven & Hell
 Law & Gospel

Ministry
 Miracles
 Prayer

Prophecy
 Triune God
 Worship

LifeLight Release Schedule

2013 RELEASES

LifeLight—Haggai/Zechariah/Malachi July
 LifeLight Foundations—Parables October

2014 RELEASES

LifeLight—Nahum/Habakkuk/Zephaniah January
 LifeLight—1 & 2 Chronicles April
 LifeLight—Hosea/Joel/Amos July
 LifeLight Foundations—End Times October

2015 RELEASES

LifeLight—Jeremiah/Lamentations January
 LifeLight—Ezekiel April
 LifeLight—Obadiah/Jonah/Micah July

Returning from Exile

Deuteronomy 29–30; 2 Chronicles 36; Ezekiel 36; Jeremiah 25:1–14; Daniel 1; 5; Esther 2; 4; Isaiah 45

Distribute before session 1 for use in session 1.

Use enrichment magazine pp. 2–7.

Resources for Worship

Use these resources for your daily study at home and at the week’s assembly.

Hymn

To God the Holy Spirit let us pray
 For the true faith needed on our way
 That He may defend us when life is ending
 And from exile home we are wending.
 Lord, have mercy!

O sweetest Love, Your grace on us bestow;
 Set our hearts with sacred fire aglow
 That with hearts united we love each other,
 Ev’ry stranger, sister, and brother.
 Lord, have mercy!

Transcendent Comfort in our ev’ry need,
 Help us neither scorn nor death to heed
 That we may not falter nor courage fail us
 When the foe shall taunt and assail us.
 Lord, have mercy!
 (LSB 768:1–3)

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Prayer

Merciful, heavenly Father, when You brought the remnant of Your chosen people back from their exile, it was more than just giving them a second chance. You were keeping Your promise of salvation through Jesus Christ and preparing the hearts of those who would receive Him in faith. Grant us now, as we see Your gracious hand in the events of our lives, that we may be strengthened in our faithfulness, and draw us ever closer to the heavenly city that You have prepared for all Your ransomed people, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Digging Deep

My Personal Study for Week 1

Before we start digging into the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, we will use this week to learn some of the Israelite history that led to the events in our study. Over this first week, we will take a look at what led to the exile in the first place and at some of the main characters from that time.

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Day 1 • Read Deuteronomy 29–30; 2 Chronicles 36:1–16; Ezekiel 36:16–38

1. Read Deuteronomy 29:18–29. Who was the first prophet to pass along God’s threat of exile?
2. What was the cause of the Lord’s wrath that resulted in the people’s exile to Babylon?
3. Read Deuteronomy 30:1–10. What is promised at the end of their time of exile?

4. Read 2 Chronicles 36:1–16 for a recap of the historical events that took place leading up to the Babylonian exile. What was the final decline of Judah?

8. According to Jeremiah 25:1–14, what is the symbolic length of the time of exile? If the king of Babylon is the Lord's "servant" (25:9) then why will he also be punished?

5. According to Ezekiel 36:16–38, what is God's key motivation in bringing His people back to the Holy Land?

9. Read Ezekiel 36:1–15. What is the unusual addressee receiving the divine Word of promise? Why would God not have Ezekiel direct this prophecy to the people instead?

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**Day 2 • Read 2 Chronicles 36:17–21;
Jeremiah 25:1–14; Ezekiel 36:1–15**

6. Read Exodus 23:10–12. The Sabbath was intended for people to rest, just as God had done following His creation of the world in six days. They were not to do any work, and the land was not to be tilled or harvested. What were some practical and spiritual purposes for these observances?

10. When it is impressed upon God's people that the land still belongs to Him and not to them, then they would be reminded to regard all that they have in their promised inheritance as purely a gift and not as something they own. How does acknowledging God's ownership of everything we call ours help us gain perspective on our role as caretakers of His property?

7. Read 2 Chronicles 36:17–21. What was going to be accomplished once the people were removed from the land? When would they return?

Return and Rebuild

Ezra 1–3; Leviticus 23:33–43

Distribute before session 2 for use in session 2.

Use enrichment magazine pp. 8–10.

Resources for Worship

Use these resources for your daily study at home and at the week's assembly.

Hymn

May we Thy precepts, Lord, fulfill
And do on earth our Father's will
As angels do above;
Still walk in Christ, the living way,
With all Thy children and obey
The law of Christian love.

So may we join Thy name to bless,
Thy grace adore, Thy pow'r confess,
From sin and strife to flee.
One is our calling, one our name,
The end of all our hopes the same,
A crown of life with Thee.

Spirit of life, of love and peace,
Unite our hearts, our joy increase,
Thy gracious help supply.
To each of us the blessing give
In Christian fellowship to live,
In joyful hope to die.

(LSB 698)

Prayer

O Lord, our God, as the foundation was being laid for Jerusalem's second temple, the people's cheering was mingled with tears of sorrow over the loss of the magnificent first temple. When we come to those moments in our lives in which a wonderful blessing is mixed with pain, provide us with Your peace and strength, as only You can give, so that by the Holy Spirit we can gain the proper perspective as we travel our life's journey, and also look forward with joyful anticipation toward the full revelation of the precious salvation that, although hidden now, is already ours in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Digging Deep

My Personal Study for Week 2

Day 1 • Read Ezra 1:1–4

1. What two things did Cyrus claim that the Lord did for him?

2. What caused King Cyrus to make these claims?

3. Read Daniel 6:8, 12, 15. When a law or pronouncement was made in Persia, what could be done to overturn it?

4. Why do you think Cyrus's decree focuses only on rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem and does not mention rebuilding the city itself?

8. Read Numbers 1:48–54 and 1 Chronicles 13. Why was it necessary to include the priests and Levites for this initial return trip to Jerusalem?

5. If a world leader made a similar pronouncement today in support of the Christian faith, how do you think the news media would evaluate it?

9. What were the vessels of silver and gold used for in temple life? How does Ezra 1:6 compare with Exodus 12:35–36?

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Day 2 • Read Ezra 1:5–11

6. What actions of King Cyrus made it clear that he was going to follow through on his decree?

10. Read Jeremiah 27:19–22. The vessels were returned to Jerusalem along with the exiles. What significance would this have for the Israelites?

7. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin comprised the former Southern Kingdom. They were nearly the only Israelites left in the Holy Land when Nebuchadnezzar imposed the Babylonian exile. The other ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom had been already decimated and exiled by earlier raids, especially by the Assyrians. Why was this important to the lineage of the coming Messiah? (See Micah 5:2.)

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Day 3 • Read Ezra 2

11. Into what categories are the returning exiles listed in Ezra 2?