

**A Selection of Discussion Questions to Be Used with
Ezra and Nehemiah, a Chapter from**

**COMPANION CHARACTERS: A SERIES OF STUDIES
IN BIBLE BIOGRAPHY.**

BY
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The selection of discussion topics and questions listed below range from moderately easy to difficult. Some topics require more deduction and critical thinking than others. There are also a few questions where finding facts is all that is asked. A good help for the questions that require research will be access to the internet and a Smith's Bible Dictionary, to which the author refers, which is available in book form as well as by free access online.

The language usage of the late 19th century is not exactly in the manner by which we communicate today. I urge those who use this text in a homeschool setting or Christian classroom setting, however, to persevere. The reason being that students who attend college will be reading texts of the type here as well as others that may be far more difficult to understand upon first reading.

The idea behind offering a variety of questions in regard to difficulty and topic is that then choices can be made that will fit the student, the situation, and time constraints. I am not including answers, only the questions. I invite those who wish for further elaboration to contact me by email at mary.may@QualityMusicandBooks.com, or by telephone at (763) 205-5390. Please leave a message if I am not available and I will return your call.

Peace and blessing,

Mary Katherine May
Quality Music and Books

1. Timeline of Old Testament events, especially Jeremiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.
2. Kings of Persia from Cyrus the Great through Darius.
3. Persia in today's world is Iran. Map study of ancient world. The Israelites had been in exile for 70 years, and had forgotten and neglected many of their traditions as well as God's teaching for their faith life. One comparison to be made is what happens to each of us when we don't have a faithful fellowship in a Body of Christ with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Historically speaking, a good example of what happens is communism in the Soviet Union and the attempted eradication of Christianity. Barely a remnant survived. Another study might be on how the Russian language, the Soviet language, as well as its culture has infiltrated and in some cases destroyed the cultures of whole groups of peoples.
4. The process: Study the order in which Jerusalem was rebuilt and how and when the Israelites were brought back to God's word. Compare this with teaching in the New Testament.
5. Leadership: the accountability of leaders here in called to account by Ezra. Find the related Scriptures in the New Testament regarding the moral character of Christian leaders.
6. God in all circumstances: For what did the Israelites praise God? For what did they thank God?

7. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are called historical books. They recount the rebuilding of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. There are often circumstances in today's world when rebuilding is necessary—a church gone awry, a family torn apart, a life given over to worldly desires. What can we find in these two books that apply to these circumstances.
8. Online study: Ezra and Nehemiah at one time were one book, and still can be found today by similar but other names. What can you find by researching on the internet about these books and their titles?
9. Words you may not know and should look up in a dictionary: sagacity, diadem, *pari passu*
10. What did a king's cup-bearer (cupbearer) do? Why did kings have cupbearers?
11. There are Christians who draw authority in one way or another from what is called "Apostolic Succession." What does this mean? Do you believe that this does or does not apply to leaders in the faith today? Has this authority been abused? What in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is very like what is called Apostolic Succession today?
12. The material presented here comes from a book written in the 19th century. Since that time, many new discoveries have increased our knowledge about the history of God's people of faith. What information that the author uses has changed? What is the same?
13. Words used in the 19th century don't always mean what they do today. For example, when we tell someone to be "careful," we are telling them to be caution. A former meaning of this word is that a person who is careful, acts in a caring manner. As you read through the text, there will be word use that will surprise you. If a word doesn't make sense in context by the definition you know, it is time to go to a dictionary and look for other meanings or archaic (no longer in use) explanations.
14. There are several tools of deception that opponents of the rebuilding attempted to use to end the restoration. What were they? Can you find examples in today's world in which these methods are used?
15. The author includes his thoughts about the relationship between the People of God (the Church) and government. Does his idea of cooperation still exist today in the U.S.A.? In other countries? Anywhere in the world?
16. What is the Jewish holiday called when the "day of atonement" is practiced?
17. The author's wording creates the idea that Ezra and Nehemiah were true companions in their efforts to restore Jerusalem? After reading the Scripture, do you agree?
18. What can we learn from the manner in which the people worked on rebuilding about cooperation and equality?
19. Who rebuilt the altar?
20. Why did those who remembered the first temple weep and mourn?

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