

- the significance of the images in the dreams
- the varied interpretations given by other scholars

Daniel is marked by the apocalyptic style and the use of imagery is powerful. The identification of symbols, symbolic elements and actions, is very needed in a study of Daniel. The student may wish to read the "Additions to Daniel" as found in the Apocrypha...I recommend the OSFORD ANNOTATED EDITION for normative text and reading.

Student of Bible prophecy find Daniel to be a central book in things pertaining to both Testaments. The literature on this area is vast as noted in the notes on "further reading." Daniel's lifestyle and relations with the government of Babylon are also important areas of study. There is a pattern in the lives of these men of God that commends itself powerfully to us.

2. A Survey Study of Ezra ("God's Scribe")

a. An overview:

The book of Ezra is the literary creation of the man for whom it is named. The modern liberal view attributes the book to an anonymous chronicler much later in history but the evidence of archaeology and the internal thrust of the book argue conclusively for an Ezran authorship that can only be dismissed by totally subjective arguments. Ezra has been criticized, among other things, for having a revival that did not continue. Nehemiah having to repeat many of the reforms...although we discover that since Ezra was nearly a quarter century before Nehemiah a new generation may well have grown up that was ignorant of his reforms...perhaps willingly but in the best light, ignorantly. Likewise the listing of names in Nehemiah 12:26 places Nehemiah before Ezra and therefore is thought to challenge the chronology but it must be seen that the listing is one of order in political protocol and Nehemiah, the official governor would have the preference over Ezra, the unofficial (by Persian Standards) priest.

Ezra's great burden is for the spiritual health of God's people. He is not a builder in the image of Nehemiah but a preacher/priest whose occupation is teaching the Scripture and seeking to see it demonstrated in the life of the people.

In the History of Redemption ...but let's have the outline
first:

- I. The return from exile 1-2
- II. Restoration of the Temple and its worship 3-6
- III. Ezra's return 7-8
- IV. The Problem of the Mixed Marriages 9-10

and now the history of redemption with a plea for forgiveness on confusion of order.

The Ezra-Nehemiah complex describes the building of the Jewish nation and makes clear this was done on the foundation of Israel's history and covenant...not just a new beginning. The Lord demonstrates His capacity to use the heathen kings to accomplish his purposes---in this case Cyrus and his successors. The historical emphasis is on the viability of the covenant and the necessity of its preservation/observation. Here is the record of God's faithfulness to the remnant and covenant renewal on a continuing national basis.