

Dear Co-Pilgrims of Faith,

I pray you are well.

From creation to chaos (destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple, the Davidic dynasty, and the southern kingdom of Judah), we are looking back, up, around, and now forward in rebuilding Jerusalem and the Temple. We can now refer to the Israelites (former Hebrews) as Jews, and we are witnessing the birth of (ancient) Judaism, with a book, the Torah (= teaching, instruction; commonly translated as *law*). As we transition from the ancient Israelite cult (= worship) of YHWH (= Yahweh, the LORD) to Judaism, we will also reconstitute Israel as a people again. To see what that might look like, please read Ezra and Nehemiah, focusing on the significance of **Ezra 10** (and **Nehemiah 9–10**). Also read-skim **1 Chronicles 1–9**. Please take notes and questions about what you see as the joys and concerns of a broken people ready to start again—a general lesson for life when we face crises. See below for the most recent biblical, historical, and theological context.

As always, I look forward to **your observations and questions**, and please never hesitate to **suggest any biblical, theological, or life topics** along the way, even if they are only tangentially related. We can be flexible and take detours on our journey through the Bible. Remember that the unofficial title of our Bible study thus far is “Anything and everything you always wanted to ask about the Bible but were to afraid or busy to ask.”

Please see the “syllabus” online for where we are headed: Bible intro 2021-04 Ann’s Choice (also attached; printed copies available in front of my office in Resident Life, Liberty Commons).

For Zoomers, here are the instructions:

Zoom (online or using an app):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82395191045?pwd=TTRiQklwR2RhRzZkNFNkU2RRbGRoUT09>

Meeting ID: 823 9519 1045

Meeting Password: annschoice

Dial in by telephone: nearest phone access in New York City

Dial 1 (929) 205 6099

Enter Meeting ID: 823 9519 1045, followed by “#”

Enter Passcode: 394871 if requested

See you in class or via Zoom. Have a wonder-ful evening.

With prayer and best wishes,

