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**THE PLACE OF NON-JEWS/FOREIGNERS IN THE EARLY
POST-EXILIC JEWISH COMMUNITY IN EZRA AND NEHEMIAH**

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Oreland Presbyterian Church USA, John and JoAnn Swart and my wife Joyce Member Usue. It is through their spiritual, emotional and financial support that I have been able to accomplish this study. May this work be used for the glory of God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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ABSTRACT

The aims and objectives of this investigation were to find whether non-Jews or non-exiles related with the early post-exilic Jewish community in their religious life and communal living according to Ezra and Nehemiah; to discern the nature of such relationship; to discover the basis on which this relationship was sustained; and to examine the text of Ezra-Nehemiah and see whether Ezra and Nehemiah exhibits exclusivity in their dealing with non-Jews or non-exiles as supposed by others (cf Williamson 1987:83).

The inquiry reveals that the author(s) or editor(s) of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah re-interpreted certain passages from the Pentateuch in a peculiar way to support the exclusive religious and social reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. Consequently, two viewpoints emerged from the text of Ezra and Nehemiah concerning non-exiles. The one is exclusive and the other is inclusive. The researcher contended that the inclusive perspective is the appropriate approach toward non-Jews as evidenced in the spirit of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants as well as in the Deuteronomic-Deuteronomistic history. In other words, the Abrahamic covenant and certain passages from the Pentateuch and from the Deuteronomic-Deuteronomistic history provide a framework for a religious and communal relationship between the Israelites and or Jews and foreigners.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title page	i
Approval page.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents.....	vii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY.....	4
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	4
1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.	10
1.5 HYPOTHESIS.....	11
1.6 METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN.....	12
1.7 CHAPTER DIVISION AND ORTHOGRAPHY.....	15
1.7.1 Chapter division.....	16
1.7.2 Orthography.....	17
1.7.3 Description of terms.....	18
CHAPTER 2 SELECTED RESEARCH FIELDS ON EZRA-NEHEMIAH.....	21
2.1 INTRODUCTION	21
2.2 SELECTED RESEARCH FIELDS ON EZRA- NEHEMIAH.....	21
2.2.1 Introduction.....	21
2.2.2 Unity with 1 and 2 Chronicles.....	22
2.2.3 Composition, chronology and unity	25
2.2.4 Date and authorship.....	35
2.2.5 Theology of Ezra-Nehemiah.....	38
2.2.6 Relationship between Jews and foreigners.....	42
2.2.7 Other issues	45
2.3 CONCLUSION.....	47
CHAPTER 3 CONTEXT, NATURE AND MEANING OF ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.....	48
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	48
3.2 LITERARY CONTEXT OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.....	50
3.2.1 Introduction.....	50
3.2.2 Structure of Genesis.....	50
3.2.3 Movement of the narrative	53
3.3 NATURE AND CONTENT OF COVENANT.....	56
3.3.1 Introduction.....	56

3.3.2	Nature/content of covenant.....	57
3.3.2.1	Definition.....	57
3.3.2.2	Content of Abrahamic covenant (Gn 15:1-21; 17:1-27).....	58
3.3.2.2.1	Introduction of the speaker (Gn 15:1; 17:1).....	59
3.3.2.2.2	Historical explanation of past relations (Gn 15:7).....	62
3.3.2.2.3	Obligations for the vassal party (Gn 17:1b, 9-14).....	63
3.3.2.2.4	Necessity of keeping the covenant (Gn 17:7, 13-14).....	65
3.3.2.2.5	Witness to the covenant (Gn 15:17-18).....	66
3.3.2.2.6	Pronouncement of blessing and curses.....	66
3.4	IMPLICATIONS OF ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.....	70
3.4.1	Exclusive and Inclusive.....	70
3.4.2	God unilaterally administered the covenant.....	71
3.4.3	Goal of Abrahamic covenant.....	71
3.4.4	Significance of name change.....	74
3.5	ABRAHAMIC COVENANT PROMISES CONCERNING FOREIGNERS.....	75
3.5.1	Introduction.....	75
3.5.2	Perspectives on Abrahamic covenant promises.....	76
3.5.2.1	Passive interpretation of <i>barak</i>	76
3.5.2.2	Reflexive interpretation of <i>barak</i>	77
3.5.2.3	Perspective of Walton on the verb forms.....	78
3.5.2.4	Nature of the blessing.....	80
3.6	RELATING EZRA-NEHEMIAH TO ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.....	82
3.6.1	Introduction.....	82
3.6.2	Affinity between Israel and foreigners in the Abrahamic covenant.....	82
3.6.3	Affinity in Ezra-Nehemiah to the Abrahamic covenant.....	85
CHAPTER 4 PERSPECTIVES ON FOREIGNERS IN THE PENTATEUCH, DEUTERONOMIC-DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY AND EZRA-NEHEMIAH.....		88
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	88
4.2	BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PENTATEUCHAL AND DEUTERONOMIC-DEUTERONOMISTIC PERSPECTIVES ON FOREIGNERS.....	90
4.2.1	Introduction.....	90
4.2.2	Foreigners in the Abrahamic covenant.....	91
4.2.3	Foreigners in the Mosaic covenant.....	93
4.2.4	Foreigners in the Davidic covenant.....	96
4.3	PERSPECTIVES ON FOREIGNERS IN EZRA-NEHEMIAH.....	97
4.3.1	Introduction.....	97
4.3.2	Ezra narrative.....	98
4.3.2.1	King Cyrus' order.....	98
4.3.2.2	Rebuilding the altar.....	100

4.3.2.3	Rebuilding the temple.....	101
4.3.2.4	Celebration of the Passover.....	105
4.3.2.5	Ezra's marriage reforms.....	106
4.3.3	Nehemiah narrative.....	111
4.3.3.1	Nehemiah receives orders from Artaxerxes.....	111
4.3.3.2	Opposition to the work of rebuilding the wall.....	113
4.3.3.3	Confession of sins.....	114
4.3.3.4	Signing an agreement.....	115
4.3.3.5	Nehemiah's reforms concerning foreigners	116
4.4	CONCLUSION.....	118
CHAPTER 5 SYNTHESIS.....		121
5.1	SUMMARY	121
5.2	FINAL REMARKS.....	126
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....		129