

Bible Study – Outline

Ezra

The Road Back

Summary

Return – Restore – Rebuild

Time Period 538BC – 430BC

Audience The 50,000 Israelites who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon

Post Captivity Books

Prophetic Books

Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

Major Theme

Return to Jerusalem, return from sin to grace
Restore The Law, Heart, Spirit, cleansing
Rebuild Altar, worship, praise, Temple, Spiritual strength

The Temple – the last place to be destroyed – the first place to be rebuilt – symbolic of our Spiritual lives

Key People

Ezra Descendant of Aaron – ch.7:1-5
Zerubbabel Descendant of David
Haggai
Zecahariah
Tatnai and Shethar-boznai

The Kings of Persia (Persia had conquered Babylon)

Cyrus 559 – 530BC
Darius 522 – 486
Xerxes 486 – 465 Husband of Esther
Artaxerxes 465 – 424 Nehemiah was his cupbearer

Key Scriptures

- II Chr. 36:23 Cyrus – King of Persia inspired to rebuild the Temple.
- Ezra 1:1-3 Cyrus inspired to have the Temple rebuilt
- Ezra 3:11-13 Sounds of weeping and joy at building of the temple
- Ezra 4:1-5
 Samaritans offer to help – but are rejected and then turn against Israel and delay building of the Temple.
- Ezra 6:6-7,13
 King Darius decrees the continuation of the building of the temple
- Ezra 7:6,10 Ezra devoted to the study, observance and teaching of the Law
- Ezra 7 The decree of Artaxerxes
- Ezra 9 Israel intermarries

Steps in Rebuilding

1. Altar (ch. 3:2-3)
 - a. Worship and sacrifice
 - b. Obey law – praise
 - c. Symbol of our relationship with God
 - d. Renewed commitment to prayer
 - e. Renewed commitment to meditation and study
2. Lay Foundation (ch. 3:10)
 - a. Reestablish the foundations of communion within your heart
 - b. Prepare to meet opposition
 - c. Obedience to God's word and the building of faith
 - d. Celebration and joy in the restored relationship with God

THE BOOK OF EZRA

THE RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE	1-6
The decree of Cyrus – King of Persia	1
The return of the people under the leadership of Zerubbabel	1 -2
The building of the Temple	3 - 6
THE RESTORATION OF THE NATION	7 - 10
The second return of the people under the leadership of Ezra	7 - 8
Israel strays through intermarriage; Ezra intercedes with God	9
Israel repents and is restored	10

Who were the Samaritan's

Samaritans [S]

the name given to the new and mixed inhabitants whom Esarhaddon (B.C. 677), the king of Assyria, brought from Babylon and other places and settled in the cities of Samaria, instead of the original inhabitants whom Sargon (B.C. 721) had removed into captivity ([2 Kings 17:24](#) ; Compare [Ezra 4:2](#) [Ezra 4:9](#) [Ezra 4:10](#)). These strangers (Compare [Luke 17:18](#)) amalgamated with the Jews still remaining in the land, and gradually abandoned their old idolatry and adopted partly the Jewish religion.

After the return from the Captivity, the Jews in Jerusalem refused to allow them to take part with them in rebuilding the temple, and hence sprang up an open enmity between them. They erected a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, which was, however, destroyed by a Jewish king (B.C. 130). They then built another at Shechem. The bitter enmity between the Jews and Samaritans continued in the time of our Lord: the Jews had "no dealings with the Samaritans" ([John 4:9](#) ; Compare [Luke 9:52](#) [Luke 9:53](#)). Our Lord was in contempt called "a Samaritan" ([John 8:48](#)). Many of the Samaritans early embraced the gospel ([John 4:5-42](#) ; [Acts 8:25](#) ; [9:31](#) ; [15:3](#)). Of these Samaritans there still remains a small population of about one hundred and sixty, who all reside in Shechem, where they carefully observe the religious customs of their fathers. They are the "smallest and oldest sect in the world."

Source: M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Third Edition

Discussion Questions

1. Where in the Book of Jeremiah was the captivity prophesied and for how long was Israel to be in Captivity? (Hint Chapters 25 and 29)
2. Cyrus was called by God – could he have known he was the king prophesied to restore the Temple? (Isa. 44:28 – Isa. 45:1-6)

Note: Isaiah prophesied from 740 – 681 BC. Cyrus ruled 559-530BC. The prophecy called Cyrus by name almost 150 years in advance.

See also - Jeremiah 25:11, 29:10

3. What is the symbolic significance of the Altar being restored first?
4. How should we be laying the equivalent of the foundation of the Temple in our own lives?
5. Who were the Samaritans (Chapter 4) and what role did they play? What was their initial deceit?
6. What was the role of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah?

Resources Used

www.biblestudytools.com

www.biblegateway.com

www.biblehub.com

www.raystedman.org

Adventuring Through the Bible by Ray Stedman

Life Application Bible – Charts and Notes – by Zondervan and Tyndale House Publishers