

A SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT:

Ezra

"The Return to Israel"

Title: Ezra

- Ezra – “_____”
- Ezra was originally combined with Nehemiah.
 - Josephus
 - Some early Christian authorities
 - The LXX also grouped them together as “Esdras B”.
- The books were split again into 1 and 2 Ezra by the _____.

Summary Statement: “In fulfillment of prophecy, God worked through _____ to allow His people to return to the Promised Land.”

Author: _____

- _____ says that Ezra wrote his own book.
- He was well-qualified to write, since he was a “man of letters” (7:11).
- Ezra, as a scribe, had access to a large number of restricted administrative documents, even the archives of the Persian Empire.
- Since Ezra also wrote 1-2 Chronicles, it was natural for him to continue the narrative with a “current events” section.

Background and Setting: The Exile

608: The Exile began when _____ captured Jerusalem the first time.

597: The second deportation.

586: The final deportation.

538: Cyrus the Great allowed the Jews to return in fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy.
_____ led this return.

458: Ezra leads the second return.

445: Nehemiah leads the last return.

608: The Exile began when Babylon captured Jerusalem.

- Nebuchadnezzar II was the Babylonian king that captured Jerusalem and was associated with Daniel.
- Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon; he frequently shared his reign with his son Belshazzar.
- Cyrus defeated _____ and established the Persian empire.

Date: _____.

- Jerusalem was first sacked around 608 B.C.
- Seventy years later, around 538 B.C. the people regathered in Jerusalem after Zerubbabel led them home.
- _____ followed with a second wave of returning Jews about 458 B.C.
- His record was probably written during the next several years.

Key People

- Ezra
- Cyrus
- Zerubbabel
- _____ & Zechariah

Overview:

- The first return (1-6)
- Cyrus decrees the return and finances the building (1).
- A list of the people who returned (2).
- The temple is rebuilt (3-6)
 - Beginning of construction
 - Completion in the face of opposition
 - The completion and dedication
- The second return (7-10)
 - Ezra arrives.

A call to purity in Israel

Key Doctrines: God is the _____ ruler over all people – even kings and rulers.

- Cyrus allowed the return to Jerusalem in fulfillment of prophecy.
- He overruled the opposition to building the temple, making them support the building.
- He turned the heart of _____ to support the temple project.

Challenges to Ezra: Why did God sanction divorce in Ezra when He condemns it in the rest of the Bible?

- God forbade the Jews from intermarrying with the Canaanites.
- In Numbers 25, the result for following Midianite women to worship Baal-Peor was death.
- Ezra's handling of the matter demonstrated God's mercy in not destroying all those who sinned.

Christ in Ezra:

- The _____ and forgiveness that the Israelites received reminds us of what Christ has done for us.
 - The Israelites did not deserve forgiveness after forsaking God so many times.
 - We do not deserve God's forgiveness either.

- But He is merciful and forgives us when we call on Him.
- We receive His _____ freely, not because we have earned it.

Key Theme: _____

- When God's work needs to be done, He will provide all and more than is necessary for it to be completed.
 - God moved in Cyrus' heart to allow the Jews to go back to Israel (1:1-4).
 - God provided funds for the people to travel back to the land (1:6-11).
 - When the Jews' enemies tried to foil the work by objecting to a later king, he gave more support for the project (6:6-13).
 - When Ezra went to Israel, the king provided for all his requests as well (7:6).
 - The king also provided Ezra with more _____ in the Promised Land (7:12-28).
 - God protected the people in their journey, even without soldiers (8:22-23)

Application: As Christians working for God, we too can rely on Him to provide everything that is necessary to complete the mission.