

Bible Reading Notes

Ezra

Pastor Jeff Landis

Ezra 1

Ezra and Nehemiah cover a period of 100 years and focus on the restoration of Jerusalem and worship among the exiles who have returned. Ezra is presumed to be the author, though he does not arrive in Jerusalem until chapter 7.

1:1 – first year of Cyrus – This is 538/539 BC

1:1 – word of the LORD – Jeremiah prophesied about the exile lasting seventy years in Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10.

Ezra 2

2:2 – Zerubbabel – was a civil leader who was from the line of David. Jeshua was the high priest. The identity of the other men is unknown.

2:59-63 – Genealogical lists may seem boring to us, but this is evidence as to why genealogies were so important to the Jews. Without detailed genealogies one could not prove Jewish descent or that one came from a priestly family.

Ezra 3

3:1 – seventh month – The fall of the year when the Feast of Booths was to be celebrated (Leviticus 23).

3:3 – It has been almost 50 years since sacrifices had been made to the Lord at this site.

3:8 – It is now spring of the next year.

3:12 – wept - In comparison to the temple of Solomon, the new temple would not be as glorious.

Ezra 4

- 4 – The church should always expect that when they are involved in the work of the Lord there will be opposition. The delay in building lasted 15 years before it was resumed.
- 4:6-23 – This section is not chronological but thematic as Ezra recounts two attempts by the enemies of God to stop the building of the temple.
- 4:6 – **reign of Ahasuerus** – Ahasuerus' reign was 486-465 BC
- 4:8 – **days of Artaxerxes** – Artaxerxes followed Ahasuerus and reigned 465-424 BC
- 4:8-6:18 – This section of the book is written in Aramaic.
- 4:12 – **finishing the walls** – This was a lie. The walls would not be rebuilt for another 90 years.

Ezra 5-6

- 5:1 – The word of God through Haggai and Zechariah provoked the people to renew the building of the temple once again. Their ministry was during 520 BC.
- 6:6-12 – Not only did the Lord move Darius' heart to grant permission to finish the temple, but commanded Israel's enemies to provide the means to do it.
- 6:15 – The date is March 12, 516 BC.
- 6:19 – It is now a month after the dedication of the temple when the first Passover is celebrated.

Ezra 7-8

Chronologically the book of Esther took place between Ezra 6 and 7.

7:6 – hand of the LORD – This will be a regular point made in the book (7:9, 28; 8:18, 22, 31). It is God's providential work that allows the success of Ezra's ministry.

7:7 – It is now 458 BC, about 15 years after the events in Esther.

7:10 – This was the role of the priests and Ezra was sent to Jerusalem to provide this teaching. Verse 11 indicates that Ezra was well suited to this task.

7:25 – Ezra would also have an administrative role to fulfill while in Jerusalem.

8:26-27 – talent – A talent is about 75 pounds. These were huge amounts of silver and gold that they were transporting to Jerusalem.

Ezra 9-10

9:1 – abominations - The problem was that the foreign wives had not given up their idolatry and the sins that went with it and so were in a position to lead their husbands and children astray.

9:4 – trembled at the words – A godly fear of the Lord and his commands.

9:10 – commandments – Ezra has in mind passages such as Deuteronomy 7:1-5.

10:3 – put away – This is not the normal word for divorce, but at least implies an ending of a marital relationship. Little information is given here about the implications of this. There must have been some provision made for the wives and their children.

10:8 – banned = Excommunicated from the congregation and the privileges of worship at the temple.