



Ezra

Restoring worship

Ezra

- Ezra did not come with the original group of returnees who accompanied Zerubbabel when the decree by Cyrus was first announced that the Jews could return to their land and build their Temple (Ezra 1:1-3).
- While in Babylon, Ezra organized a little over 40,000 Jews to return with him to the Land of Israel

Ezra

- Ezra saw that all the Jewish-owned stores in Jerusalem were **open on the Sabbath**, which was the market day.
- The non-Jews from the neighboring towns and villages would come into Jerusalem on the Sabbath to make purchases. The Jewish shop-owners told Ezra that they had found legal loopholes in Jewish law for doing so.

Ezra 1:1-2

- Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, **the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus** king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying:
- 2 **“Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah**

Ezra

- When Ezra did arrive in the Land of Israel, he saw a Jewish community that had **broken down spiritually**.
- **intermarriage rate was as high**. The situation was so bad that **the High Priest** — whom all the Jewish people looked to for spiritual leadership — **had sons who married non-Jewish women**.

Ezra 3:10-13

- The New Temple
- Some shouted for joy
- Other cried of disappointment

Ezra

chapter 4:1-7

- Problems arose.
- People around them started turmoil.
- Decree to stop building the temple.

Ezra

6:15-16

- They finished the temple
- The people rejoiced
- They appointed people for service

Ezra 7:9-10

- 9 For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his God was upon him.
- 10 For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Ezra

8:21-23

- 21 Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from Him a safe journey for us, our little ones, and all our possessions.
- 22 For I was ashamed to request from the king troops and horsemen to protect us from the enemy on the way, because we had said to the king, "The hand of our God is favorably disposed to all those who seek Him, but His power and His anger are against all those who forsake Him."
- 23 So we fasted and sought our God concerning this matter, and He listened to our entreaty.

Ezra chapters 9 and 10

- Confession of the people 9:1-5
- Confession of the priests 10:10-11

Ezra

- Ezra and Nehemiah called a convention and administered what became known as, “**The Covenant of Faith**” (Nehemiah, Chapter 10).
- The people read from the Book of **Deuteronomy**, which describes all the laws and ideals they were not living up to. **They all wept and repented, and agreed to uphold the Torah**

Ezra

- One of the first measures took Ezra was to make an ultimatum forcing all Jewish men to divorce their non-Jewish wives or at least have the women convert. **Whoever refused would be excluded from the community**
- Then he addressed the **Sabbath desecration**. The Jewish shop-owners had in many cases found legal loopholes to conduct their work on the Day of Rest

