

Analysis of

EZRA

"RETURN TO RESTORE WORSHIP AND MORALITY"

"Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem." Ezra 1:3

-- Cyrus, King of Persia, 538 B. C.

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Prepared by James T. Bartsch

June, 1995. Updated October, 2019

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Introduction:

1. Three dispersions. Judean people exiled to Babylon.

Deportations of Judah into Babylonian Captivity			
Date	People Affected	Babylonian King	Scripture
605 B.C.	Daniel	Nebuchadnezzar	Daniel 1:1-7; 2 Kings 24:1
597 B.C.	Ezekiel	Nebuchadnezzar	2 Kings 24:12-17; Ezek. 1:1-3
586 B.C.	Jeremiah was spared exile.	Nebuchadnezzar	2 Kings 25:1-7

2. Significant leaders during the exile.

Leaders During the Exile				
Movement	Leader	Purpose	Date	Scripture
Return to Israel	Zerubbabel	Rebuild the Temple	536 B.C.	Ezra 1-6
Stay in Persia	Esther	Protect the People	483 B.C.	Esther
Return to Israel	Ezra	Rebuild the People	458 B.C.	Ezra 7-10
Return to Israel	Nehemiah	Rebuild the Walls	445 B.C.	Nehemiah

3. Leaders in the Book of Ezra

- a. Zerubbabel = Chs. 1-6
- b. Ezra = Chs. 7-10

4. Under Zerubbabel the people had to hurdle a psychological barrier.
Under Ezra the people had to hurdle a moral barrier.
5. Zerubbabel fought the fear of enemy opposition.
Ezra fought the disobedience of mixed marriages.

Analysis of the Text:

A1 RETURN TO RESTORE WORSHIP: ZERUBBABEL (536 B. C.) 1 - 6

B1 The Decree of Cyrus to Return to Israel 1

C1 Cyrus' decree 1:1-4

C2 The donating of gifts to the returnees 1:5-11

B2 The List of Returnees from Babylon (Key Leader: Zerubbabel) 2

B3 Religious Restoration under Jeshua and Zerubbabel 3

C1 The rebuilding of the altar 3:1-3

C2 The celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles 3:4-7

C3 The Rebuilding of the temple begun 3:8-13

B4 The Psychological Hurdle 4 - 6

C1 Enemy attempts to frustrate the rebuilding of the temple 4

D1 Intimidation against rebuilding (during the reigns of Cyrus and Darius) 4:1-5

D2 Forced discontinuation of rebuilding (during the reigns of Xerxes, Artaxerxes, and the second year of Darius) 4:6-24

D3 Principle: When you are trying to do God's work, expect dishonest and slanderous opposition.

C2 Renewed reconstruction of the temple 5 - 6

D1 The prophetic motivation of Haggai 5:1-2

D2 Principle: Listen to God's word, not to opposing voices!

D3 The official opposition of Governor Tattenai 5:3-17

D4 The completion of the temple 6

E1 The decree by Darius ordering Tattenai to assist the rebuilding of the temple 6:1-12

E2 The completion and dedication of the temple 6:13-18

E3 The celebration of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread 6:19-22

D5 Principle: Rejoice with those who rejoice. 6:13-22; Rom. 12:15

A2 RETURN TO RESTORE MORALITY: EZRA (458 B. C.) 7 - 10

B1 Ezra's Return to Jerusalem Authorized by Artaxerxes 7 - 8

- C1 The summary of Ezra's journey 7:1-9
- C2 The letter from Artaxerxes to Ezra 7:10-28
- C3 The list of returnees under Ezra 8:1-20
- C4 Fasting, prayer and preparation 8:21-30
- C5 The arrival in Jerusalem 8:31-36

B2 The Moral Hurdle 9 - 10

- C1 The problem of mixed marriages 9
 - D1 The report to Ezra of Israelis having married local pagans 9:1-2
 - D2 Ezra's dismayed prayer of confession to God 9:3-15
- C2 The divorce of foreign wives 10
 - D1 The peoples' contrition over their sin 10:1-8
 - D2 The peoples' agreement in Jerusalem to divorce their pagan wives 10:9-17
 - D3 The list of those who agreed to divorce their wives 10:18-44

Lessons from Ezra

1. God will always work to fulfill His word, even though spoken through human instruments like Jeremiah (1:1) and Haggai and Zechariah (5:1-2, 6:14).
2. God can use Gentile kings like Cyrus (1:1-11), Darius (6:1-12), Artaxerxes (6:14) and even Tattenai (6:13) to accomplish His purposes.
3. Those who attempt to do the will of God will always face opposition (4 - 5).
4. Spiritual leaders need to help the people make tough moral decisions (9-10).
5. Can you and I sense the good hand of God upon us (7:6, 9, 28; 8:18, 22)?
6. 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 (7:10). What is your life's ambition?

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