

Day 261 – Ezra 7-8 •

Ezra chapters 7-10 describe Ezra's return to Jerusalem under the favor of Artaxerxes to help bring spiritual revival to the people.

The book of Ezra records the fulfillment of God's promise to restore Israel to her land after the 70 years of captivity in Babylon. This was accomplished through the help of three Persian kings (Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes) as well as Jewish leaders including Ezra.

“This Ezra went up from Babylon, and he was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all he requested because the hand of the LORD his God was upon him.” Ezra 7:6

King Artaxerxes issued a decree in Ezra 7:11-26, extending support to the Jews. Verse 23 is significant, showing that the king desired to have peace in that part of his empire.

In Chapter 8, note that this group of Jews led by Ezra carried 24 tons of silver and 4 tons of gold to Jerusalem.

What did Ezra set his heart to do, per Ezra 7:9?

Day 262 – Ezra 9-10 •

Ezra 9:5-15 is one of the great prayers of confession in the Bible. Though he is personally guiltless, Ezra associates himself with the guilt of his people.

In Ezra 9, what was the specific sin of which the people were guilty?

In Chapter 10 they were instructed to put away all the foreign wives and their children.

The names of 113 individuals are listed in Ezra 10:18-44. These men had married foreign wives.

The presence of children in some families made the separations more difficult but did not stop the divorces.

For the moment the nation was purified, though the same sin returned 12 years later (Neh. 10:30), and again 30 years later (Neh. 13:23). ¹

Note that the prohibition against intermarriage was not on racial, but on religious grounds. (Ezra 9:1) The foreign women were pagans.

Day 263 – Nehemiah 1-5 •

Nehemiah served as cupbearer to King Artaxerxes I, ensuring the wine the king drank was not poisoned.

In 444 B.C., Nehemiah directed the task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

In Nehemiah 2, the king detected that Nehemiah was sad though he was not sick. Why was Nehemiah sad?

Outline of Nehemiah

- I. Rebuilding the Walls (Under Nehemiah), 1-7
- II. Renewing the Covenant (Under Ezra), 8-10
- III. Reforming the Nation, 11-13

“It came about from that day on, that half of my servants carried on the work while half of them held the spears, the shields, the bows and the breastplates; and the captains were behind the whole house of Judah.” Nehemiah 4:16

Name _____

It is uncertain whether the events of chapter 5 happened during the time the walls were being built or later. ¹

Note that some were charging interest at the rate of 1 percent per month (12 percent per year), considered usury.

Nehemiah set an unselfish example for all the people, not taking any salary or allowance from the people during the entire 12 years of his first term as governor.

Day 264 – Nehemiah 6-7 •

“It came about when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations surrounding us saw it, they lost their confidence; for they recognized that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.” Nehemiah 6:16

Per Nehemiah 7, how many days did it take for the Jerusalem walls to be rebuilt?

The record of Nehemiah 7:4-73 is virtually the same as Ezra 2 and was likely the basis for Nehemiah's populating Jerusalem with those of pure ancestry (11:1). ¹

Day 265 – Nehemiah 8-10 •

Nehemiah chapters 8-10 detail the covenant renewed.

A biblical definition of a sermon:

“They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.” Nehemiah 8:8

Bible study - systematic theology:

“Then on the second day the heads of fathers' households of all the people, the priests and the Levites were gathered to Ezra the scribe that they might gain insight into the words of the law.” Nehemiah 8:13

Ezra's prayer (Nehemiah 9:5-38) began with an acknowledgement of God's majesty and continued with a recital of the major points of Israel's history. It concluded with a confession of sin and a commitment to keep God's laws. ¹

Per Nehemiah 10:30-39, there were four things the Israelites agreed to do to please God. List these:

Day 265 – Nehemiah 11-13 •

In Nehemiah 11, the Israelites cast lots to determine who would live within the secure walls of Jerusalem.

What percentage of the country's population moved into the city of Jerusalem?

References

¹ *Ryrie Study Bible*, Moody Press, 1995.