

Ezra – Chapter Seven

“Help From the Hand of the Lord”

Timeline

Jews Taken Captive in 3 Waves: 605, 597, 586
First Wave Returned 538 (led by Zerubbabel & Jeshua – chapters 1-6 of Ezra)
Rebuilding of Temple Completed 516
Persian King Xerxes I 486-465 (Ahasuerus in Esther – 483-471)
Persian King Artaxerxes I 465-424
Second Wave Returned 458 (led by Ezra – chapters 7-10 of Ezra)
Ezra Wrote the Book of Ezra 445-450
Third Wave Returned 445 (Nehemiah)

Review

Chapters 5-6

- God used the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to refocus the people of God on their calling.
- God gave them favor with Darius, the King of Persia, who issued a decree supporting them in their work.
- They resumed work on the Temple and completed the rebuilding in approximately 4^{1/2} yrs.
- Chapter 6 concludes the account of the first wave of Jewish exiles who returned from Babylonian captivity. It ends on a high note spiritually.
- 58 years go by between the end of chapter 6 and the beginning of chapter 7.
- The events in the Book of Esther took place during this time (see Timeline).
- The leaders and people once again drifted away from God during this time – 9:1-2.

The Preparation of a Spiritual Leader 1-10

- 1-5** Ezra’s heritage as a priest – 16 generations spanning roughly 1,000 years spanning back to Aaron, the brother of Moses, the first High Priest
- 6-10** Ezra (his name means “help”) led the 2nd wave of exiles who returned to Judah
- He was a scribe – a skilled expert in God’s Law vv. 6, 7, 11, 12, 21
 - The King granted everything he requested for the journey and the mission v. 6
 - A fairly large contingent made the journey with Ezra (7,000 to 8,000) – 8:1-14
 - He led the return in 458 – a trip which took exactly 4 months vv. 8-9
 - The hand of the Lord was upon Him – 7:6, 9, 28; 8:18, 22, 31
 - Evidence that the hand of the Lord was upon him – v. 10: he “had prepared his heart to study ... do ... teach”

The Provision of a World Ruler 11-26

- 11-12** Introduction and Greeting (Nehemiah 1:11; 2:1-8 and Daniel 9:25)
- 13-26** **What King Artaxerxes I approved and granted to Ezra (v. 6)**
- **People** – anyone who wanted to was free to go with him v. 13
 - **Purpose** – it would be a spiritual mission to check on the spiritual condition of those who had already resettled in Judah and Jerusalem v.14
 - **Provision** – all that was needed
 - silver and gold from the King v.15
 - silver and gold from Babylon and from freewill offerings for the Temple v. 16
 - whatever was needed for sacrifices v. 17

- whatever was needed to do the will of God v. 18
- whatever was needed for the Temple v. 19 (6:14)
- access to the treasury of the regional government (within limits) vv. 20-23
- tax exempt status for priests and Temple workers v. 24
- **Power (Authority)** – to enforce the Law of God
 - to appoint magistrates and judges and who know and can teach The Law v. 25
 - to punish willful offenders of The Law v. 26

The Praise for the Lord's Help 27-28

- 27** Ezra recognized the true source of his blessing
28 Ezra recognized the hand of the LORD his God was upon him and he was encouraged and recruited some of the leading men of Israel to go with him on the journey

Doctrinal Conclusions

1. What is our heart settled on?

Is it settled on seeking the Lord in His Word?

Psalms 119:14-16 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As *much as* in all riches. **(15)** I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways. **(16)** I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

Is it settled on being a doer of the Word?

James 1:23-25 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; **(24)** for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. **(25)** But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Is it settled on teaching the Word to others?

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

2. We need the hand of God upon us!

John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Matthew 19:26 But Jesus looked at *them* and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Luke 1:37 For with God nothing will be impossible."

3. Jesus is the true and only King of Kings!

Revelation 19:16 And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.