

# EZRA



## STOP 15: Ezra

**PURPOSE:** To show God's faithfulness and the way he kept his promise to restore his people to their land

**AUTHOR:** Not stated, but probably Ezra

**ORIGINAL AUDIENCE:** The exiles who returned from captivity

**SETTING:** Ezra follows 2 Chronicles as a history of the Jewish people, recording their return to the land after the Captivity.

**DATE WRITTEN:** Around 450 B.C., recording events from about 538-450 B.C. (omitting 516-458 B.C.); possibly begun earlier in Babylon and finished in Jerusalem

### KEY VERSES:

“And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, did eat, And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.” (6:21, 22).

**KEY PEOPLE:** Cyrus, Zerubbabel, Haggai, Zechariah, Darius I, Artaxerxes I, Ezra

**KEY PLACES:** Jerusalem, Babylon

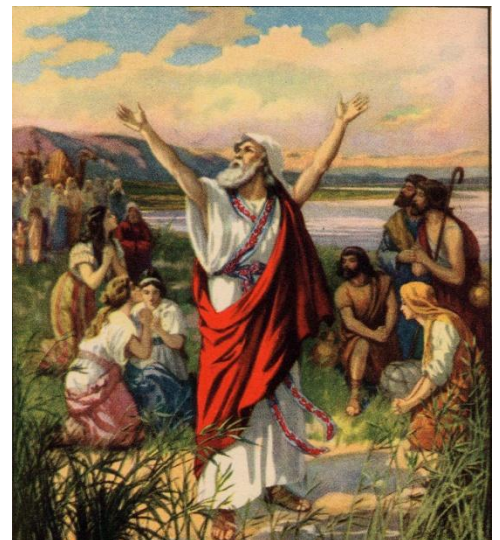
### OUTLINE:

#### A. THE RETURN LED BY ZERUBBABEL (1:1—6:22)

1. The first group of exiles returns to the land
2. The people rebuild the Temple

#### B. THE RETURN LED BY EZRA (7:1—10:44)

1. The second group of exiles returns to the land
2. Ezra opposes intermarriage



Ezra thanks God for His help.

### CHRIST IN EZRA:

- The Temple
- The Law

## MEGATHEMES

THEME	EXPLANATION	IMPORTANCE
The Jews Return	By returning to the land of Israel from Babylon, the Jews showed their faith in God's promise to restore them as a people. They returned not only to their homeland but also to the place where their forefathers had promised to follow God.	God shows his mercy to every generation. He compassionately restores his people. No matter how difficult our present "captivity," we are never far from his love and mercy. He restores us when we return to him.
Rededication	In 536 B.C., Zerubbabel led the people in rebuilding the altar and laying the Temple foundation. They reinstated daily sacrifices and annual festivals, and rededicated themselves to a new spiritual worship of God.	In rededicating the altar, the people were recommitting themselves to God and his service. To grow spiritually, our commitment must be reviewed and renewed often. As we rededicate ourselves to God, our lives become altars to him.
Opposition	Opposition came soon after the altar was built and the Temple foundation laid. Enemies of the Jews used deceit to hinder the building for over six years. Finally, there was a decree to stop the building altogether. This opposition severely tested their wavering faith.	There will always be adversaries who oppose God's work. The life of faith is never easy. But God can overrule all opposition to his service. When we face opposition, we must not falter or withdraw, but keep active and patient.
God's Word	When the people returned to the land, they were also returning to the influence of God's Word. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah helped encourage them, while Ezra's preaching of Scripture built them up. God's Word gave them what they needed to do God's work.	We also need the encouragement and direction of God's Word. We must make it the basis for our faith and actions to finish God's work and fulfill our obligations. We must never waver in our commitment to hear and obey his Word.
Faith and Action	The urging of Israel's leaders motivated the people to complete the Temple. Over the years they had intermarried with idol worshipers and adopted their pagan practices. Their faith, tested and revived, also led them to remove these sins from their lives.	Faith led them to complete the Temple and to remove sin from their society. As we trust God with our hearts and minds, we must also act by completing our daily responsibilities. It is not enough to say we believe; we must make the changes God requires.

Ezra 7:10

“ For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.”