

Bible Books Book by Book Series

EZRA

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."

Course Text: Ezra

The book of Ezra records the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity after 70 years of exile there, just as God promised. It is sometimes called the "Second Exodus," but that is probably not a good name for it, because it did not really happen all at once. Ezra records two groups going from Babylon to Israel many decades apart. The first group was led by Zerubbabel, who started rebuilding the temple. (Chapters 1 to 6) The second group was led by Ezra. (Chapters 7 - 10) These were just two groups of many that gradually found their way back to their homeland over the years.

The release from captivity was made possible because the Babylonians were conquered by the Persians. Ezra covers the time period from about 540 BC to about 460 BC. There were at least six different Persian emperors during this time. Israel remained a province of Persia until it was conquered by the Greeks under Alexander the Great about a hundred years later or so.

During the period covered by this book the Temple is rebuilt and the true worship restored in Jerusalem. The exiles were from this time forth known as Jews. It should be noted, finally, that the captivity of the Jews had at last cured them of their idolatry, for there are few evidences of idolatry or of false worship in Judea after the exile.

The Kings of Persia

Date B.C	Bible Name	Bible Passage	Secular History Name
539-530	Cyrus	Ezra 1-3	Cyrus
530-521	Ahasruerus	Ezra 4-6	Cambysses
521	Artaxerxes	Ezra 4:7-23	Pseudo Smerdis
521-486	Darius	Ezra 5-6	Darius the Great
486-465	Ahasruerus		Xerxes
464-423	Artaxerxes	Ezra 7-10	Artaxerxes I

Suggested methodology:

1. Let the students have a copy of the lesson well before the class meets. (Perhaps the previous meeting)
2. The students read the Bible book and answer the questions in this lesson before the group meets.
3. At the class meeting allow time for greetings and fellowship. (Save most of this for the end)
4. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
5. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
6. Discuss the questions on page 9. Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers, when provided, are just one opinion; you may have a better answer. It might be good to establish the norm that only those who have actually read the book should discuss it aloud.
7. Discuss whatever other questions people have on their mind about the Ezra.
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)

Depending on the number of people, this class is expected to take about two hours.

Copyright Information

All content of this training course not attributed to others is copyrighted, including questions, formatting, and explanatory text. **Copyright © 2014 by Thor F. Carden. All rights reserved.**

Course Logo by Troy Cunningham Copyright © 2014 by Troy Cunningham. All rights reserved. Used by permission. <http://www.lovebiblestudy.com/Troy/art.htm>

Illustration by Philip Martin Copyright © 2005-2014. All rights reserved. Used by permission. <http://www.phillipmartin.com>

Illustrations by Jeff Larson Copyright © 2000-2014. All rights reserved. Used by permission. <http://www.thebackpew.com>

Illustration by Gustave Dore are in the public domain.

Quotes from GotQuestions.org © Copyright 2002-2014 Got Questions Ministries - All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

NASB or **NASV** (New American Standard Bible) Unless otherwise noted, scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

----- PRICE INFORMATION -----

This material is provided at no cost to those in jail or prison. If you are not incarcerated you have permission to print and copy these course materials as much as you like as long as you make payment for their use and keep this page intact with the contents. This is not free, except to those who are in jail or prison, and although we are a ministry, we are not a non-profit organization. We expect to be paid, to help finance our ministry to the incarcerated. We suggest two different ways of determining the price.

(1) Take up an offering from the students at the end of the course, and send it to us.

OR

(2) Pray about it and pay us what God tells you to send.

Of course, we have designed the website so that there is nothing to stop you from just downloading and printing the course. If you think it is worth nothing, why are you using it? If you think God would have you take or teach this course and you have no money to pay for it, I urge you to reconsider. If God does not want you to use this course He might be trying to let you know that by withholding funds. Or He might have some other purpose, like teaching you to humbly ask somebody else to fund it. Or maybe something else, but if we worship the same God, He would not have you just take it without regard to our wishes. We hope to make enough money to continue producing and providing these lessons. If God does not bless this ministry with financial encouragement, we will take that as pretty strong evidence He does not want us to make any more of these lessons available.

We prefer that you mail us a check, but you may also pay by credit card via PayPal.

Love Bible Study

PO Box 1075

Goodlettsville, TN 37070-1075

Paypal information at

<http://www.LoveBibleStudy.com/price.htm>

Ezra Chapters 1 to 3

CHAPTER 1

Jeremiah had prophesied that the God's people would live in exile for 70 years. After the Persians conquered the Babylonians, the Jews were freed to go home, if they wanted, by a proclamation of Cyrus the king of Persia. He also ordered the temple rebuilt, and the things that had been stolen from the temple returned.

Read Chapter 1 of Ezra and answer the following questions:

[1A] Who caused Cyrus the King to release the Jews? _____

People from which three tribes of Israel returned to the land? Ezra 1:5

[1B] _____

[1C] _____

[1D] _____

CHAPTER 2

The people that Zerubbabel led back to Jerusalem and the land of Judah are listed by their families in this chapter. Some of the Levitical priests lost their right to serve in the temple because they had not kept documentation of their heritage. The chapter also inventories some of the animals and wealth that they took with them.

Read Chapter 2 of Ezra and answer the following questions:

[2A] Who had originally carried them away captive? _____

[2B] About how many people went with Zerubbabel? _____

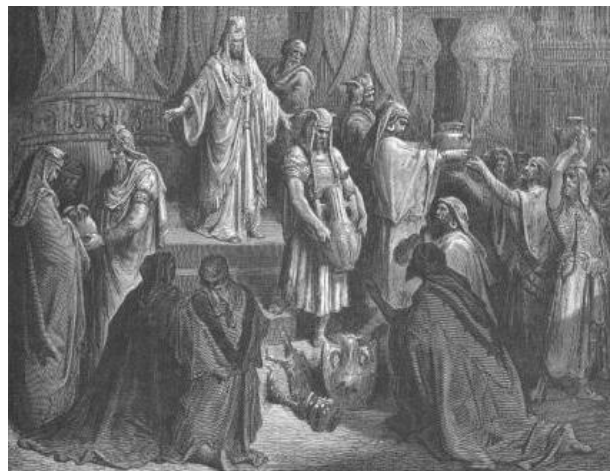
CHAPTER 3

After they got situated in their new homes in Judah they gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate and offer a sacrifice to God. They built a new altar on the foundation of where the old one had been in the temple of Solomon. Their happy shouts were mixed with tears as they began to rebuild the temple. It seems the oldest people who remembered the temple of Solomon wept, while everyone else made a joyful noise.

Read Chapter 3 of Ezra and answer the following questions:

[3A] What was the name of the celebration they held? _____

[3B] About how long after they returned did they begin work on the temple? _____



CYRUS RESTORING THE VESSELS OF THE TEMPLE

by Gustave Dore

----- ANSWERS -----

Ezra Chapters 1 to 3

[1A] Who caused Cyrus the King to release the Jews? The Lord Ezra 1:1

People from which three tribes of Israel returned to the land? Ezra 1:5

[1B] Judah

[1C] Benjamin

[1D] Levi

[2A] Who had originally carried them away captive? Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon Ezra 2:1

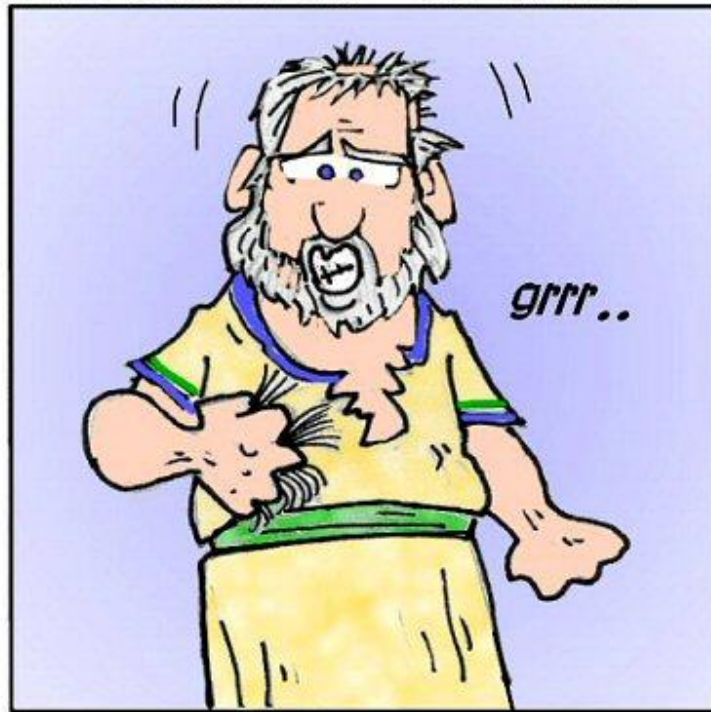
[2B] About how many people went with Zerubbabel? A little more than 40,000 Ezra 2:64

[3A] What was the name of the celebration they held? Feast of Booths Ezra 3:4

[3B] About how long after they returned did they begin work on the temple?

A little over 2 years Ezra 3:8

THE BACK PEW - JEFF LARSON



After Ezra learned the people were doing wrong.. He angrily tore his robe, pulled out hair from his head and beard. It was a HOLY TANTRUM. **Ezra 9:1-4**

Ezra Chapters 4 to 6

CHAPTER 4

The people who moved into the land while the Jews were exiled did not like the Jews coming back, but since King Cyrus had ordered it, they could not stop it. For some reason, probably to sabotage the building project or to get in good with Persian King, they offered to help with the rebuilding. The Jewish leaders wisely turned them down. Then the enemies of the Jews hired lawyers, and began appealing to the new King Ahasruerus to bring the building of the temple to an end. Basically they were suing to stop it. This was denied. So they tried again with the next king, Artaxerxes, who ordered the work stopped. The Jews were forced to obey the order.

Read Chapter 4 of Ezra and answer the following questions:

[4A] Who had brought these other people to the land of Judah? _____

Or Osnappar is also an acceptable answer. Ezra 4:10 because both did

[4B] Who was the commander or leader of these other people? _____

[4C] Who was the scribe that wrote the letter to Artaxerxes? _____

[4D] Which King of Persia ordered the end of the temple building? _____

CHAPTER 5

King Artaxerxes dies, and King Darius takes his place. The prophets convince the people to take up the work of re-building the temple. When their enemies try to stop them they say they are following the orders of Cyrus, who by now is long dead. They are questioning the existence of such an order from Cyrus. The enemies appeal to King Darius by mail while the Jews continue to work on the temple.

Read Chapter 5 of Ezra and answer the following questions:

Who are the prophets who convince the people to re-start the temple building project:

[5A] _____

[5B] _____

[5C] Who was the governor of the province? _____

CHAPTER 6

King Darius has a search done for the order of Cyrus, and it is found. Darius orders that not only is the order of Cyrus to build the temple to be carried out, but the governor, who is trying to get the work stopped, has to pay for it out of his funds. The temple is completed and they have a celebration.

Read Chapter 6 of Ezra and answer the following questions:

[6A] Who was to supply the animals for the temple sacrifices on a daily basis. _____

[6B] How long had Darius been king when the temple was completed? _____

[6C] What did they use as a guide to determine how to assign the priests and Levites their duties? _____

[6D] Which Jewish feasts did they celebrate? _____

----- ANSWERS -----

Ezra Chapters 4 to 6

[4A] Who had brought these other people to the land of Judah? Esarhaddon king of Assyria Ezra 4:2
Or Osnappar is also an acceptable answer. Ezra 4:10 because both did

[4B] Who was the commander or leader of these other people? Rehum Ezra 4:8-9

[4C] Who was the scribe that wrote the letter to Artaxerxes? Shimshai Ezra 4:8-9

[4D] Which King of Persia ordered the end of the temple building? Artaxerxes Ezra 4:17-23

Who are the prophets who convince the people to re-start the temple building project:

[5A] Haggai the prophet

[5B] Zechariah the son of Iddo Ezra 1:1

[5C] Who was the governor of the province? Tattenai Ezra 5:3

[6A] Who was to supply the animals for the temple sacrifices on a daily basis.

Tattenai, the provincial governor. Ezra 6:6-10

[6B] How long had Darius been king when the temple was completed? Over five years. Ezra 6:15

[6C] What did they use as a guide to determine how to assign the priests and Levites their duties?

The book of Moses. Ezra 6:18

[6D] Which Jewish feasts did they celebrate? Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread Ezra 6:19-22
(It is really all one feast. Passover is just the first day of the seven day feast.)

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



With the temple completed, they gave it to the Lord by offering 100 bulls, 200 male sheep, 400 lambs, and 12 goats for each tribe. **Ezra 6:17** .. the ensuing jealousy of the goats was both unfounded and misguided.

Ezra Chapters 7 to 10

CHAPTER 7

This is not the same Artaxerxes from Chapters 4 and 5 that stopped the temple building. Ezra leads a second group of exiles back to the land of Judah. He is a descendant of Aaron, the brother of Moses. King Artaxerxes gives them permission to go and sends an offering to God as well.

Read Chapter 7 of Ezra and answer the following questions:

[7A] What was the profession of Ezra? _____

[7B] How long had Artaxerxes been king when Ezra left Babylon? _____

[7C] What authority did Artaxerxes give to Ezra? _____

[7D] Whose Law did Artaxerxes say was to be in authority in the province of Judah? _____

CHAPTER 8

This chapter contains a listing of the families that went with Ezra to Judah. When Ezra finds no Levitical Priests among his first group of volunteers, he recruits some to go with him. They are entrusted with the offerings being sent to God. When they arrive the offerings are placed in the temple. Read Chapter 8 of Ezra and answer the following questions:

[8A] Who did Ezra ask to send Levitical Priests with him on his journey to Judah? _____

[8B] What did Ezra have everyone do in order to protect them on the journey? _____

[8C] What was the name of the river where they camped until they started the journey to Judah? _____

CHAPTER 9

Some of the returned exiles were getting married to the other people living around them. This was contrary to God's law and Ezra had been given authority to enforce God's law by Artaxerxes. Ezra asked God for forgiveness on behalf of the people, and guidance in how to deal with the matter.

Read Chapter 9 of Ezra and answer the following questions:

[9A] Who told Ezra about the marriage problem? _____

[9B] When Ezra heard what was the first thing he did? _____

CHAPTER 10

While Ezra was praying the people of Jerusalem gathered around and wept in sorrow and repentance. Ezra called for an assembly of all the people. Those who had married outside of the Jews divorced their wives and made an offering for their sin.

Read Chapter 10 of Ezra and answer the following questions:

[10A] Where did Ezra go to continue to fast and pray? _____

[10B] What was the weather like when the people assembled at Jerusalem? _____

[10C] What did the men with foreign wives promise to do? _____

----- ANSWERS -----

Ezra Chapters 7 to 10

[7A] What was the profession of Ezra? Scribe Ezra 7:6

[7B] How long had Artaxerxes been king when Ezra left Babylon? Over six years Ezra 7:8

[7C] What authority did Artaxerxes give to Ezra? Ezra could appoint judges and magistrates Ezra 7:25

[7D] Whose Law did Artaxerxes say was to be in authority in the province of Judah?

God's law Ezra 7:26

[8A] Who did Ezra ask to send Levitical Priests with him on his journey to Judah?

Iddo of Casiphia Ezra 8:17

[8B] What did Ezra have everyone do in order to protect them on the journey?

They fasted and prayed. Ezra 8:21-23

[8C] What was the name of the river where they camped until they started the journey to Judah?

Ahava Ezra 8:31

[9A] Who told Ezra about the marriage problem? Princes, leaders, or elders Ezra 9:1

[9B] When Ezra heard what was the first thing he did? Tore his clothing Ezra 9:3

[10A] Where did Ezra go to continue to fast and pray?

The place of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib Ezra 10:6

[10B] What was the weather like when the people assembled at Jerusalem? It was raining Ezra 10:9

[10C] What did the men with foreign wives promise to do? Divorce their wives Ezra 10:19



phillipmartin.info

(1) What arguments did the enemies of the Jews use in Ezra 4:8-16 to convince the King to stop the temple building project?

Think & Pray _____

(2) Read again these three passages: 7:10, 8:21-23, and 8:31. What can we learn from Ezra's example?

Think & Pray _____

(3) In Ezra 9:5 the position Ezra took for his prayer is described? Do you think it is important what position you are in when you pray? Why or why not?

Think & Pray _____

(4) If someone asked you what Ezra was about what would you say?

Think & Pray _____

(5) How can the lessons of Ezra be applied to our own life?

Think & Pray _____

(6) Which verse or passage would you select to memorize from Ezra? Why?

Think & Pray _____

If you have any questions about Ezra, now is the time to discuss them with your classmates.

----- ANSWERS -----

(1) Historical Records They told him to look in his own history books and he would find the evidence that Jerusalem was a wicked and rebellious city, and that if it was rebuilt, the Jews would not pay any taxes to the king.

(2) Effective Prayer In Ezra 7:10, Ezra sought to understand God's will with all his heart. In Ezra 8:21-23 he led the people in fasting and praying while seeking God's help. In Ezra 8:31 God answered their prayer. It is called praying in God's will, or as I like to call it, effective prayer.

(3) Prayer Posture An instructive little poem:

"The proper way for a man to pray,"
Said Deacon Samuel Keys,
"And the only proper attitude
Is down upon his knees."

"No, I should say the way to pray,"
Said Rev. Dr. Wise,
"Is standing straight with uplifted arms
And rapt and upturned eyes."

"Oh, no, no, no"
Said Elmer Snow.
"Such posture's way too proud.
A man should pray with eyes fast closed
and head contritely bowed."

"Last year I fell in Hodgkin's well,
Headfirst," said Syrus Brown,
"And all my toes were stickin' up
And my head was a pointin' down."

"And I made a prayer right then and there,
The best I'd ever said.
The prayin'est prayer I ever prayed
Was standin' on my head."

(I found several versions of this poem on the internet but was unable to determine who first wrote it)

You should pray in whatever position helps you keep your mind focused on Him instead of yourself.

(4) Ezra Summary The book of Ezra records the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity after 70 years of exile there, just as God promised. Ezra records two groups going from Babylon to Israel many decades apart. These were just two groups of many that gradually found their way back to their homeland over the years. The release from captivity was made possible because the Babylonians were conquered by the Persians. During the period covered by this book the Temple is rebuilt and the true worship restored in Jerusalem. The exiles were from this time forth known as Jews. It should be noted, finally, that the captivity of the Jews had at last cured them of their idolatry, for there are few evidences of idolatry or of false worship in Judea after the exile.

(5) Ezra Life Application There is nothing wrong with praying for one's needs, but praying for instructions might be a better use of our time. God already knows our needs.

(6) Something to Remember I like 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." because I want to be like that.