

April 19, 2020

Text: Ezra

Title:

Outline:

Historical background:

1. On or close to 593 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar squelched Zedekiah's rebellion in Jerusalem resulting in the destruction of the city and the temple. At this time the temple furniture pieces were taken to Babylon, and the morale of the Jews hit its low point. – II Chronicles 36
2. On or around 556 B.C. Darius the Mede king defeated Babylon for the Medes and Persians. – Daniel 5

Ezra 1-2 – Cyrus arranges for the Jews return

* 55 years after Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city, in 538 B.C. the Jews head back.

1. By order of the Lord – 1:2
2. With provisions from Persia's king
 - 1- 5,400 pieces of gold and silver from the king's treasury – 1:11
 - 2- 42,360 Jews, including the elderly who had been removed by Nebuchadnezzar, the priests, the children of Solomon's servants, and the Levites. – 2:64
 - 3- 736 horses; 245 mules; 435 camels; 6720 donkeys – 2:66-67

Ezra 3 – Temple construction commences

1. The altar is reestablished and put to use – 3:3
 2. The religious regiment is reestablished – 3:4-7
 3. The temple foundation is laid – 3:8-13
- * Note * The elders mourn, the youth rejoice.

Ezra 4 – Temple construction stops

1. The problem with the natives – 4:1-16
 - 1- They harassed
 - 2- They wrote a letter to king Artaxerxes
2. The response of the king – 4:17-24
 - 1- He wrote a letter of instruction to cease labor
 - 2- Labor ceased

Ezra 5-6 – Temple construction resumes

1. God's prophets rally the Jews – 5:1-2
2. The problem with the natives reappears – 5:3-17
 - 1- They enquire of God's people why they build
 - 2- They write to verify from King Darius
3. The king reestablishes Cyrus' decree – 6:1-12
4. The temple construction was finished in 515 B.C., providing for sacrificial celebration – 6:13-22

Ezra 7-8 – Ezra’s trip back to Jerusalem

1. Ezra receives the blessing and means from Artaxerxes to resume worship in Jerusalem – 7
2. Ezra is accompanied by the pious – 8:1-23
3. The treasure is divided between 12 priests – 8:24-30
4. Ezra arrives in Jerusalem – 8:31-36

Ezra 9-10 – Separation from sinful influences

1. The problem – The Jews intermarried with neighboring pagan nations – 9:1-4
2. Ezra’s prayer of confession – 9:5-15
3. The men make an extreme move for purity: divorcement from their families – 10:1-44

Conclusion:

* Approximately 90 years later, the temple is operating well. Ezra worked hard his whole life to see this done. What will your life’s work have been?