

The Bible - Week 25 (June 27th)

Eric Swanson / General

Ezra

Author: Ezra, also the author of Nehemiah

Date: Likely after Nehemiah went back to Babylon in 433 BCE

Audience: To the returning Jewish people who had been in Babylonian exile.

Reason: Ezra records the history of those returning, their work and as a source of inspiration

Theme: The rebuilding of both temple and faith.

Key Verse:

Ezra 6:14-15 CEB

So the elders of the Jews built and prospered because of the prophesying of the prophet Haggai and Zechariah, Iddo's son. They finished building by the command of Israel's God and of Cyrus, Darius, and King Artaxerxes of Persia. This house was completed on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the rule of King Darius.

Sections: Returning (Chapters 1-2), Rebuilding (Chapters 3-6), Ezra's Return (Chapters 7-8), Restoring Faith (Chapters 9-10)

Key Words: Temple Law, Moses, Decree, Restore

Basic Intro: Ezra tells us what happens when the nation returns from nearly 70 years of exile in Babylon. The go

right back to bad habits of sinfulness. God promises to bring his people back this is a part of that promise.

Questions for Discussion:

- **The building of the temple has metaphor for us today. The People knew they had messed up and this time they wanted to do things right. They made sure that the foundation was solid before they rebuilt the temple. How do we do this in our faith today?**
- **All of us will face resistance in the building of our faith. The Samaritans tried to stop the Jews from continuing their work. What is the resistance to building your temple of faith today? How do you work through that space?**
- **Ezra experiences a revival of their prayer life. This is God moving. How does Ezra's prayer life encourage yours? What are some practical things you can do to build up your prayer life?**
- **Ezra is to bring hope to a hopeless lot of people. The Hebrew root word for testimony means "to do again." Returning from exile, again, God does his salvation work again. How does this give you hope today? What role in the work are you called to do today, in this season of your life?**