

THE KING IS COMING

Survey of Judah Alone, Captivity, Return, and Years of Silence

LESSON 18: THE RETURN OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH (EZRA 7-10 AND NEH 1-13 . . . *HISTORY*)

MEMORY. Memorize the major kings of Persia who interacted with people in the Bible: Cyrus (Zerubbabel/Joshua), Cambyses (?), Darius I (Zerubbabel/Joshua), Xerxes (Esther), and Artaxerxes I (Ezra/Nehemiah).

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READING. Read Ezra 7-10 and Neh 1-13. (If time does not permit, read Neh 2-6, 8-9.) After doing your reading, in the space below write down something that you found to be interesting or important. It can be something that you have never noticed before or something that you want to remember and apply.

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DISCUSSION.

1. *Ezra the Priest and Scribe.* Ezra returned to Jerusalem in 458 BC. Why had the king of Persia sent Ezra? (Ezra 7:11-28) What was the spiritual condition of the people when Ezra arrived, and what did Ezra do and urge the people to do? (9:1-10:17)

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DISCUSSION.

- 2. *Nehemiah the Builder.*** Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem in 445 BC. What did he intend to build? (Neh 1:11b-2:8) What were some of the external and internal conflicts that Nehemiah faced as he led the people in the rebuilding project? (4:1-5:13; 6:1-14)

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DISCUSSION.

- 2. *Nehemiah the Builder.*** How long did the rebuilding project take, and how were the people able to complete it so quickly? (6:15-16) Summarize the dedication ceremony (12:27-43).

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DISCUSSION.

3. *Nehemiah the Governor.* Nehemiah became governor in 445 BC and governed until 433 BC when he went to Babylon. How did Nehemiah prove to be a good political and spiritual leader of the people of Judah? (Cf. Neh 5:14-19; 7:1-4; 8:1-11:2.)

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DISCUSSION.

4. *Nehemiah the Restorer.* Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem sometime later, perhaps around 430 BC. What was the spiritual condition of the people when Nehemiah returned, and what did Nehemiah urge the people to do? (Neh 13:1-31)

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CONNECTION. In what way(s) may Ezra and/or Nehemiah foreshadow Jesus Christ? (Any connection to Christ will be implicit as the New Testament does not quote Ezra-Nehemiah.)

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APPLICATION. Read the prayers of Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 9:5-15; Neh 1:4-11; 4:4-5; 5:19; 6:9, 14; 13:14, 22, 29, 31; cf. 9:5-38). What do you learn about prayer from these prayers? Use the prayers of Ezra and Nehemiah as examples for your own daily prayers this week.