
Ezra

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah were originally one book recording Israel's return from exile in **three waves**.

Leader	to Rebuild	Section
Zerubbabel	The Temple	Ezra 1-6
Ezra	The Law	Ezra 7-10
Nehemiah	The Walls	Neh 1-13

Key Theme and Verse

The theme of Ezra is restoring the spiritual heart of the nation ([Ezra 7:10](#)).

Outline

Nation Restored

- Return with Zerubbabel ([Ezra 1-2](#))
- Begin work ([Ezra 3](#))
- Experience opposition ([Ezra 4](#))
- Resume work ([Ezra 5](#))
- Complete work ([Ezra 6](#))

People Rededicated

- Arrive with Ezra ([Ezra 7-8](#))
- Confess sin ([Ezra 9](#))
- Cleanse of sin ([Ezra 10](#))

Main Outcomes

- temple rebuilt ([Ezra 6:15-20](#))
- people re-separated ([Ezra 10](#))

Zerubbabel

Zerubbabel served as a Tirshatha or governor ([Ezra 2:63](#)).

- He showed care in conforming to restored worship ([Ezra 3:2-5](#)).
- He responded to the words of Haggai and Zechariah ([Ezra 5:1-2](#)).
- He led the remnant back to Judea.
- He laid the foundation of the new temple.
- He directed the building of the new temple ([Ezra 3:8-13](#))

Ezra

Ezra was a descendant of Aaron ([Ezra 7:1-5](#)) and was also an expert in the Scriptures ([Ezra 7:6](#)).

- He had a godly purpose ([Ezra 7:10](#)).
- He was thankful to God ([Ezra 7:27-28](#)).
- He depended on God ([Ezra 8:21-23](#)).
- The people's sin grieved him ([Ezra 9:3-4](#)).
- He showed humility ([Ezra 9:5-15](#)).
- He confronted evil ([Ezra 10](#)).

Personal Reflection and Application

Have you ever wandered away from God and thought He would never accept you again? Take heart. God cast “out” Israel for disobedience, but He did not cast them “off.” He made a way for them to return if they chose to do so. He will allow us to suffer from our poor choices, but if we have accepted Christ as Savior, He will provide a way for us to return to Him if we chose.

<i>example in Ezra</i>	<i>your application</i>
Return to the land Ezra 1:1-3	Return to the Gospel and meditate on it 1John 1:9
Rebuild the Altar Ezra 3:1-6	Renew your dedication to Christ Luke 14:26-27
Build the new temple Ezra 3:8-13	Begin serving Christ Rom 12:1
Face adversaries Ezra 4:1	Expect trials; Endure 1Pet 4:12-13
Listen to the prophets Ezra 5:1-6:14	Be in the Word; Live by it Jas 1:19-27
Complete the work Ezra 6:15-22	Experience triumphs through faith 1Cor 10:13

Small Group Conversation Guide

In **Ezra 1:1-4**, we read that God stirred up Cyrus, the king of Persia, to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. God can do as He pleases with the rulers on earth.

Paul encourages us to pray for those in authority [**1Tim 2:1-4**].

- Why does Paul want us to pray for rulers?
- Do you pray for the leaders of our nation and other nations?
- In your group, encourage each person to pray one thing for our world leaders.

Leadership Principles from Ezra

Getting Back on Track

Reflect on Ezra's example of service and leadership. When you begin a challenge that involves restoring your and other's relationship with God, how well do you do each of these tasks?

- **Prepare** for the task ([Ezra 7](#)): Ezra prepared his heart to seek, do, and teach.
- **Seek** God's direction ([Ezra 8](#)): Ezra depended on God and was determined to do things God's way.
- **Grieve** over compromises ([Ezra 9](#)): Ezra was distraught over the people's compromises and he cried out to God.
- **Restore** separation ([Ezra 10](#)): Ezra confessed the sins of the people and began to separate them from it.

Something to Find in Each Chapter

As you read through the book, it may help to have something to find in each chapter. Try these:

01. What prompted King Cyrus to allow Jews to return	02. How many returned with Zerubbabel in the first wave
03. What part of the temple was rebuilt first	04. How people tried to stop the temple from being rebuilt
05. What prompted the people to begin rebuilding again	06. What King Darius requested prayer about
07. What three things Ezra prepared his heart to do	08. Why Ezra did not ask for a military escort to help them
09. How Ezra responded to learning of his people's sins	10 How people wept together over their disobedience