

PETE BUMGARNER MINISTRIES

**A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION
FOUNDED OCTOBER, 1984**

EZRA

STUDY GUIDE



EZRA

SCRIPTURE READING

Book of Ezra

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Ezra is a historical book of the Old Testament that gives insight into the resettlement of the Jewish people in their homeland after their long exile in Babylon.
- B. The book is named for its author and central figure, Ezra the priest.
- C. Ezra was a descendant of Aaron through Eleazar and a skilled scribe in the law of Moses. (Ezra 7:1-6)
- D. Ezra led the former exiles into a new commitment to God's Law after their return to their own country.
- E. In Isaiah's prophecy concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the laying of the foundation of the temple, he called Cyrus by name, declaring that he would fulfill God's desire. The events in Ezra relate to this prophecy. (Isaiah 44:28)

II. CHAPTER ONE

- A. In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, the Lord fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecy by stirring the heart of Cyrus to write a proclamation which he sent throughout his kingdom. (Ezra 1:1; Jeremiah 29:10-14)
- B. The proclamation said, "This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a temple at Jerusalem in the land of Judah. All of you who are his people may return to Jerusalem in Judah to rebuild this temple of the Lord, the God of Israel, Who lives in Jerusalem. And may your God be with you! Those who live in any place where Jewish survivors are found should contribute toward their expenses by supplying them with silver and gold, supplies for the journey, and livestock, as well as a freewill offering for the temple of God in Jerusalem.'" (Ezra 1:2-4 NLT)

- C. God aroused the hearts of the priests, the Levites, and the leaders of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of the Lord. (Ezra 1:5)
- D. All their neighbors encouraged them by giving items of silver and gold, merchandise, livestock, and gems, in addition to all that was spontaneously given. (Ezra 1:6)
- E. King Cyrus presented those who were returning to Jerusalem with the items that King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Lord's temple in Jerusalem and placed in the temple of his own gods. (Ezra 1:7)
- F. He directed Mithredath, the treasurer of Persia, to count these items and present them to Sheshbazzar, the leader of the exiles returning to Judah. (Ezra 1:8)
- G. The items Cyrus donated were thirty gold trays, a thousand silver trays, twenty-nine silver censers, thirty gold bowls, four hundred ten silver bowls, and a thousand other items. (Ezra 1:9-10)
- H. Five thousand four hundred gold and silver items were turned over to Sheshbazzar to take to Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:11)

III. CHAPTER TWO

- A. The Jewish exiles of the provinces who returned from their captivity to Jerusalem and to the other towns of Judah were numbered by families. (Ezra 2:1)
- B. These families had been deported to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. (Ezra 2:1)
- C. The family leaders were Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Serai-ah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah. (Ezra 2:2)
- D. Two thousand one hundred seventy-two men from the family of Parosh returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:3)
- E. Three hundred seventy-two men from the family of Shephatiah returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:4)
- F. Seven hundred seventy-five men from the family of Arah returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:5)

- G. Two thousand eight hundred twelve men from the family of Pahath-moab, who were descendants of Jeshua and Joab, returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:6)
- H. One thousand two hundred fifty-four men from the family of Elam returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:7)
- I. Nine hundred forty-five men from the family of Zattu returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:8)
- J. Seven hundred sixty men from the family of Zaccai returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:9)
- K. Six hundred forty-two men from the family of Bani returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:10)
- L. Six hundred twenty-three men from the family of Bebai returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:11)
- M. One thousand two hundred twenty-two men from the family of Azgad returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:12)
- N. Six hundred sixty-six men from the family of Adonikam returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:13)
- O. Two thousand fifty-six men from the family of Bigvai returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:14)
- P. Four hundred fifty-four men from the family of Adin returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:15)
- Q. Ninety-eight men from the family of Ater, descendants of Hezekiah, returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:16)
- R. Three hundred twenty-three men from the family of Bezai returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:17)
- S. One hundred twelve men from the family of Jorah returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:18)
- T. Two hundred twenty-three men from the family of Hashum returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:19)
- U. Ninety-five men from the family of Gibbar returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:20)

- V. One hundred twenty-three men of Bethlehem returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:21)
- W. Fifty-six men of Netophah returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:22)
- X. One hundred twenty-eight men of Anathoth returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:23)
- Y. Forty-two men of Beth-azmaveth returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:24)
- Z. Seven hundred forty-three men of Kirjath-Jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:25)
- AA. Six hundred twenty-one men of Ramah and Geba returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:26)
- BB. One hundred twenty-two men of Mikmas (Mikdash) returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:27)
- CC. Two hundred twenty-three men of Bethel and Ai returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:28)
- DD. Fifty-two men of Nebo returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:29)
- EE. One hundred fifty-six men of Magbish returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:30)
- FF. One thousand two hundred fifty-four men of Elam returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:31)
- GG. Three hundred twenty men of Harim returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:32)
- HH. Seven hundred twenty-five men of Lod, Hadid, and Ono returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:33)
- II. Three hundred forty-five men of Jericho returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:34)
- JJ. Three thousand six hundred thirty men of Senaah returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:35)
- KK. The priests who returned to their homeland were also listed by families. (Ezra 2:36)

- LL. Nine hundred seventy-three priests from the family of Jedaiah through the lineage of Jeshua returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:36)
- MM. One thousand fifty-two priests from the family of Immer returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:37)
- NN. One thousand two hundred forty-seven priests from the family of Pashhur returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:38)
- OO. One thousand seventeen priests from the family of Harim returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:39)
- PP. The Levites who returned to their homeland were also listed by families. (Ezra 2:40)
- QQ. Seventy-four Levites from the families of Jeshua and Kadmiel, who were descendants of Hodaviah, returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:40)
- RR. One hundred twenty-eight singers from the family of Asaph returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:41)
- SS. One hundred thirty-nine gatekeepers of the families of Shalum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai returned to their homeland. (Ezra 2:42)
- TT. These temple servants returned to the land of Judah: the descendants of Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth, Keros, Siaha, Padon, Lebanah, Hagabah, Akkub, Hagab, Shalmal, Hanan, Giddel, Gahar, Reaiah, Rezin, Nekoda, Gazzam, Uzza, Paseah, Besai, Asnah, Meunim, Nephusim, Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur, Bazluth, Mehidah, Harsha, Barkos, Sisera, Tamah, Neziah, and Hatipha. (Ezra 2:43-54)
- UU. The following descendants of King Solomon's servants returned to the land of Judah: Sotai, Sophereth, Peruda, Jaalah, Darkon, Giddel, Shephatiah, Hattil, Pokereth-hazzebaim, and Ami. (Ezra 2:55-57)
- VV. The total number of the temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants was three hundred ninety-two. (Ezra 2:58)

- WW. Another group returned to Jerusalem at this time from the towns of Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Kerub, Addan, and Immer, but they could not prove that they or their families were descendants of Israel. Six hundred fifty-two men from the families of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda were in this group. (Ezra 2:59-60)
- XX. Hobaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai, who were families of priests, also returned to Jerusalem, but they had lost their genealogical records; therefore, they were not allowed to serve as priests. (Ezra 2:61-62)
1. Barzillai had married a woman who was a descendant of Bar-zillai of Gilead, and he had taken her family name. (Ezra 2:61)
 2. The governor would not let these men eat the priests' share of food from the sacrifices until there was a priest who could consult the Lord about the matter through the Urim and Thummim. (Ezra 2:63)
- YY. The total number of men who returned to Judah was forty-two thousand three hundred sixty, plus seven thousand three hundred thirty-seven male and female servants and two hundred singers, both men and women. The total number of the people listed is forty nine thousand eight hundred ninety-seven. (Ezra 2:64-65)
- ZZ. They set out for Jerusalem with seven hundred thirty-six horses, two hundred forty-five mules, four hundred thirty-five camels, and six thousand seven hundred twenty donkeys. (Ezra 2:66-67)
- AAA. When the group arrived at the site of the temple in Jerusalem, some of the family leaders gave generously toward the rebuilding of God's temple on its original site. (Ezra 2:68)
- BBB. Each leader gave as much as he could. The total sum of their gifts was sixty-one thousand gold drachmas, five thousand silver minas, and one hundred robes for the priests. (Ezra 2:69)
- CCC. The priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, the temple servants, and some of the common people settled in villages near Jerusalem. The rest of the people went to other towns in Judah from which they had come. (Ezra 2:70)

IV. CHAPTER THREE

- A. In the seventh month, the children of Israel came from their cities, where they had settled and assembled in Jerusalem. (Ezra 3:1)
- B. At this time, Jeshua the son of Jehozadak, his fellow priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel with his family began to rebuild the altar of the God of Israel so they could sacrifice burnt offerings according to the law of Moses. (Ezra 3:2)
- C. Although the people were afraid of the inhabitants of the land, they rebuilt the altar at its old site and immediately began to sacrifice burnt offerings to the Lord on the altar. They offered sacrifices each morning and evening. (Ezra 3:3)
- D. According to the law of Moses, they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles, sacrificing the burnt offerings specified for each day of the feast. (Ezra 3:4)
- E. They also offered the regular burnt offerings and the offerings required for the New Moon celebrations and the other annual festivals to the Lord. (Ezra 3:5)
- F. Although the foundation of the temple of the Lord had not been laid, from the first day of the seventh month, they began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord. (Ezra 3:6)
- G. They gave money to the masons and carpenters. They gave food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre so that they would bring cedar logs by sea from Lebanon to Joppa, as authorized by King Cyrus of Persia. (Ezra 3:7)
- H. The construction of the temple began in second month of the second year after they arrived in Jerusalem. (Ezra 3:8)
- I. The work force was made up of those who had returned to Jerusalem, including Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Jeshua son of Jehozadak, his fellow priests, and all the Levites. (Ezra 3:8)
- J. The Levites who were twenty years old or older were put in charge of rebuilding the temple. (Ezra 3:8)

- K. All the Levites, Jeshua and his sons and brothers, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, and the sons of Henadad with their sons and brothers, stood united to oversee the workmen in the temple of God. (Ezra 3:9)
- L. When the builders completed the foundation of the temple, the priests put on their robes and got in position to blow their trumpets. The Levites, who were descendants of Asaph, clashed their cymbals to praise the Lord, just as King David had instructed. (Ezra 3:10)
- M. The singers sang praise and thanks to the Lord because of His goodness and mercy that endures forever. (Ezra 3:11)
- N. When the foundation of the temple was laid, the people shouted with a great shout. (Ezra 3:11)
- O. Many of the older priests, Levites, and family heads, who had seen Solomon's temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid; yet, many others shouted for joy. (Ezra 3:12)
- P. The people made so much noise that the shouts of joy could not be distinguished from the sound of weeping. Their sound was heard far away. (Ezra 3:13)

V. CHAPTER FOUR

- A. When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple for the Lord God of Israel, they came to Zerubbabel and to the heads of the families and asked to help build the temple. (Ezra 4:1-2)
 - 1. They assured them that they followed the God of Israel and that they had been sacrificing to Him since the time Esarhaddon king of Assyria brought them there. (Ezra 4:2)
 - 2. Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of the families of Israel would not allow them to help build the temple. They told them that they alone would build the temple for the Lord God of Israel, just as King Cyrus of Persia commanded them. (Ezra 4:3)

- B. The people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building. They even hired counselors to work against them to frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia, to the reign of Darius king of Persia. (Ezra 4:4-5)
- C. At the beginning of the reign of Ahasuerus (Xerxes), they wrote an accusation against the people of Judah and Jerusalem. (Ezra 4:6)
- D. During the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of his colleagues wrote a letter to Artaxerxes. The letter was written in and translated from the Syrian language. (Ezra 4:7)
- E. Rehum the commanding officer and Shimshai the secretary wrote an accusing letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the Persian king. The letter was endorsed by the Dinaites, Apharsachites, Tarpelites, Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, the Elamites, and the rest of the people whom the great and honorable Asnappar deported and settled in the city of Samaria and other cities on that side of the Euphrates River. (Ezra 4:8-10)
- F. The following remarks were contained in the letter sent to Artaxerxes. (Ezra 4:11-16)
 - 1. "Let it be known to the king that the Jews who came up from you have come to us at Jerusalem, and are building the rebellious and evil city, and are finishing its walls and repairing the foundations." (Ezra 4:12 NKJV)
 - 2. "Let it now be known to the king that, if this city is built and the walls completed, they will not pay tax, tribute, or custom, and the king's treasury will be diminished." (Ezra 4:13 NKJV)
 - 3. "Because we receive support from the palace, it was not proper for us to see the king's dishonor; therefore we have sent and informed the king, that search may be made in the book of the records of your fathers." (Ezra 4:14-15 NKJV)

4. “You will find in the book of the records and know that this city is a rebellious city, harmful to kings and provinces, and that they have incited sedition within the city in former times, for which cause this city was destroyed.” (Ezra 4:15 NKJV)
5. “We inform the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are completed, the result will be that you will have no dominion beyond the River.” (Ezra 4:16 NKJV)
- G. The king responded to the letter by sending a message to Rehum the commander, to Shimshai the scribe, to the rest of their companions who dwelt in Samaria, and to the remainder of the people beyond the River. (Ezra 4:17)
- H. The king told them that the letter sent by them had been read to him. (Ezra 4:18)
- I. At the king’s command, a search of the records was made. As a result of their search, they learned that in earlier times the city of Jerusalem had revolted against kings, and that rebellion and sedition had come forth from there. (Ezra 4:19)
- J. They also learned that mighty kings had reigned in Jerusalem and ruled over all the region beyond the Euphrates River. Tax, tribute, and custom were paid to these kings. (Ezra 4:20)
- K. The king gave a command to stop building the city of Jerusalem until he instructed otherwise. (Ezra 4:21)
- L. The king commanded these men to put a stop to the building of Jerusalem, fearing that his kingdom would be jeopardized. (Ezra 4:22)
- M. As soon as King Artaxerxes’ letter was read to Rehum, Shimshai the secretary, and their associates, they immediately went to the Jews in Jerusalem and by military force compelled them to stop building. (Ezra 4:23)
- N. The work on the temple in Jerusalem was terminated until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia. (Ezra 4:24)

VI. CHAPTER FIVE

- A. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo prophesied in the name of the God of Israel to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem. (Ezra 5:1; Haggai 1:1; Zechariah 1:1)
- B. Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jehozadak responded to the word of the Lord and began rebuilding the temple of God in Jerusalem. The prophets of God were with them and helped them. (Ezra 5:2)
- C. Tattenai, governor of the province west of the Euphrates, Shethar-bozenai, and their colleagues came to Jerusalem and asked who authorized them to resume their construction of the temple. They also asked for a list of the names of all the people who were working on the temple. (Ezra 5:3-4)
- D. God watched over them, and the leaders of the Jews were allowed to continue their construction of the temple until a report was sent to Darius and he returned his decision. (Ezra 5:5)
- E. Tattenai the governor, Shethar-bozenai, and the other officials of the Apharsachites beyond the Euphrates River sent this letter to King Darius. (Ezra 5:6)
 - 1. “Greetings to King Darius. We wish to inform you that we went to the construction site of the temple of the great God in the province of Judah. It is being rebuilt with specially prepared stones, and timber is being laid in its walls. The work is going forward with great energy and success.” (Ezra 5:7-8 NLT)
 - 2. “We asked the leaders, ‘Who gave you permission to rebuild this temple and restore this structure?’ We demanded their names so that we could tell you who the leaders were. This was their answer:” (Ezra 5:9-11 NLT)
 - a. “We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the temple that was built here many years ago by a great king of Israel.” (Ezra 5:11 NLT)
 - b. “Because our ancestors angered the God of heaven, He abandoned them to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who destroyed this temple and exiled the people to Babylonia.” (Ezra 5:12 NLT)

- c. “King Cyrus of Babylon, during the first year of his reign, issued a decree that the temple of God should be rebuilt.” (Ezra 5:13 NLT)
 - d. “King Cyrus returned the gold and silver utensils that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of Babylon.” (Ezra 5:14 NLT)
 - e. “These items were taken from that temple and delivered into the safekeeping of a man named Sheshbazzar (Persian name of Zerubbabel), whom King Cyrus appointed as governor of Judah.” (Ezra 5:14 NLT)
 - f. “The king instructed him to return the utensils to their place in Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple of God there as it had been before.” (Ezra 5:15 NLT)
 - g. “Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the temple of God in Jerusalem. The people have been working on it ever since, though it is not yet completed.” (Ezra 5:16 NLT)
- 3. Tattenai the governor, Shethar-bozenai, and the other officials requested that Darius search the royal archives of Babylon to see whether King Cyrus ever issued a decree to rebuild God’s temple in Jerusalem. (Ezra 5:17)
 - 4. They requested that King Darius inform them of his decision concerning this matter after the search had been made. (Ezra 5:17)

VII. CHAPTER SIX

- A. King Darius issued a decree, and a search was made in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon. (Ezra 6:1)
- B. At Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of Media, a scroll was found, and in it a record was written. (Ezra 6:2)
 - 1. In the first year of King Cyrus, he issued a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem. (Ezra 6:3)

2. “Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits, with three rows of heavy stones and one row of new timber.” (Ezra 6:3-4 NKJV)
 3. “Let the expenses be paid from the king’s treasury. Also let the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple which is in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and taken back to the temple which is in Jerusalem, each to its place; and deposit them in the house of God.” (Ezra 6:4-5 NKJV)
- C. Darius commanded Tattenai the governor, Shethar-bozenai, and the other officials of the Apharsachites beyond the Euphrates River to stay away from Jerusalem. (Ezra 6:6)
 - D. They were told to leave the work of God’s house alone and to let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build the temple on its site. (Ezra 6:7)
 - E. Darius issued a decree commanding these men to give the elders of these Jews whatever they needed for reinstating worship in the temple. (Ezra 6:8)
 - F. The cost for building the temple was to be taken from the taxes on the region beyond the Euphrates River. The money was to be given immediately to these Jewish leaders so that they would not be hindered in their work. (Ezra 6:8)
 - G. The young bulls, rams, and lambs for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven and wheat, salt, wine, and oil, were to be given daily, according to the request of the priests who were in Jerusalem. Their daily provision was to be given without fail. (Ezra 6:9)
 - H. Darius wanted these sacrifices of sweet aroma offered to the God of heaven and prayer to be made for the life of the king and his sons. (Ezra 6:10)
 - I. Darius also issued a decree stating that whoever altered this edict was to be hanged on a timber pulled from his own house, and that his house be made a refuse heap because of his opposition. (Ezra 6:11)

- J. Darius urged the God who caused His name to dwell on the temple in Jerusalem to destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter his decree or to destroy the house of God which is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 6:12)
- K. After issuing his decree, Darius commanded that it be carried out diligently. (Ezra 6:12)
- L. Tattenai the governor, Shethar-bozenai, and the other officials of the Apharsachites beyond the Euphrates River immediately honored the decree, doing all that King Darius had commanded. (Ezra 6:13)
- M. The elders of the Jews built and prospered through the prophesying of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo. (Ezra 6:14)
- N. The temple was finished according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia. (Ezra 6:14)
- O. The temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. (Ezra 6:15)
- P. The people of Israel, the priests, the Levites, and the rest of the exiles celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy. (Ezra 6:16)
- Q. For the dedication of the temple of God, they offered a hundred bulls, two hundred rams, and four hundred male lambs. As a sin offering for all Israel, they offered twelve male goats, one for each of the tribes of Israel. (Ezra 6:17)
- R. They installed the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their sections for the service of God at Jerusalem, following the instructions written in the law of Moses. (Ezra 6:18)
- S. On the fourteenth day of the first month, the exiles celebrated the Passover. (Ezra 6:19)
- T. The priests and Levites purified themselves and were all ceremonially clean. The Levites slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the exiles, including the priests as well as themselves. (Ezra 6:20)

- U. The Passover meal was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile and by others in the land who had turned from their immoral customs to worship the Lord God of Israel. (Ezra 6:21)
- V. For seven days they celebrated with joy the Feast of Unleavened Bread because the Lord had filled them with joy by changing the attitude of the king of Assyria, so that he assisted them in the work on the house of the God of Israel. (Ezra 6:22)

VIII. CHAPTER SEVEN

- A. The temple was completed and dedicated during the reign of Darius king of Persia. Ezra, a descendant of Aaron, came up from Babylon while Artaxerxes ruled. He was well-versed in the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to the people of Israel. (Ezra 7:1-6)
- B. The king had given Ezra everything he asked for because the hand of the Lord God was on Ezra. (Ezra 7:6)
- C. Some of the children of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants came with Ezra to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. (Ezra 7:7)
- D. Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of King Artaxerxes' reign. (Ezra 7:8)
- E. He began his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month. He arrived at Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month because the good hand of God was upon him. (Ezra 7:9)
- F. Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the "law" of the Lord, to apply it, and to teach its statutes and ordinances in Israel. (Ezra 7:10)
- G. King Artaxerxes sent the following letter to Ezra, the priest and scribe who studied and taught the commands and laws of the Lord to Israel. (Ezra 7:11)
 - 1. "Greetings from Artaxerxes, the king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the teacher of the law of the God of heaven." (Ezra 7:12 NLT)

2. "I decree that any of the people of Israel in my kingdom, including the priests and Levites, may volunteer to return to Jerusalem with you." (Ezra 7:13 NLT)
3. "I and my Council of Seven hereby instruct you to conduct an inquiry into the situation in Judah and Jerusalem, based on your God's law, which is in your hand." (Ezra 7:14 NLT)
4. "We also commission you to take with you some silver and gold, which we are freely presenting as an offering to the God of Israel who lives in Jerusalem." (Ezra 7:15 NLT)
5. "Moreover you are to take any silver and gold which you may obtain from the province of Babylon, as well as the freewill offerings of the people and the priests that are presented for the temple of their God in Jerusalem." (Ezra 7:16 NLT)
6. "These donations are to be used specifically for the purchase of bulls, rams, lambs, and the appropriate grain offerings and drink offerings, all of which will be offered on the altar of the temple of your God in Jerusalem." (Ezra 7:17 NLT)
7. "Any money that is left over may be used in whatever way you and your colleagues feel is the will of your God." (Ezra 7:18 NLT)
8. "As for the utensils we are entrusting to you for the service of the temple of your God, deliver them in full to the God of Jerusalem." (Ezra 7:19 NLT)
9. "If you run short of money for anything necessary for your God's temple or for any similar needs, you may requisition funds from the royal treasury." (Ezra 7:20 NLT)
10. "I, Artaxerxes the king, hereby send this decree to all the treasurers in the province west of the Euphrates River: `You are to give Ezra whatever he requests of you, for he is a priest and teacher of the law of the God of heaven." (Ezra 7:21 NLT)
11. "You are to give him up to a hundred talents of silver, a hundred cors of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, a hundred baths of olive oil, and an unlimited supply of salt." (Ezra 7:22 Author's Translation)

12. “Be careful to provide whatever the God of heaven demands for His temple, for why should we risk bringing God’s anger against the realm of the king and his sons?” (Ezra 7:23 NLT)
 13. “I also decree that no priest, Levite, singer, gatekeeper, temple servant, or other worker in this temple of God will be required to pay taxes of any kind.” (Ezra 7:24 NLT)
 14. “You, Ezra, are to use the wisdom God has given you to appoint magistrates and judges who know your God’s laws to govern all the people in the province on the other side of the Euphrates River.” (Ezra 7:25 Author’s Translation)
 15. “If the people are not familiar with those laws, you must teach them.” (Ezra 7:25 NLT)
 16. “Anyone who refuses to obey the law of your God and the law of the king will be punished immediately by death, banishment, confiscation of goods, or imprisonment.” (Ezra 7:26 NLT)
- H. Ezra blessed the Lord God of his fathers for moving upon the king’s heart to beautify the house of the Lord in Jerusalem and for extending His mercy to him before the king and his counselors and before all the king’s mighty princes. (Ezra 7:27)
- I. Ezra was encouraged because the hand of the Lord God was upon him, and he gathered leading men of Israel to go up with him. (Ezra 7:28)

IX. CHAPTER EIGHT

- A. Verses one through fourteen record the genealogy of those who went with Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem during the reign of King Artaxerxes. (Ezra 8:1-14)
- B. The company of people who went with Ezra were assembled at the river that ran to Ahava. They camped at this location for three days. (Ezra 8:15)
- C. During these three days, Ezra noticed that there were no Levites among the company. (Ezra 8:15)

- D. The leaders Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam were summoned by Ezra, along with Joiarib and Elnathan, who were men of understanding. (Ezra 8:16)
- E. Ezra sent these men to Iddo, who was a leader in Casiphia. He told them what to say to Iddo, his kinsmen, and the temple servants in Casiphia. Ezra requested ministers for the temple of God at Jerusalem. (Ezra 8:17)
- F. Because the gracious hand of God was upon those returning to Jerusalem, Sherebiah and eighteen of his sons and brothers were sent to Ezra. Sherebiah was an intelligent man and a descendant of Mahli, who was a descendant of Levi the son of Israel. (Ezra 8:18)
- G. They also sent Hashabiah and twenty of his sons and brothers, along with Jeshaiiah. These men were descendants of Merari. (Ezra 8:19)
- H. Two hundred twenty men of the Nethinim, who were designated by name, were sent to Ezra. The Nethinim were men whom David and the leaders appointed to provide service for the Levites. (Ezra 8:20)
- I. While they were gathered at the Ahava River, Ezra proclaimed a fast. The purpose for the fast was to humble themselves before God, seeking Him for the most convenient way for them, their children, and their substance to make this journey to Jerusalem. (Ezra 8:21)
- J. Because they had told the king that their God protects all those who worship Him, but His fierce anger rages against those who abandon Him, Ezra was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to accompany them and protect them from enemies along the way. (Ezra 8:22)
- K. Ezra and his company fasted and prayed that God would take care of them on their journey; God honored their prayer. (Ezra 8:23)
- L. Ezra appointed twelve leaders of the priests, including Sherebiah and Hashabiah, to be in charge of transporting the silver, the gold, the gold bowls, and the other items that the king, his council, his leaders, and the people of Israel had presented for the temple of God. (Ezra 8:24-25)

- M. Ezra weighed the treasure as he gave it to them. There were six hundred fifty talents of silver, one hundred talents of silver articles, one hundred talents of gold, twenty gold basins worth a thousand drams, and two vessels of brilliant copper that were as precious as gold. (Ezra 8:26-27)
- N. Ezra told the priests that both they and the articles were holy to the Lord and that the silver and the gold were a freewill offering to the Lord God of their fathers. (Ezra 8:28)
- O. He commanded them to watch and keep the treasure until it was weighed in the chambers of the house of the Lord before the leaders of the priests, Levites, and heads of the fathers' houses of Israel which were in Jerusalem. (Ezra 8:29)
- P. The silver, the gold, and the articles were weighed and turned over to the priests and Levites to carry to Jerusalem to the temple of God. (Ezra 8:30)
- Q. On the twelfth day of the first month, Ezra and his company departed from the Ahava River to go to Jerusalem. God's hand was upon them, delivering them from the hand of the enemy and from ambush along the road. They came to Jerusalem and stayed there three days. (Ezra 8:31-32)
- R. The fourth day after they arrived in Jerusalem, all the silver, the gold, and the articles were weighed and recorded in the temple of God by Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest. Accompanying him were Eleazar the son of Phinehas and the Levites, Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui. (Ezra 8:33-34)
- S. Those who returned to Jerusalem from captivity offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel. They offered twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and twelve male goats for a sin offering. (Ezra 8:35)
- T. The king's orders were delivered to his governors and the administrative officials in the region beyond the River. They responded favorably toward the Israelites and the temple of God. (Ezra 8:36)

X. CHAPTER NINE

- A. The Jewish leaders came to Ezra and reported that many of the people of Israel, including some of the priests and Levites, had not kept themselves separate from the other peoples living in the land. (Ezra 9:1)
 - 1. They had taken up the detestable practices of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites. (Ezra 9:1)
 - 2. The men of Israel had married women from these people and had taken women as wives for their sons. (Ezra 9:2)
 - 3. The holy race had become polluted by these mixed marriages. (Ezra 9:2)
 - 4. The officials and leaders were some of the worst offenders. (Ezra 9:2)
- B. When Ezra heard this report, he tore his clothes, pulled hair from his head and beard, and sat down utterly shocked. (Ezra 9:3)
- C. Because of the unfaithfulness of their brethren, the people who feared God came and sat with Ezra. Ezra sat there utterly appalled until the time of the evening sacrifice. (Ezra 9:4)
- D. At the time of the sacrifice, Ezra stood up from where he had been sitting in mourning with his clothes torn. He fell to his knees and lifted his hands to the Lord God. (Ezra 9:5)

E. Ezra prayed this prayer to the Lord:

“O my God, I am utterly ashamed; I blush to lift up my face to You. For our sins are piled higher than our heads, and our guilt has reached to the heavens. Our whole history has been one of great sin. That is why we and our kings and our priests have been at the mercy of the pagan kings of the land. We have been killed, captured, robbed, and disgraced, just as we are today. But now we have been given a brief moment of grace, for the Lord our God has allowed a few of us to survive as a remnant. He has given us security in this holy place. Our God has brightened our eyes and granted us some relief from our slavery. For we were slaves, but in His unfailing love our God did not abandon us in our slavery. Instead, He caused the kings of Persia to treat us favorably. He revived us so that we were able to rebuild the temple of our God and repair its ruins. He has given us a protective wall in Judah and Jerusalem. And now, O our God, what can we say after all of this? For once again we have ignored Your commands! Your servants the prophets warned us that the land we would possess was totally defiled by the detestable practices of the people living there. From one end to the other, the land is filled with corruption. You told us not to let our daughters marry their sons, and not to let our sons marry their daughters, and not to help those nations in any way. You promised that if we avoided these things, we would become a prosperous nation. You promised that we would enjoy the good produce of the land and leave this prosperity to our children as an inheritance forever. Now we are being punished because of our wickedness and our great guilt. But we have actually been punished far less than we deserve, for You, our God, have allowed some of us to survive as a remnant. But now we are again breaking Your commands and intermarrying with people who do these detestable things. Surely Your anger will destroy us until even this little remnant no longer survives. O Lord, God of Israel, You are just. We stand before You in our guilt as nothing but an escaped remnant, though in such a condition none of us can stand in Your presence.” (Ezra 9:6-15 NLT)

XI. CHAPTER TEN

A. While Ezra prayed and made his confession, he wept and threw himself to the ground in front of the temple of God. A large crowd of people from Israel, men, women, and children, assembled and wept bitterly with him. (Ezra 10:1)

- B. Shecaniah son of Jehiel, a descendant of Elam, spoke to Ezra, saying, “We confess that we have been unfaithful to our God, for we have married these pagan women of the land. But there is hope for Israel in spite of this. Let us now make a covenant with our God to divorce our pagan wives and to send them away with their children. We will follow the advice given by you and by the others who respect the commands of our God. We will obey the law of God. Take courage, for it is your duty to tell us how to proceed in setting things straight, and we will cooperate fully.” (Ezra 10:2-4 NLT)
- C. Ezra responded to Shecaniah’s proposition by standing up and demanding that the leaders of the priests, the Levites, and all the people of Israel take an oath, declaring that they would do as Shecaniah had said. They all took the solemn oath. (Ezra 10:5)
- D. Ezra left the front of the temple and went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. He continued to mourn over the unfaithfulness of the returned exiles and did not eat food or drink water. (Ezra 10:6)
- E. A proclamation was issued throughout Judah and Jerusalem for all the returned exiles to assemble in Jerusalem. (Ezra 10:7)
- F. According to the decision of the officials and elders, anyone who failed to appear within three days would forfeit all his property and would be expelled from the assembly of the returned exiles. (Ezra 10:8)
- G. Within the three days, all the men of Judah and Benjamin assembled in Jerusalem. On the twentieth day of the ninth month, all the people sat in the street in front of the temple of God. They trembled because of the occasion and because of the rain. (Ezra 10:9)
- H. Ezra the priest stood and spoke to the people, saying, “You have transgressed and have taken pagan wives, adding to the guilt of Israel. Now therefore, make confession to the Lord God of your fathers, and do His will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the pagan wives.” (Ezra 10:10-11 NKJV)
- I. All the assembly agreed with Ezra, but because of the number of people involved and because of the heavy rain, the people were not able to stand outside or accomplish this task in one or two days. (Ezra 10:12-13)

- J. The people requested that their leaders be allowed to arrange trials for them. (Ezra 10:14)
1. Everyone with a heathen wife would come at the scheduled time to appear before the elders and judges of his city. (Ezra 10:14)
 2. Each case would be decided, the situation would be cleared up, and the fierce wrath of God would be turned away from them. (Ezra 10:14)
- K. Only Jonathan the son of Asahel, Jahzeiah the son of Tikvah, Meshullam, and Shabbethai the Levite opposed this course of action. (Ezra 10:15)
- L. The proposal of the people was followed, and Ezra the priest selected men who were family heads, one from each family division, specifying them by name. (Ezra 10:16)
- M. On the first day of the tenth month, they began to investigate the cases; by the first day of the first month, they finished dealing with all the men who had married heathen women. (Ezra 10:17)
- N. The sons of the priests had also taken heathen wives. (Ezra 10:18)
1. Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah promised to put away their wives. Because of their guilt, they presented a ram of the flock as their trespass offering. (Ezra 10:18-19))
 2. Others from the priestly lineage who had taken heathen wives were: Hanani and Zebadiah, who were sons of Immer; Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uziah, sons of Harim; Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasaah, sons of Pashhur. (Ezra 10:20-22)
- O. Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiiah (Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer were Levites who had taken heathen wives. (Ezra 10:23)
- P. One of the singers, Eliashib, has also taken a heathen wife. (Ezra 10:24)
- Q. The gatekeepers, Shallum, Telem, and Uri had taken heathen wives. (Ezra 10:24)

R. The following Israelites also had taken heathen wives: (Ezra 10:25-43)

Ramiah, Jeziah, Malchiah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malchijah, and Benaiah, the sons of Parosh;

Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and Eliah, the sons of Elam;

Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad, and Aziza, the sons of Zattu;

Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai, the sons of Bebai;

Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal, and Ramoth, the sons of Bani;

Adna, Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh, the sons of Pahath-Moab;

Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah, the sons of Harim;

Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei, the sons of Hashum;

Maadai, Amram, Uel, Benaiah, Bedeiah, Cheluh, Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Mattenai, Jaasai, Bani, Binnui, Shimei, Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah, Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah, Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph, the sons of Bani;

and Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel, and Benaiah, the sons of Nebo.

S. All these men had taken heathen wives, and some of them had children by their heathen wives. (Ezra 10:44)

XII. CONCLUSION

A. There are three major elements in the book of Ezra that must not be overlooked: God's faithfulness; the enemy's opposition; and the people's responsibility.

1. **God's faithfulness** is manifested in a variety of ways.

- a. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God declared seventy years of captivity for the nation of Judah. God kept His word.
 - b. Through the prophet Isaiah, God proclaimed the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem and called Cyrus by name.
 - c. The unfaithfulness of the people did not change God's faithfulness to His word.
- 2. The **adversary's persistent opposition** is also revealed in the book of Ezra.
 - a. Although the return to Jerusalem to build the temple was God's mandate, it did not take place without opposition.
 - b. We must realize that Satan does not desist in his attacks just because God gives a mandate. We must persistently oppose him by doing what God tells us to do.
- 3. The **people's responsibility** must not go unrecognized.
 - a. The purpose for the people being allowed to return to Jerusalem was to rebuild the temple.
 - b. It is imperative that we not be diverted from our main objective. It is easy to get so involved with meeting our needs that we fail to carry out God's mandate.
 - c. In the book of Ezra, the people were responsible for building the temple and obeying the law of Moses.
- B. Captivity came to the Jewish people because they refused to follow the one true God.
- C. Deliverance came to the people because of God's faithfulness, not their goodness.
- D. Thank God for the Isaiahs, Jeremiahs, and Daniels who are not afraid to proclaim the word of the Lord to His people, nor to remind the Lord of His word to His people.
- E. Thank God for the Ezras and Nehemiahs who will make the people accountable to God's word.