

DAILY BIBLE READING PLAN

09-10-2023 // WEEK 36 NOTES

Ezra 1 - Nehemiah 9

Ezra

- Ezra was a priest in the captivity.
- The **book of Ezra** is about the rebuilding of the destroyed Temple.
- Around 538 BC, King Cyrus of Persia (which had overthrown Babylon as the world power), had the Jews under his tutelage. He is asked by the Jews to return to their homeland after 70 years in captivity (thus fulfilling Jeremiah's prophecy that they would stay in captivity for 70 years – out of the 490 years in the land where they didn't give a year's rest to the land every 7 years). It was granted.
- Ezra and Zerubbabel lead the entourage of Jews back. They started to rebuild the Temple first (destroyed by Babylon around 586 BC). Opposition arises. For 20 years the project was shut down.
- Then, it begins again and is completed (**Haggai** is the prophetic book that discusses this rebuilding of the Temple).
- This book is about the rebuilding of the Temple, its starts and stops, and eventual completion. The Temple was central to Jewish life and important for the return to God's holy land.

Nehemiah

- Nehemiah was a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, a Persian king around 440s BC. Some (me included) think that this is the date that begins the Daniel prophecy of 70 x's 7 to Jesus entering Jerusalem. Pretty fascinating.
- Cupbearers tasted the drinks offered to the king to make sure they weren't poisoned. It was obviously done by someone with trust from the king!

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- The Temple had been rebuilt. A group of Jews were now back in the homeland. But Nehemiah has a vision about Jerusalem being unprotected. The walls lay in ruin. So he prays, gets courage, and goes to the king and asks if he could return to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem. The king grants it, giving him even more than he asks, but only wants the assurance that he would return one day as his cupbearer. Nehemiah says yes.
- The rest of the book is about Nehemiah's strategy to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem. It's a **marvelous book about LEADERSHIP**. It shows the vision necessary to begin a work, prayer as the foundation, getting the proper resources, facing opposition, overcoming opposition, and completing the great vision/work given.
- This is one of my favorite books in the Bible, largely because I love leadership, but also because its guidelines and principles are largely seen in leadership motifs today.

I hope the journey is still interesting to you! Next week you will finish **Nehemiah** and start **1 Chronicles**. You will reread a lot of the stories that you read in **1 Kings**. Don't be dismayed. There are differences.

Remember: **Kings** show Israel's history from man's perspective. **Chronicles** shows Israel's history from God's perspective. You will see some very interesting differences. But it's a good refresher of how Israel fell, was divided, the two kingdoms, the captivity, and the prophets of God forming to speak against their godless appetites.

David