
Reformation of the People: Ezra 7-10

Ezra; 2nd Return to Jerusalem; (457 B.C.)

Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

...the good hand of God was on me. (6x)

Ezra 9:2 They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, and have mingled the holy race with the peoples around them. And the leaders and officials have led the way in this unfaithfulness.

Ezra 9:3 When I heard this, I tore my tunic and cloak, pulled hair from my head and beard and sat down appalled.

Ezra 9:6 ...and prayed: "O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to you, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens.

Ezra 10:1 While Ezra was praying and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a large crowd of Israelites--men, women and children--gathered around him. They too wept bitterly.

Key: Page 1: delight. ungodly. worship. opposition. fail. complete. dance.

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Re-Building Your Life

What Should I Learn from Ezra?

September 25, 2011

Jeremiah 29:14 "I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

Ezra 6:2 You plunged them into a sea of joy.

Lessons:

God will do what it takes to release your heart to _____ in Him.

God moves in the hearts of _____ people to serve that purpose.

God will arouse your heart to enjoy _____ more than any other blessing on earth.

God will permit strong _____ to oppress you as you walk the narrow road to the party.

At times you will _____—you will choose the easier road that leads to immediate satisfaction, but God will break your heart over your movement away from Him, and He will stir you to ongoing radical repentance.

God will _____ the life-giving work in your heart that He has already begun.

You will _____ with God at His party.

Historical Background:

Jeremiah 29:10 This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place."

■ *Ezra 1:1 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing:*

² *"This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: "'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah.*

■ ³ *Anyone of his people among you--may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem.*

Isaiah 44:28 ... who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."'

■ *Isaiah 45:13 "I will raise up Cyrus in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free, but not for a price or reward, says the LORD Almighty."*

Restoration of the Temple: Ezra 1-6

■ **Zerubbabel; 1st return to Jerusalem; (538 B.C.—515 B.C.)**

Ezra 3:3 Despite their fear of the peoples around them, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the LORD, both the morning and evening sacrifices.

Matthew 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many

enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it."

■ *Ezra 4:4 Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building. ⁵ They hired counselors to work against them and frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia and down to the reign of Darius king of Persia.*

■ *Ezra 6:8 Moreover, I hereby decree what you are to do for these elders of the Jews in the construction of this house of God: The expenses of these men are to be fully paid out of the royal treasury, from the revenues of Trans-Euphrates, so that the work will not stop. ⁹ Whatever is needed--young bulls, rams, male lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem--must be given them daily without fail, ¹⁰ so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons.*

■ ¹¹ *Furthermore, I decree that if anyone changes this edict, a beam is to be pulled from his house and he is to be lifted up and impaled on it. And for this crime his house is to be made a pile of rubble.*

¹² *May God, who has caused his Name to dwell there, overthrow any king or people who lifts a hand to change this decree or to destroy this temple in Jerusalem. I Darius have decreed it. Let it be carried out with diligence.*
