EZRA
EXPLAINED: Episode Summary

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1. ESSENTIALS

What Do You Need to Know First to Study Ezra Well?

DATE: ***539-450 BC:*** Dawn of Persian Empire
GENRE: ***Historical:*** Restoring Jerusalem's glory
AUTHOR: ***Ezra / Nehemiah?:*** Scribal Writings
SETTING: ***Post-Exile:*** Judah Captives Returning
PURPOSE: ***God's Faithfulness:*** Temple Restored
AUDIENCE: ***People of Judah:*** God's True Remnant

2. STORYLINE

What Do You Need to Know First to Study Ezra Well?

Judah's Exiles Return to Jerusalem

- Persia overthrows Babylonian Empire
- Cyrus is king over Persian Empire
- 70 years of exile & judgment complete
- Cyrus decrees & supports rebuilding
- Judah prepares to return home

KEY VERSES

"Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem." - Ezra 1:3

"For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel." - Ezra 7:10

3. THEMES & IDEAS

What Major Biblical Concepts Do We Find in Ezra?

- God's Sovereignty Throughout Exile
- Return Home & Reclaim Promises
- Worship Restored & Temple Rebuilt
- Opposition from Foreigners in Judah
- The Crisis of Pagan Intermarriage
- Ezra's Return, Leadership & Influence
- Power of Confession & Repentance
- The Feasts & National Hope Revived

4. STRUCTURE

What are the major sections of Ezra?

CH 1-6: 1. The Exiles Return & The Temple Rebuilt
Cyrus of Persia frees and supports Judah's exiles to return home and rebuild the temple

CH 7-10: 2. Ezra's Return & The People's Reforms
Ezra, a priest and scribe of the law, returns to Judah and leads national repentance



4. STRUCTURE - EXPANDED

4. What are the major sections of Ezra?

5. What do we learn about God from each of these sections?

6. What do these sections offer our Christian life?

CH 1-6: 1. THE EXILES RETURN & THE TEMPLE REBUILT

Cyrus frees and supports Judah's exiles to return to their homeland and rebuild their temple to God

CH 1: Cyrus' Edict & Temple Items
Cyrus declares the Jews free to return to Judah and returns to them all treasure taken from the temple

CH 2: The List of Exiles Who Return
A Post-Exile genealogy of those who returned to Judah from Babylon (priests, Levites, temple servants)

CH 3-4: Restoration: Initiated & Opposed
Altar rebuilt, temple restoration begins until adversaries convince Artaxerxes to halt the work

CH 5-6: Restoration: Continued & Completed
Zerubbabel, Haggai & Zechariah appeal to Darius, then lead restoration to completion, dedication, & Passover

Note: The prophets Haggai and Zechariah encourage the people to finish the temple (Ezra 5:1)

CH 7-10: 2. EZRA'S RETURN & THE PEOPLE'S REFORMS

Ezra, a priest and teacher of the law, returns to Judah and leads the nation's repentance and restoration

CH 7: Ezra's Return & Commission
Ezra, a scribe, is commissioned & supported by Persia to return to Judah and institute reforms

CH 8: Exiles Who Return with Ezra
Ezra righteously leads a second remnant of Exiles back to Judah, bringing temple treasure back

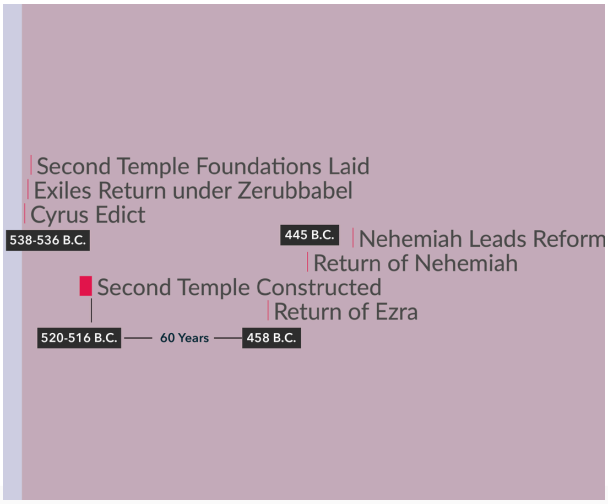
CH 9: Ezra's Repentance for Judah
Ezra cries out to the Lord over Judah's intermarriage with foreign nations, which resulted in idolatry

CH 10: Judah's Repentance Toward God
Judah responds to Ezra's plea by collectively repenting to God and abolishing intermarriage

Note: Sixty years pass between chapters 6 and 7 before Ezra returns with the second remnant

5. HOW EZRA POINTS TO CHRIST

- The way he unites the people "as one man" in building up the house of God
- He was sent to teach, reveal, and obey the Scriptures before the people for their sanctification
- Purifying the marriage union, allowing no mixture of the flesh with the spiritual works of God



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