

## Purpose

To show God's faithfulness and the way He kept His promise to restore His people to their land

## Penman

Not stated, but probably Ezra

## Meaning of Name

Ezra literally means "helper"

## Date Written

Around 450 BC, recording events from about 538-450 BC (omitting 516-458 BC); possibly begun in Babylon and finished in Jerusalem

## Setting

Ezra follows *2 Chronicles* as a history of the Jewish people, recording their return to the land after the captivity

## Key People

Cyrus, Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Haggai, Zechariah, Darius I, Artaxerxes I, the Samaritans, and Ezra

## Key Places

Babylon and Jerusalem

## Key Verse

"The Passover meal was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile and by the others in the land who had turned from their immoral customs to worship the Lord... They ate the Passover meal and celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days. There was great joy throughout the land because the Lord had changed the attitude of the King of Assyria towards them, so that he helped them to rebuild the Temple of God..." 6:21,22

## Special Features:

Ezra and Nehemiah were one book in the Hebrew Bible, and with Esther, they comprise the post-captivity historical books. The prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi should be studied along with Ezra, for they lived during the time of the post-captivity period.

## An Overview (10 Chapters)

- The Return Led by Zerubbabel (1: 1-6:22)
- The Return Led by Ezra (7: 1-10:44)

## Major Themes

### The Jews Return

God shows His mercy to every generation. He compassionately restores His people. No matter how difficult our present "captivity," we are never far from His love and mercy. He restores us when we return to Him.

### Rededication

In rededicating the altar, the people were recommitting themselves to God and His service. To grow spiritually, our commitment must be reviewed and renewed often. As we rededicate ourselves to God, our lives become altars to Him.

### Opposition

There will always be adversaries who oppose God's work. The life of faith is never easy. But God can overrule all opposition to His service. When we face opposition, we must not falter or withdraw, but keep active and patient.

### God's Word

All of us need the encouragement and direction of God's Word. We must make it the basis for our faith and actions to finish God's work and fulfill our obligations. We must never waver in our commitment to hear and obey His Word.

### Faith and Action

Faith led the people to complete the Temple and to remove sin from their society. As we trust God with our hearts and minds, we must also act by completing our daily responsibilities. It is not enough to say we believe, we must make the changes God requires.