

August

[Ezra](#), [Nehemiah](#), [Esther](#)

August 1 Ezra 1 – Return of the exiles – What was happening 70 years ago? Ezra begins with the promise that God made through Jeremiah 70 years previously that was now being fulfilled in the most unusual way! Review the Babylonian captivity and all the grieving done because of the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. This would've been a new generation, with very few from the original generation able to make the trip back to "start over". Note the repetition of God's working through all of this. What are examples of God's working through our lives as a result of the past 70 years? What is He wanting us to do for the next 70 years?

August 2 Ezra 2 – Names of returning exiles – How do you feel about genealogies? Some are very interested in them, others aren't... Why were these genealogies and the numbers so VERY important? See the first verses of this chapter. Note the name Zerubbabel – see also Matt. 1:12-13, and Ezra 3:8. Note also the emphasis on the Temple and worship. How important is worship in our lives today?

August 3 Ezra 3 – Revival of Temple worship – Why was it dangerous to rebuild the altar of God? How dangerous is it today to stand up for the truths of God's Word? What did they do about it? What can we do about it today? Why the shouting for joy and weeping at the same time? How excited do we get about our opportunity for worship?

August 4 Ezra 4 – Opposition under 3 rulers – Why the opposition to rebuilding the Temple? Why the official order to stop building? Why did God allow this interruption? Why does the Holy Spirit have Ezra record this for us?

August 5 Ezra 5 – Haggai and Zechariah – These are the minor prophets who wrote in our Bible. What was their message from God to God's people? How did God use the governor, Tattenai, to carry out His will? How important are "royal archives"? (Keep this in mind when we read Esther and Mordecai...) How important are accurate historical records for today?

August 6 Ezra 6 – Darius' decree – What a "turn-around"! How could Darius, a Babylonian, write: "May God, who has caused His Name to dwell there..."? In comparison to the dedication of the Temple in Solomon's day, this was quite small. (See 1 Kgs. 8) Why could the Passover be celebrated again? What is most important about our worship of God?

August 7 Ezra 7 – Ezra comes to Jerusalem – Ezra now comes – why didn't he come with Zerubbabel before the Temple was built? What do we know about Ezra? What description would we receive? Why was Artaxerxes ("king of kings" v.12) so generous? (see v.23) Did Artaxerxes believe in the true God? Note, "the hand of the LORD my God was upon me" (v.9, 28) Is this still true today?

August 8 Ezra 8 – More exiles return – a second group of exiles return – with their recorded genealogies! (again see v.18, 31) How did Ezra prepare himself and the people for the journey? How was Ezra "ashamed"? (v.22) How much wealth did they carry with them the 4 months it took to travel to Jerusalem? Why did they bring it with them? Why is this included in the Bible?

August 9 Ezra 9 – Intermarriage – Why was this intermarriage so harmful? (called "unfaithfulness") Wow, what a prayer Ezra prayed! And recorded for us! What do we learn from his prayer? How was it a teaching time for the people who heard his prayer? (note the result of the prayer in ch. 10)

August 10 Ezra 10 – Repentance – What does God do about divorce? Why this mass of divorces here? What repentance needs to happen in America today? When these women and children (from the unfaithful marriages) were sent away, where would they go? What is the importance of listing these 110 men guilty of marrying pagan wives and their repentance and putting away their wives and children? What would an "intermarriage" be today?

[August 11](#) Nehemiah 1 – Nehemiah’s prayer – Why was Nehemiah so upset? What does this tell us about him? What is it that upsets us? What did he do about it? (v.4) Is this also how we handle what upsets us? Note the confession and remembrance in his prayer. God does not need to be reminded; so why did he pray this way?

[August 12](#) Nehemiah 2 – Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem – Why was he afraid to be sad in the king’s presence? How is this so very different from our day? Note how Nehemiah is a man of prayer! Note, v.8, 18 “because the gracious hand of the my God was upon me...” – when might we use this phrase? Who are the “Sanballot and Tobiah” in your life? In the life of the Church?

[August 13](#) Nehemiah 3 – Builders of the wall – Why the names for all the gates? Note – this is a re-build...

[August 14](#) Nehemiah 4 – Opposition to building – How did Nehemiah deal with the bullies? Note the first response was always prayer. How is that a great first response? Why also “post the guard”?

[August 15](#) Nehemiah 5 – Help for the poor – What additional source of trouble did Nehemiah have to deal with? (v.8) Why would people do this? How is this happening also today? How serious was making a promise? Is it the same today? Why? (Note – 12 years! v.14 – see again the question the king asked Nehemiah at the beginning – 2:6) Was v.19 a proper prayer?

[August 16](#) Nehemiah 6 – Completion amidst opposition – What additional intrigue do the enemies try? What does this teach us about how to deal with threats? What prayers did Nehemiah pray?

[August 17](#) Nehemiah 7 – Leadership and resettlement – What is the purpose for the list of names? How important were the “family records” at that time? Why was this? What does this have to say to us today?

[August 18](#) Nehemiah 8 – Ezra reads the Law – All the people listened how long? How and why did they do this? Why did they stand? Why did they prostrate themselves? Why were the people weeping? Why did they build and live in booths? Why was this time so special?

[August 19](#) Nehemiah 9 – Repentance by Israel – How did the people react? Does this still happen today? Not the public review of God’s covenants with them by the Levites. Why is this important? How do we do this today / or do we?

[August 20](#) Nehemiah 10 – Sealed promise – What was the promise they “sealed”? How does this compare to church membership today?

[August 21](#) Nehemiah 11 – New residents of Jerusalem – Why would anyone want to live in Jerusalem? Why did they cast lots? Remember the importance of living on their “ancestral property” (Num. 34:2; 1 Kgs. 21:1-3)

[August 22](#) Nehemiah 12 – Dedication of the Wall – What is the significance of David in v.24, 36-37, 45? What was involved in their celebration of the dedication? How would the Levites “purify themselves, the people and the walls”? (Lev. 16; Num. 8:5-14; 19:17-22 – look ahead also to Neh. 13:8-9)

[August 23](#) Nehemiah 13 – Final reforms – What is “the Book of Moses”? (see Deut. 23:3) Who should not be “admitted to the assembly of God” today? What had happened during Nehemiah’s absence? (v.4-5) How did Nehemiah correct them? (Another prayer from Nehemiah – v.14f) Was this a selfish prayer? (v.14, 22, 31) How is this similar to Jn. 2:13-16? What “guarding of the gates” (v.19-22) must we also be doing in our day today? Why was it important for the children to “speak the language of Judah”? What does this say about marriage? Does this still apply today? (2 Cor. 6:14-18)

[August 24](#) Esther 1 – Xerxes and Vashti – Why was queen Vashti deposed? (God’s larger plan) How “wise” were the wise men? How can we see God’s plan working in the politics of today as well?

[August 25](#) Esther 2 – Esther and Mordecai – How was Esther chosen to be the next queen? What was God’s plan through Mordecai? (for King Xerxes as well as for Esther and God’s people) Was it right for Esther and Mordecai to hide their nationality and beliefs? Are there times today that we should “hide” ours?

[August 26](#) Esther 3 – Haman’s plot – What do we know about Haman? Why did Haman have such a hatred for the Jews? How does God show He is always in control even when it doesn’t look that way? How can we remember this?

[August 27](#) Esther 4 – “For such a time as this” – How had God prepared Mordecai and Esther for “this time”? What interesting alternative does Mordecai remind Esther? (v.14) For what time / special work is God working through you?

[August 28](#) Esther 5-6 – Esther’s request / Haman’s plan – What was the wisdom that God gave to Esther? What “coincidence” happened to carry out God’s plan? (ch. 6) Are the “coincidences” with God? How did God humble Haman? What warning does this give? What promise does this also give?

[August 29](#) Esther 7 – Esther’s accusation / Haman’s death – Again, what further wisdom did God give to Esther? How quickly God can turn man’s plans around! Again, what is the warning / promise given here also for us today?

[August 30](#) Esther 8 – Xerxes edict for the Jews – How did God bless Mordecai and Esther? How did God protect His people, the Jews? What effect did this have for the non-Jews?

[August 31](#) Esther 9-10 – Purim and Mordecai’s promotion – With the king’s new edict, why would so many still want to kill the Jews? Why didn’t the Jews take the plunder? What is the purpose of the feast of Purim? Although we don’t celebrate it – how do we remember God’s rescue?