

# Ezra

## Study #1

### Background

Nine Basic Stages of the Old Testament (H.L. Wilmington)		
<u>The Creation Stage</u>  <b>Genesis 1-11</b>	<u>The Patriarchal Stage</u>  <b>Genesis 12-50; Job</b>	<u>The Exodus Stage</u>  <b>Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy</b>
<u>The Conquest Stage</u>  <b>Joshua</b>	<u>The Judges Stage</u>  <b>Judges, Ruth; 1 Samuel 1-7</b>	<u>The United Kingdom Stage</u>  <b>1 Chronicles; 2 Chronicles 1-9; 1 Samuel 8-31; 1 Kings 1-11; Psalms; Song of Solomon; Ecclesiastes; Proverbs</b>
<u>The Divided Kingdom Stage</u>  <b>1 Kings 12-22; 2 Kings; 2 Chronicles 10-36; Obadiah; Joel; Jonah; Amos; Hosea; Micah; Isaiah; Nahum; Zephaniah; Habakkuk; Jeremiah; Lamentations</b>	<u>The Babylonian Captivity Stage</u>  <b>Ezekiel; Daniel</b>	<u>The Return Stage</u>  <b>3 HISTORY BOOKS Ezra; Esther; Nehemiah;</b>  <b>3 PROPHETS Haggai; Zechariah; Malachi</b>

Ezra is an example of a great contrast: God's hatred of sin, but His love for His children. (Heb. 12:11)

The Three Phases of the Captivity and Return (John Phillips)		
<b>The Captivity</b>		
<b>605 B.C.</b>	<b>Phase I</b>	Nebuchadnezzar first invaded the land and took away Jehoiakim and the leading nobles including Daniel.
<b>597 B.C.</b>	<b>Phase II</b>	A second Babylonian invasion took place. King Jehoiachin was carried away into captivity together with most of the people of importance including Ezekiel and the ancestors of Mordecai.
<b>586 B.C.</b>	<b>Phase III</b>	The final destruction of Jerusalem took place, Zedekiah, the king of Judah, breaking his oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar, had entered into an alliance with Egypt to throw off the Babylonian yoke. The Babylonians besieged Jerusalem, and terrible scenes took place. At last the city was sacked, the temple burned, and the final deportation effected. The land began to make up for its neglected Sabbaths. (Sabbatical years of letting the land rest).
<b>The Return</b>		
<b>538 B.C.</b>	<b>Phase I</b>	Cyrus the Persian issued a decree which gave the Jews liberty to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. This was led by Zerubbabel. A small group responded.
<b>458 B.C.</b>	<b>Phase II</b>	A further group returned under the leadership of Ezra. This return was a whole generation later than the first.
<b>445 B.C.</b>	<b>Phase III</b>	Nehemiah, a high official in the Persian court, was given permission to return to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

**There are two great promises that we see in connection with this book (Ezra):**

1. Sin will bring judgment (Jer. 1:14-16)
2. A Remnant Would Return (Jer. 29:10-14; Daniel 9:1-2)

<b>The Relationship of Ezra to Other Biblical Books</b>	
<b>Book</b>	<b>Relationship</b>
To Chronicles	- it is a sequel.
To Esther	- it is a parallel
To Nehemiah	- it is part one of the story.
To Isaiah	- it is a fulfillment of that which God prophesied that Cyrus would do. (Is. 44:28)
To Jeremiah	- it is the confirmation of his prophecy concerning the 70 years. (Jer. 29:10)
To Daniel	- it is the answer to his prayers. (Dan. 9:1-2)
To Haggai	- it is the background of his rebuke. (They built goodly houses while leaving the temple unfinished.)
To Zachariah	- it is the work of the high priest that he anointed (Joshua)
To Malachi	- it was the peak of spiritual service from which Israel had backslidden by his day.

**Ezra the man** - (more in future studies)

- He was a scribe (7:6) and a priest (7:11).
- He had a position of influence in the Persian court (7:21-26).
- He had a passion for the law of God and for teaching others the law of God. (7:10)

**Why study Ezra?**

1. It is inspired Scripture! (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
2. The real stories of the Old Testament are meant to be lessons for us. (1 Cor. 10:11)
3. Ezra is the ONLY account of the first years after the return from the Captivity.
4. There are tremendous moral lessons for us here.
5. It is an encouragement to those trying to build a work for God today!