

## The Book of Ezra

### Name

Ezra – the book is named after a Levitical priest who was sent by King Artaxerxes of Persia to Jerusalem to \_\_\_\_\_ in Judah.

### Author

\_\_\_\_\_ – sections of Ezra (7:27-28; 8:1-34; and 9:1-15) are the personal stories of the author. The rest of the book fits the same style as Ezra's personal accounts presenting us with a unified book written by Ezra the priest.

### Dates

The book of Ezra covers the return of the Exiles of Babylon/Persia from the decree of Cyrus in \_\_\_\_\_ to the leadership of Ezra in \_\_\_\_\_.

### Theme

The theme of Ezra is \_\_\_\_\_ in restoring His people to the Promised Land. The Lord is sovereign over Cyrus and Artaxerxes and providing safety to His servants who trust in Him.

### Genre

Ezra is a fascinating collection of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

### Structure

- I. The First Return from Exile
  - A. The Decree of Cyrus (1:1-4).
  - B. The Exiles Who Return (1:5-2:70)
  - C. The Restoration of Sacrifices in Jerusalem (3:1-7)
  - D. The Beginning of the Temple Rebuild (3:8-13)
  - E. The Opposition to the Temple (4:1-23)
  - F. Rebuilding the Temple (4:24-6:15)
  - G. Temple Dedication and Passover (6:16-22)
- II. The Second Return with Ezra
  - A. Ezra arrives in Jerusalem (7:1-10)
  - B. Artaxerxes' Letters Commissioning and Supplying Ezra (7:11-28)
  - C. Those who traveled with Ezra (8:1-20)
  - D. The Description of the Journey to Jerusalem (8:21-36)
- III. Israel's Struggle with Intermarriage
  - A. The Description of the Situation (9:1-3)
  - B. Ezra's Prayer of Confession (9:4-15)
  - C. The Foreign Wives are Sent Away (10:1-44)

### Main Characters

- \_\_\_\_\_ - the Lord miraculously worked to return His people to their home
- \_\_\_\_\_ - King of Persia who wrote a decree to send Jews back to Judah
- \_\_\_\_\_ - the governor who led the first group of exiles back to Judah
- \_\_\_\_\_ - opponent of the Jews who worked to stop the construction work
- \_\_\_\_\_ - a priest sent by King Artaxerxes to enforce Mosaic Law in Judah

### Audience

The book of Ezra was written for the Israel who \_\_\_\_\_ and settled in Jerusalem. This book is a call to religious \_\_\_\_\_ in all aspects of life by Ezra.

## The Book of Nehemiah

### Name

Nehemiah – the book is named after the main character of the book. Nehemiah was the cupbearer of the Persian Emperor (Artaxerxes). He returned to Jerusalem to \_\_\_\_\_ of the city.

### Author

\_\_\_\_\_ – the book begins with the simple declaration that these are “the words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah.”

### Dates

The book of Nehemiah covers the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem and the period of leadership under Nehemiah and Ezra \_\_\_\_\_.

### Theme

The theme of Nehemiah is \_\_\_\_\_. After generations of idolatrous kings in Jerusalem, 70 years in captivity, and 100 years of struggling to rebuild the temple and the city of walls, the LORD is faithful to the words of His covenant to His people. Nehemiah’s repeated prayer to be remembered by His God. Nehemiah looked to be remembered by the God who is faithful.

### Genre

Nehemiah is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the leader in Jerusalem who spearheaded the movement to rebuild the walls. The book also contains many political records from the days of Nehemiah.

### Structure

- I. Nehemiah’s Heart for Jerusalem (1:1-2:10)
- II. The Rebuilding of the Walls
  - A. Nehemiah’s Inspection (2:11-20)
  - B. The Division of the Work (3:1-32)
  - C. Opposition of the Arabs (4:11-14)
  - D. Working with Sword and Trowel (4:15-23)
  - E. Responsible Political Leadership in Jerusalem (5:1-19)
  - F. Attempts to Intimidate Nehemiah (6:1-14)
  - G. The Completion of the Walls (6:15-19)
  - H. Temple Dedication and Passover (6:16-22)
- III. The List of the Exiles (7:1-73)
- IV. The Reestablishment of the Mosaic Law
  - A. The Reading of the Law (8:1-12)
  - B. The Celebration of the Feast of Booths (8:13-18)

## The Historical Books

- C. Public Confession of National Sins (9:1-37)
- D. Public Vow of Future Faithfulness (10:1-39)
- V. Establishment of Jerusalem
  - A. The People Selected to Live in Jerusalem (11:1-12:26)
  - B. The Dedication of the Walls (12:27-43)
  - C. Support for the Levites (12:44-47)
- VI. Nehemiah's Final Reforms
  - A. The Moabite in Temple (13:1-14)
  - B. Working on the Sabbath (13:15-22)
  - C. Intermarriages with the Nations (13:23-31)

### Main Characters

\_\_\_\_\_ - the Lord was faithful to His people through the construction of the walls of Jerusalem

\_\_\_\_\_ - King of Persia who sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls

\_\_\_\_\_ - the cupbearer of Artaxerxes who travels to Jerusalem to help the construction of the walls of the city

\_\_\_\_\_ - opponents of the Jews who worked to stop the work on the walls

\_\_\_\_\_ - a priest who worked with Nehemiah to call God's people to faithfulness

### Audience

The book of Nehemiah was written for the Israel who \_\_\_\_\_ and settled in Jerusalem. This book is a call to \_\_\_\_\_ in all aspects of life by Nehemiah.

## The Book of Esther

### Name

Esther – the book is named after the main character of the book. Esther was a simple yet beautiful Jewish girl who was exalted to the role of the \_\_\_\_\_. She saved the Jewish people from a worldwide assault.

### Author

\_\_\_\_\_ – the Bible gives no inspired information on the author of the book. Mordecai, the uncle of Esther, is named most often as the author. Ezra and the temple scribes of Judah are also suggested as the author.

### Dates

The book of Esther occurs during the reign of Xerxes the Great, the Persian emperor, \_\_\_\_\_. The Jews called Xerxes, Ahasuerus. The events of Esther are set in one of four ancient capital cities of the Persians, Susa. Susa is 750 miles from Jerusalem.

### Theme

The theme of Esther is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. While the people of God are hundreds of miles removed from the land of Israel and the name of God is not even \_\_\_\_\_, He still reigns supreme. The book of Esther was also written to provide the historical background for the feast of Purim.

### Genre

Esther is a \_\_\_\_\_ of the reign of Xerxes as it relates to the Jewish people and more specifically the family of Mordecai.

### Structure

- I. Esther Crowned as Queen
  - A. Queen Vashti Dethroned (1:12-21)
  - B. The Search for the New Queen (2:1-14)
  - C. Esther's Exaltation (2:15-20)
- II. The Feud of Mordecai and Haman
  - A. Mordecai Saves the King (2:21-23)
  - B. Haman's Anger at Mordecai (3:1-6)
  - C. Haman's Plot to Kill the Jews (3:7-15)
  - D. Mordecai's Reaction to the Plot (4:1-14)
- III. Esther's Plea for Salvation of the Jews
  - A. Esther's Call for a Fast (4:15-17)
  - B. Esther First Banquet (5:1-8)
  - C. Haman's Joy and Despair (5:9-14)

## The Historical Books

- D. Mordecai's Joy and Honor (6:1-14)
- E. Esther's Second Banquet (7:1-10)
- F. Esther's Call for the Salvation (8:1-8)
- IV. The Day of Vengeance
  - A. The Order for Self-Defense of the Jews (8:9-17)
  - B. The Victories of the Jews (9:1-32)
- V. The Fame of Mordecai (10:1-3)

### Main Characters

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Xerxes) – King of Persia who was easily manipulated by others
- \_\_\_\_\_ – an official of Xerxes who served at the king's gate
- \_\_\_\_\_ – a Jewish girl who was exalted to the position of Queen of Persia
- \_\_\_\_\_ – a jealous Agagite who sought to destroy the Jewish people

### Audience

The book of Esther was written for the Israelites who struggled with their place in the world following the \_\_\_\_\_ and their \_\_\_\_\_. No matter how small they may be in the eyes of the world, their God is still in control.