

Supplementary Materials for KOOL Journal for Parents/Adults

Week 6: 26 February to 4 March, 2018 (pp.50 - 57)

Context

This chapter provides more details concerning the events of the return that the writer summarized earlier (7:7-9). The returnees assembled on the banks of the Ahava waterway that flowed through the district of Babylon that bore the same name. The site is presently unknown. However, it is known that Babylonia was crisscrossed by a network of irrigation canals that tapped the water of the Euphrates and flowed toward the Tigris, which had a slightly deeper bed. A satrap (8:36; lit. protector of the realm) ruled over governors in the Persian governmental structure.

Key Character: Ezra (refer to Week 5 supplement)

Other Characters: Artaxerxes (refer to Week 5 supplement)

Ezra 8	
<p>Review Verse of the Week Ezra 8:22b <i>The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him.</i></p>	
Date/Passage	Reflection and Response (R & R)
<p>Mon. 26 8:1–14 {Ezra 8:1}</p>	<p>The descendants of the priestly and royal families in Israel appear first in this list (8: 2- 3). Then the names of the rest of the Jews follow. A comparison of 8:3-14 with 2:3-15 shows that Ezra's companions were mainly the relatives of those Jews who had returned 80 years earlier under Zerubbabel. The one exception was Joab's family (8:9). Note the use of first person pronoun by the writer of the Book of Ezra from chapter 8 to 10.</p> <p style="color: red;">R & R:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the objective of such a listing? • Would our names be listed in the Book of Life (Ps 69:28; Rev 3:5)?
<p>Tue. 27 8:15 – 20 {Ezra 8:15,17-18}</p>	<p>Ezra's return to Jerusalem was delayed in order to recruit Levites as none had volunteered when the services of more Levites than those already in Judah were needed to restore worship at the Temple. Due to his recruiting efforts in Casiphia (exact site unknown), 38 Levites and 220 temple servants joined the immigrants. One writer estimated the total number of men who returned with Ezra as about 1,700—plus women and children. Another calculated the total number of men, women, and children as between 4,000 and 5,000.</p> <p style="color: red;">R & R:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God has gifted each of us with a talent to contribute to his Kingdom (1 Pet 4:10). Do we wait to be recruited or persuaded or we are quick to look for opportunities to volunteer?

<p>Wed. 28 8:21–23 {Ezra 8:21-23}</p>	<p>Ezra and the people travelled on foot for 900 miles via a dangerous route without any military escort. Before making all the physical preparations for the journey, Ezra made spiritual preparations. The people fasted and prayed, showing their dependence on God for their protection, not the military escort. Although Ezra knew God’s promise to protect His people, he did not take it for granted. He knew also that the blessings have to be appropriated by prayer. Fasting from food reminded them of their total dependence on God. Under Ezra’s godly leadership, the people arrived safely in Jerusalem after four months.</p> <p>R & R:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our journeys may be less arduous but do we ask for God for guidance and protection? • How often do we fast and pray? <p>“Without serious prayer, we reduce God to a quick-service pharmacist with painkillers for our every ailment.” (Tyndale House Publishers, Chronological Life Application Study Bible, 2004, p. 1199.)</p>
<p>Thu. 1 March 8:24 – 30 {Ezra 8:28-30}</p>	<p>There were an estimated 28 tons of silver and gold contributed for “the house of our God”— a large amount of treasure to transport with or without military escort for protection. Ezra made the necessary physical preparations for the transport of such treasures. He took special precautions to make sure the expensive temple utensils arrived safely and to guarantee that everyone would perceive that his handling of the precious cargo was completely honest (cf. 2 Cor. 8:20-21). Each object used in the Temple was dedicated to God and is considered to be a holy treasure that must be guarded carefully. Note the measures taken for delegation of responsibility and accountability.</p> <p>R & R:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What ‘treasures’ have God entrusted to our care or given to each of us for His use? • As a church, are we good stewards of His resources? Are proper procedures in place for good governance?
<p>Fri. 2 8:31– 44 {Ezra 8:31}</p>	<p>Note how the treasures were meticulously accounted in 8:34. (Many present-day scandals could be avoided if Christian leaders would learn from Ezra.) Then offerings were made to the God of Israel. Burnt offerings represented the consecration of the worshippers' persons to God (Lev. 1; 6:8-13). Sin offerings provided atonement (covering) for the worshippers' sinful natures (Lev. 4:1—5:13; 6:24-30).</p> <p>R & R:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare the burnt offerings made by this second group of returnees and those made during the dedication of the house of God in 6:17. What were the differences or similarities? • What was the significance of the 12 male goats in both instances? • What offerings does God require of us today? Refer to 1 Sam 15:22.
<p>Sat. 24</p>	<p>Review Ezra 7 and 8.</p> <p>R & R:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What more have we learnt about Ezra’s traits compared to what we knew about him in chapter 7.

- In what ways does Ezra represent a role model for us to emulate?

References:

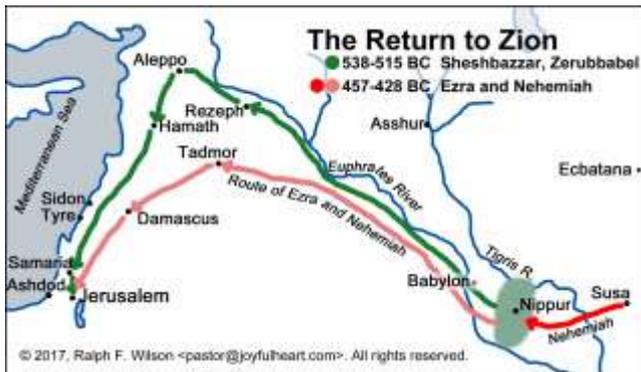
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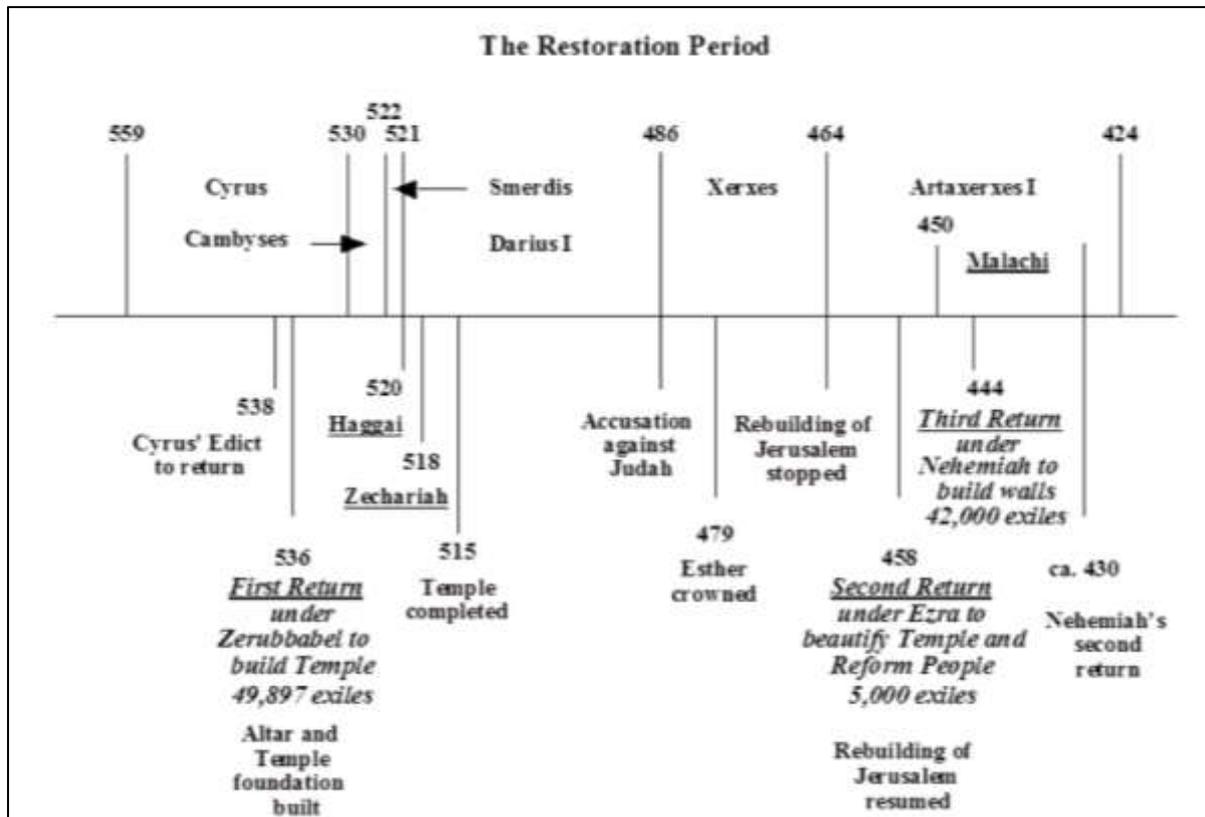
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Source: <http://www.jesuswalk.com/rebuild/maps/return-to-zion-2260x1313x300.jpg>



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