

# Old Testament Overview

---

## Ezra – Esther

(Er 7:10)

### INTRODUCTION

1. Good Afternoon
  - a. Greeting...
2. We have up to this point gone from Gn through II Ch.
  - a. We have seen history given from creation to the Babylonian captivity.
  - b. Today we are going to see God's people, the remnant return to worship God.
  - c. We will be looking at Ezra – Esther.
3. The time frame we are looking at circa 539 B.C. – 450 B.C. maybe a little later.
  - a. Cyrus the king of Persia has taken Babylon over and started the Medo-Persian Empire.
4. It is here we pick up with Ezra.

### I. Ezra

#### A. Name + History

1. Name after the prophet and probable writer Ezra.
2. It was probably written circa 450 B.C.
3. At this time the Persian monarchy overthrew Babylon Judah's captive.
  - i. October of 539 B.C.
4. Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes allowed captives to go back to their homelands.
  - a. Three Jewish waves happened in three stages.
  - b. Ezra covers the first and second wave.

#### B. Outline

1. (1-6) The Return Under Zerubbabel
  - i. Persian decree – 1
  - ii. Census of returning exiles – 2
  - iii. Construction of new temple – 3-6
2. (7-10)
  - i. Ezra identified & Artaxerxes' decree issued – 7
  - ii. The journey to Jerusalem – 8
  - iii. The problem of mixed marriages – 9-10

#### C. Lessons Learned

1. Doing God's will is not always easy.
  - i. **Je 38:7-10** "Now Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs, who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon. When the king was sitting at the Gate of Benjamin, 8 Ebed-Melech went out of the king's house and spoke to the king, saying: 9 "My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon, and he is likely to die from hunger in the place where he is. For there is no more bread in the city." 10 Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, "Take from here thirty men with you, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he dies.""

# Old Testament Overview

---

- ii. **II Co 11:23-28** "Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness— 28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches."
  - iii. **He 11:36-38** "Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth."
2. Repentance is not easy but the reward is great.
- i. You have to admit being wrong.
    - a. **I Jn 1:9-10** "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."
  - ii. You have to prove you've repented
    - a. **Lk 3:8** "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones."

## II. Nehemiah

### A. Name + History

- 1. Name is after the main person of the book.
- 2. Nehemiah was a cupbearer thus he was trustworthy.
- 3. He used his influence to help God's people to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple which had been stopped by the Samaritans.
- 4. Nehemiah used his position to get the king Artaxerxes I to let him be governor over Judah.
  - a. As governor Nehemiah's leadership and organization skills helped Judah to rebuild its wonderful city of Jerusalem and complete the restoration process.

# Old Testament Overview

---

## B. Outline

1. (1-7) Jerusalem's walls rebuilt under Nehemiah
  - i. Jerusalem's condition and Nehemiah's prayer – 1
  - ii. Nehemiah's inspection of the walls – 2
  - iii. Repairs start – 3
  - iv. Work is hampered by opposition – 4-6a
  - v. Walls are completed – 6b
  - vi. Genealogy to register the people – 7
2. (8-10) The covenant renewed under Ezra
  - i. The reading of the law & the peoples response – 8
  - ii. The people's penitence & worship – 9
  - iii. Recommitment to the covenant – 10
3. (11-13) Reformation of the nation
  - i. Repopulation of Jerusalem and other cities – 11
  - ii. Identification of Priest and Levites – 12a
  - iii. Celebration of the Wall – 12b
  - iv. Reforms regarding non-Jews, priests, Sabbath, & marriage – 13

## C. Lessons Learned

1. Reconciling to God means reconciling to God's word
  - i. **Ne 8; Jn 14:15; 15:14**
2. Use your influence for God's glory
  - i. Nehemiah use his to get to Jerusalem to help his brethren.
  - ii. Esther to save her people, God's people.
  - iii. Paul with Philemon about Onesimus.
  - iv. Everyone has some influence on someone, use it for good.

## III Esther

### A. Name + History

1. Named after the Jewish Queen of Persia.
2. Book is set during a ten year period of the reign of Xerxes I at his palace in his capital city of Shushan.
3. These events are sandwiched between the 6th and 7th chapters of Ezra about 483-473 B.C.

### B. Outline

1. (1-3) Threatening circumstances for God's people
  - i. Vashti deposed – 1
  - ii. Esther selected – 2
  - iii. Haman's evil decree (kill all Jews) – 3
2. (4-10) The threatening circumstances thwarted
  - i. Mordecai appeals to Esther – 4
  - ii. Esther's banquet, Haman's gallows constructed, and Mordecai honored – 5-6
  - iii. Haman hung – 7
  - iv. Mordecia's counter decree issued (allow Jews fight back) – 8
  - v. The decree executed; Purim instigated – 9
  - vi. Mordecai's fame – 10

# Old Testament Overview

---

## C. Lessons Learned

1. It takes courage to do what is right (Vashti & Esther before king)
  - i. **Dt 31:6** "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."
  - ii. **Ps 27:14** "Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!"
  - iii. **Ac 28:15** "And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage."
2. Providence is real
  - i. God does not have to do a miracle to make sure His promises are fulfilled.
  - ii. **Gn 50:20** "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."
  - iii. **Es 4:14** "For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"
  - iv. **Pm 15** "For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, that you might receive him forever"
  - v. **Ro 8:28** "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

## CONCLUSION

1. How wonderful is our God to give us so many accounts and books to learn from. We truly have a great and awesome God.
2. Invitation
  - a. God's Plan of Salvation
    - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
    - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
    - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
    - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
    - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
    - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**