



WELCOME TO EZRA!

The exile is over. After seventy years in Babylon, God begins bringing His people home. The temple has been destroyed. Jerusalem lies in ruins. Generations have grown up far from the land God promised their ancestors. Yet God has not forgotten His purposes nor has he forgotten His people.

The book of Ezra answers the question, "What does it look like to return to God after a season of exile?"

The book begins with King Cyrus issuing a decree that allows God's people to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. What follows is a story of courage, opposition, worship, repentance, and spiritual renewal.

One of the key verses in the book comes from Ezra's own testimony:

Now Ezra had determined in his heart to study the law of the Lord, obey it, and teach its statutes and ordinances in Israel.

— Ezra 7:10 (CSB)

As you read, look for these themes:

- God's ability to use everything at His disposal to advance His purposes in the Earth.
- God's faithfulness to His promises
- The courage required to obey God
- The importance of worship and holiness
- The reality of opposition to God's work
- The power of Scripture to renew God's people
- The role of spiritual leadership
- God's ability to rebuild what has been broken

Ultimately, Ezra points beyond itself.

The rebuilt temple points forward to Jesus, the true Temple. The return from exile points toward the greater restoration that Christ offers us. The longing for renewal points toward the new creation where God's people will dwell with Him forever.

What follows is a 3-week, 21-day reading guide designed to help you explore the book of Ezra and connect its message to everyday life. As always, if you have questions, comments concerns, or just want to connect, don't hesitate to reach out.

WEEK ONE

Day 1 — God Keeps His Promises

Read: Ezra 1, Jeremiah 29:10–14

Theme: The God who remembers

Reflection: The return from exile begins because God remembers His promise. Generations may pass, kingdoms may rise and fall, but God's word never fails.

Ask Yourself: What promise of God do I need to trust today?

Day 2 — Stirred Hearts

Read: Ezra 2

Theme: Responding to God's call

Reflection: Thousands leave comfort and familiarity behind to follow God's invitation. Restoration often requires leaving something behind before receiving what God has ahead.

Ask Yourself: Where is God asking me to step out in faith?

Day 3 — Worship First

Read: Ezra 3:1–7, Psalm 122

Theme: Putting God at the center

Reflection: Before walls are rebuilt or homes are established, the altar is restored. God's people prioritize worship before anything else.

Ask Yourself: What comes first in my life when I start something new?

Day 4 — Foundations

Read: Ezra 3:8–13, 1 Corinthians 3:10–15

Theme: Rebuilding what was lost

Reflection: Some celebrate while others weep as the temple foundation is laid. Restoration often includes both joy and grief.

Ask Yourself: What old loss might God be rebuilding in my life?

Day 5 — Resistance Appears

Read: Ezra 4:1–5, Ephesians 6:10–18

Theme: Opposition to God's work

Reflection: The moment rebuilding begins, opposition follows. Resistance is not always evidence that we're on the wrong path.

Ask Yourself: How do I respond when obedience becomes difficult?

Day 6 — Delays and Discouragement

Read: Ezra 4:6–24

Theme: Persevering through setbacks

Reflection: The work stops for years. God's people experience delays, confusion, and frustration. Yet God's plans remain intact.

Ask Yourself: Where am I tempted to quit because progress feels slow?

Day 7 — When God Seems Silent

Read: Psalm 13, Psalm 126

Theme: Trusting during waiting seasons

Reflection: The pause in rebuilding reminds us that faith often grows during seasons when little appears to be happening.

Ask Yourself: How am I handling the waiting seasons of life?

WEEK TWO

Day 8 — A Prophetic Wake-Up Call

Read: Ezra 5:1–5, Haggai 1

Theme: Renewed obedience

Reflection: God sends prophets to awaken His people. Sometimes the greatest obstacle is not opposition but distraction.

Ask Yourself: What might God be calling me back to?

Day 9 — Courage to Continue

Read: Ezra 5:6–17

Theme: Faithful under scrutiny

Reflection: The leaders continue working even while their actions are being investigated. Obedience is often costly.

Ask Yourself: Would I continue obeying God if others questioned my decisions?

Day 10 — The Decree Rediscovered

Read: Ezra 6:1–12

Theme: God's sovereign hand

Reflection: What looked like a threat becomes a blessing. God can use governments, circumstances, and unlikely people to accomplish His purposes.

Ask Yourself: Where have I underestimated God's ability to work behind the scenes?

Day 11 — The Temple Completed

Read: Ezra 6:13–18

Theme: Finishing well

Reflection: After years of struggle, the temple is completed. Faithfulness often requires endurance far more than talent.

Ask Yourself: What has God called me to finish?

Day 12 — Celebration and Deliverance

Read: Ezra 6:19–22, Luke 22:14–20

Theme: Remembering God's salvation

Reflection: The people celebrate Passover because they remember what God has done. Gratitude fuels faithfulness.

Ask Yourself: What has God done that I need to remember more often?

Day 13 — Ezra Arrives

Read: Ezra 7:1–10

Theme: A life shaped by Scripture

Reflection: Ezra studies God's Word, obeys it, and teaches it. Spiritual influence begins with personal transformation.

Ask Yourself: Which comes more naturally to me—learning, obeying, or teaching?

Day 14 — Favor and Provision

Read: Ezra 7:11–28

Theme: The gracious hand of God

Reflection: Ezra repeatedly attributes success to God's hand upon him. God's favor is not something we earn but something we receive.

Ask Yourself: Where have I seen God's hand at work recently?

WEEK THREE

Day 15 — A Risky Journey

Read: Ezra 8:1–20

Theme: Trusting God on the road

Reflection: The journey to Jerusalem is dangerous, but God is leading His people forward.

Ask Yourself: What step of faith feels risky right now?

Day 16 — Fasting Before Moving Forward

Read: Ezra 8:21–30

Theme: Dependence on God

Reflection: Before traveling, Ezra calls for prayer and fasting. Strength comes from seeking God before facing challenges.

Ask Yourself: Do I seek God's help first or after I've exhausted my own resources?

Day 17 — Faithful Stewardship

Read: Ezra 8:31–36, Matthew 25:14–30

Theme: Handling God's gifts well

Reflection: The treasures entrusted to the people are delivered safely because they are handled carefully and responsibly.

Ask Yourself: How am I stewarding what God has entrusted to me?

Day 18 — The Reality of Sin

Read: Ezra 9:1–4

Theme: Taking holiness seriously

Reflection: Ezra is devastated by the people's compromise. He understands that outward rebuilding means little without inward faithfulness.

Ask Yourself: Am I more troubled by sin in my life or more likely to excuse it?

Day 19 — A Prayer of Repentance

Read: Ezra 9:5–15, Psalm 51

Theme: Honest confession

Reflection: Ezra confesses sins he did not personally commit because he identifies deeply with God's people.

Ask Yourself: When was the last time I honestly confessed my sin before God?

Day 20 — Repentance Leads to Action

Read: Ezra 10:1–17

Theme: Turning back to God

Reflection: Genuine repentance involves more than feeling sorry. It produces real change.

Ask Yourself: Is there an area where my repentance needs action?

Day 21 — A Restored People

Read: Ezra 10:18–44, Revelation 21:1–5

Theme: God's ongoing work of restoration

Reflection: Ezra ends with unfinished tension, reminding us that restoration is often a process. Yet God's commitment to His people remains unchanged.

Ask Yourself: Where is God still restoring and rebuilding my life?