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# Lesson 158

## Ezra and the Jewish Restoration

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### Story Elements

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Text:</b> Ezra 1-10</li><li>• <b>Setting:</b> circa 538 - 458 BC, in Babylon and Jerusalem</li><li>• <b>Main Characters:</b> God, Ezra, Jeshua, and Zerubbabel</li><li>• <b>Plot:</b> During the Persian Empire, many Jews return from exile and rebuild the temple.</li><li>• <b>Key word(s):</b> "the children of the _____"</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Climax:</b> Ezra 10:1 <i>Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore.</i></li></ul> |
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### Resettling the Land

1. (1:1-2-70) In the first year of the reign of Cyrus, he made a decree that the temple of God should be rebuilt and that any Jewish exiles who desired may return to their homeland. This decree was the fulfillment of the prophecy of \_\_\_\_\_. (cf Jer. 25:12; 29:10)
2. Zerubbabel, a descendant of \_\_\_\_\_, and Jeshua the high priest, were the Jewish-recognized leaders of the first wave of resettlement. In all, about 50,000 people returned with Zerubbabel.

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### Rebuilding the Temple

3. In the seventy years between Jerusalem's destruction and resettlement, the land had been repopulated by pagan peoples from Babylon and Assyria. These outsiders posed a spiritual threat to the Jews, and their presence in the land necessitated a revival of the Levitical system to protect the Hebrews from further spiritual degradation. (cf. 3:3)
  - (a) (3:1-7) After reestablishing their homes, the Jews focused on rebuilding the \_\_\_\_\_ so that the sacrificial system could begin again.
  - (b) In the seventh month (Sep./Oct.) the Feast of \_\_\_\_\_ was celebrated.
4. (3:8-13) Two years after the initial resettlement, efforts to rebuild the temple itself began. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Jeshua, the foundation was laid. The people of Jerusalem celebrated with joyful singing and shouts of praise, but the old men wept. Why do you think they wept? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. (4:1-3) The neighboring people (the Samaritans) initially wanted to help the Jews rebuild the temple, claiming to have been faithful followers of Jehovah. But Zerubbabel and Jeshua rejected their offer because they knew that \_\_\_\_\_ would creep in and defile the true worship of God.
  - (a) (4:4-23) From that point on, the Jews faced continual opposition from the Samaritans as they tried to rebuild the temple. The Samaritans would correspond with the Persian throne and accuse the Jewish nation of rebelling against the emperor by building the temple.
  - (b) (5:1-2) For 16 years work on the temple ceased. Construction restarted because of the preaching of the prophets \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

6. (6:13-22) The second temple, also known as \_\_\_\_\_ temple, was finished about 515 BC.

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## Reforming the People

7. (6:22) There is a 59-year gap between the finishing of the temple and Ezra's journey to Jerusalem. During this time, the story of \_\_\_\_\_ takes place, and a new national holiday, Purim, is instituted by the Jews.
8. (7:1-28) Ezra, a scribe skilled in the Law of Moses, led a second group of settlers from captivity to Judah. Ezra was sent with royal sanctions and supplies to educate the people of Jerusalem in the ways of their God.
- (a) (8:15-20) As Ezra's group of returning exiles gathered at \_\_\_\_\_ (a channel of the Euphrates) in preparation for their return to Jerusalem, Levites were especially sought for serving the temple. (8:21-23)
- (b) Instead of requesting military protection for the long trip to Jerusalem, Ezra told the king that God would watch over the returning exiles. They \_\_\_\_\_ and prayed for God to protect them - and God answered their prayers. (8:21-23; cf Psalm 20:7).
9. (9:1-15) After settling in at Jerusalem, Ezra learned of rampant intermarriage between the Jews and surrounding peoples.
- (a) Ezra knew this was the very compromise that caused Israel's \_\_\_\_\_ (Deut. 7:1-5). Ezra fell to his face, rent his clothes, and prayed fervently before the temple that God would have mercy on his sinful nation.
- (b) (10:1-17) Ezra's passionate confession attracted not attention. The other leaders were so convicted of their disobedience in marrying pagan wives that they covenanted to \_\_\_\_\_. Such measures were harsh, but Ezra knew that the spiritual welfare of the nation was in jeopardy. (cf. 9:14-15)

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## Application

10. When Ezra heard of the sinful marriages of his fellow Israelites, he said, *"I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished."* Matthew Henry notes that, "Those that tremble at the word of God cannot but \_\_\_\_\_ at the sins of men, by which the law of God is broken and his wrath and curse are incurred."<sup>1</sup>

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Answer Key:** Key word(s): "captivity" • 1. Jeremiah • 2. David • 3. a) altar; b) tabernacles • 4. The old men remembered the glory of the old temple, but the young men had nothing to compare it to, so they felt no sorrow. • 5. syncretism; b) Haggai, Zechariah • 6. Zerubbabel • 7. Esther • 8. a) Ahava; b) fasted • 9. a) apostasy; b) put them away. • 10. tremble

**How to use this worksheet for personal Bible study:** (1) Read the Bible passage given in the **Story Elements** section. (2) Read through the worksheet and try to fill in the blanks without looking at the **Answer Key**. (3) Check your answers with the key and make the necessary corrections. Keep in mind that some answers are a matter of opinion, and often more than one answer is correct. (4) Write down your own thoughts, applications, and questions for further study in the **Notes** section.

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<sup>1</sup> Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994. Print.