

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

The Restoration Books

Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther

Historical Books

The Theocratic Books	The Monarchical Books	The Restoration Books
Joshua	1 & 2 Samuel	Ezra
Judges	1 & 2 Kings	Nehemiah
Ruth	1 & 2 Chronicles	Esther

Chronology of
Ezra, Nehemiah & Esther

<i>1st Return under Zerubbabel</i>	<i>Events of the book of Esther</i>	<i>2nd Return under Ezra</i>	<i>3rd Return under Nehemiah</i>
Ezra 1-6	Book of Esther	Ezra 7-10	Book of Nehemiah
537-516 B.C.	473 B.C.	458-457 B.C.	437 B.C.

<i>RETURN</i>	<i>FIRST</i>	<i>SECOND</i>	<i>THIRD</i>
<i>Reference</i>	Ezra 1-6	Ezra 7-10	Nehemiah 1-13
<i>Date</i>	538 B.C.	458 B.C.	444 B.C.
<i>Leaders</i>	Sheshbazzar Zerubbabel	Ezra	Nehemiah
<i>Persian King</i>	Cyrus	Artaxerxes Longimanus	
<i>Elements of the Decree</i>	As many as wished could return & rebuild Temple.	As many as wished could return & complete the Temple. Allowed to have own civil magistrates.	Allowed to rebuild the walls around the city.
<i>Related Events</i>	Work begun but then halted until 516 B.C.	Problems with inter-marriage	Wall rebuilt in 52 days.
<i>Prophets</i>	Zechariah Haggai		Malachi

EZRA

Returning from Exile and Rebuilding

Outline

- 1. The 1st Return from Exile and Rebuilding of the Temple: Ezra 1-6**
 - A. The 1st return from exile under Sheshbazzar: Ezra 1**
 - B. List of returned exiles: Ezra 2**
 - C. The rebuilding of the temple planned and thwarted: Ezra 3-4**
 - D. Restoration of the temple: Ezra 5-6**
- 2. Ezra's Return; Mission and Results: Ezra 7-10**
 - A. The 2nd Return from Exile: Ezra 7-8**
 - B. Ezra's Action over mixed marriage: Ezra 9-10**

EZRA

1	1st Return under Sheshbazzar & Zerubbabel	Return from Babylon	The Edict of Cyrus
2			The Exiles who returned
3		Rebuilding of the Temple	Construction begun
4			Construction opposed
5			Construction delayed
6			Construction completed
7	2nd Return under Ezra	Return from Babylon	Decree of Artaxerxes
8			The Journey
9		Restoration of the People	Problem of mixed marriages
10			Solution to the problem

First Group Returns (1-6)

- Zerubbabel and Jeshua led the first group—42,360 Jews.
- Returned home with the temple vessels taken by Nebuchadnezzar.
- First built an altar to worship God.
- Observed the Feast of Tabernacles.
- Began the task of rebuilding the temple.

1st Return “Cont’d”

The Temple Foundation

- Some shouted praises; the older ones wept.
- Samaritans offered to help with the rebuilding; the offer was refused.
- Samaritans worked to stop the rebuilding project.
- Counselors were sent to the Persian courts to halt the work.
- Work stopped under reign of King Ahasuerus.

1st Return “Cont’d”

Work Halted Then Continued

- The temple work was halted for ten years.
- Prophets Haggai and Zechariah urged the people to continue.
- Persian governor Tattenai ordered a check of whether the work was authorized.
- Rebuilt with part of the Persian royal treasury.
- Temple rebuilt—Passover kept for the first time since captivity.

The Second Group Arrives (7-10)

- 60 years later Ezra led the second group back.
- Ezra is priest and scribe. Has risen to a high position under King Artaxerxes.
- King sent money to be used in offering sacrifices, or for other things.
- 1500 returned, including 240 Levites for the temple service.
- They delivered money to the temple officials.

2nd Return “Cont’d”

Sin in the Camp!

- Ezra was informed that the people had intermarried.
- Even temple ministers had violated God’s law!
- Ezra was appalled. He went into deep mourning.
- At evening, he stood up and prayed before the people.
- Confessed Israel’s sins that had led to the captivity.

2nd Return “Cont’d”

Repentance Demanded

- People were moved to tears by their conduct.
- Decided to put away their foreign wives and children.
- Ezra publicly charged them with this sin
- Appointed officers to make sure the foreign wives were put away.
- Within ten days, all the women had been put away, including the ones who had borne children.

Lessons From Ezra

1. Results of neglecting to study and obey God's word.

- **Failure to heed led to captivity.**
- **Lack of knowledge led to destruction.**
- **Drifted into apostasy.**
- **Spiritual growth requires study.**

Lessons From Ezra

2. Marrying outside of God's family.

- Led to much grief and heartache
- The same problem caused Solomon to fall.
- Two people going in two different directions.
- Additional hardships.

Lessons From Ezra

3. The power of preaching and true repentance.

- **Three preachers helped to preserve the faithful remnant.**
- **Getting the law back into their hearts.**
- **Must preach the truth, and only true repentance can bring peace and security.**

Lessons From Ezra

4. The sorrow that sin always brings.

- **Ezra confessed their sins.**
- **Ashamed of their conduct—no excuses!**
- **Their only hope was in returning to God's ways.**

Lessons From Ezra

5. Divine providence in the book of Ezra.

- Jeremiah foretold the 70-year captivity. {*Jere.25:12*}
- Isaiah had named Cyrus {*Isa.44:28*}
- Persian rulers were more humane.
- Loyal work of people such as Daniel, Esther, and Nehemiah.

NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah-Name means
"The consolation of god"

*3rd Return from Exile
and
Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem*

Overview of Nehemiah (3rd Return from Exile)

1:1-11	2:1-10	2:11-20	3:1 - 6:19	7:1-73	8:1 - 12:47	13:1-31
Nehemiah talks to God	Nehemiah talks to the King	The work planned	The work completed	Number of the people	Covenant renewal	Further reforms
Conception			Completion	Consecration		
Work				Worship		
Rebuilding the Wall				Revival of the People		
Cupbearer of the King		Builder of the Wall		Governor of the People		

Outline

A. Nehemiah's Mission (**Rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem**): Neh 1.1-7.73a

1. Nehemiah hears news from Jerusalem: Neh 1.1-4
2. Nehemiah's prayer: Neh 1.5-11
3. Nehemiah receives permission to visit Jerusalem: Neh 2.1-8
4. Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem, inspects its walls, and gains assent to his proposals: Neh 2.9-20

Outline “Cont’d”

5. The rebuilding of the wall: Neh 3
6. Opposition from the Samaritans: Neh 4
7. Economic difficulties and Nehemiah's solution:
Neh 5.1-13
8. Nehemiah's unselfishness as governor: Neh 5.14-
19
9. In spite of traps for Nehemiah, the wall is
finished: Neh 6
10. Preparations for the peopling of Jerusalem:
Neh 7.1-73a

Outline "cont'd"

B. Ezra's Activity: Neh 7.73b-9.37

- 1. Ezra's reading of the law: Neh 7.73b-8.12**
- 2. Celebration of the Festival of Booths: Neh 8.13-18**
- 3. A day of repentance and its penitential psalm: Neh 9.1-37**

C. Nehemiah's Community: Neh 9.38-13.31

- 1. The pledge of reform: Neh 9.38-10.39**
- 2. The population of Jerusalem and Judah: Neh 11**
- 3. The clergy of the post-exilic community: Neh 12.1-26**
- 4. The dedication of the wall: Neh 12.27-43**
- 5. An ideal community: Neh 12.44-13.3**
- 6. Reforms during Nehemiah's second governorship: Neh 13.4-31**

Background

- Nehemiah was cupbearer for Artaxerxes I
- 20th reign in 444 B.C.
- His brother, Hanani, returned from Jerusalem and declared the walls broken down and the city in distress.
- For four months, this report weighed heavily on Nehemiah's heart, making him sad
- Requested a leave of absence to rebuild the walls in Jerusalem

Plans for the Work

- **Nehemiah went to Jerusalem**
- **Was there for three days personally surveying the walls**
- **He told them why he had come**
- **He challenged the people to help rebuild the walls**
- **Each family was assigned a section of the wall to rebuild.**

Nehemiah-a man of god

- Nehemiah was cupbearer to the king, a position of influence and honor. He lived in the palace, and his life was one of physical ease. Yet, he was a man who maintained a passion for the truth of God and Torah and therefore embodied four characteristics that made him Gods man for the hour (Chapter 1)

FOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF NEHEMIAH

- **COMPASSION:** showed in 1:2-4 and all his prayer of chapter 1
- **COURAGE:** Chapter 2
- **CONFIDENCE:** in God that He is the source of success.
- **COOPERATION:** Extra-ordinary team builder

ESTHER

The Providence of God's Deliverance

Cast of Characters

- **Esther (also known as *Hadassah*).**
- **Ahasuerus: Xerxes**
- **Mordecai & Haman**

The Narrative

- A new queen
- Mordecai saves the king
- Haman's jealousy
- A plan for ethnic cleansing
- Plea to Esther
- Haman's plan
- The king's plan
- Esther's revelation
- The Jewish deliverance

Outline of Esther

1:1 - 2:18	2:19-23	3:1-15	4:1 - 7:10	8:1 - 9:17	9:18-32	10:1-3
Esther becomes Queen	Mordecai saves the King's Life	Haman plots against Jews	Esther acts to deliver her people	Jews defend themselves	Jews celebrate	Mordecai rewarded
Esther & Mordecai in the Persian Court		Trouble for the Jews		Victory for the Jews	Esther & Mordecai in the Persian Court	

Background

- **Third year of the reign of King Ahasuerus (Persia)**
- **Six-month banquet for his army and officers**
- **Followed by a seven-day banquet for all in the capital--Shushan**
- **After much drinking, the king commanded Queen Vashti to come and parade her beauty**
- **Vashti refused to obey the king's command!**

Background

- The king became enraged; he sought counsel from his wise men.
- They said the queen must set an example for the other wives. Therefore, Queen Vashti should be removed!
- Beautiful virgins were brought to the king's harem so he could choose a new queen.
- One year of preparation for each maiden
- Each spent one night with the king.
- If not called again by the king, she spent the rest of her life in a different harem.

Esther Is Chosen

- A Jewess who lived with her cousin, Mordecai
- The king chose her to be the new queen.
- Esther kept her nationality a secret.
- One day, Mordecai overheard two men plotting to assassinate the king.
- He told Esther, and she gave the message to the king's officials.
- The two men were hanged, and the event was recorded in the king's chronicles.

Haman

- Ahasuerus made Haman second in command—all were to bow and pay him homage.
- Mordecai refused to bow before Haman.
- Haman became so angry, he determined to destroy all the Jews in the king's provinces.
- Haman told the king the Jews did not follow his law. He offered 10,000 talents of silver to enrich the king's treasury if he would sign a decree to put all Jews to death.
- The decree was determined and stamped with the king's signet ring.

Mordecai's Request

- Mordecai went into mourning.
- A copy of the edict was given to Queen Esther.
- Mordecai asked Esther to go to the king and intercede for her people.
- At first, fearful of being put to death, she was reluctant.
- *“Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!” {Esther 4:16}*

Golden Scepter

- When Esther went before the king, he held out his scepter.
- Esther requested that the king and Haman attend a banquet for the king.
- When asked what she desired, she said that she would tell them tomorrow at another special banquet for the king and Haman.
- Haman was elated, but seeing Mordecai at the king's gate caused him to lose his joy.
- Intending to hand Mordecai the next day, Haman commanded that a gallows 75 feet high be built!

Revealing the plot

Esther Reveals the Plot (7:4 - 6)

Haman Is Hanged on His Own Gallows (7: 9-10)

Mordecai Is Promoted (8:2)

The King's New Edict (8:11)

Lessons From Esther

❖ Esther 1:10-11

- Queen Vashti's modesty
- Refused to parade before drunken, lustful men
- A challenge to learn the beauty of holiness

❖ Esther 4:16

- Always be ready to serve.
- Unwavering dedication to God
- Be willing to risk your own life.

❖ Esther 4:14

- God's sovereignty
- God's will always to be done
- Esther and Mordecai's faith helped deliver God's people.

A Picture of Christ

The Story

Esther was the virgin bride who married the king.

Haman plotted against Mordecai and against all the Jews.

Esther agrees to intercede after the people have fasted for three days.

The Picture

The church is the spotless bride who marries the King

Satan has set himself against Christ and against all men

Christ interceded on our behalf and then was in the grave three days.

A Type of Christ

The Story

Haman met his end on the gallows he had intended for Modecai.

The Picture

Christ intentionally went to the cross that was prepared for us.

In both cases, that which looked like certain death and defeat was turned into ultimate victory.