

# Finishing Well

Lesson #17

Ezra: Type Of Jesus Christ

April 26, 2023

## Important Items Linked with the Watergate: Significance of 1<sup>st</sup> Day of the Month The Nethinim

God works in a systematic and orderly way. Through the great Persian king, Cyrus, He fulfilled His promise that the Jews could return to their homeland after 70 years in captivity.

Next God raised up Zerubbabel to rebuild the literal, physical temple and Joshua to serve the spiritual needs of the people.

- Type of Jesus Christ as King & Priest leading the remnant back into their promised land after the 7-year Tribulation Period. Christ's mission will be fully accomplished.

The altar and the foundation of God's Temple lay in neglect for 16 years while the Jews gave attention to their homes and their lives. They forgot God's purpose for stirring their hearts to return to Jerusalem was to Build His Temple and Restore True Worship.

Haggai's initial message on Aug. 29<sup>th</sup>, 520 BC, admonished the people to "consider their ways," examine their priorities and begin building the Temple of the LORD.

His initial message included 4 admonitions:

Put God First      Believe His Promises      Honor God's Name      Obey His Commands

Response: ALL the remnant of the people obeyed God's commands.

Rebuilding began on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

Haggai's 2<sup>nd</sup> sermon [Haggai 2:1-9] addressed their discouragement. LOOK UP

It was delivered on October 20, 520 BC on the last day of the Feast Of Tabernacles, a time of great celebration of God's current harvest, His provision for the children of Israel during their exodus from Egypt and it also looked forward to the Millennial reign of their Messiah.

His encouragement to Keep The Work Going included the assurance of:

God's Presence, His unchangeable Covenant [Word], God's Promises and God's Provision.

About a 60 year Gap Between Ezra 6 & Ezra 7: Insert the Book of Esther. Esther becomes Queen. Her marriage gave the Jews prestige at Persian court which effected Ezra's return and Nehemiah's position. Preservation of the Jews - Takes place in Shushan or Persia.

Ezra 1-6	Esther	Ezra 7-10		Nehemiah
Restoration under Zerubbabel	58 year gap	Reformation under Ezra	13 year gap	Reconstruction under Nehemiah
538-515 B.C.		457 B.C.		444-425 B.C
Temple		People		Walls
Prophets: Haggai & Zechariah		–		Prophet: Malachi
1 <sup>st</sup> return (about 50,000 or 2%)		2 <sup>nd</sup> return (about 2,000)		3 <sup>rd</sup> return

Nearly 80 years had passed since group #1 under Zerubbabel returned to Jerusalem.

The Jewish remnant was struggling under difficult circumstances.

Wiersbe: When God wants to judge a nation, He sends them inferior leaders [Isa. 3:1-8];

but when He wants to bless them, He sends them men like Ezra.

Finally, God raised up Ezra [commissioned by King Artaxerxes of Persia, 464-423 BC] to lead a second group of refugees from Babylon to Judah:

1. Bring financial and spiritual support to the work in Jerusalem.
2. His teaching and leadership will make a difference in the people and spark a revival.

The Secret of Ezra's Success: "The Good Hand Of The LORD Was Upon Me." [6x in Ezra 7 & 8]

Same Principle: John 15:5 Without Me You Can Do Nothing.

Ezra 7:1a, 6 Now after these things [book of Esther]... <sup>6</sup> This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him.

- Ezra's careful study of the Scriptures had increased his faith [Rom. 10:17] and helped him understand God's plans for the Jewish remnant. He prayed for God to intervene.
- God called Ezra to go to Jerusalem to be used as instrument in His plans.
- He gave Ezra the boldness to approach the king and gave the king a desire to cooperate with Ezra's request. [II Tim. 1:7]

<sup>9</sup> For upon the first day of the first month [Nisan 1; New Moon] began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month [New Moon] came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him.

<sup>10</sup> For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

- When you recall that Ezra was born in Babylon, you can better appreciate his achievement as a skilled student of the Jewish Scriptures.
- Prepared heart, devoted to study God's Word.

Ps. 119:97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

Wiersbe: "If our knowledge of the truth doesn't result in obedience, then we end up with a big head instead of a burning heart.

Without diligent, personal study there is nothing fresh to apply or proclaim.

Without striving to personally apply the Word and grow in sanctification, proclamation will lack the fire of conviction. To focus on teaching alone, without conviction or practice behind it, is to substitute the form of the message for its substance.

Some go right from studying to teaching without having the Word of God really transform their lives. It goes from the mind to the mouth without ever passing through the heart.

- But this sequence - seek, do and teach - is a powerful one."

II Tim. 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

The 3 qualities in Ezra 7:10 are paralleled in Matt. 13:52 Then said he unto them, Therefore, every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

- Ezra was a scribe who studied the Word.
- He was a disciple who obeyed and practiced the Word.
- He was a householder who shared the Word with others.
- He was passionate for the purity of God's people, seeking to hallow God's name.

Gal. 4:19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

Ezra 7:12-13 Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time.

- Artaxerxes appointed Ezra as the leader of the group and also the king's agent in Judah.

<sup>13</sup> I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.

- ~1700 will join Ezra to help restore the city and the spiritual restoration of the people.
- Their arrival and influence will spark a revival in Jerusalem.
- Consider: ~6 decades had passed since the completion of the Temple.

God had told the struggling remnant in Jerusalem, "The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine."

Ezra 7:15-28 1. God opens the royal treasury and provides money to buy sacrifices to be offered at the Temple in Jerusalem.

2. The king commanded his officers beyond the river to give the Jews money out of the local royal treasury. A hundred talents of silver would be nearly four tons of silver!
3. Artaxerxes gave Ezra the remaining sacred articles from the original temple.
4. He allowed Ezra to receive gifts from the Jews who remained in Babylon and anyone else who wanted to contribute.
5. Ezra was given everything he needed to re-establish temple worship in Jerusalem, including sacrifices of atonement.
6. The King exempted the Jewish priests, Levites and temple servants from paying taxes or being conscripted for special duty to the empire.
7. He gave Ezra extensive authority to lead this effort, levy taxes, appoint judges, enforce the law and teach God's law and lead the people of Israel.

Ezra 7:26 And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not.

Ezra's Praise: <sup>27</sup>Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem:

<sup>28</sup> And hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened as the hand of the LORD my God was upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me.

## Ezra 8:15-21

After about a week of travel, the group stopped at the River Ahava for 3 days before proceeding. Ezra took inventory of the people and discovered: There are no Levites among us.

- Ezra sent a committee of 11 men back to Babylon to recruit some Levites.
- 38 Levites responded and 220 temple servants, Nethinim.
- Ezra's whole approach to this journey was spiritual. Spiritual purity & holiness
- Ezra called for 3 days of fasting and prayer for God's protection.

Before he arrived at Jerusalem, Ezra proclaimed a fast and beseeched God for protection and mercy. The Gentile peoples around them were very hostile, and Ezra said that he "was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way; Since we had told the king, "The hand of our God is for good upon all that seek Him, and the power of His wrath is against all that forsake Him." So we fasted and besought our God for this, and He listened to our entreaty." [Ezra 8:22-23]

Thus Ezra, like Christ, does not require earthly means of accomplishing success and trusts in God to protect His people.

Wiersbe: Undoubtedly the Lord gave Ezra special faith for this journey because He knew that Ezra's desire was only to glorify God. When you consider the factors involved in this expedition, you can see what great faith Ezra possessed. Here were several thousand Jews, inexperienced in travel and warfare, carrying a fortune in gold and silver, led by a scholar, not a soldier, and planning to travel through dangerous territory that was infested with brigands, and yet their leader didn't want an army to protect them! He deserves the "Great Faith Award."

Shortly after Ezra and the people with him arrived in Jerusalem, he commenced his priestly duties of putting affairs in order. He was shocked to discover that his people had intermingled with the pagan nations that surrounded Jerusalem.

Many of the priests had gone out to make a living because the temple was not supported sufficiently to allow them to serve full time. Some of them had even taken wives of the pagan nations, as had many other Jewish citizens.

Ezra 9:2 For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

Intermarriage with people from some of the surrounding nations was expressly forbidden by the Lord because it led to idolatry [Deut. 7:1-5]. Idolatry had led to the downfall of the Israelite nation, undermined the power of God among them and dispersed and separated them into 2 nations, but even the horrors of defeat and exile for 70 years had not taught the people their lesson.

Consider: The flesh never changes. No matter how long you walk in the Spirit, you will never get to the place where you cannot revert to the worst you ever were if you depart from dependence upon the Spirit of God.

- When they intermingled, they lost sight of God's purpose for them.

Isa. 66:2b but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word.

Until God's people show respect for God & His Word, the Spirit of God cannot work in mighty power as He longs to do; we hinder God's work in us in our behalf.

Ezra 9:3-4 And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard and sat down astonished. <sup>4</sup> Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.

➤ appalled = to be shocked, horrified, astonished, desolate

Ezra Had a Heart For Holiness: Stunned and immediately began to mourn over this situation.

1. He tore his garments, pulled out his hair; sat in mourning for an entire day.
2. Ezra responded to the disobedience and rebellion of God's people by weeping over Jerusalem, just as Jesus would weep over Jerusalem's refusal to receive and welcome Him. Jesus weeps over rebellion and disobedience.
3. Their inheritance was allocated on the basis of their tribal lineage.
4. The preservation of the purity of the seed matters!
5. These people have kept genealogies to trace the line of descent from Adam & Eve who heard God's words about the seed of the woman who would bruise the serpent's head [Genesis 3:15] and thereby re-open the way to Eden.

Therefore, the concern to record the history of God's people is a concern to keep track of what God has done in the outworking of that ultimate purpose of God: to overcome evil and reopen the way to Eden, reopen the way to God's presence.

6. The promised Messiah was to come from the line of Judah [Gen. 49:10] and from the seed of David [II Sam. 7:1-17].
7. They must maintain racial purity. Not only would foreign wives lead them astray [Neh. 13:26-27], they would contaminate the seed. Divorce became necessary.

Ezra is passionate about the purity of Israel because he knows the world's desperate need for Israel's Messiah to accomplish redemption.

Ezra 9:6 At the time of the evening sacrifice he bowed down before God and offered a prayer of confession, in which he numbered himself among the transgressors:

And said, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.

Ezra 9:8 And now for a little space grace hath been shown from the LORD our God,

- to leave us a remnant to escape, and
- to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes,
- and give us a little reviving in our bondage.

- ❖ Notice, in the midst of reflections on the past, another forward-looking emphasis.
- ❖ The time references [God gives a "little relief" in our bondage] shows that relief has not come in its fullness. It's only temporary.
- ❖ In addition, the reference to a "a secure place," literally "a tent peg," is meant to connote a firm anchor of stability for the community. However, the notion also alludes to something that is transient since it probably refers to the nomadic practice of staking a tent. There is no final satisfaction here that these Israelite travelers have indeed arrived at their final destination, for this rebuilt temple is not the final temple.
- ❖ In the book of Ezra there is the recognition that believers are aliens and strangers here on earth: pilgrims pressing towards a heavenly city "whose architect and builder is God." [Heb 11:10].

Ezra 9:10 After all God had done for His people, they responded by disobeying His Word. "We are speechless." It becomes obvious the Jewish men were sinning against a flood of light. The religious practices of the Canaanites were unspeakably vile and the stench reached to heaven. God's law made it clear that Israel was to have NO association with these nations. Now over 100 Jewish men had taken the first step by marrying into their families. [Ezra 9:12]

1. How would this affect this future mixed generation of children when it came time to obey God and be a part of the covenant?

2. These Jewish men were sacrificing the future of the nation of Israel.

Ezra asked: "What shall we say after this?"  
Ezra 9:13-15 Behold, we are before you in our guilt,  
 for none can stand before you because of this."

- Guilt always shuts my mouth before God.

Ezra knew God could easily destroy the remnant and start again with another people, but He asked God to be gracious and forgiving.

As Ezra began to pray and weep at the altar, "a very great congregation of men and women and children" came together and they fell under conviction of sin.

Ezra 10:1b They too wept bitterly.

Note: This response was not something Ezra worked up in the people. He prayed it down. Their priests had offered a lamb on the altar, but Ezra gave the Lord a greater sacrifice. Ezra, along with some leaders, began to investigate the matter so cleansing could take place. Their investigation was completed in 3 months. They discovered over 100 offenders which included 27 priests, Levites, temple singers and gatekeepers [those who you expect to be models of obedience]. It was the 1<sup>st</sup> day of month 1, Nisan. [new beginning; restore; repair] God in His grace accepted their repentance and confession and granted them forgiveness.

Ezra: Hebrew priest, scribe, religious leader, and reformer who vitally influenced the Jews. Ezra charted the course, laid the groundwork for a greater reformer, a true and eternal Savior to come for his people. Ezra's effective ministry included teaching the Word of God, initiating reforms, restoring worship, and leading spiritual revival in Jerusalem.

He was an encouragement to God's people to magnify worship as their top priority, to emphasize the need for and use of God's Word as the only authoritative rule for living, and to be concerned about the image God's people show to the world.

Nothing must supersede worship of God, and obedience is not optional.

James Hamilton: The promise-based typological expectation that develops across the pages of the Old Testament was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus, and we can see points of contact between Jesus and key figures in the Old Testament.

### Ezra: A Type of Jesus Christ At His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming

#### 1. Led a remnant to Jerusalem.

God promised the people of Judah He would return them to Jerusalem after their 70-year Babylonian captivity to rebuild their city, rebuild the temple and restore proper worship. God similarly promises to return Judah and Israel to their ancestral homeland after the 7-year Tribulation Period. Jesus Christ will rebuild the city, rebuild the temple and restore proper worship. Many prophecies show that at Jesus Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, He will gather the descendants of Israel and Judah from the ends of the earth. [the remnant]

Isaiah 11:11-12 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

<sup>12</sup> And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Jer. 23:3-4, 7-8 And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

<sup>4</sup> And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

<sup>8</sup> But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

Ezekiel 39:25-29 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for My holy name;

<sup>26</sup> After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid.

<sup>27</sup> When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations;

<sup>28</sup> Then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land and have left none of them anymore there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

2. Ezra was sent to Jerusalem as a ruler and as a priest to establish pure worship.  
Jesus Christ will return on the Feast of Trumpets as a King and Priest who will establish pure worship in His Millennial Kingdom.

Walvoord: Christ as the world ruler of the millennial kingdom will rule from Jerusalem.

He will be the object of worship, and the universal instruction in Biblical truth as well as the many demonstrations of divine power and the abundant ministry of the Holy Spirit will foster a spiritual life on a world-wide scale unprecedented in the history of the world.

Isa. 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Haggai 2:14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

3. Ezra reinstated the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles.

This feast will be celebrated during the Millennial Kingdom.

Zech. 14:16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

4. Ezra set up religious instruction to teach God's ways and God's laws.

Jesus Christ Will Inaugurate A Time Of Instruction

Isa. 2:2-3 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

5. Ezra set up and appointed magistrates to judge and have authority over the people.

He appointed judges to enforce God's law.

Jesus Christ Will Appoint Some To Rule & Reign With Him In Different Capacities.

Isa. 9:7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Matt. 19:28 So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

I Cor. 6:2-3 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

Rev.20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Rev. 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Isa. 32:1 Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice.

Dan. 7:27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

II Tim. 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

Rev. 2:26 And he that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power [authority] over the nations:

Rev. 3:21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Note: There are promises to OT saints, the 12 Apostles, NT believers, Tribulation Martyrs

His prayer, which ranks with Nehemiah 9 and Daniel 9 as one of the great prayers of confession in the Bible, shows us the Godly reaction to sin:

- *The Godly reaction to sin is to recognize it from Scripture, to mourn over it, and to confess it without excuse to the God of mercy.*

Ezra's prayer is a model of confession with 4 elements.

- A. Confession acknowledges the absolute righteousness of God in all His dealings with us.
- B. Confession submits to God's righteous dealings without complaint or excuse.
- C. Confession agrees with God concerning His view of our sin.
- D. Confession casts the sinner on God's undeserved mercy, based on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

J. C. Ryle: "Christ is never fully valued, until sin is clearly seen"

- My first reaction to sin must be to see it clearly from the Scriptures.
- Then, realizing it put our Savior on the cross, I should mourn over it.
- I should confess it without excuse to the God of mercy, appropriating His cleansing for my conscience, that I might be renewed to serve Him in purity.

C. S. Lewis: "When a man is getting better, he understands more and more clearly the evil that is still in him. When a man is getting worse, he understands his own badness less and less"

As we grow in godliness, with Ezra we will react more strongly to our own sins and to the sins of God's people. We will dwell more consistently at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ, where God's mercy flows to repentant sinners.