

Sunday School Lesson

March 20, 2022

CELEBRATE PASSOVER LIBERATION

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Ezra 6:13-22

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Questions for Us Today

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When we endeavor to do the Lord's work, how should we handle opposition?

How do we respond after the Lord has blessed us mightily?

Sunday School Lesson Objectives

- 1. To better understand how God used Persian kings to enable the rebuilding of the temple.**
- 2. To consider how the Lord's prophets provided encouragement to the people.**
- 3. To review how the people reacted after the temple reconstruction was completed.**

Sunday School Lesson Segments

March 20, 2022

- 1. Points of Information: Ezra**
- 2. Other Individuals for Today's Lesson**
- 3. Lesson Context**
- 4. Lesson Text**

Points of Information – Ezra

Ezra, born into the priestly line of Aaron, was a great-grandson of Hilkiah, another noble priest.

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Since Jeremiah was a son of Hilkiah, Ezra was related to him as well.

Ezra's name means "God is my helper."

Points of Information – Ezra

Ezra performed a number of roles, in service to the Lord: Elder, scribe, priest, prophet, preacher, civic and spiritual leader.

Points of Information – Ezra

When Ezra stood in a pulpit and read (preached) God's Holy Word to the people, it was a model for our congregational worship. The people then stood in respect and reverence for the reading of the Law and they wept. Nehemiah 8:1-9.

Points of Information – Ezra

Along with the Books of Nehemiah and Esther, the Book of Ezra speaks of the time after the captivity [exile] of the Jews in Babylon – the post-exilic period.

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In the Jewish tradition, the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah are combined into one Book.

A significant portion of the Book of Ezra is written in the Aramaic language, and not just in Hebrew.

Other Individuals for Today's Lesson

1. Jeremiah

2. Zerubbabel

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3. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon

4. Kings Cyrus, Artaxerxes I and
Darius I of Persia

5. Haggai and Zechariah

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Context (Part 1)

In Chapter 1, Ezra detailed the original decree issued by King Cyrus of Persia and the resulting first wave of return to Jerusalem by the people of Israel.

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In Chapter 2, Ezra gave a census of those who returned in the first wave with Zerubbabel.

In Chapter 3, Ezra chronicled the rebuilding of the temple and the restoration of worship.

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Context (Part 2)

In Chapter 4, Ezra detailed the opposition to the rebuilding of the temple.

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In Chapter 5, Ezra told of how the prophets Haggai and Zechariah helped in the rebuilding of the temple with their own labor and by urging the people to press on.

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Context (Part 3)

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Now, in Chapter 6, Ezra has written about the discovery of the original decree issued by King Cyrus, leading to the firm order of King Darius for the rebuilding of the temple to continue without (further) interference.



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Ezra 6:13-22

Ezra 6:13 (NRSV)

Then, according to the word sent by King Darius, Tattenai, the governor of the province Beyond the River, Shetharbozenai, and their associates did with all diligence what King Darius had ordered.

Ezra 6:14-15

So the elders of the Jews built and prospered, through the prophesying of the prophet Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo. They finished their building by command of the God of Israel and by decree of Cyrus, Darius, and King Artaxerxes of Persia;

and this house was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

Ezra 6:16

The people of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the returned exiles, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy.

Ezra 6:17

They offered at the dedication of this house of God one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel, twelve male goats, according to the number of tribes of Israel.

Ezra 6:18

Then they set the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their courses for the service of God at Jerusalem, as it is written in the book of Moses.

Ezra 6:19

On the fourteenth day of the first month the returned exiles kept the Passover.

Ezra 6:20

For both the priests and the Levites had purified themselves; all of them were clean. So they killed the Passover lamb for all of the returned exiles, for their fellow priests, and for themselves.

Ezra 6:21

It was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile, and also by all who had joined them and separated themselves from the pollutions of the nations of the land to worship the Lord, the God of Israel.

Ezra 6:22

With joy they celebrated the festival of unleavened bread seven days; for the Lord had made them joyful, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, so that he aided them in the work on the house of God, the God of Israel.

Remember this:

- 1. God chooses whom He uses!**
- 2. We should work together on behalf of the will of the Lord!**
- 3. We should celebrate the goodness of God!**

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