

Life-Study of Ezra Summaries - Messages 1—5

The Need of a Return from Captivity

After Israel entered into the good land, they were not faithful to God. The kingdom of Israel became apostate; they forsook God and set up other worship centers in addition to the unique center at Jerusalem. At that time the city of Jerusalem was captured and was not returned to Israel until 1967. **Today we are in a situation that is typified by the situation at Ezra's time.** Some of us have come back already, and others are still on the way.

The book of Ezra is concerned with **the return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple**. Ezra, whose name means “help” or “helper” was a descendant of Aaron, a priest and a scribe skilled in the law of Moses. The book of Ezra stresses the return of the children of Israel from their captivity. This return is crucial in four points: **recovering the purpose of God's calling of them, recovering their oneness, recovering their enjoyment of the portion of the good land promised by God, and God's intention to have His house built and His kingdom established on the earth.** All the foregoing crucial points are types, typifying today's recovery of the church life, which is a recovery out of the church's captivity in the great Babylon back to the unique ground of God's choice.

The Return of the Captivity Under the Kingly Leadership of Zerubbabel

The return of the captivity under the **leadership of Zerubbabel** was according to the decree of Cyrus king of Persia. Cyrus made this decree because God stirred up his spirit. This stirring up was a work of the hiding God. In his decree Cyrus ordered the captives of Israel to go back to Jerusalem and **rebuild the house of God** there. Everyone whose spirit God had stirred up rose up to build the house of Jehovah in Jerusalem. The rebuilding was completed in prosperity through the prophesying of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. The work of rebuilding the house of Jehovah was completed on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

The intention of the recovery is to have all the saints in the recovery come together in their localities to be built up together as the house of God in so many cities. Through such a house, God will have His kingdom. We need to have a desire to be freed from self and the natural life in order to be built up with others. To be built we need to be adjusted, disciplined, corrected, and transformed. Then we will be able to come together to be built as the house of God in many localities.

The Return of the Captivity Under the Priestly Leadership of Ezra

The **return of the captivity under Ezra** began through his request to the king. Ezra had set his heart to seek and **do the law of Jehovah and to teach His statutes and ordinances.** The king permitted the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites to go freely with all their wealth. The king also authorized Ezra to appoint magistrates and judges to judge the people in the land, to teach them the laws of his God, and to execute judgment according to the law of God and the law of the king. Ezra blessed God for putting such a thing as this into the king's heart to beautify the house of Jehovah in Jerusalem.

The Need for Ezras – Those Skilled in the Word of God

In the church life today, the main responsibility of the elders is to teach the saints with the truths. All the elders need to spend much time to learn the truths. Like Ezra, all the elders and co-workers must be skilled in the Word of God. Today there is the need just for Zerubbabels but for more Ezras. We need Ezras to teach the people, to educate them, and to constitute them with the heavenly truths.

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