Opening

Gathering: What great things has God done to His glory through the members of my church?

Today’s Focus: God returned the Jews to Israel as He had promised. They responded with a renewed faithfulness.

Key Verses: What has happened to us is a result of our evil deeds and our great guilt, and yet, our God, You have punished us less than our sins have deserved and have given us a remnant like this.
Ezra 9:13

In Your great mercy You did not put an end to them or abandon them, for You are a gracious and merciful God. Nehemiah 9:31

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Judah Exiled in Babylon (Jeremiah 29:1-23)

Why had the Jews been exiled to Babylon?
Nehemiah 9:16, 29-31 (1-37)

What had God promised before the exile that comforted the Jews in Babylon?
Isaiah 13:1, 17, 19; 14:1

Did the Jews have any idea how long they would have to wait for this to happen?
Jeremiah 29:10-14

What action did Daniel take when the 70 years were nearly complete?
Daniel 9:1-3 (1-19)

The Edict of Restoration (Ezra 1)

Who was responsible for sending the Jews back to Judah and why?
Ezra 1:1-2

After being settled for 70 years, who gave up their homes and returned?
Ezra 1:3, 5 (3-5)

How could these people afford the move and living during the temple construction?
Ezra 1:6

What important items did Cyrus send back with this first group of Jews?
Ezra 1:7

How much wealth did the remnant bring?
Ezra 1:8, 11 (8-11)

Who was this Sheshbazzar that Cyrus appointed as governor over Judah?
1 Chronicles 3:17; Ezra 5:2, 14-16; Haggai

Note: Scholars disagree as to whether Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel were the same person

Where do we see Zerubbabel later?
Matthew 1:12; Luke 3:27

How many Jews returned?
Ezra 2:1, 64-67 (1-70)
Reconstruction of the Temple  *(Ezra 3)*

What did the Jews begin to do after first settling in the towns?  
_Ezra 3:1-2  (1-6)_

What was special about this happening in the seventh month (Tishri)?  
_Leviticus 23:24, 27, 34_

What was their next step after building the altar and starting sacrifices?  
_Ezra 3:8  (8-9)_

How did the Jews feel react they saw the temple foundations?  
_Ezra 3:10-13_

Efforts Frustrated by Samaritans  *(Ezra 4)*

Who wanted to help rebuild the temple?  
_Ezra 4:1-2_

Were these really Israelites & did they follow Jehovah as the one true God?  
_2 Kings 17:22-24, 28, 33_

Did the Jews accept this help & why or why not?  
_Ezra 4:3_

How did the Samaritans accept this rejection?  
_Ezra 4:4-5_

What happened as a result of this opposition?  
_Ezra 4:24_

Temple Construction Resumed  *(Ezra 5-6)*

Why did God raise the prophets Haggai and Zechariah?  
_Haggai 1:1-4, 7-8  (1-15)_

Did the people listen to these prophets?  
_Ezra 5:1-2_

Did they meet any opposition this second time around?  
_Ezra 5:3, 5, 7, 17  (3-17)_

How did King Darius respond?  
_Ezra 6:1-2  (1-5)_

What extra touch did Darius add?  
_Ezra 6:7-8  (6-12)_

What did the Jews do after the temple was completed?  
_Ezra 6:15-16, 19  (13-22)_

Reconstruction of the City Walls  *(Ezra 4)*

Was there any opposition when the Jews began to rebuild Jerusalem’s city walls?  
_Ezra 4:6_

Note:  King Xerxes married a Jew *(Esther)* who saved Jews from annihilation – last week’s story

What did the Samaritans do after not being able to get Xerxes to stop the construction?  
_Ezra 4:11-13  (7-16)_

Did King Artaxerxes agree with their concern?  
_Ezra 4:19, 21  (17-23)_
Nehemiah Gets Involved *(Nehemiah 1-3)*

- Note: The Book of Nehemiah was originally part of the Book of Ezra
- Who was Nehemiah?
  - Nehemiah 2:1
- For what did Nehemiah ask of King Artaxerxes?
  - Nehemiah 2:4-5 (1:1-2:5)
- Besides letting him go and funding the effort, how else did Artaxerxes help Nehemiah?
  - Nehemiah 2:9 (6-10)

- What did Nehemiah do soon after he arrived in Jerusalem?
  - Nehemiah 2:15-16 (11-16)
- How did the Jews respond to Nehemiah's call to begin rebuilding the walls?
  - Nehemiah 2:17-18
  - Nehemiah 3

*Let's Try Again* *(Nehemiah 4)*

- Did they meet any opposition the second time around?
  - Nehemiah 2:10, 19-20
- How did the Samaritans respond when the walls started going up?
  - Nehemiah 4:1-3
- How did the Samaritans respond when the wall reached half its height?
  - Nehemiah 4:6-8, 11-12 (4-12)
- Did this threat stop the efforts?
  - Nehemiah 4:16-18 (13-23)

*Jerusalem's City Walls are Completed* *(Nehemiah 6)*

- What other opposition did Nehemiah resist?
  - Nehemiah 6:2, 5-10, 13 (1-14)
- How long did this reconstruction effort take?
  - Nehemiah 6:15-16
- What did the Jews do after the city walls were completed?
  - Nehemiah 12:27, 31, 38, 40, 43
- How was Jerusalem populated?
  - Nehemiah 11:1-2

*Ezra Returns to Jerusalem* *(Ezra 7-8)*

- Who was Ezra?
  - Ezra 7:1, 6 (1-10)
- Why was Ezra sent to Jerusalem?
  - Ezra 7:19-20, 25-26 (11-28)
- Why did King Artaxerxes go out of his way for the Jews like this?
  - Ezra 7:23
- What did Ezra do before setting out for Jerusalem with around 2000 men and riches?
  - Ezra 8:21 (1-36)
Ezra’s First Crisis  (Ezra 9-10)

What was the first problem Ezra was presented in Jerusalem?
Ezra 9:1-2  (1-3)
What did Ezra and the people agree to do?
Ezra 10:10-12  (1-44)

Law Reform  (Nehemiah 8-9)

How did the people learn about God's Law?
Nehemiah 8:2-3  (1-4)
Did the people really want to learn God’s Law or were they just watching a show?
Nehemiah 8:5-6
How did the people understand since they now spoke Aramaic?
Nehemiah 8:8  (7-8)

How did the people respond when they realized how they had been sinning?
Nehemiah 8:9
How did they respond later in the month after their situation sank in?
Nehemiah 9:1-3  (1-37)
Did they decide to do anything in response to their now-recognized guilt?
Nehemiah 9:38; 10:29  (9:38-10:39)

Closing Prayer

Persian Rulers

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>529-522</td>
<td>Cambyses II</td>
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<td>522-485</td>
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<td>485-465</td>
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<td>465-424</td>
<td>Artaxerxes II</td>
<td>Darius II died</td>
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<tr>
<td>424-424</td>
<td>Artaxerxes III</td>
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<td>405-359</td>
<td>Artaxerxes II</td>
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<td>Artaxerxes III</td>
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<td>338-336</td>
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Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. What consequences have I experienced from going against God’s will?
   (Ezra 9:13; Nehemiah 9:29-30, 37; Leviticus 26:14-39; 2 Kings 18:11-12)
2. How have I responded when God has worked through me to do great things?
   (Ezra 3:10-13; 6:16; Nehemiah 12:43; Exodus 15; Ephesians 3:2-13)
3. How have others frustrated my efforts to do the Lord’s work?
   (Nehemiah 4; Galatians 1:6-10; 5:7-12; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16)
4. How have I unwittingly frustrated the efforts of others doing the Lord’s work?
   (Ezra 5; Acts 11; 15; Romans 14:13; 1 Corinthians 8)
5. When have I felt remorse after recognizing that I sinned against God?
   (Ezra 9:6-7; Nehemiah 8; 2 Samuel 12:1-23; Ezekiel 33:10-11; Matthew 26:69-75)