Crossroads International Church Singapore Dr. Rick Griffith

8 April 2018 Message 15 of 66

NLT 60 Minutes

**Be Worshipful**

Title

***Book of Ezra***

**Topic:** Worship

**Subject:** Why does God restore us?

**Complement:** God delivers us from our bondage to worship him.

**Purpose:** The listeners will worship in one new way.

**Attribute:** We worship the God of Deliverance

**Reading:** Ezra 9:8

**Song:** Worthy of Worship

# Introduction

### Interest: [Sometimes non-Christians know our purpose of assembly better than we do. Years ago when I had lived in Singapore but a few days, I looked in the *Yellow Pages* to find out where to go to church.]

Finding a Church

#### When my family moved to Singapore in 1991 for me to teach at Singapore Bible College, after securing our housing, our first item of business was to find a church.

#### So I did what many people did back then—"let your fingers do the walking" was the slogan of the Yellow Pages.

• Yellow Pages

#### For those of us who have no idea what I'm talking about—and that is a lot of us since everyone in this church is younger than me—the Yellow Pages was the "go to" place before the internet.

#### Every organization had their phone number there back in the late 20th century.

#### • So I looked under "Churches." But I found no entries!

• Close Up Pages

#### "Really?" I thought. "Surely the churches are in here. There are hundreds of churches in Singapore!"

#### So I looked up "Christian," but there was no entry there either. Then I tried "Baptist"—no go.

#### You are laughing, but where would you look?!

#### Finally, somehow, I found them under "P" alphabetically. Sure enough, the churches were all listed there in the "P" section, under "Places…of Worship"!

#### At that spot were listed, by religion, the Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Christian places of worship.

#### I guess what hit me most as I saw this was that these were all deemed places of *worship*—not places of *teaching*, not places of *ministry*, not places of *gathering*, not places *evangelizing*.

#### There, right there through my *Yellow Pages*, God spoke to me. What each religion is doing, more than anything else, is worshipping!

Why Church?

### Need: Do you know why we leave the world to gather in community? Why church?

#### Is it to learn and teach?

• Learn?

#### Do we gather mostly to sing?

• Sing?

#### Is fellowship our chief reason to come together?

• Fellow?

#### Is our chief reason to gather to serve?

• Tennis

#### Oops. That is the wrong kind of serve. I mean do we gather mainly to serve God?

• Serve?

#### What kind of service is this? It is a WORSHIP service!

### Main Idea: Why are we essentially delivered from our old way of life? Why does God restore us? Why does the LORD deliver us from our bondage? *God delivers us from our bondage to worship him.*

Subject

MI

### Background: God had sent the Jews into exile for 70 years due to their idolatry—yet he was working throughout that whole time to restore their worship.

Backgrd

(9 slides)

### Preview: Today we’ll first see why God restored the Jews—and then we’ll see why he delivers us.

• Them?

Preview

### Text: Our text is the entire book of Ezra.

• Us?

(Why did God restore the people of Judah from Babylon?)

MP

# I. God delivered the Jewish exiles to worship him (Book of Ezra).

[He brought the Jews from being kicked out of their land back to that land so they would honor him.]

## God used Zerubbabel to return 50,000 exiles to rebuild the temple to worship him (Ezra 1–6; 538 BC).

### The first return under Zerubbabel showed God as faithful to fulfill his promise of restoration (Ezra 1–2).

Ezra 1

(12 slides)

#### Cyrus of Persia supported all Jews in Babylon to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple as proof of God fulfilling his promise of restoration even through a pagan king (Ezra 1).

Ezra 2

(10 slides)

#### The list of returning exiles had 50,000 Jews who returned and gave freewill offerings for the temple reconstruction to show God fulfilling his promise of restoration (Ezra 2).

### God restored temple worship despite opposition and the idolatry that caused the exile (Ezra 3–6).

Ezra 3

(2 slides)

#### Temple rebuilding began by rebuilding the altar and foundation and resuming sacrifices as God's help to worship at the temple—not the high places (Ezra 3).

#### Enemies halted the temple rebuilding for 16 years until Zechariah and Haggai exhorted the Jews to continue until God moved the key enemy to assure their success (4:1–6:12).

Ezra 4-5

(6 slides)

#### The Jews celebrated the completed temple rebuilding in 516 BC (20 years after its beginning) with a special dedication and Passover observance (6:13-22).

Ezra 6

(3 slides)

## God used Ezra to return 5,000 exiles for them to obey their covenant (Ezra 7–10; 458 BC).

Ezra 7

(7 slides)

### The second return under Ezra the priest with 5,000 Jews shows that God mercifully protects all who trust him (Ezra 7–8).

#### Ezra's credentials to lead more returnees back to Jerusalem show God leading his life as priest to restore the remnant spiritually (7:1-10).

##### Ezra was a priest (7:1-5).

##### Ezra was a teacher (7:6a).

##### Ezra saw the hand of God on his life (7:6b-9).

##### Ezra prioritized the study, obedience, and teaching of the law (7:10).

#### God funded the return by King Artaxerxes giving money and authority to Ezra to lead and tax exemption for temple workers to show how God blesses obedience (7:11-28).

#### Returnees of 18 family heads, 1496 other men, women and children, totaled about 5,000—a far smaller group than the 50,000 with Zerubbabel 80 years before (8:1-14).

Ezra 8

(3 slides)

#### God protected the returnees due to their spiritual preparation by adding 258 Levites as temple leaders and celebrating a fast to show his hand on all who trust him (8:15-36).

### God protected the messianic seed through Ezra's restoration of the people by separating from foreign wives (Ezra 9–10).

Ezra 9

(2 slides)

#### Ezra saw that leaders tempted Judah to sin by unlawful marriage to pagan wives (9:1-2; cf. Gen 24:3; 26:34-35; 28:1-8; Exod 34:16; Deut 7:1-2; 20:17-18; Judg 3:5; 1 Kings 11).

#### Ezra lamented the intermarriage and contrasted God’s faithfulness with Israel's unfaithfulness to model repentance for the covenant people (9:3-15).

#### The initiation by the leaders that Israelites divorce their foreign wives was carried out faithfully for 113 men to exhort Israel to live according to the covenant (Ezra 10).

Ezra 10

(3 slides)

##### After the whole nation lamented the sin of intermarriage, the leaders initiating the idea to divorce all foreign wives fulfilled their vow to do so (10:1-17).

##### That those who divorced pagan wives included priests, Levites, and commoners shows the great extent that this sin corrupted the holy nation (10:18-44).

NT Jerusalem

(Isn't it great to see how God would restore the Jews to worship him? Well, he is still the same God and he does the same today as well…)

Subject

# II. God delivers us from our bondage to worship him (Main Idea repeated).

MP

[The world made us slaves but God freed us so we can praise him as the true God.]

## God knows how horrible slavery to false gods is for us.

Slavery

### Israelites even killed their own children in false worship of Molech.

### Sadly, we do the same today.

Evolution of Worship

## Do you need to be restored from slavery to sin?

### Do you have habits that you just can’t seem to ever conquer?

### Many men over the years have confessed their bondage to porn.

### Women, likewise, can be enslaved to movies—or shopping—or other forms of slavery, such as romanticizing their lives.

### Why does God want to restore you?

Subject

(Why does God restore us?)

# Conclusion

### God transforms exiles into worshippers (Main Idea restated).

MI

### Main Points

Summary

EI

#### God delivered the Jewish exiles to worship him (Book of Ezra).

#### God delivers us from our bondage to worship him (Main Idea repeated).

Ezra for Us

### My own journey in worship was one where I needed a lot of help!

#### I must confess that my own journey in worship was just that—a journey with its highs and lows, pitfalls and heights. I learned in college that worship is really the most important element in life, but I really struggled to get out of bed in the morning to worship God. So I shared this with my close friend Albert. He asked, "So what time do you need to get out of bed to read your Bible and pray?" I said, "Well, to leave for class at 6:45 AM but have a decent breakfast and shower before that, I need to get up at 5:30 AM to read and pray for 30 minutes."

#### "OK," Albert told me, "I will call you at 5:30 tomorrow morning."

#### Do you think I had trouble getting out of bed the next day? Not on your life! I especially knew that my parents would hear the phone and wake up, so I made sure I was at my desk and picked up the line before it could even have a full ring.

#### "Hey, Rick, good morning!" Albert said, "Are you at your desk meeting with God?"

#### "Yes," I said. "Good! Talk to you tomorrow!"

#### The phone call was probably the shortest call I've ever had—but also the most impactful call I've ever had.

#### Sure enough, Albert called the next day, and the next day, and the next day. After three weeks, I had a new habit and I told him I didn't need the calls anymore.

#### I went on to get my PhD in that Book, and Albert went on to lead the regional Young Life ministry.

#### What's the point? Worship isn't easy and doesn't come at naturally for most of us. We need help.

#### I have built-in help now, as Susan and I commit to pray and read God's Word together each day. Honestly, I need that kind of accountability. I suspect you do too!

### What would change in your life if your chief reason to gather were worship?

What to Change

#### Would you come early for prayer and preparation?

#### Would reading God’s Word daily be a delight instead of a chore?

#### Would you begin to lead others in worship?

#### Would you see your body as the new temple of the Spirit so you would take care of his temple better?

### Restoration to God for the repentant believer requires action. So what kind of action is God calling you to take?

Application

### Prayer

Black

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

# Questions

# Tentative Main Ideas

Text

# Illustrations That Apply

### Text

# Old Testament Survey Notes

**Ezra**

**Introduction**

**I. Title:** Ezra and Nehemiah originally formed a single book according to Josephus (*Against Apion* 1.8), Jerome (*Preface to the Commentary on Galatians*), and the Talmud (*Baba Bathra* 15a). The Hebrew Bible also has the two books together under the title Ezra Nehemiah (hy:m]j,n“ ar;z“[, *ezra' nehemeyah*). However, the repetition of Ezra 2 in Nehemiah 7 may indicate that the two were originally separate works. Ezra means "help, succour, assistance" (BDB 740d 1) and Nehemiah means "Yahweh comforts" (BDB 637c 3). Once again the names are significant in that Ezra's ministry enabled the Jews to return to the land and consecrate themselves again while Nehemiah functioned as God's comfort through building Jerusalem's protective wall.

**II. Authorship**

A. External Evidence: Jewish Talmudic tradition has long held that Ezra authored this book.

B. Internal Evidence: In 7:27–9:15 the author refers to himself in the first person. This is significant since in all likelihood Ezra was not even born when the events of chapters 1–6 took place (538-516 BC) as he is first introduced in 7:1 (458 BC). Like Chronicles, the book has a strong priestly emphasis, and Ezra was in direct descent from Aaron through Eleazar, Phineas, and Zadok (7:1-5). The Apocrypha states that Ezra had access to the library of documents gathered by Nehemiah (2 Macc. 2:13-15) which furnished the material to write Ezra 1–6 as well as Chronicles (*TTTB*, 117); however, Nehemiah lived in Babylon until his arrival in Jerusalem in 444 BC so Ezra either used Nehemiah’s documents later than 444 BC or else the Apocrypha is wrong (cf. Date below).

**III. Circumstances**

A. Date: The events of Ezra 7–10 in which Ezra had part occurred in 458-457 BC. Also, Ezra was contemporary of Nehemiah (Neh. 8:1-9; 12:36), who arrived in Jerusalem in 444 BC. A likely date of composition may be between these two dates at about 450 BC (Martin, *BKC*, 1:651).

However, the Book of Ezra itself covers two distinct eras separated by 58 years. Ezra 1–6 relates the story of Zerubbabel (538-516 BC) while Ezra 7–10 is mostly an autobiographical account of Ezra that begins six decades later (458-457 BC). During the period covered by the Book of Ezra three other prominent non-biblical leaders lived (*TTTB*, 117): Gautama Buddha in India (ca. 560-480 BC), Confucius in China (551-479 BC), and Socrates in Greece (470-399 BC).

B. Recipients: Ezra's readers were Jews who had recently returned to Israel from Persia who were the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those who returned from Babylon a century earlier.

C. Occasion: Ezra continues the account of Jewish history recorded in 2 Chronicles. The Chronicles record God faithfully fulfilling his promise of *judgment* for Judah's sin; Ezra records how God was faithful to his promise of *restoration* after 70 years as prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10). Ezra's account of this restoration exhorted the returnees to follow the LORD wholeheartedly—especially in true temple worship and covenant obedience. This emphasis was much needed as the Book of Malachi sadly reports deplorable conditions at this time (e.g., intermarriage, ritualism, etc.).

**IV. Characteristics**

A. Ezra records the first events following the Babylonian Exile, but only in a selective sense as a 58-year gap separates chapters 1–6 and 7–10. The book of Esther occurs during this gap.

B. Ezra is one of the few books of Scripture originally written in two languages (Daniel is the other). Almost one fourth (67 of 280 verses) is written in Aramaic with the majority in Hebrew. This material (4:8–6:18; 7:12-26) is Aramaic because it mainly comprises official correspondence for which Aramaic was the standard language of the day (Martin, *BKC*, 1:652).

C. The events in the restoration of Israel under Ezra and Nehemiah continued to fulfill God's purposes for Israel as stated in the promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).

1) Events: The events of the restoration came in three separate returns to the land from Babylon (see the charts in these class notes beginning on p. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**).

a) The first return under Zerubbabel (538 BC) involved about 50,000 Jews who came back to the land to rebuild the temple as a result of Cyrus' decree (cf. Ezra 1–6). They quickly rebuilt the altar and re-instituted sacrifices, and then began rebuilding the temple (536 BC). However, opposition from Tattenai and others halted the work for 16 years until it resumed in 520 BC and was finally finished in 516 BC. The prophets Zechariah and Haggai also ministered at this time. Their exhortations to rebuild the temple contributed significantly to its reconstruction.

b) The second return under Ezra (458 BC) brought back about 5,000 Jews in the reign of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7–8). Ezra restored the people by leading them to obey the Law by abolishing intermarriage with foreign women (Ezra 9–10). He restored the people's faith in God by teaching and preaching the Law of Moses, which lead to a national revival.

c) The third return under Nehemiah (444 BC) to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem revolved mostly around Nehemiah himself, as the number of Jews with him is never recorded (cf. Book of Nehemiah). His return under Artaxerxes rallied the people to work together despite opposition from Sanballat, Tobias, and Gershem the Arab so that the entire wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt in a mere 52 days. Nehemiah then organized the defense of the city, lead in a recommitment to Sabbath observance, and enacted a process by which Jerusalem would be repopulated to defend it and the temple from attack. He, too, had to deal with the problem of intermarriage that Ezra addressed less than two decades earlier (Neh. 13). The Book of Malachi also records the deplorable state of the temple at this time in which sacrificial ritual had replaced genuine heart commitment to Yahweh. Nehemiah's selfless example also rebuked the people's exacting interest from their fellow Israelites in violation of the Law.

2) Relationship to the Abrahamic Covenant: The restoration era is important in that without a return to the land, the Abrahamic Covenant could never be fulfilled.

a) God promised Abraham that his descendants would occupy the land from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates (Gen. 15:18), yet Israel in Babylon was living outside of these boundaries. The nation needed to return to the land for the land promises to be fulfilled. Jeremiah 25:11-12 also promised a restoration to the land.

b) The Messiah had already been prophesied to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). In God's own prophetic timetable as seen in Daniel 9:25-26, the nation needed to return to the land for this seed aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant to be fulfilled by the prophesied time of Christ's birth. Also, Jesus offered the kingdom during his earthly ministry, which would not have been possible apart from a return to the land.

c) The books of Ezra and Nehemiah also show the problem of intermarriage (see above). It was vital to put away this sin so that Israel might keep the purity of the Davidic line to fulfill the seed promises given to Abraham. Had Ezra and Nehemiah not taken such drastic measures to stop intermarriage, there would have been no guarantee that the Messianic King was from the lineage of David (cf. Matt. 1; Luke 3).

**Argument**

The Book of Ezra shows a keen interest in the temple as it continues from the end of 2 Chronicles. Unfortunately, the remnant that returned did not convey as strong a commitment to the covenant and temple as one would expect. Therefore, Ezra records the restoration of the temple under Zerubbabel (Ezra 1–6) and the restoration of the people to their covenant obligations under Ezra (Ezra 7–10) to encourage the remnant in true temple worship and covenant obedience.

**Synthesis**

**Restoring the temple and people partial fulfillment of land promise**

**1–6 Temple–Zerubbabel**

1–2 Return

1 Decree

2 Returnees–50,000

3–6 Rebuilding

3 Begins

4:1–6:12 Opposed

4:1-23 Summarized

4:24 Interrupted

5:1-2 Zechariah/Haggai

5:3–6:12 Tattenai humiliated

6:13-22 Ends

**7–10 People–Ezra**

7–8 Return

7:1-10 Qualifications

7:11-28 Provisions

8:1-14 Returnees–5,000

8:15-36 Protection

9–10 Restoration

9:1-2 Intermarriage

9:3-15 Lament

10 Divorces

**Outline**

**Summary Statement for the Book**

**The *restorations of the temple and people* to the land under Zerubbabel and Ezra record God's faithfulness and mercy in fulfilling his promise of restoration to *encourage the remnant in true temple worship* and covenant obedience.**

# I. God used Zerubbabel to return 50,000 exiles to rebuild the temple to worship him (Ezra 1–6; 538 BC).

## The first return under Zerubbabel showed God as faithful to fulfill his promise of restoration (Ezra 1–2).

### Cyrus of Persia supported all Jews in Babylon to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple as proof of God fulfilling his promise of restoration even through a pagan king (Ezra 1).

### The list of returning exiles had 50,000 Jews who returned and gave freewill offerings for the temple reconstruction to show God fulfilling his promise of restoration (Ezra 2).

## God restored temple worship despite opposition and the idolatry that caused the exile (Ezra 3–6).

### Temple rebuilding began by rebuilding the altar and foundation and resuming sacrifices as God's help to worship at the temple—not the high places (Ezra 3).

### Enemies halted the temple rebuilding for 16 years until Zechariah and Haggai exhorted the Jews to continue until God moved the key enemy to assure their success (4:1–6:12).

#### Opposition to temple rebuilding (ca. 536 BC under Cyrus) stopped the work for 16 years (4:1-5; 536-520 BC).

#### A parenthesis of later opposition to wall rebuilding (ca. 484 under Xerxes and ca. 444 BC under Artaxerxes) shows God granted success over enemy opposition (4:6-23).

#### Temple rebuilding stopped for 16 years (536-520 BC) by Jews who intermarried with pagans and worshipped other gods (4:24).

#### Zechariah and Haggai successfully encouraged the Jews to keep rebuilding the temple despite opposition (5:1-2; 520 BC).

#### Tattenai’s opposition backfired as Darius appointed him to fund the work until completion to show God providing a house to properly worship him (5:3–6:12).

### The Jews celebrated the completed temple rebuilding in 516 BC (20 years after its beginning) with a special dedication and Passover observance (6:13-22).

# The reformation of the people in the second return under Ezra with 5,000 Jews encouraged the remnant to fulfill its covenant obligations due to God's mercy (Ezra 7–10; 458 BC).

## The second return under Ezra the priest with 5,000 Jews shows that God mercifully protects all who trust him (Ezra 7–8).

### Ezra's credentials to lead more returnees back to Jerusalem show God leading his life as priest to restore the remnant spiritually (7:1-10).

#### Ezra was a priest (7:1-5).

#### Ezra was a teacher (7:6a).

#### Ezra saw the hand of God on his life (7:6b-9).

#### Ezra prioritized the study, obedience, and teaching of the law (7:10).

### God funded the return by King Artaxerxes giving money and authority to Ezra to lead and tax exemption for temple workers to show how God blesses obedience (7:11-28).

### Returnees of 18 family heads, 1496 other men, women and children, totaled about 5,000—a far smaller group than the 50,000 with Zerubbabel 80 years before (8:1-14).

### God protected the returnees due to their spiritual preparation by adding 258 Levites as temple leaders and celebrating a fast to show his hand on all who trust him (8:15-36).

## God protected the messianic seed through Ezra's restoration of the people by separating from foreign wives (Ezra 9–10).

### Ezra saw that leaders tempted Judah to sin by unlawful marriage to pagan wives (9:1-2; cf. Gen 24:3; 26:34-35; 28:1-8; Exod 34:16; Deut 7:1-2; 20:17-18; Judg 3:5; 1 Kings 11).

### Ezra lamented the intermarriage and contrasted God’s faithfulness with Israel's unfaithfulness to model repentance for the covenant people (9:3-15).

|  |
| --- |
| Are Ezra and Nehemiah functioning primarily to teach us proper leadership style? Then whom should you follow?   1. Intermarriage lead Ezra to pull out his own hair (Ezra 9:13) 2. Intermarriage lead Nehemiah to pull out others’ hair (Neh. 13:25)! |

### The initiation by the leaders that Israelites divorce their foreign wives was carried out faithfully for 113 men to exhort Israel to live according to the covenant (Ezra 10).

#### After the whole nation lamented the sin of intermarriage, the leaders initiating the idea to divorce all foreign wives fulfilled their vow to do so (10:1-17).

#### That those who divorced pagan wives included priests, Levites, and commoners shows the great extent that this sin corrupted the holy nation (10:18-44).

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

**God’s Approval of Divorce Under Ezra**

*Issue: How could God approve of divorce here when he elsewhere disapproves of it and even says clearly, “I hate divorce” (Mal. 2:16; cf. Matt. 19:8)?*

1. The text doesn’t specifically say that God approved of divorce. One solution could have been for the 113 men to leave the community with their families. However, for the sake of argument, the other reasons below are offered.

2. The account illustrates that maintaining the purity of the covenant people of God was more important than even keeping some individual families intact (especially families destined to destroy the messianic line).

3. Though 113 men may seem a small number, this included leaders of the people, so intermarriage was certainly going to spread further to the common people as had happened in the Jewish community in Egypt and the northern kingdom of Israel.

**Be Worshipful**

***Ezra***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*:

**The reason God *restored the temple and people* to the land under Zerubbabel and Ezra was to show his faithful fulfillment of his promise of restoration *to* *encourage true temple worship* and covenant obedience.**

# The reason God used Zerubbabel to return 50,000 exiles to rebuild the temple was to worship him (Ezra 1–6; 538 BC).

## The first return under Zerubbabel with 50,000 Jews showed God's faithfulness to fulfill his promise of restoration (Ezra 1–2).

### Cyrus of Persia supported all Jews in Babylon to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple as proof of God fulfilling his promise of restoration even through a pagan king (Ezra 1).

### The list of returning exiles had 50,000 Jews who returned and gave freewill offerings for the temple reconstruction to show God fulfilling his promise of restoration (Ezra 2).

## God restored temple worship despite opposition and the idolatry that caused the exile (Ezra 3–6).

### Temple rebuilding begins by rebuilding the altar and foundation and resuming sacrifices to show God's commitment to worship at the temple rather than the high places (Ezra 3).

### Enemies halted the temple rebuilding for 16 years until Zechariah and Haggai exhorted the Jews to continue until God moved the key enemy to assure their success (4:1–6:12).

### The Jews celebrated the completed temple rebuilding in 516 BC (20 years after its beginning) with a special dedication and Passover observance (6:13-22).

# The reason God used Ezra to return 5,000 exiles was for them to fulfill their covenant obligations (Ezra 7–10; 458 BC).

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### Ezra's credentials to lead more returnees back to Jerusalem show God leading his life as priest to restore the remnant spiritually (7:1-10).

### God funded the return by King Artaxerxes giving money and authority to Ezra to lead and tax exemption for temple workers to show how God blesses obedience (7:11-28).

### Returnees of 18 family heads, 1496 other men, women and children, totaled about 5,000—a far smaller group than the 50,000 with Zerubbabel 80 years before (8:1-14).

### God protected the returnees due to their spiritual preparation by adding 258 Levites as temple leaders and celebrating a fast to show his hand on all who trust him (8:15-36).

## God protected the messianic seed by Ezra purifying Judah’s marriages so they would obey the covenant (Ezra 9–10).

### Ezra saw that leaders tempted Judah to sin by unlawful marriage to pagan wives (9:1-2; cf. Gen 24:3; 26:34-35; 28:1-8; Exod 34:16; Deut 7:1-2; 20:17-18; Judg 3:5; 1 Kings 11).

### Ezra lamented the intermarriage and contrasted God’s faithfulness with Israel's unfaithfulness to model repentance for the covenant people (9:3-15).

### The initiation by the leaders that Israelites divorce their foreign wives was carried out faithfully for 113 men to exhort Israel to live according to the covenant (Ezra 10).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: Sometimes non-Christians know our purpose of assembly better than we do. Years ago when I had lived in Singapore but a few days, I looked in the *Yellow Pages* to find out where to go to church.

### Need: Why do you leave the world to gather in community?

#### Is it to learn and teach?

#### Do we gather mostly to sing?

#### Is fellowship our chief reason to come together?

#### Why are we essentially delivered from our old way of life?

### Main Idea: Why does God restore us? Why does the LORD deliver us from our bondage? *God delivers us from our bondage to worship him.*

### Background: God had sent the Jews into exile for 70 years due to their idolatry—yet he was working throughout that whole time to restore their worship.

### Preview: Today we’ll first see why God restored the Jews—and then we’ll see why he delivers us.

### Text: Our text is the entire book of Ezra.

(Why did God restore the people of Judah from Babylon?)

# I. God delivered the Jewish exiles to worship him (Book of Ezra).

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### The second return under Ezra the priest with 5,000 Jews shows that God mercifully protects all who trust him (Ezra 7–8).

#### Ezra's credentials to lead more returnees back to Jerusalem show God leading his life as priest to restore the remnant spiritually (7:1-10).

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#### God protected the returnees due to their spiritual preparation by adding 258 Levites as temple leaders and celebrating a fast to show his hand on all who trust him (8:15-36).

### God protected the messianic seed through Ezra's restoration of the people by separating from foreign wives (Ezra 9–10).

#### Ezra saw that leaders tempted Judah to sin by unlawful marriage to pagan wives (9:1-2; cf. Gen 24:3; 26:34-35; 28:1-8; Exod 34:16; Deut 7:1-2; 20:17-18; Judg 3:5; 1 Kings 11).

#### Ezra lamented the intermarriage and contrasted God’s faithfulness with Israel's unfaithfulness to model repentance for the covenant people (9:3-15).

#### The initiation by the leaders that Israelites divorce their foreign wives was carried out faithfully for 113 men to exhort Israel to live according to the covenant (Ezra 10).

(Isn't it great to see how God would restore the Jews to worship him? Well, he is still the same God and he does the same today as well…)

# II. God delivers us from our bondage to worship him (Main Idea repeated).

## God knows how horrible slavery to false gods is for us.

### Israelites even killed their own children in false worship of Molech.

### Sadly, we do the same today.

## I have had to learn how to worship since it didn’t come naturally to me.

### A friend in the US invited me to his 10 AM church service.

### My friend Albert taught me the discipline I needed to worship.

#### He woke me up for personal worship.

#### I had to learn punctuality.

## Do you need to be restored from slavery to sin?

### Do you have habits that you just can’t seem to ever conquer?

### Many men over the years have confessed their bondage to porn.

### Women, likewise, can be enslaved to movies—or shopping—or other forms of slavery, such as romanticizing their lives.

### Why does God want to restore you?

(Why does God restore us?)

# Conclusion

### God transforms exiles into worshippers (Main Idea restated).

### Main Points

#### God delivered the Jewish exiles to worship him (Book of Ezra).

#### God delivers us from our bondage to worship him (Main Idea repeated).

### What would change in your life if your chief reason to live were worship?

#### Would you come early for prayer and preparation?

#### Would reading God’s Word daily be a delight instead of a chore?

#### Would you begin to lead others in worship?

#### Would you see your body as the new temple of the Spirit so you would take care of his temple better?

### Prayer



**Rick Griffith**

8 April 2018

Message 15 of 66

**Be Worshipful**

***Ezra***

# Introduction

### Sometimes non-Christians know our purpose of assembly better than we do.

### Why do you leave the world to gather in community?

### Why does God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us? *God delivers us from our bondage to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ him* (Main Idea)*.*

### God had sent the Jews into exile for 70 years due to their idolatry—yet he was working throughout that whole time to restore their worship.

# I. God delivered the Jewish exiles to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ him (Book of Ezra).

## God used Zerubbabel to return 50,000 exiles to rebuild the temple to worship him (Ezra 1–6; 538 BC).

### The first return under Zerubbabel showed God as faithful to fulfill his promise of restoration (Ezra 1–2).

### God restored temple worship despite opposition and the idolatry that caused the exile (Ezra 3–6).

## God used Ezra to return 5,000 exiles for them to obey their covenant (Ezra 7–10; 458 BC).

### The second return under Ezra the priest with 5,000 Jews shows that God mercifully protects all who trust him (Ezra 7–8).

### God protected the messianic seed through Ezra's restoration of the people by separating from foreign wives (Ezra 9–10).

# II. God delivers us from our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to worship him (Main Idea repeated).

## God knows how horrible slavery to false gods is for us.

## I have had to learn how to worship since it didn’t come naturally to me.

# Conclusion

### God transforms exiles into \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Main Idea restated).

### What would change in your life if your chief reason to live were worship?

Download this sermon PPT and notes for free at BibleStudyDownloads.org/resource/old-testament-preaching/

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**Ezra**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Restoring the Temple and People** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Temple** | | | | | **Book of Esther (58 yr gap)** | **People** | | | |
| **Zerubbabel** | | | | | **Ezra** | | | |
| **Chapters 1–6** | | | | | **Chapters 7–10** | | | |
| **50,000 Return** | | | | | **5,000 Return** | | | |
| **Survival** | | | | | **Revival** | | | |
| **Working** | | | | | **Worshipping** | | | |
| **538-516 BC (22 Years)** | | | | | **458-457 BC (1 Year)** | | | |
| **External Opposition: Samaritans** | | | | | **Internal Opposition: Intermarriage** | | | |
| **Return 1–2** | | **Rebuilding 3–6** | | | **Return 7–8** | | **Restoration 9–10** | |
| Decree  1 | Returnees  2 | Begins  3 | Opposed  4:1–6:12 | Ends  6:13-22 |  | Qualifi- cations & Provisions  7 | Returnees  & Protection  8 | Inter- marriage & Lament  9 | Divorces  Carried  Out  10 |

**Key Word: Temple**

**Key Verse: “… for a brief moment, the LORD our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage” (Ezra 9:8)**

**Summary Statement:**

**The reason *God restored the temple and people* to the land under Zerubbabel and Ezra was to show his faithful fulfillment of his promise of restoration *to encourage true temple worship and covenant obedience.***

**Application:**

**Restoration to God for the repentant believer requires *action.***