

**WEEK 9: EZRA AND NEHEMIAH**  
**DAY 1: THE RULE OF FOREIGN KINGS**

1. We have looked at nine books of history in the Old Testament. They told us about God's people until they were taken to Babylon. We hope you are getting help for your own life as you study.

What do we learn from the faithful and unfaithful kings of Judah in 2 Chronicles?

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

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2. From these kings we learn: Faithfulness to God brought blessing. Unfaithfulness to God brought judgment. We have finished the books of history which tell about the first two periods of history.

On the list write the names of the two periods. Write the names of the books which tell about them.

Books of History		
Period 1	Period 2	Period 3
_____	_____	<b>Rule of Foreign Kings</b>
1 _____	4,5 _____	10 Ezra
2 _____	6,7 _____	11 Nehemiah
3 _____	8,9 _____	12 Esther

Read the name of Period 3. Read the names of the books which tell about this period.

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3. Joshua, Judges and Ruth tell about the Rule of God. 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings and 1&2 Chronicles tell about the Rule of Kings. This week we begin to look at Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. These three books of history tell about the Rule of Foreign Kings.

You remember that God's people sinned and were taken to Babylon. Today we shall learn two things:

- (1) Jeremiah prophesied that after 70 years the Jews would return from Babylon
- (2) God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia, to allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem.

In your Bible read Ezra 1:1 to 5. Read verse 1 again. Cyrus is the king. But who is the prophet you read about?

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4. You read about the prophet Jeremiah. You also read about Cyrus, King of Persia. Cyrus was one of the foreign kings who ruled over the Jews. This was the third period of history. The Jews no longer had their own kings. They had foreign kings, like Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus. God had warned the Jews that this would happen.

Jeremiah 25:11:

This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste and these nations (the Jews) shall serve the king of Babylon 70 years.

From these how long did God say that Jews would serve the king of Babylon?

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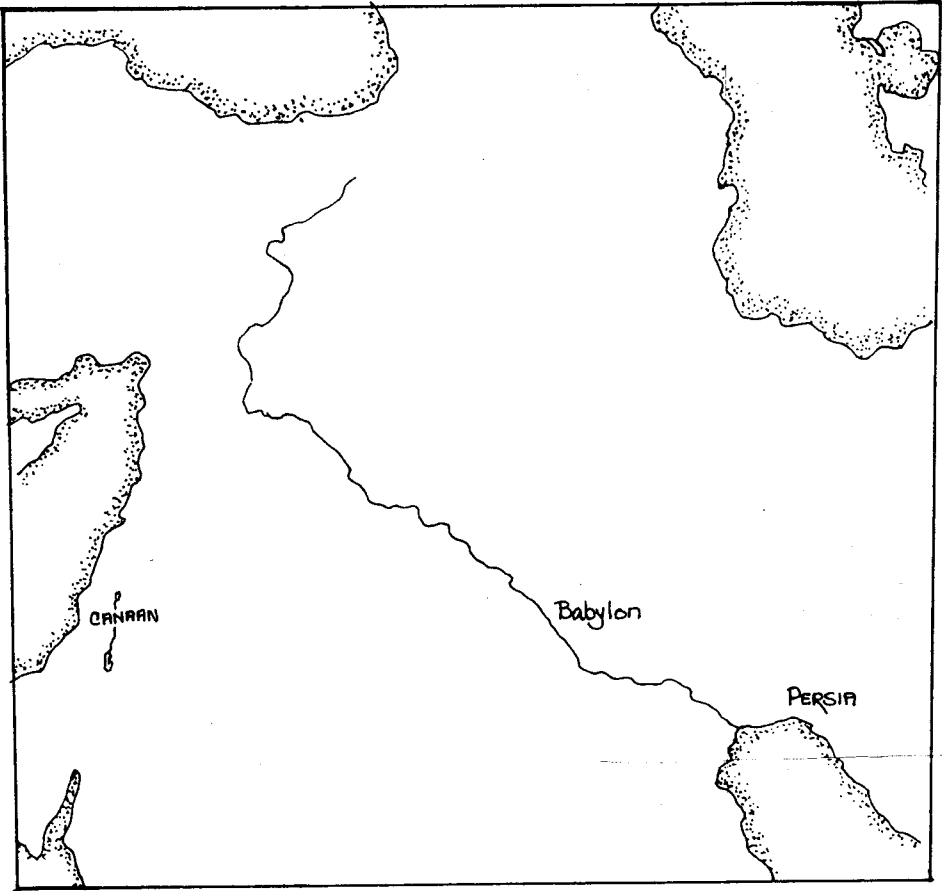
5. The Jews would serve the king of Babylon for 70 years. This was God's message through the prophet Jeremiah. God also gave another message through Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 29:10:

For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfil to you My promise and bring you back to this place.

What is the name of the third period of history? \_\_\_\_\_

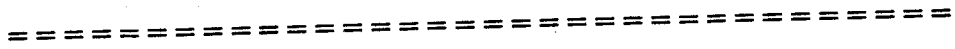
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The king of Persia let the Jews return from Babylon

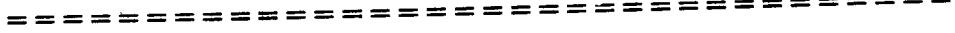
6. We are learning about the period called the Rule of Foreign Kings. During this time the Jews were ruled by the kings of Babylon and Persia. It was the king of Babylon who carried away the people of Judah. Then the king of Persia defeated the king of Babylon.

On the map facing this page, draw a line under the name, Persia. Draw another line from Babylon to Canaan. What did Jeremiah prophesy would happen to the Jews after 70 years?



7. Jeremiah prophesied that they would return from Babylon. .

What people was Jeremiah prophesying about? \_\_\_\_\_



8. It was the people of Judah, or the Jews. The people of Judah had sinned against God. God used a heathen nation to punish them. They were taken from their own land to Babylon. They were ruled by foreign kings.

Who prophesied that after 70 years the Jews would return from Babylon?

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9. Jeremiah prophesied that this would happen. This is the first thing we are learning today. God promised to bring His people back to their own land. God always keeps His promises. He stirred up the spirit of Cyrus King of Persia. Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem. Read what God said about King Cyrus through the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 44:28:

who says of Cyrus, "He is My shepherd (or ruler), and he shall fulfil all My purpose.

From this verse, who was God planning to use to fulfil His purpose?\_\_\_\_\_

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10. God was preparing to use Cyrus, a foreign king. The Jews in Babylon knew about God's promises through the prophets. You remember that Daniel was in Babylon at this time. This is what Daniel said.

Daniel 9:2-3:

... I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years which, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and supplications.

In these verses who did Daniel say had prophesied that after 70 years the Jews would return from Babylon?\_\_\_\_\_

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11. Daniel said that Jeremiah prophesied this. Daniel and many of the Jews in Babylon still knew God. They knew that he wanted to bring them back to their own land. We have read that Daniel prayed. God answered Daniel's prayer. He answered the prayers of all His faithful people in Babylon.

Ezra 1:1:

... the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia.

From this verse, what did God do to the spirit of Cyrus?\_\_\_\_\_

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12. God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus. He was the king who would allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem.

Cyrus was the king of what foreign country? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. Cyrus was the king of Persia. Read the message which he sent throughout his great kingdom.

Ezra 1:2-3:

Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia. The Lord, the God of heaven ... has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people (the Jews) ... let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord.

To what city was Cyrus allowing the Jews to return? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. He allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem. He wanted them to rebuild the temple there. God was fulfilling His promise.

Whose spirit did God stir up so that he allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem?

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15. God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia. It was surprising that Cyrus would let the people return. But God was answering the prayers of Daniel. He was answering the prayers of other Jews too.

Who prophesied that after 70 years the Jews would return from Babylon? \_\_\_\_\_

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16. Jeremiah prophesied this. God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia. He allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem. Daniel was a man of prayer. He knew that God promised to let His people return. Daniel prayed and claimed God's promises. We need a work of God's Spirit in our country today. God has given us a wonderful promise.

2 Chronicles 7:14:

If my people who are called by My name humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

From this verse, who can claim this promise? \_\_\_\_\_

Write some things you would like to see God do for your country in answer to prayer.

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17. This promise is for God's people. All who trust God are His people today. Be ready to share the rest of your answers in class.

Who prophesied that after 70 years the Jews would return from Babylon? \_\_\_\_\_

Whose spirit did God stir up so that he allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem?  
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**WEEK 9: EZRA AND NEHEMIAH**  
**DAY 2: THE FIRST GROUP RETURNED TO JERUSALEM**  
**Ezra 1 to 3**

1. Today we shall learn more from the book of Ezra. This book of history tells about the Rule of Foreign kings. Nehemiah and Esther also tell about this period.

Who prophesied that after 70 years the Jews would return from Babylon?\_\_\_\_\_

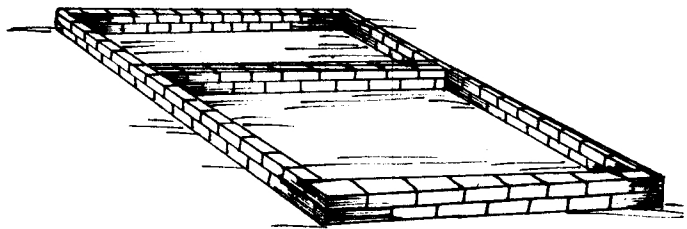
Whose spirit did God stir up so that he allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem?  
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2. Jeremiah prophesied that after 70 years the Jews would return. God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia. King Cyrus sent a message to all the Jews in his kingdom. The message said that any Jew could return to Jerusalem. Those who returned should rebuild the temple. This is what we will learn today.

Zerubbabel led the first group of Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem. This group of Jews did two things in Jerusalem.

- (1) They built the altar of God.
- (2) They laid the foundation of the temple.



Write the names of the three books of history which tell about the Rule of Foreign Kings.

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3. The Rule of Foreign Kings is found in Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. Yesterday we learned about Cyrus. He was one of the foreign kings who ruled over the Jews. He said they could return to Jerusalem.

Ezra 1:5:

Then rose up the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, every one whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.

Where had the Jews been living for 70 years? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. The Jews had been in Babylon for 70 years. But now any Jew who wanted could return to his own country. The heads of the fathers' houses' of Judah and Benjamin prepared to return. Some priests and Levites also wanted to return. A man called Zerubbabel led this first group of Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem. He was a grandson of the last king of Judah.

Which book of history tells us about the first group of Jews to return to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. The book of Ezra tells us about the first group. Ezra chapter 2 gives a list of all those who went. We read about their leader. Then we see the names of many families. The list of names shows priests, Levites, and the temple servants. The all travelled together from Babylon.

Ezra 2:2:

They came with Zerubbabel (the leader), Jeshua (the priest), Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah.

Who led the first group of Jews from Babylon? \_\_\_\_\_

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## 6. Zerubbabel led these Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem. It was a big group.

**Ezra 2:64:**

The whole assembly (or group) together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty.

**Ezra 2:70:**

The priests, the Levites, and some of the people lived in Jerusalem and its vicinity (or nearby); and the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants lived in their town, and all Israel in their towns.

**Did Zerubbabel lead the first group or the second group of Jews from Babylon?**

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7. Zerubbabel led the first group from Babylon to Jerusalem. They had to build themselves houses. Some lived in Jerusalem. Others lived in towns nearby.

**Ezra 3:1:**

When the seventh month came, and the sons of Israel were in the towns, the people gathered as one man to Jerusalem.

The seventh month was always an important one for the Jews. Three of their big feast were held that month. There were the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. All faithful Jews came to the temple for these feasts. During the years in Babylon these feasts had not been kept.

**What group of people did Zerubbabel lead from Babylon to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_**

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8. He led the first group of Jews from Babylon. The book of Ezra tells us two things the Jews did when they got to Jerusalem.

- (1) They built the altar of God.
- (2) They laid the foundation of the temple.

**Take your Bible now and read Ezra 3:1 to 6. Read verse 2 again. From this verse, What did the Jews build? \_\_\_\_\_**

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9. The Jews built an altar of God. They needed an altar to offer sacrifices to God. They wanted to worship Him. They wanted to thank Him for bringing them back safely.

Ezra 3:3:

They set the altar in its place, for fear was upon them because of the peoples of the lands, and they offered burnt offerings upon it to the Lord, burnt offerings morning and evening.

In what city did the Jews build the altar of God? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. They built it in Jerusalem. They wanted to worship God in obedience to the law. But there were many different kinds of burnt offerings to be given. How did they remember all of them? God's law told them all about these offerings.

Ezra 3:2:

... and they built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings upon it, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God.

From this verse, what did they have to build before they could worship God?

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11. They had to build the altar of God. They wanted to obey God and worship Him according to His law. We have learned that faithfulness to God brought blessing. The Jews now wanted to worship God in God's way. They wanted God to bless them.

Who led the first group of Jews from babylon to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. Zerubbabel led the first group from Babylon. When the Jews got to Jerusalem they did two things.

Write the first thing they did. Read the second.

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) They laid the foundation of the temple.

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13. They built the altar of God. King Cyrus let the Jews return to Jerusalem. He told them to go and rebuild the temple. We have learned one thing they did when they returned.

**Ezra 3:6:**

From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord. But the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid.

From this verse, what was not yet laid? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. The foundation of the temple was not laid. Zerubbabel had led the first group of Jews to Jerusalem. But it took time and materials to rebuild the temple. You remember that King Cyrus asked everyone to give offerings for the temple. He also gave things to help.

Take your Bible now and read Ezra 3:7 to 10. Read verse 10 again. From this verse what did the builders do? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. They laid the foundation of the temple. This was the second thing the Jews did when they returned to Jerusalem. When the foundation was finished there was great rejoicing.

**Ezra 3:11:**

and they sang responsively (or with two groups), praising and giving thanks to the Lord, "for he is good, for his steadfast love endures for ever toward Israel." And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

What is the first thing the Jews did when they returned to Jerusalem?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) They laid the foundation of the temple.

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16. First they built the altar of God. But this was not enough. Cyrus had told them what they should do. God also wanted them to do something.

What is the second thing the Jews did when they returned to Jerusalem?

- (1) They built the altar of God.
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_

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17. They laid the foundation of the temple. We are looking at the book of Ezra. Zerubbabel led the first group of Jews from Babylon. The Jews now wanted to worship God in God's way. They wanted to be faithful to God. They wanted God to bless them.

It is important for us, too, to worship God each day. We do not need an altar now. We come in the name of the Lord Jesus.

What is the best time for you to meet daily with God? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is the best place for you to sit when you read the Bible and pray?

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What problems do you have when you try to meet daily with God? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. Be ready to talk about these problems in class.

Who led the first group of Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

What two things did the Jews do when they returned to Jerusalem?

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

**WEEK 9: EZRA AND NEHEMIAH**  
**DAY 3: THE TEMPLE WAS REBUILT**

**Ezra 4 to 6**

1. Who led the first group of Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

What two things did these Jews do in Jerusalem?

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Zerubbabel led the first group of Jews from Babylon. When they arrived, the Jews built the altar of God. They also laid the foundation of the temple. But it was many years before the temple was rebuilt. In our lesson today we shall see the reason for this. We shall learn:

- (1) The Samaritans discouraged the Jews and they stopped building.
- (2) When the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah encouraged them, the Jews rebuilt the temple.

In which book of history do we read about the rebuilding of the temple?

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3. We are looking at the book of Ezra. The Jews who returned to Jerusalem had many troubles. People called Samaritans were living in Jerusalem when the Jews returned. These people were from many different heathen nations. They were sent there by foreign kings. Some of them had married Jews who were left behind. These Samaritans became enemies of the Jews. We shall see how they hindered the work on the temple.

In your Bible read Ezra 4:1-5.

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4. The Samaritans offered to help rebuild the temple. They said they also worshipped the true God. But they were really enemies of the Jews.

Ezra 4:3:

But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of father's houses in Israel said to them, "You have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God; but we alone will build to the Lord, the God of Israel.

Do you think Samaritans really worshipped the true God? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. The Jews refused the help of the Samaritans. They knew that they worshipped idols. They did not worship the true God. God had allowed the Jews to be taken to Babylon. This was their punishment for worshipping idols. When they got back to Canaan they wanted to be faithful to the true God. They did not want to join with people who worshipped idols.

What did the Samaritans offer to help the Jews to do? \_\_\_\_\_

6. The Samaritans offered to help rebuild the temple. The Jews refused their help. Read what the Samaritans did.

Ezra 4:4:

Then the people of the land (the Samaritans ) discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build.

Read this verse carefully. What did the Samaritans do that made the Jews afraid to build? \_\_\_\_\_

7. The Samaritans discouraged the Jews. They worked against the Jews in many ways. They even wrote a letter to the king of Persia. They told him lies about the Jews. The Samaritans did not want the Jews to rebuild the temple. The king of Persia believed what the Samaritans said. He ordered the work to be stopped.

Ezra 4:24:

Then the work on the house of God which is in Jerusalem stopped.

From these verse, what did the Jews stop building when the Samaritans discouraged them? \_\_\_\_\_

8. The Jews stopped building the temple.

We as Christians can become discouraged too. If we do, we are in great danger of failing God. When we are discouraged we often stop doing God's work. This is what happened to the Jews. They stopped building the temple. They sinned against God by not trusting Him to help them. Many years passed and the temple was not rebuilt.

Who discouraged the Jews so that they stopped building the temple? \_\_\_\_\_

9. The Samaritans did this. God's people, the Jews, were discouraged. They needed help. God had His servants ready to help them.

Ezra 5:1:

Now the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them.

Where can we get help if we are discouraged? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Perhaps you said from God, or from His word. Perhaps you said from the pastor or a church leader. God sent the prophet Haggai with a message first. Haggai told the Jews their troubles come from disobeying God. They had stopped building the temple. Then Haggai encouraged the Jews.

Haggai 1:4-6:

Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled (or well built) houses, while this house (the temple) lies in ruins? Now therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider how you have fared. You have sown much, and harvested little.

Haggai 1:13:

Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke to the people with the Lord's message, "I am with you, says the Lord."

When the people heard God's message, "I am with you," do you think they were encouraged, or discouraged? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. I think they were encouraged. Haggai encouraged them. Zechariah, another prophet also encouraged them. Read some of his messages from the Lord to the Jews.

Zechariah 4:6:

...Not by might, nor by power, but my Spirit, says the Lord.

Zechariah 4:9:

The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundations of this house; his hands shall also complete it.

Zechariah 8:9:

Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Let your hands be strong, you who in these days have been hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets. God sent Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the Jews. Who had discouraged them so that they stopped building the temple?"

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12. The Samaritans had discouraged the Jews. God sent His prophets to encourage them. Read what Zerubbabel and the Jews did.

Haggai 1:12:

Then Zerubbabel ... with all the remnant (or the rest) of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him.

Ezra 5:2:

Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak arose and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and with them were the prophets of God, helping them.

When Haggai and Zechariah helped them, what did the Jews begin again to rebuild?

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13. They began to rebuild the temple. God gave His prophet another message to encourage them. You remember that when Solomon built the first temple God filled it with His glory. Now see what God promised.

Haggai 2:7:

... and I will fill this house with splendour (God's glory), says the Lord.

Write the names of the two prophets who encouraged the Jews. \_\_\_\_\_

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14. Haggai and Zechariah encouraged them. They went on building the temple until it was finished.

Ezra 6:14-15:

... the Jews built and prospered, through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. They finished their building by command of the God of Israel and by decree (or order) of Cyrus ... and this house was finished.

Whom did the prophets encourage so that they rebuilt the temple? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. The prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, encouraged the Jews. They rebuilt the temple. It was a time of great rejoicing. They worshipped God. They offered burnt offerings and sin offerings on the altar. They also kept two more feasts. One was the feast of the Passover.

Ezra 6:22:

And they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy; for the Lord had made them joyful.

Who had discouraged the Jews so that they stopped building the temple?

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16. The Samaritans had discouraged the Jews. This was not what God wanted.

What did the Jews do when the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah encouraged them?

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17. They rebuilt the temple. We have seen that the prophets encouraged them with promises from God. The Jews began to trust God again. They were helped to finish the job God gave them to do.

Church workers today can get discouraged. They can be tempted to give up their work for God. The Bible is full of encouraging promises from God. Think again of God's message through Haggai and Zechariah. Think of the times Jesus told people to be encouraged and not be afraid.

Let us say that one of your Sunday School teachers or youth leader is discouraged. From what you have learned in this lesson write some promises from God to tell him. Be ready to share your thoughts in class.

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18. Who discouraged the Jews so that they stopped building the temple?

What did the Jews do when the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, encouraged them?

**WEEK 9: EZRA AND NEHEMIAH**

**DAY 4: EZRA AND THE SECOND GROUP TO JERUSALEM**

**Ezra 7 to 10**

1. We shall finish looking at the book of Ezra today. We are studying the period called the Rule of Foreign Kings. We learned about the first group who returned to Jerusalem.

Who discouraged the Jews so that they stopped building the temple? \_\_\_\_\_

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What did the Jews do when the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, encouraged them?  
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2. The Samaritans discouraged the Jews. They stopped building the temple. But when the prophets encouraged them they rebuilt the temple. The book of Ezra was written by a man called Ezra. We will learn about him today from the last four chapters of his book:

Ezra led a second group from Babylon to Jerusalem.

The people in Jerusalem had sinned against God. When Ezra prayed for them:

- (1) They confessed their sin
- (2) They put away their heathen wives.

Read Ezra 7:6 to 10. Read verse 10 again. What had Ezra set his heart to study?  
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3. Ezra wanted to know the law of God. The hand of the Lord was upon him. Read again what he did.

Ezra 7:6-7:

this Ezra went up from Babylonia... And there went up also to Jerusalem...some of the people of Israel and some of the priest and Levites, the singers and gatekeepers and the temple servants.

Ezra led a second group of Jews from Babylon. To what city did he lead them?  
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4. Ezra led a second group of Jews to Jerusalem. You know that the Jews were in Babylon for 70 years. Then King Cyrus allowed them to return to their own land. Later another king of Persia agreed for more Jews to return to Jerusalem.

Ezra 7:13-14:

I (Artaxerxes) make a decree (or law) that any one of the people of Israel or their priests or Levites in my kingdom, who freely offers to go to Jerusalem, may go with you (Ezra). For you are sent by the king...to make inquiries about Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of your God.

From what city did Ezra lead a second group of Jews to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Ezra led them from Babylon. The king of Persia sent Ezra to Jerusalem. He asked Ezra to find out if the Jews in Jerusalem were keeping God's law. The king also sent an offering to God. He told Ezra to collect offerings from all the Jews in Babylon.

Whom did Ezra lead from Babylon to Jerusalem? Was it the first group of Jews, or the second group? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. He led the second group of Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem. You remember Zerubbabel led the first group. The king of Persia told Ezra to choose leaders to rule the people. These leaders should be taught God's law. Ezra was happy about all the king said.

Read Ezra 7:27-28. Who led the second group of Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Ezra led the second group of Jews from Babylon. In Ezra 8 we find a list of those who went with him. We also read about the journey. They prayed that God would protect them.

Ezra 8:22:

For I 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.

God answered their prayer. The second group arrived safely with Ezra. But who led the first group of Jews to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Zerubbabel led the first group of Jews. About 42,000 Jews went to Jerusalem with him. You remember that they built the temple. The king sent Ezra to see if these Jews were obeying God's laws. This is what Ezra heard when he arrived in Jerusalem.

Ezra 9:1-2:

... The people of Israel and the priests and Levites have not separated themselves from the people of the lands with their abominations (or sins), from the Canaanites.... For they have taken some of their daughters to be wives for themselves and for their sons.

From these verses, had the Jews married the daughters of other Jews, or the daughters of the heathen nations?  
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9. The Jews had taken wives from the heathen nations. The Jews in Jerusalem had disobeyed God's law. They knew that the law forbade them to marry Canaanites and other heathen people. Ezra was very sad to hear this.

Ezra 9:5:

And at the evening sacrifice I rose ... and fell upon my knees and spread out my hand to the Lord my God, saying ...

Who began to pray for the Jews who had sinned? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Ezra began to pray. He prayed a long prayer. He prayed with great feeling. He prayed for those who had disobeyed God's law. As he prayed, he made himself one with those who had sinned.

Ezra 9:6,10,14:

O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to thee, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads ... we have forsaken thy commandments ... shall we break thy commandment again and intermarry with the peoples who practice these abominations (or sins)?

For whom was Ezra praying? \_\_\_\_\_

What had they done against God? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. Ezra was praying for the Jews who had sinned. They had disobeyed God's law. They had married heathen wives. Ezra knew that he often sinned in other ways. He humbly took the place of a sinner before God. He asked for God's mercy.

Ezra 9:15:

O Lord the God of Israel, thou art just ... Behold we are before thee in our guilt (or sin) for none can stand before thee because of this.

Ezra prayed for the Jews who had sinned. What do you think he wanted them to do first?

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12. Perhaps you said he wanted them to confess their sin. Or he wanted them to ask God to forgive. God heard his prayer. God's Holy Spirit worked in the hearts of these Jews. They were sorry for their sin. They cried bitterly. One man spoke to Ezra.

Ezra 10:2:

... We have broken faith with (or sinned against) our God and have married foreign (or heathen) women.

From this verse, what sin did the Jews confess? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. They confessed that they married heathen wives. The Jews did two things:

- (1) They confessed their sin.
- (2) They put away their heathen wives.

All the Jews who had sinned were called together. Ezra spoke to them.

Ezra 10:10-11:

... You have trespassed (or sinned and married foreign women, and so increased the guilt of Israel. Now then make confession to the Lord the God of your fathers, and ... separate yourselves from ... the foreign (or heathen) wives.

Ezra told the Jews first to confess their sin to the Lord. Then he told them to separate themselves from whom? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. They should separate from their heathen wives. They confessed their sin. This was good, but it was not enough. They had to do something to show they were sorry for their sin.

Ezra 10:12:

Then all the assembly answered with a loud voice, "It is so; we must do as you have said.

Ezra 10:44:

All these (names in a list) had married foreign women and they put them away.

What is the second thing the Jews did when Ezra prayed for them?

(1) They confessed their sin.

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

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15. They put away their heathen wives. Ezra did not speak angrily to the people. He prayed for them. When the Jews heard that prayer they knew they had done wrong. They saw their sin. They were sorry and wanted to turn away from it. This was true repentance. God used Ezra's prayer to help the Jews repent.

Who led the second group of Jews from babylon to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the first thing the Jews did when he prayed for them?

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) They put away their heathen wives.

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16. First they confessed their sin. Ezra led the second group of Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem. He was a man whom God could use. He helped God's people, the Jews. We have read that the hand of the Lord was upon him.

Ezra 7:10:

For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach his statutes and ordinances (or laws) in Israel.

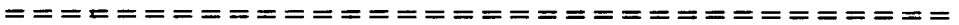
Ezra prayed for the Jews who had sinned. What did they do after they confessed their sin?  
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17. They put away their heathen wives. If they had kept them the nation of Israel would have become mixed. It would have died out. God wanted to keep the nation of Israel strong. He would send Christ through this nation. A Christian man today should not divorce his heathen wife. If you want to study more about this, read 1 Corinthians 7:12-13.

Ezra loved God's word and obeyed God's laws. He taught God's law to others. We have learned what happened when Ezra prayed for those who had sinned. The people repented.

Think over this lesson. Begin to plan a sermon on repenting. On another paper write the big things you will say. Preach the sermon if you can. Bring your paper to class. Be ready to tell the class what heppened when you preached .



18. Who led the second group of Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_



The Jews in Jerusalem had sinned. What did they do when Ezra prayed for them?

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

**WEEK 9: EZRA AND NEHEMIAH**  
**DAY 5: NEHEMIAH BUILT THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM**  
Nehemiah 1 to 7

1. Today we begin to look at the book of Nehemiah. This is the second book of history which tells about the Rule of Foreign Kings. It tells us more about the Jews who returned from Babylon.

Who led the second group of Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

The Jews in Jerusalem had sinned. What two things did they do when Ezra prayed for them?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Ezra led the second group from Babylon to Jerusalem. Ezra prayed for the Jews who had sinned. They confessed their sin. They put away their heathen wives.

From the book of Ezra we learned that the temple was rebuilt. But the walls of Jerusalem were still broken down. Nehemiah tells about the rebuilding of the walls. A man named Artaxerxes became king of Persia. Nehemiah served him. Today we shall learn two things about Nehemiah.

- (1) The king of Persia gave Nehemiah permission to go to Jerusalem.
- (2) God helped Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.



In your Bible read Nehemiah 1:1 to 4. Read verse 1 again. Who was writing the words you just read?

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3. Nehemiah was writing them. We are looking at the book of Nehemiah. We are learning about the man, Nehemiah. Nehemiah heard that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down. The Jews in Jerusalem were in great trouble and shame. This news made Nehemiah very sad. But he was a man of prayer. He knew that the Jews in Jerusalem had sinned. So he prayed to God.

Nehemiah 1:6:

let thy ear be attentive, and thy eyes open, to hear the prayer of thy servant which I now pray before thee day and night for the people of Israel thy servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against thee. Yea, I and my father's house have sinned.

Like Ezra, Nehemiah confessed with his people when he prayed. Nehemiah served the king of what foreign country?

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4. Nehemiah served the king of Persia. We are learning about the period when the Jews were ruled by foreign kings. Nehemiah was a good and trusted servant of the king. He continued to pray about the trouble in Jerusalem. He prayed about the broken walls for three months. As he prayed he felt God wanted him to go and help the Jews.

Write the name of one man we learned about who led a group of Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem.

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5. Zerubbabel led the first group to Jerusalem. Ezra led the second group. The Jews who returned rebuilt the temple. The walls of Jerusalem also needed to be rebuilt. The Jews in Jerusalem needed help to do this. Nehemiah served the king of Persia. But he wanted to go to Jerusalem. He knew he would need the king's permission to go. He wanted to know God's time for him to speak to the king. Perhaps he prayed these words many times as he waited.

Nehemiah 1:11:

... give success to thy servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man (the king of Persia).

The day came for Nehemiah to speak to the king. He needed permission to go to the city of Jerusalem. Read Nehemiah 2:1 and 2 in your Bible.

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6. One day the king noticed that Nehemiah was sad. The king asked him about this.

Nehemiah 2:3:

I said to the king, "Let the king live for ever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city (of Jerusalem), the place of my fathers' sepulchres (or graves) lies waste, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

The king asked Nehemiah what he wanted to do. This was the opportunity Nehemiah was waiting for. Where did Nehemiah want to go? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Nehemiah needed permission to go to Jerusalem. He wanted to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The king asked another question.

Nehemiah 2:4:

Then the king said to me, "For what do you make request?"

Whose permission did Nehemiah need in order to go to the city of Jerusalem?

\_\_\_\_\_

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8. Nehemiah needed permission from the king of Persia. Before Nehemiah answered the king, this is what he did.

Nehemiah 2:4:

... So I prayed to the God of heaven.

This would have been a very short prayer. Perhaps he prayed, "Lord, help me" or "God, please guide me."

Do you ever pray short prayers like these? \_\_\_\_\_

Does God answer you? \_\_\_\_\_

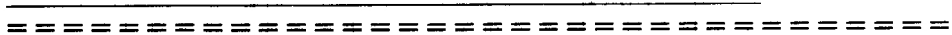
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9. Be ready to tell about this in class. God helped Nehemiah to say the right things. He asked, if it pleased the king, that he might go to a certain city. He asked permission to rebuild the walls. Nehemiah was a man of prayer. He prayed when he heard about the broken walls. He prayed for a time to speak to the king. He prayed about the answer that he should give to the king. God answered his prayer.

Nehemiah 2:8:

... And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

To what city did the king of Persia give Nehemiah permission to go?

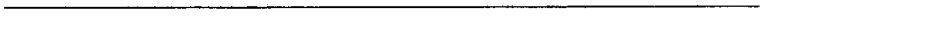


10. The king gave him permission to go to Jerusalem. This is the first thing we are learning about Nehemiah. Nehemiah went and was there three days. That night he went out and looked at all the walls. We can be sure that he prayed much as he went around the walls. He needed God's help to rebuild them. God showed him what to do. First he spoke to the Jews in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 2:17:

.. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer disgrace (or shame).

From this verse, what did Nehemiah say that he and the Jews should do?

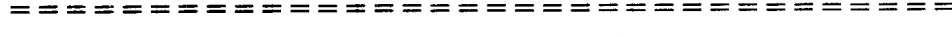


11. They should rebuild the walls. Nehemiah told the Jews how God had answered his prayers. He told them about the help from the king of Persia. The Jews were willing to help rebuild the walls.

Nehemiah 2:18:

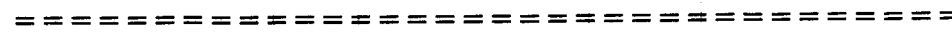
... And they said "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the work.

To what city did the king of Persia give Nehemiah permission to go? \_\_\_\_\_



12. The king gave Nehemiah permission to go to Jerusalem. Nehemiah wanted to rebuild the walls of the city. The Jews were willing to help him. You remember that their enemies tried to stop them from rebuilding the temple. These same enemies tried to stop them from building the walls.

Who do you think prayed that God would help them to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem?



13. Nehemiah prayed. We shall see that God answered his prayer. God helped Nehemiah rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. This is the second thing we are learning about Nehemiah. God helped Nehemiah to make plans. Nehemiah divided the work. He gave each family of Jews a part of the wall to rebuild. The enemies were angry. They made fun of the Jews. They tried to stop them. But Nehemiah and the Jews prayed and continued building.

Nehemiah 4:4-6:

Hear, O God, for we are despised ... So we built the wall; and all the wall was joined together to half its height. For the people had a mind to work.

The king of Persia gave Nehemiah permission to go to Jerusalem. From this verse, what did God help Nehemiah to rebuild there? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. He helped Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah prayed. God answered his prayer.

Nehemiah 6:15-16:

So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations round about us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem; for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.

Who helped Nehemiah and the Jews rebuild the walls of Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. God helped them. The enemies tried many different ways to stop the work. They discouragerd the Jews. They tried to make them afraid. They made fun of them. They told Nehemiah someone was coming to kill him. But Nehemiah was a man of prayer and God helped him. Read what he said.

Nehemiah 6:11:

... Should such a man as I flee (or run away)?

To what city did the king of Persia give Nehemiah permission to go? \_\_\_\_\_

What did God help Nehemiah to do there? \_\_\_\_\_

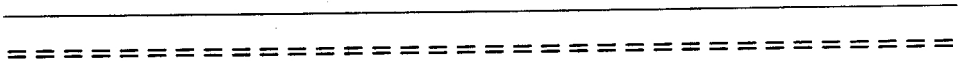
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16. The king gave Nehemiah permission to go to Jerusalem. God helped Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. God answered prayer. He did not allow the enemies to stop the work.

Satan is our enemy today. He uses some of the same ways to stop God's work.

Has Satan tried to stop the work of your church in some way? \_\_\_\_\_

Write what happened, and how you overcome him. \_\_\_\_\_



17. Be ready to talk about this in class.

To what city did the king of Persia give Nehemiah permission to go? \_\_\_\_\_

What did God help Nehemiah to do there? \_\_\_\_\_