

A new beginning with God

Sermons through the Old Testament Books of Ezra and Haggai

Jeremiah 29:11-14 and Ezra 1:1-2:70

An Introduction:

Ezra writes of the history of God's people during a time when God's people are given a new beginning. It's around the middle of the 6th Century BC. They have lost possession of the Promised Land. It's been taken from them and they have been exiled off to Assyria and Babylon. The book of Lamentations recalls their prayers of sorrow, regret and hope. In fulfilment of a promise and because of his faithfulness and love for his people God grants a new beginning for his people: a fresh start. They are given the opportunity to return to Jerusalem; to live in the land and rebuild the Temple. Ezra recalls the history of events that unfold and Haggai is the preacher prophet God raises up to encourage his people during this time. We are meant to be reminded of who God is from these two books, how he relates to his people and we to him.

Though we might forget God, God doesn't forget his people.

God gives his people new beginnings with him.

Psalm 137; Lamentations 3:19-26; Jeremiah 29:11-14

It's 537BC. God's people in exile (Babylon). God moves in Cyrus the king of Persia to allow God's people to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple.

Ezra 1:1-2:67

God keeps his promises. The people resettle and show their appreciation and support.

Ezra 2:68-70

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Begin with prayer asking God to teach you of himself from his word.

Read the introduction to the sermon series (See over)

Questions:

1. Before entering the Promised Land God had given a warning to his people. What was it? Read Deuteronomy Chapter 8 verses 19 and 20.
2. What God had warned happened. Eventually God's people find themselves exiled. Read Psalm 137 and Lamentations Chapter 3 verses 19 to 26. What do you learn about the people of God and their hopes in God?
3. Whilst in exile, God made a promise. What was it? Read Jeremiah Chapter 29 verses 10 to 14.
4. As promised Babylon is conquered by the Persians in 539BC. Read Ezra Chapter 1 verses 1 to 4. What happened? What did God do?
5. How did God's people respond? Read Ezra Chapter 1 verse 5 and 6.
6. What more did King Cyrus do? Read Ezra Chapter 1 verses 7 to 11.
7. Chapter 2 of Ezra lists all the people that took up the opportunity of a new beginning with God. Not all God's people in exile chose to return. Those who did, how did they show their appreciation and support for God's work. See verses 68 and 69.
Note: 61,000 darics of gold = 500 kilograms of gold = \$39,165,000 today and 5000 minas of silver = 2,700kilograms of silver = \$3,000,000 today.
8. What has God taught you of himself from his word?

Close with a prayer that sums up your response to what you have learn of God from his word?

Preparation for next week. Read Ezra Chapter 3.