

## The Book of Ezra

# 22

## Morning Devotions

Select a passage in God's Word. Talk with the Lord as you read the passage, then go back and find one or two verses which the Lord has impressed on your heart and meditate on them.

## Morning Study

This morning we begin our study of **Ezra**. The way this book follows on so easily from **2 Chronicles** lends support to the ancient Jewish tradition that Ezra was also the writer of **Chronicles**. This would make **Ezra** the equivalent of **3 Chronicles**! Just compare these two passages:

**Read 2 Chronicles 36:22-23**

**Read Ezra 1:1-4**

Cyrus, the king of Persia, had decreed that the Jews could return to their land after seventy years in exile (note the prophecy concerning Cyrus in **Isaiah 48:28-45:13**). Toward the end of these seventy years, Babylon had been conquered by the Medes and the Persians (**Daniel 5**), who now had suzerainty over Judah.

Ezra was a priest who later returned to Jerusalem, in 458 BC, during the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes I of Persia, the same king for whom Nehemiah served as cupbearer (**Nehemiah 1:11**). In fact, Ezra and Nehemiah were contemporaries and co-workers, and the Jewish *Talmud* counted these two books as one book – **Ezra-Nehemiah**.

Ezra can be divided into seven main sections:

- The record of the return of the Jews to their land – **1:1-2:70**
- The rebuilding of the altar – **3:1-13**
- Opposition to the rebuilding of the Temple – **4:1-5**
- Correspondence between Judah and Persia – **4:6-6:12**
- The rebuilding of the Temple – **6:13-22**
- Ezra's return to Jerusalem – **7:1-8:36**
- Ezra's covenantal challenge to the people – **9:1-10:44**

Let's now read the book of **Ezra** in one sitting, bearing in mind that at the core of **Ezra** is the re-establishing of the covenant between God and his people.

# Memory Verse

What, then, shall we say in response to this?  
 If God is for us, who can be against us?  
 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave  
 him up for us all – how will he not also, along  
 with him, graciously give us all things?

Romans 8:31-32

Here are a few suggestions that may help you to memorize your memory verse:

- ➡ Ask the Lord to help you remember his Word (see [John 14:26](#)).
- ➡ Use the version of the Bible you are most familiar with. What you normally read in your Bible is what you need to be memorizing.
- ➡ Don't just memorize the contents of the verse; memorize its "address" (the verse reference) as well. You can do this by following this pattern: Step 1: **reference**; Step 2: **verse content**; Step 3: **reference**. Then repeat steps 1-3. Note that you are quoting the reference twice as many times as you quote the actual verse content. This gives the verse a clear "reference tag."
- ➡ After you have read your memory verse out aloud several times, try going through your memory verse *without* reading your computer screen.
- ➡ Look up your memory verse in your Bible. Look at its immediate context and read the verses that come before and after your memory verse.
- ➡ Print out your memory verse or jot it down on a piece of paper. Take this paper with you when you go to work or do other daily activities. Meditate on the meaning of the verse throughout the day.
- ➡ During your noon appointment with the Lord, take out your memory verse and go over it again. Talk to the Lord about what this verse means to you personally.
- ➡ In the evening (at either your evening study or your evening devotions), see if you can quote your memory verse from memory. Then, without looking at the memory verse itself, see if you can find it in your Bible.
- ➡ The next day, before you begin committing a new verse to memory, rehearse your previous day's memory verse and see if you can remember it (without cheating!).
- ➡ Finally, at the end of the week (possibly on the Sunday), collect all your week's memory verses, rehearse them and see if you can recall them without reading them. Spend a little extra time on any verses you have difficulty recalling.
- ➡ Remember: Don't just memorize a verse. Put it into practice ([James 1:22](#)). It is not being able to quote a verse from memory that counts. It is His Word *abiding* in your heart that counts ([John 15:7](#)). When you actually apply a verse consistently to your daily life, that is when you *truly* know that verse!