

Ezra/Nehemiah
Community Presbyterian Church
Lesson Two

1. Ezra 2:1-2 Now these are the people of the province, that came up from among the captive exiles whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had carried into exile in Babylon, who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own city; who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel.

2. Ezra 3:1-3

When the seventh month arrived – the Israelites being settled in their towns – the entire people assembled as a body in Jerusalem. The Jeshua son of Jozadak and his brother priests and Zerubbabel son of Shaltiel and his brother set to and built the altar of the God of Israel to offer burnt offerings upon it as is written in the Torah of Moses, the man of God. They set up the altar on its foundation because they were in fear of the peoples of the land and they offered burnt offerings on it the Eternal burnt offerings each morning and evening.

3. Ezra 3:11

All the people raised a great shout extolling the Eternal because the foundation of House of the Eternal had been laid.

4. Ezra 3:12

The old people who had seen the first house, wept loudly at the sight of the founding of this house.”

5. Rashi explains:

These were the many people, the larger portion of the community, who had not seen the First Temple they greatly rejoiced and raised their voices in happiness and celebration. . Those who heard them could distinguish the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping of the people. The sound of the rejoicing was loud but the sound of the weeping was louder to people listening at a distance.

6. Ezra and Nehemiah mention the Temple a total of 57 times, but the text never refers to the rebuilt temple as The Second Temple.

7. (BT Yoma 9)

However, considering that the people during the Second Temple period were engaged in Torah study, observance of mitzvot, and acts of kindness, and that they did not perform the sinful acts that were performed in the First Temple, why was the Second Temple destroyed? It was destroyed due to the fact that there was wanton hatred during that period. This comes to teach you that the sin of wanton hatred is equivalent to the three severe transgressions: Idol worship, forbidden sexual relations and bloodshed.

8. Lamentations 5:21

Turn Thou us unto Thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; Renew our days as of old.

9. Ezra 4:1-2

When the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the Eternal God of Israel, they approached Zerubbabel and the chiefs of the clans and said to them, "Let us build with you, since we too worship your God having offered sacrifices to Him since the time of King Esarhaddon of Assyria who brought us here.

10. II Kings 17:25-34

They took over Samaria and lived in its towns. When they first lived there, they did not worship the Lord; so, He sent lions among them and they killed some of the people. It was reported to the king of Assyria: "The people you deported and resettled in the towns of Samaria do not know what the god of that country requires. He has sent lions among them, which are killing them off, because the people do not know what he requires."

Then the king of Assyria gave this order: "Have one of the priests you took captive from Samaria go back to live there and teach the people what the god of the land requires." So one of the priests who had been exiled from Samaria came to live in Bethel and taught them how to worship the Eternal... Nevertheless, each national group made its own gods in the several towns. They worshiped the Eternal, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been brought.

11. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria? For Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. (John 4: 9)

12. Venerable Bede

This story is well known. By the enemies of Judah and Benjamin he means the Samaritans whom the king of the Assyrians, when the ten tribes had been captured, transported from various peoples of the Gentiles into their cities and lands; they accepted God's law and observed it to a degree and yet continued to be slaves to the same idols as before.