

The Bible Panorama – History X: Ezra
“For the Restoration in God” **Ezra 7:1-10**
Going Beyond the sermons into the Scripture preached by Pastor Peter Oh on August 26, 2018

Entering In:

*What is something that has changed in the church during your lifetime?
Do you think it was a change for the better or for the worse?*

1. In our previous study, the Chronicler highlighted three major periods of reform during the reigns of Asa, Hezekiah and Josiah. Why did he do that?
- 2.

Now that some of the exiles were returning to Jerusalem, what evidence that these reforms were taken to heart by the returning exiles do we find in Ezra?

- 2:59-63 (cf.2:36-58)
- 3:2-6
- 3:10, 11
- 6:19-22

What further reform was initiated by Ezra? (9:1, 2; 10:2-4, 17)

Read Deuteronomy 7:3-4. In light of this, how would you characterize Ezra’s reform? Explain.

- A. Keeping up with the times
- B. Legalism
- C. Returning to God’s revealed will
- D. Other

What is at stake if God’s covenant people marry outside the covenant community?

Is this prohibition of marrying outside the covenant community still relevant today? Cite at least one New Testament passage to support your answer.

Does Paul’s admonition, “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14) apply to other relationships besides marriage? Give an example.

2. In Cyrus’ decree (Ezra 1:2ff), who did he acknowledge had given him “all the kingdoms of the earth”?

What did he say that he had been appointed to do?

To understand how he came to know this, we must consult the Old Testament prophets. Read Isaiah 44:24-28 to answer the following questions.

- How does the LORD identify himself?
- What does he say of Jerusalem and the towns of Judah?
- What does he say of Cyrus?

What did the LORD say he would do for Cyrus? (Isaiah 45:1-3) Why?

How do we know that Isaiah intended for us to understand these things as prophecies? (Isaiah 41:21-23)

Who was in Cyrus' court that would have had knowledge of these prophecies? (Daniel 9:1, 2, 25; 10:1) [cf. Jeremiah 25:11, 12]

Which of the following is the most likely way that Cyrus came to know God's plan for him? Explain.

- A. Through a dream or a vision
- B. Daniel presented a scroll of Isaiah's prophecies to him
- C. He didn't know it was God's plan for him; a *second Isaiah* wrote chapters 40 – 66 after the fact, making it a historical account instead of a prophecy
- D. Other

According to Isaiah 45:4-7, was Cyrus a believer? What does Isaiah say that leads you to your conclusion?

What implication does this have for our view of and/or participation in politics?

Living It Out:

Pray with the Psalmist,

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God" (Psalm 20:7).

"Obey the command of the LORD,

'Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save'" (Psalm 46:3).