

# EXILE AND RETURN Lesson 29

## FIRST DAY

### Read Lesson 28 Notes

## SECOND DAY:

### Read Ezekiel 1:28-2:5 and Daniel 2:19-23

#### Ezekiel 1:28 -2:5

[28] Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him.

This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

#### Ezekiel 2

##### Ezekiel's Call to Be a Prophet

[2:1] He said to me, “Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.” [2] As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.

[3] He said: “Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me to this very day. [4] The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says.’ [5] And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that a prophet has been among them.

#### Daniel 2:19-23

[19] During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven [20] and said:

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his.

[21] He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others.

He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

[22] He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.

[23] I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

## THIRD Day:

### Read

### Ezra 1:1-4; 6:16-22; 9:1-15; and Esther 4:12-14

#### Ezra 1:1-4

##### Cyrus Helps the Exiles to Return

[Ezr 1:1] In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing:

[2] “This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: “ ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. [3] Any of his people among you may go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem, and may their God be with them. [4] And in any locality where survivors may now be living, the people are to provide them with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem.’ ”

#### Ezra 6:16-22

[16] Then the people of Israel—the priests, the Levites and the rest of the exiles—celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy. [17] For the dedication of this house of God they offered a hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred male

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lambs and, as a sin offering for all Israel, twelve male goats, one for each of the tribes of Israel. [18] And they installed the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their groups for the service of God at Jerusalem, according to what is written in the Book of Moses.

### The Passover

[19] On the fourteenth day of the first month, the exiles celebrated the Passover. [20] The priests and Levites had purified themselves and were all ceremonially clean. The Levites slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the exiles, for their relatives the priests and for themselves. [21] So the Israelites who had returned from the exile ate it, together with all who had separated themselves from the unclean practices of their Gentile neighbors in order to seek the LORD, the God of Israel. [22] For seven days they celebrated with joy the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because the LORD had filled them with joy by changing the attitude of the king of Assyria so that he assisted them in the work on the house of God, the God of Israel.

### Ezra 9:1-15

#### Ezra's Prayer About Intermarriage

[9:1] After these things had been done, the leaders came to me and said, "The people of Israel, including the priests and the Levites, have not kept themselves separate from the neighboring peoples with their detestable practices, like those of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites. [2] They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, and have mingled the holy race with the peoples around them. And the leaders and officials have led the way in this unfaithfulness."

[3] When I heard this, I tore my tunic and cloak, pulled hair from my head and beard and sat down appalled. [4] Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel gathered around me because of this unfaithfulness of the exiles. And I sat there appalled until the evening sacrifice.

[5] Then, at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my self-abasement, with my tunic and cloak torn, and fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the LORD my God [6] and prayed:

"I am too ashamed and disgraced, my God, to lift up my face to you, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens. [7] From the days of our ancestors until now, our guilt has been great. Because of our sins, we and our kings and our priests have been subjected to the sword and captivity, to pillage and humiliation at the hand of foreign kings, as it is today.

[8] "But now, for a brief moment, the LORD our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage. [9] Though we are slaves, our God has not forsaken us in our bondage. He has shown us kindness in the sight of the kings of Persia: He has granted us new life to rebuild the house of our God and repair its ruins, and he has given us a wall of protection in Judah and Jerusalem.

[10] "But now, our God, what can we say after this? For we have forsaken the commands [11] you gave through your servants the prophets when you said: 'The land you are entering to possess is a land polluted by the corruption of its peoples. By their detestable practices they have filled it with their impurity from one end to the other. [12] Therefore, do not give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters for your sons. Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them at any time, that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it to your children as an everlasting inheritance.' [13] "What has happened to us is a result of our evil deeds and our great guilt, and yet, our God, you have punished us less than our sins deserved and have given us a remnant like this. [14] Shall we then break your commands again and intermarry with the peoples who commit such detestable practices? Would you not be angry enough with us to destroy us, leaving us no remnant or survivor? [15] LORD, the God of Israel, you are righteous! We are left this day as a remnant. Here we are before you in our guilt, though because of it not one of us can stand in your presence."

### Esther 4:12-14

[12] When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, [13] he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. [14] For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"

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### Question 7a

**Nehemiah 8:1-8;** [8:1] all the people came together as one in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the teacher of the Law to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel.

[2] So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. [3] He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

[4] Ezra the teacher of the Law stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion. Beside him on his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah and Maaseiah; and on his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam.

[5] Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. [6] Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

[7] The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah—instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. [8] They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read.

### **FOURTH DAY**

**Read Nehemiah 1: 4:4-5; 5:6-9;**  
**6:14-15;**

#### Nehemiah 1

#### **Nehemiah's Prayer**

[Ne 1:1] The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah:

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, [2] Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

[3] They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

[4] When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. [5] Then I said:

"LORD, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, [6] let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. [7] We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

[8] "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, [9] but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

[10] "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. [11] Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant

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success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.”

I was cupbearer to the king.

### **Nehemiah 4:4-5**

[4] Hear us, our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. [5] Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders.

### **Nehemiah 5:6-9**

[6] When I heard their outcry and these charges, I was very angry. [7] I pondered them in my mind and then accused the nobles and officials. I told them, “You are charging your own people interest!” So I called together a large meeting to deal with them [8] and said: “As far as possible, we have bought back our fellow Jews who were sold to the Gentiles. Now you are selling your own people, only for them to be sold back to us!” They kept quiet, because they could find nothing to say.

[9] So I continued, “What you are doing is not right. Shouldn't you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies?”

### **Nehemiah 6:14-15**

[14] Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, my God, because of what they have done; remember also the prophet Noadiah and how she and the rest of the prophets have been trying to intimidate me. [15] So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days.

## **FIFTH DAY**

### **Read Haggai 1:3-6; Zechariah 1:1-6** **And Malachi 1:1-2**

#### **Haggai 1:3-6**

[3] Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: [4] “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?”

[5] Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. [6] You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.”

#### **Zechariah 1:1-6**

##### **A Call to Return to the LORD**

[Zec 1:1] In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo:

[2] “The LORD was very angry with your ancestors. [3] Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Return to me,’ declares the LORD Almighty, ‘and I will return to you,’ says the LORD Almighty. [4] Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed: This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.’ But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the LORD. [5] Where are your ancestors now? And the prophets, do they live forever? [6] But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your ancestors?”

“Then they repented and said, ‘The LORD Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do.’”

#### **Malachi 1:1-2**

[Mal 1:1] A prophecy: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.

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### Israel Doubts God's Love

[2] “I have loved you,” says the LORD.

“But you ask, ‘How have you loved us?’

“Was not Esau Jacob's brother?” declares the LORD.

“Yet I have loved Jacob,

### **SIXTH DAY:**

**Reflect on God’s faithfulness to you**  
**in light of our Study**

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