

OUR GOD IS IN CONTROL...A STUDY IN EZRA
Introduction to Ezra
Ezra 1:1-4

In 587 BC the Babylonians ravaged Jerusalem and the Temple and deported most of Judah's population under God's _____ for their disobedience (II Chronicles 36:15-21).

As in Egypt 1000 years earlier, God sovereignly used "_____ to make way for _____".

Ezra and Nehemiah record the exiles returning to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple, city, and walls, as well as their chosen status as God's people of _____.

Ezra 1:1-4

Though not a true believer in Yahweh, King Cyrus had at least two objectives in allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem. (They would carry out neither of them.)

- He was establishing buffer states around his empire that would be _____ to him.
- Subjects resettling in their own countries could worship their gods, who could _____ for him and to his gods Bel and Nebo.

His proclamation was the hand of the "God of the heavens" as sovereign ruler of heaven and earth.

The emphasis in verses 2-3 on the _____ sets the tone for this and other postexilic books, with the temple being the nation's lifeblood in its relationship to God.

I Peter 2:4-5; Ephesians 2:19-22

Themes in Ezra

It is the tale of God's rule, using three kings: Cyrus the Great, Darius the Great, and Artaxerxes.

Though the Jews were punished with exile, the markers and identity of God's people are their "_____" and "_____" to obey God's commands.

Themes in Ezra are applicable today:

- Renewed worship
- Renewed worship and the promise of _____
- Renewed worship and _____