

Key words in Ezra

Jews: Hebrew *yehudi*—4:12, 23; 5:1, 5; 6:7, 8, 14—from a root meaning “to praise” or “to give thanks.” Jacob used this term during his blessing of his son Judah in Genesis 49:8: “Judah, your brothers will praise you.” A Jew may be a person from the tribe of Judah (Numbers 10:14), or an Israelite living in the geographical region known as Judah (see Jer. 7:30). During the post-Exilic period, “Jew” referred to the Israelites as a people group. The use of the term “Jew” is also found in the NT. Jesus is called “the King of the Jews” (Matt. 27:29). Later, Paul clarified that the true Jew is a person marked by “circumcision of the heart” (Rom. 2:28, 29).

Remnant: Hebrew *sha’ar*—9:8, 15—literally, “to remain” or “to be left over.” A remnant refers to the few people who survive after a catastrophe, such as the Flood. In the Bible, the word mostly refers to the diminished Israelite population who survived the Exile (9:8). The prophets also use the word to specifically describe the Israelites who remained faithful to God (Amos 5:14, 15). The prophet Isaiah described the Messiah as one day gathering the remnant of Israel from all the nations, even attracting some Gentiles to Himself (Is. 11:10, 11, 16). The remnant therefore points to God’s covenant faithfulness in sparing His people. Through the preservation of Israel, all the world would be blessed by the coming of the Messiah (Gen. 12:3).