

Out of Exile

(Ezra 1:1-4)

- Introduction:
1. During this time of “exile,” I could not help but think of the similarities (on a much smaller scale) between what we have been going through and with what God’s people went through in their 70-year-exile in Babylon.
 2. The historic record of the exile is tremendously faith-building.
 - a. The exile and length of the exile was predicted (Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10).
 - b. The king who authorizes their return from exile is predicted 100 years before he was even born (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-4).
 3. Let’s consider and compare some of the lessons learned from Judah’s exile to our “exile.”

I. The Importance of the Assembly.

- A. The synagogue has no roots in any Bible command.
- B. It was the destruction of Solomon’s temple and the exile in 586 B.C. that gave rise to the synagogue.
- C. The exiles soon realized the importance of assembly, community, fellowship, and guidance.
- D. Have we not experienced the same thing (Hebrews 10:24-25).

II. The Importance of Scripture

- A. (Nehemiah 8:1-8).
- B. Imagine what it must have been like, living in essence, a lifetime without the Scriptures.
- C. The people must have been biblically illiterate, and they hungered for God’s word.
- D. Notice that the people:
 1. “Called for the book of the Law” (v. 1).
 2. Stood when the book was opened (v. 5).
 3. They didn’t seem to be watching the clock (v. 3).
 4. They were attentive (v. 3).

III. The Importance of Discipline

- A. Remember, this exile was a direct result of their disobedience (Leviticus 26:34).
- B. God’s discipline created a godly fear in their hearts, causing them to fear him more than the people around them. Thus, they began worshipping God and observing feast days (Ezra 3:1-5).
- C. Discipline, pain, and hardship bring reflection and cause us to re-prioritize our lives.

- Conclusion:
1. I hope we, like Judah, come out of our “exile” learning the lessons the same lessons they learned.
 2. May we have a greater appreciation for the assembly, Scripture, and our priorities.