

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY SCHEDULE FOR 12/31/12 TO 1/06/13

Because God loved the world, He sent yet another time of renewal to Judah, King Josiah led this revival and kept Judah true to the Lord, at least outwardly, throughout his reign. The Savior would come from the tribe of Judah, from the house (dynasty) of David. The Lord had promised that. And so he patiently worked in and through the lives of Judah's kings. As you read, look for evidence of that holy work.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2013 Read 2 Chronicles 36

Judah entered a long, dark tunnel after the death of Josiah. Four wicked kings followed him. The reign of the last three was punctuated by invasion by the Babylonians- a ruthless enemy that had managed to conquer even the fierce Assyrian army. During the reign of the last king, Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar attacked for the last time and completed the deportations that had begun a few years earlier. For 70 years thereafter, the temple lay in ruins, just as God had foretold through the prophet Jeremiah. Nonetheless, the exile in Babylon did not cancel the Lord's promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, or David. The last two verses of today's chapter chronicle the way the Lord brought His people back to the land He had promised them.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2, 2013 Read Ezra 1 and 2

Ezra's book recounts the return of the exiles to Palestine after about 70 years in captivity (dating from the first deportation in 605 B.C.). as you read, note the miraculous way in which the Lord used a heathen ruler, Cyrus, to accomplish His ultimate purpose- sending the world's Messiah, who would be born, not in Babylon, but in Bethlehem as the prophet had foretold (Micah 5:2).

THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 2013 Read Ezra 3 and 4

Despite their fears about the dangers, the former exiles, led by Zerubbabel, began to rebuild the temple. Sure enough, as soon as the foundation was laid, opposition began to heat up. Chapter 4 gives three examples of this opposition. As you read today, ask yourself how you would have responded to the opposition had you been among the returning exiles.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 4, 2013 Read Ezra 5 and 6

Twenty years after the exile's return, the temple still had not been completed. The Lord acts on His people's behalf through the government of King Darius. And He sends His prophets to His people. As you read, note the role they played in the temple's completion.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 2013 Read Ezra 7 and 8

A gap of about 58 years lies between Ezra 6 and 7. The events recorded in the Book of Esther occurred during this gap. Ezra has to this point in his book related events as they had been told to him. Now, the book becomes an autobiography. Ezra tells more about himself and how he came to lead the second large group of exiles back to Jerusalem. As you read, notice phrases like "the hand of the Lord my God was on me" (7:29). You may wish to underline them when they appear in the text.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6, 2014 Come to worship with on Epiphany and see the God in flesh revealed. Then spend some time in the afternoon or evening catching up on any reading you missed all week.