

NCPC Sunday School: Ezra, A Building Project

Shorter Catechism Question 15

Q. 15. *What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?*

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created was their eating the forbidden fruit.

- I. **Introduction and Background:** The story of Ezra is set after the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and its temple and took many of the people into exile And the book of Ezra picks up the story about 50 years later when some of them return to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple and their lives there.

- A. Genre: history with a purpose
- B. Date: Ezra begins with the decree of Cytus in 538 BC and Ezra's return 458 BC.
- C. Author: anonymous, but Hebrew tradition is that Ezra is the main author

II. Outline: There are 2 movements: rebuilding the temple and rebuilding the community

- A. Return of the Exiles and Rebuilding of the temple (1:1-6:22)
 - a. The decree of Cyrus (1:1-4)
 - b. Preparation for returning (1:5-11)
 - c. The list of those returning (2:1-70)
 - d. Rebuilding of the altar (3:1-6)
 - e. Rebuilding of the temple (3:7-6:22)
 - 1. Rebuilding begun (3:7-13)
 - 2. Opposition to rebuilding (4:1-24)
 - 3. Rebuilding resumed (5:1-2)
 - 4. More opposition (5:3-6:12)
 - 5. Rebuilding completed (6:13-22)
- B. Return of Ezra and Rebuilding of the Community (7:1-10:44)
 - 1. Return of Ezra (7:1-8:36)
 - 2. Rebuilding of the community (9:1-10:44)
 - 3. Ezra's reaction to intermarriage (9:1:15)
 - 4. The people's reaction to Ezra (10:1-44)

III. Message and Theology: The major themes are (1) rebuilding the house of God, (2) the importance of the people of God and (3) the primacy of the written Word of God (found predominately in Nehemiah).

- A. Rebuilding the House of God
- B. The People of God
- C. The Written Word
- D. Sovereignty and Responsibility

IV. New Testament Considerations:

- A. Expanded definition of house
- B. The book of Ezra and the open question concerning the poor state of the church.
- C. The reality of the church today