



TEACHER NOTES FOR CHAPTER 14 THE KINGS & PROPHETS OF ISRAEL

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THEME	BACK WHERE WE BELONG: A NEW AGE DAWNS
HOMEWORK BIBLE READING	Ezra 3-4 & Nehemiah 1-4
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OVERVIEW

The Old Testament does not end in judgment! This chapter allows students to see that the final installment of the Old Testament story is the return, rebuilding and restoration of the Israelites to Jerusalem.

As God had promised he did not leave his people in Exile forever. After the time allocated to them had been served God moved in history to bring his people back. The story of their return and rebuilding in Ezra and Nehemiah is a great read and often students are very happy to read about what is a particularly positive moment in their history.

Even in the good times there are challenges though and this chapter gives you the opportunity to explore some of those that confronted the Israelites upon their return. There is no more idol worship in the land but they have new enemies and still have to act to ensure they keep walking in the ways God laid out for the nation at Sinai.

It is significant to point out to the students that there is no king from here on in the history of this nation. The role of the priest increases and it is particularly this period from the return of the exiles to the coming of Christ where the political and religious landscape that greets us in the New Testament is forged.

At the end of the chapter there is room for reflection and we would encourage you to find a way of celebrating the journey that the students have taken through this part of the Bible as you come to the end of this lesson which is the end of the course.

OUR TIPS

The 4 investigations

It is hard to do justice to this period in such a short time. There is room in this period to do a study on leadership as we have some of the best leadership of the entire period right here at the end. The best way that we could end the study of this period is to focus on a number of snapshots of what the returning exiles faced as they were re-established in the land. You may choose to break the students up into groups for this activity and report back to the class or you may choose to work through the 4 different investigations together.

P244 Reflecting back

It is really important to finish the study well. Depending on your location, the climate and your students you may want to get them to sit outside on their own for a period to have a chance in silence to reflect back on what they have learnt during this study. It might be good to start that process off by giving your own summary of things that you enjoyed focusing on during the study.

Survey the students

If this is the first time that you have taught the course it would be a great idea at the end of this chapter to survey the students about how they have found the course. Ask open ended questions like: How have you found this course? What do you think could be improved? What did you enjoy learning about the most?

If you have any suggestions for us after receiving that feedback we would love to know!

YOUR TIPS

We would love to hear what you have learnt after teaching this chapter. If you have tips that you are happy for us to freely share with other teachers using this course please let us know by emailing them through to us at admin@biblicalturningpoints.com.au.

COMMON QUESTIONS STUDENTS ASK

- Why did they send the women and children away?
- Why don't they have a king again?
- Why didn't everyone return?

We would love to hear what questions students are asking in response to the content of this chapter. Please let us know at admin@biblicalturningpoints.com.au.

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU TEACH THIS CHAPTER

- Kings and Prophets Visual aid

If you know of any websites or resources that would assist teachers with bringing this chapter to life please let us know at admin@biblicalturningpoints.com.au.

ANSWERS FOR CHAPTER 14

Answers have been provided for questions where we believe clarification may be needed or where an activity requires the teacher to have the correct answer before the students commence the activity.

If you have any questions about an activity not written up in the following notes, please contact us at admin@biblicalturningpoints.com.au.

CHAPTER 14

p. 236-7 Activity	Investigation 1: The rebuilding of the Temple
	<p>Read Ezra 3-6 and Haggai 1-2</p> <p>What motivated the returning Israelites to prioritise building a new temple? God spoke to the prophet Haggai and told him it was time to rebuild the temple. God stirred up the spirits of the leaders and they began work.</p> <p>How was it funded? King Cyrus returned the articles taken from the temple and the costs were paid by the royal treasury.</p> <p>What opposition did they face and how was the project delayed? The people around them caused them to fear and frustrated their plans. Accusations were also made against them to Artaxerxes</p> <p>Why didn't the people opposing them want the temple rebuilt? They feared it would make the people strong and they would be defeated. The king would no longer be paid taxes from the area.</p> <p>What does Haggai say about the delay? That the Israelites should be more focused on completing the project as they are living in homes they have managed to complete since returning.</p> <p>How do the people respond to Haggai? They resume the work.</p> <p>What role did Darius play in allowing the project to commence? Darius was asked to stop the rebuilding. He checked the records and found King Cyrus' orders and decreed that they be carried out and those trying to stop this from happening would be punished.</p> <p>Why was there such a mixed response to the laying of the foundation? There was joy at the realisation that their people were re-established in the land but there was sorrow at the loss of the riches and influence of the former kingdom.</p>

p. 238-9 Activity	Investigation 2: The intermarriage saga
	<p>Read Ezra 9-10 What prompted Ezra to confront this issue? He was told by some leaders that the people, including the Levites and priests, had not kept themselves separate but had married people from neighbouring peoples.</p> <p>What does it say about Ezra that he was willing to do this? He stood up against the majority. He stayed true to God's laws.</p> <p>What command did Ezra quote about marriage and where is it found in the Bible? (In the land you are entering)...Do not take their daughters in marriage for your sons and do not give your daughters in marriage to them. Deuteronomy 7:3</p>

p. 240-1 Activity	Investigation 3: The rebuilding of the walls
	<p>Read Nehemiah 1-4, 6 and 12 What does Nehemiah hear about Jerusalem while he is still in Susa? The survivors are in great trouble and distress. The Jerusalem wall is broken down and the gates have been burned.</p> <p>What does Nehemiah's response reveal about the people's faith in exile? He wept, mourned and fasted. There were those in exile like Nehemiah who stayed true to their faith and continued to worship God.</p> <p>Make a list of the main points of Nehemiah's prayer in chapter 1. Acknowledgement of God and his greatness. Confession of sin of the people Hear us God and grant me success in speaking to the king.</p> <p>Explain the circumstances that led to Nehemiah returning to Jerusalem. Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer. He asked the king to be sent back to Jerusalem so he could help to rebuild it. He also asked for and was given letters to local authorities for supply of materials and safe conduct.</p> <p>Why do you think Nehemiah inspected the city at night and what did he discover? He knew he would face opposition so he inspected at night so he would not be stopped.</p> <p>Why do you think Nehemiah was successful in rebuilding the walls? He gained the trust of the workers. He worked with them and was a faithful man.</p>

p. 242-3 Activity	Investigation 4: The renewal of the covenant
	<p><i>Read Nehemiah 8-10</i> <i>When Ezra opens the book of the Law to read, how do the people respond?</i> They stood to listen and they wept with joy.</p> <p><i>How long did they listen for?</i> Each day for 7 days.</p>