

# The Book of Ezra-Nehemiah

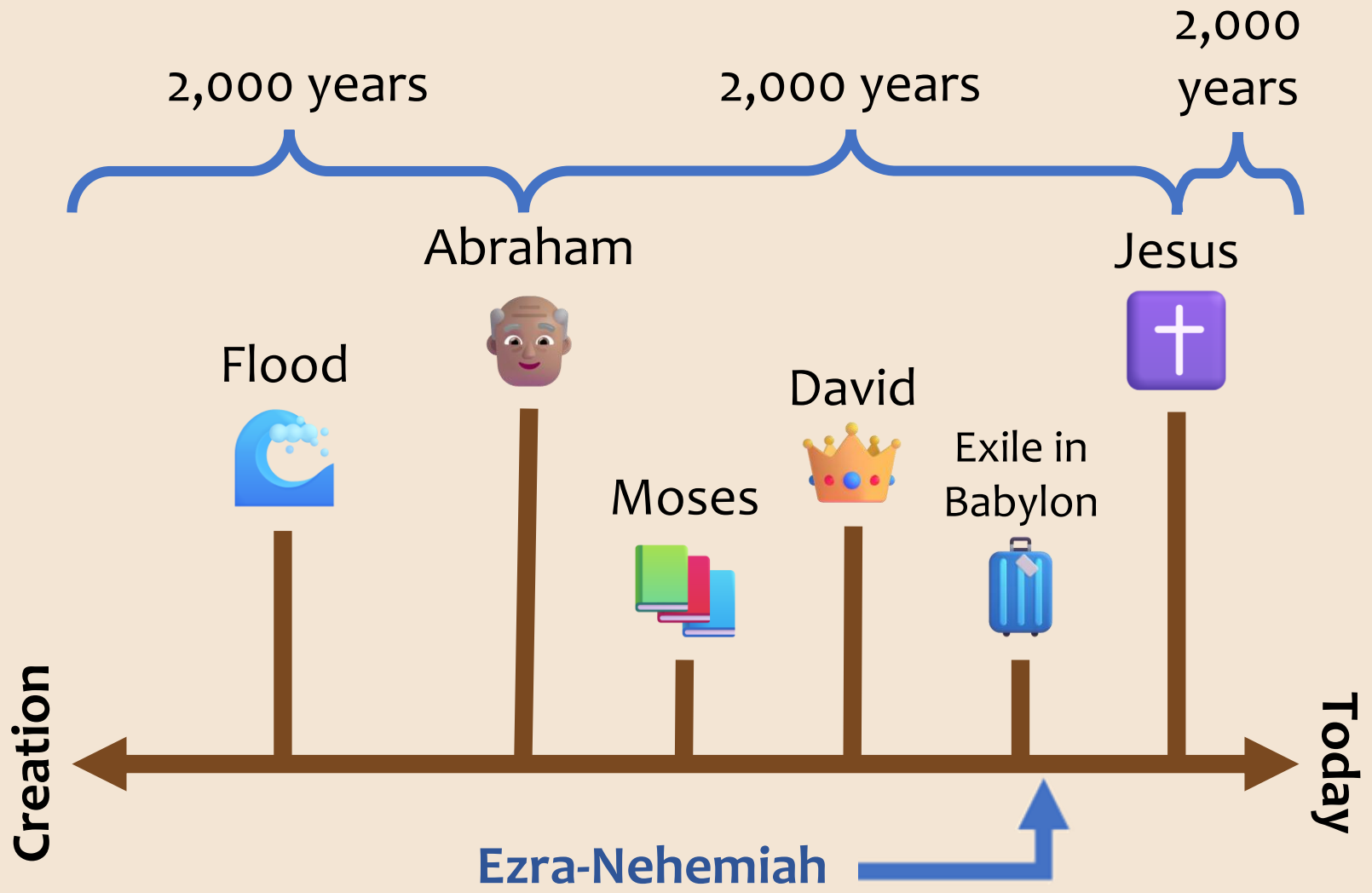


# A brief note

- Our Bibles have **Ezra & Nehemiah**
- In ancient times, this was a single book called **“Ezra”**
- But for clarity, people today often say **“Ezra-Nehemiah”** when referring to the book that contains all 23 chapters



# Bible timeline



# Summary

## Ezra-Nehemiah

- Jewish exiles return to their homeland and rebuild the temple and the walls of Jerusalem
  - This takes place over the course of about a century
- They are Jews, but Judah is a foreign land to them
  - Many of them would have been born in Babylon/Persia






# Why Ezra-Nehemiah is special

- **Determination**
  - We do not see the leaders in this book commanded by a revelation. They just need to make everything right.



# Main characters

-  **Jeshua**
  - High priest (see **Haggai 1:1**)
  - Called *Joshua* by Haggai and Zechariah
-  **Zerubbabel**
  - Governor of Judah (see **Haggai 1:1**)
  - Descendant of David (and ancestor of Jesus)
-  **Ezra**
  - Priest (**Ezra 7:11**)
  - Leads the Jews till Nehemiah comes
-  **Nehemiah**
  - Governor of Judah (**Nehemiah 5:14**)

# Outline of *Ezra-Nehemiah*

With likely historical dates

- First exiles to Babylon (**2 Kings 24:10-16**) 605 BC
- Babylon destroys Jerusalem (**2 Kings 25:1-12**) 586 BC
  
- **Temple rebuilt: Ezra 1-6** 538 – 516 BC
  - Zerubbabel and Jeshua return and lead
- **Correcting intermarriage: Ezra 7-10** 458 BC
  - Ezra returns and leads
- **Wall rebuilt: Nehemiah 1-12** 445 BC
  - Nehemiah returns and leads
- **Correcting intermarriage : Nehemiah 13** 433 BC
  - Nehemiah returns *again* and leads

# Theology and doctrine

- Marrying foreign women
  - In **Deuteronomy 7:1-6**, God commands the Jews to not marry foreign women
  - In **Ezra 9-10**, Ezra learns that the people have done this anyway and some even had children, and Ezra commands the people to divorce those foreign wives
  - In **Nehemiah 13:23-27**, Nehemiah confronts this briefly also (12 years later) – by beating the men up
- But...
  - Ruth and Rahab were foreign women that not only married Jewish men, but were praised for their faith and are both in the ancestry of Jesus Christ!

# Recap of *Ezra-Nehemiah*

- **Summary**

- Jewish exiles return to their homeland and rebuild the temple and the walls of Jerusalem

- **Why it is special**

- Determination of the leaders

- **Main characters**

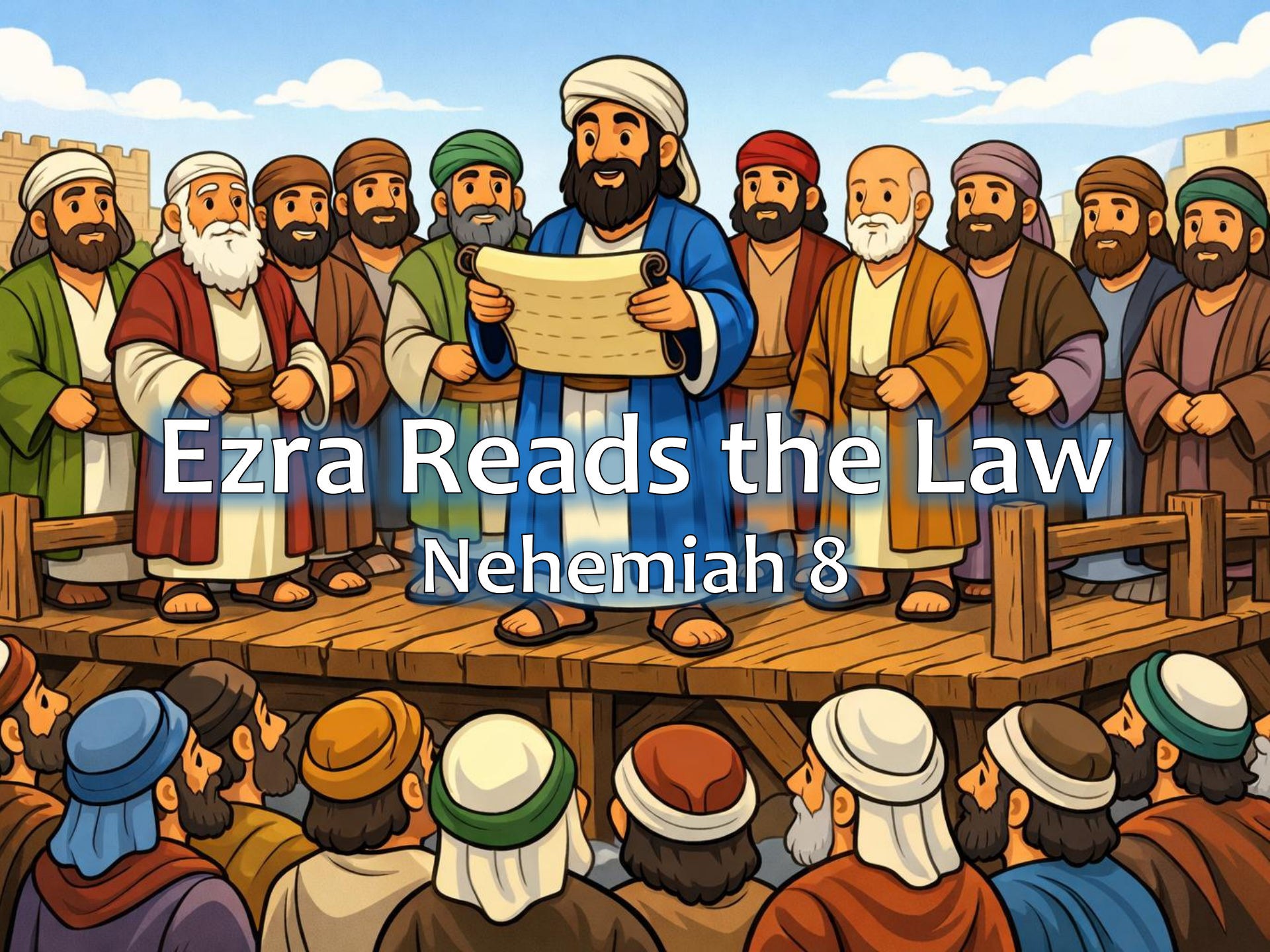
- Jehsua
- Zerubbabel
- Ezra
- Nehemiah

- **Outline**

- Temple rebuilt (Ezra 1-6)
- Intermarriage (Ezra 7-10)
- Wall rebuilt (Nehemiah 1-12)
- Intermarriage (Neh. 13)

- **Theology and doctrine**

- The Jews were not to marry foreign wives  
(Deuteronomy 7:1-6)



# Ezra Reads the Law

## Nehemiah 8

# Summary

Ezra Reads the Law  
Nehemiah 8

- Everyone gathers to hear Scripture being read all morning
  - This is about 5 days after the wall is rebuilt
  - Next, they do some homework
  - Two weeks later (same story), they observe the Feast of Booths











# Why this story is special

- It's a true revival
  - The people *physically* worked together for 2 months before this
  - Now they are united *spiritually*, longing for the word
  - It convicts them – they weep in response – but then rejoice since they can understand what God says

# Main characters

-  **Ezra**
  - Priest
  - Reads a lot
-     **A bunch of Levites**
  - Help out
-  **The people**
  - Listen

# Outline of *Nehemiah 8*

1. The people gather (**v. 1**)
2. Ezra reads all morning (**vs. 2-3**)
3. He's on a stage with 13 men (**vs. 4-6**)
4. 13 *other* men help the people understand (**vs. 7-8**)
5. Cheer up, people! (**vs. 9-12**)
6. Feast of Booths celebrated (**vs. 13-18**)

# In case you missed it

- **Verse 1** –It was the people’s idea to read the Law!  
Yes!
- **Verse 4** – Ezra was on a stage built for this occasion
- **Verse 7** – It seems that the Levite interpreters are mixed in the crowd, since the people stay in place
- **Verse 9** – the people weep in reaction

# In case you missed it

- The reading was about 5 or 6 days after the wall was rebuilt
  - The wall was finished on the 25th day of the sixth month (the month of *Elul*, **Nehemiah 6:15**)
  - *Elul* is 29 days long (some say 30)
  - The reading was on the 1st day of the seventh month
- This day was also the *Feast of Trumpets*
  - **Leviticus 23:23-25**
- The *Feast of Booths* was 14 days later
  - The leaders rediscover Scriptures about this feast on the day after the reading
  - The Feast of Booths is on the 15th day of the seventh month (**Leviticus 23:34**)

# Theology and doctrine

- The seventh month (*Tishri*)
  - Is very busy for a Jew – ten days of sacrifice and rest – not to mention three other Sabbath days (usually)
  - September/October to us
  - **Leviticus 23:23-44**
- Feasts:
  - 1 Tishri: Feast of Trumpets (*Rosh Hashanah*)
  - 10 Tishri: Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*)
  - 15-21 Tishri: Feast of Booths (*Sukkot*)
  - 22 Tishri: Eighth Day (*Shemini Atzeret*)
    - Modern observance focuses on *Simchat Torah* for this day – the conclusion of the reading of the Law

# Recap of *Nehemiah 8*

- **Summary**

- Everyone gathers to hear Scripture being read all morning

- **Why it is special**

- It is a true revival

- **Main characters**

- Ezra
- Levites
- The people

- **Theology and doctrine**

- The seventh month:  
**Leviticus 23:23-44**

- **Outline**

1. The people gather (**v. 1**)
2. Ezra reads all morning (**vs. 2-3**)
3. He's on a stage with 13 men (**vs. 4-6**)
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5. Cheer up, people! (**vs. 9-12**)
6. Feast of Booths (**vs. 13-18**)

- **In case you missed it**

- **Verse 1** – It was the people's idea
- **Verse 4** – Stage built for this occasion
- **Verse 7** – Interpreters
- **Verse 9** – the people weep
- 5 or 6 days after the wall was rebuilt
- Same day as the *Feast of Trumpets*

# Poem: 1 Chronicles 16:8-36

## David praises God for the Ark of the Covenant

- This poem actually crams part or most of three psalms together:
  - The first 1/3 of **Psalm 105**
  - Almost all of **Psalm 96**
  - And a small portion of **Psalm 106** (parts of **verses 1, 47 and 48**)
  - In that order – it's not rearranged at all
- If the Psalms were the *original* text, the poem in Chronicles is what today we might call a **MEDLEY**
- **Outline:**
  - Vs. 8-13: Tell of the LORD, how he has done great things
  - Vs. 14-18: The LORD keeps His covenant promises
  - Vs. 19-22: The LORD protects His people
  - Vs. 23-27: Tell of the LORD's greatness
  - Vs. 28-34: Everyone and everything praises the LORD
  - Vs. 35-36: Save us, that we may tell of your greatness even more