

July 18–24  
Ezra 1; 3–7; Nehemiah 2; 4–6; 8  
“I Am Doing a Great Work”



# Rebuilding the Temple

Ezra 1:1-2

Why do you think that Cyrus encourages having the temple rebuilt in Jerusalem?

Henry B. Eyring

“God does not rule in nations, but He is mindful of them. He can and does place people in positions of influence who want what is best for the people and who trust in the Lord.” (CR, Oct. 2010)

## George Albert Smith

“It was a strange thing that in the days of Isaiah the Lord revealed to him that the greatest of all the nations in the earth should be humbled, and He gave the name of the man, Cyrus, whom the Lord referred to as His anointed, and told Isaiah that Cyrus would overthrow Babylon and rebuild Jerusalem. The prophet had said that Jerusalem would be in bondage seventy years. It was just seventy years when Cyrus gathered together and took back to Jerusalem the Jews who had been taken captive to Babylon.” (CR, Oct. 1943)

Isaiah 44:28

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

# Rebuilding the Temple

Ezra 1:3-7

In what ways did Cyrus encourage Judah to rebuild their temple?

# Rebuilding the Temple

Ezra 3:10-13

## David E. Sorensen

“The Church has now entered the most committed era of temple building in its history....

“This is an extraordinary blessing for us as members of the Church. The Old Testament describes some of the joy that comes from people building these holy places: ‘And they sang together ... in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; ... And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.’

“Watching these new temples being built, I believe that we too will have occasion to praise the Lord and weep for joy.” (CR, Oct. 1998)



# Rebuilding the Temple

Ezra 6:15-22

How did the Jews know the process for dedicating the temple and performing the temple ordinances?

# Rebuilding the Temple

*Ezra 7:6-10,25*

What did Ezra do that made it possible to for him do the work of the Lord and teach the statutes and judgments to the Israelites?

## Spencer J. Condie

“Leaders can make a difference! Faith in the Lord and high expectations can bring about a mighty change of heart among an entire people.

“One of the great teachers and prophet-leaders in Israel was Ezra, who “had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.” As Saints of the latter days, we are grateful for a modern-day Ezra, even our beloved prophet... who, like Ezra of old, has prepared himself to receive the word of the Lord and is prepared to do the Lord’s will. I bear you my witness that there is a living prophet in Israel today.” (CR, April 1990)

# Nehemiah Fortifies Jerusalem

Neh 2:5-6,17-18

# Nehemiah Fortifies Jerusalem

Neh 4:1-3,6-9

What did the Jews do to insure that their enemies did not disrupt their work?

## Boyd K. Packer

“When the Israelites returned from their long captivity in Babylon, they found their city in ruins. The protecting walls of Jerusalem lay in rubble. Their enemies moved among them with great influence and the Israelites were subject to them.

“Then came Nehemiah the prophet, known now as ‘the wall builder.’ He rallied the Israelites to their own defense. Under his direction they began to rebuild the wall.

“At first their enemies ridiculed them. Tobiah, the Ammonite, mocked them, saying, ‘Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.’

“But Nehemiah consoled his people and set to work. The enemy was everywhere. ‘Nevertheless,’ he recorded, ‘we made [a] prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them.’

“Sisters, think carefully upon that. They ‘made a prayer,’ and ‘set a watch,’ and proceeded with their work.” (CR, Oct. 1980)

# Nehemiah Fortifies Jerusalem

Neh 4:14-18

## Dieter F. Uchtdorf

"Nehemiah of the Old Testament is a great example of staying focused and committed to an important task....

“As the walls of the city began to rise, opposition intensified. Nehemiah’s enemies threatened, conspired, and ridiculed. Their threats were very real, and they grew so intimidating that Nehemiah confessed, ‘They all made us afraid’ (Neh 6:9). In spite of the danger and the ever-present threat of invasion, the work progressed. It was a time of stress, for every builder ‘had his sword girded by his side, and so builded.’”

(CR, April 2009)



## George Q. Cannon

“The Saints erected [the Nauvoo temple] in the midst of poverty, destitution, sickness, death, and, I may say, with the sword or rifle in one hand and the trowel in the other, their enemies surrounding them on every hand. They had slain Joseph and Hyrum, and attempted to destroy others of the servants of God, and they were continually burning and destroying the houses and property of the Saints, and were determined to expel them from the State. But in the midst of these tribulations the Saints continued their labors until that temple was roofed in, and until within its walls they could attend to the ordinances for the living and the dead.” (JD, 14:310)

# Nehemiah Fortifies Jerusalem

Neh 6:1-4

What reason does Nehemiah give for not leaving Jerusalem to meet his enemies?

Boyd K. Packer

“The wall now stood. No longer could their enemies threaten nor destroy. When their enemies saw that they grew strong, they worried, and they turned to other tactics.

“And here is the lesson. It is a type, it is symbolic, it is a warning! In it is a message... for every member. Consider it very, very carefully....

“His answer to them holds counsel for every sister in Relief Society. It is a message as well to the brethren of the priesthood. ‘I sent messengers unto them,’ Nehemiah recorded, ‘saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?’

“Sisters, you have a great work to do. Build Relief Society! Strengthen its organization! Do not be enticed to leave it and go down to the worldly plains of Ono.

“Do not allow yourselves to be organized under another banner. Do not run to and fro seeking some cause to fulfill your needs. Your cause stands under the authority of the priesthood of Almighty God; that is the consummate, the ultimate power extant upon this earth!” (CR, Oct. 1980)

## Robert D. Hales

“Nehemiah wisely refused their offer with this message: ‘I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?’ We too have a great work to do, which will not be accomplished if we allow ourselves to stop and argue and be distracted. Instead we should muster Christian courage and move on. As we read in Psalms, ‘Fret not thyself because of evildoers’ (Psalm 37:1).”  
(CR, Oct. 2008)

# Ezra Reemphasizes the Laws and Ordinances

Neh 8:1,5-6,8,18

Next Week:

July 25–31

Esther

“Thou Art Come.... For Such a time As  
This”

