Module 6 AVP Lecture Notes

The exile stands as the explicit judgment of God on an unfaithful people. As has been shown, Israel and Judah exhibited their unfaithfulness in a variety of ways. As such, God had them taken captive in order to demonstrate both his faithfulness and his justice.

The story of Israel’s return exhibits God’s sovereign power in the world. Proof of point: “salvation for the Israelites came from an unexpected place: the East” (Carvalho 345; Boadt 382). God uses Persia under King Cyrus, who preferred that his “captives” live in their own land and worship their own gods (Carvalho 345; Boadt 382).

The toleration of local customs and limited self-rule (Boadt 380) sets up the story told by Ezra and Nehemiah regarding the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. Jewish literature provides us with a variety of sources for the period after the exile. Consider this list: Haggai, Zechariah, Isaiah 56 – 66 (“3rd Isaiah”), Ezra 1 – 6, and 2 Chronicles 36:22 – 23, as well as Psalm 85 and Psalm 126 (Boadt 382).

Nehemiah is the 1st key figure to consider regarding the restoration of the land and the people. Myers points out that Nehemiah had the necessary qualities to lead in the restoration—he was trusted by Artaxerxes and used his authority wisely to the confidence of his fellow Jews (61).

His wisdom was revealed in that his 1st task was to rebuild the walls of the city and then to build housing, providing for the workers and other returning Jews. This work was mandated by his dedication to the faith tradition of Israel. This dedication is evident when he showed concern for the Levites (13:10–14). Additionally, he held great sanctity toward the Temple (13:4–9). He showed appreciation of the Sabbath (10:32; 13:15–21) and made provision for offerings (10:33–40) (Myers 61).

Next, the consideration turns toward Ezra, who was a priest and a scribe. Ezra played a major role in the restoration of the temple. He leaves a record of his own work in the book that bears his name (chapter 7 – 10). Additional information is given in Nehemiah 8.

Marcus notes that Ezra credits his arrival in Jerusalem to the benevolent act of God. This is because he had declared to Cyrus the importance of totally depending upon God. Thus, he did not think that he should request the customary escort offered by the king (Marcus 652).

Ezra’s primary purpose was to restore the law to the land. He was well-versed in the law (7:6) and devoted himself to the study the law (7:6, 10). Chapter 8 notes the significant event of the public reading of the law. The response from the audience was overwhelming—a show of great emotions and weeping. Marcus concludes, “Ezra’s reading of the Torah inaugurated a new element in Jewish life whereby the Torah was read and explicated on regular occasions in public” (653).

Here, you will note the work cited information.

Works Cited


