

הַיּוֹם בַּאֲשֶׁר קוֹמַם יֵשׁוּעַ
הַמָּשִׁיחַ מִן־הַמָּוֶת



**The Resurrection Day
Of Messiah Yeshua**

When It Happened

According To The Original
Texts

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(laid out in book order)

8:9?

Such a scenario does not explain why the people were weeping in Neh. 8:9 nor why they had to be instructed on the impropriety of mourning on a holy day (8:11). Ezra would have known that he was supposed to normally read the Torah at the feast of Tabernacles (Deut. 31:10-12), but he reads it starting on the first of the month, which is Yom Teruah (blowing) because he knows the people will miss their opportunity to follow the law if they do not know it before the time to obey it comes to build booths. He realizes that he will re-read, or continue reading it at Tabernacles in any case. He does this because they do not know the Torah at all. The people act as if they have never heard the Torah. And clearly what made Ezra's Torah reading and teaching possible was the authority the king had given to Nehemiah.

If he had come 13 years before, then they would certainly know about the feast of Tabernacles, yet Neh. 8:14-18 makes it clear that they were ignorant of their duty, and had not kept it properly since the days of Joshua! Ezra came with a complete and total legal mandate from the king of Persia to teach and enforce the keeping of the Torah:

And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God which is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges that they may judge all the people who are in *the province* beyond the River, *even* all those who know the laws of your God; and you may teach anyone who is ignorant *of them*. And whoever will not observe the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed upon him strictly, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of goods or for imprisonment. (Ezra 7:25-26).

Ezra was commanded by the king to teach the Torah, yet according to the 458 B.C. advocates he kept the people in ignorance of the most fundamental and important observances and duties so that the people were weeping! To only inform them of their duties 13 years later would be total dereliction of his official responsibility. To so neglect it would be to dare Israel's enemies to strike before reform was possible. That Ezra 7-9 comes before Nehemiah 8, therefore, is not nearly as credible as the alternative of Ezra's administration after Nehemiah.

The decree puts the lie to the assumption by 458 B.C. advocates that Ezra was teaching the Torah to smaller groups, but not publicly reading it in the seventh year or enforcing it in all Judea. For the King had given Ezra total authority in Judea in this matter.

A second problem is a theological one. If Ezra spent thirteen years reading the Torah to the people, why is it that Yahweh rewarded Ezra's long—yet successful—mission by bringing disaster upon Jerusalem in the last year of his mission? Nehemiah would have found this disaster difficult to reconcile with Yahweh's past dealings with the nation which was to reward the obedient and bring disaster on the disobedient. Why else does Nehemiah immediately link the destruction of the walls with disobedience? Are we to assume that the national repentance of 445 was brought about by the destruction of the walls, rather than as a result of Ezra's long mission? If so, then we are still left with the problem of an ineffectual, national, spiritual leader.³⁵⁰

Nehemiah deals with mixed marriages after 431 B.C. by forbidding any new marriages. He does not require them to be dissolved by divorce, but he does cause certain men to be publicly beaten, no doubt after they disobeyed his orders (Neh. 13:25). Then Ezra comes in 397 B.C. and is informed that the problem of mixed marriages with pagans remained, and was even threatening the priesthood. Ezra, no doubt, knew of Nehemiah's measures against it, and decided that they were not being effective, so he decides that all the cases must be brought before his court and that such marriages must be ended with divorce. For forty-nine years, or seven sevens, the people had been put on notice that mixed marriages were not to be tolerated. Nehemiah's gracious allowing of those who had already transgressed to remain married expired under Ezra. Further, we may note that Nehemiah's measure was merciful in light of the people's ignorance of the Torah, which ignorance is corrected in Neh. 8:1*f* and 13:1 (445-431 B.C.) By the time we get to Ezra's stricter measures, the people would have known better for long enough to justify the stricter measures.

³⁵⁰ Leslie McFall, *Was Nehemiah Contemporary with Ezra in 458 BC?*

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