

An aerial view of Prague, Czech Republic, during sunset. The Vltava River flows through the city, with the Charles Bridge in the foreground. The city is filled with historic buildings, including a prominent church with a green dome. The sky is filled with soft, golden light from the setting sun.

WELCOME
to the
International Baptist Church
of Prague

SUNDAY 25 APRIL 2021

PRAYER



Psalm 15. A Psalm of David.

¹ LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent?
Who may live on your holy mountain?

² The one whose way of life is blameless,
who does what is righteous,
who speaks the truth from their heart;

³ whose tongue utters no slander,
who does no wrong to a neighbour,
and casts no slur on others;

Psalm 15. A Psalm of David.

⁴ who despises a vile person
but honours those who fear the LORD;
who keeps an oath even when it hurts,
and does not change their mind;

⁵ who lends money to the poor without interest;
who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.

Whoever does these things
will never be shaken.

A scenic landscape featuring a range of snow-capped mountains in the background, a dense forest of evergreen trees in the middle ground, and a calm lake in the foreground that perfectly reflects the mountains and trees. The sky is a clear, bright blue. Overlaid on the center of the image is the word "SERMON" in large, bold, yellow capital letters.

SERMON



EZRA

NEHEMIAH

EZRA 3

“Rebuilding the altar”

PRAYER



EZRA 3:1-4

¹ When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns, the people assembled together as one in Jerusalem.

² Then Joshua son of Jozadak and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates began to build the altar of the God of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, in accordance with what is written in the Law of Moses the man of God.

³ Despite their fear of the peoples around them, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the LORD, both the morning and evening sacrifices.

⁴ Then in accordance with what is written, they celebrated the Festival of Tabernacles with the required number of burnt offerings prescribed for each day.

EZRA 3:5-7

⁵ After that, they presented the regular burnt offerings, the New Moon sacrifices and the sacrifices for all the appointed sacred festivals of the LORD, as well as those brought as freewill offerings to the LORD.

⁶ On the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, though the foundation of the LORD's temple had not yet been laid.

⁷ Then they gave money to the masons and carpenters, and gave food and drink and olive oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre, so that they would bring cedar logs by sea from Lebanon to Joppa, as authorised by Cyrus king of Persia.

EZRA 3:8-10

⁸ In the second month of the second year after their arrival at the house of God in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak and the rest of the people (the priests and the Levites and all who had returned from the captivity to Jerusalem) began the work. They appointed Levites twenty years old and older to supervise the building of the house of the LORD.

⁹ Joshua and his sons and brothers and Kadmiel and his sons (descendants of Hodaviah) and the sons of Henadad and their sons and brothers – all Levites – joined together in supervising those working on the house of God.

¹⁰ When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their places to praise the LORD, as prescribed by David king of Israel.

EZRA 3:11-13

¹¹ With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the LORD:

‘He is good; his love towards Israel endures for ever.’

And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

¹² But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy.

¹³ No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away.



**EZRA/
NEHEMIAH**

EZRA 3

“Rebuilding the altar”

EZRA 1:2-5

² ‘This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:

“‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a **temple for him at Jerusalem** in Judah.

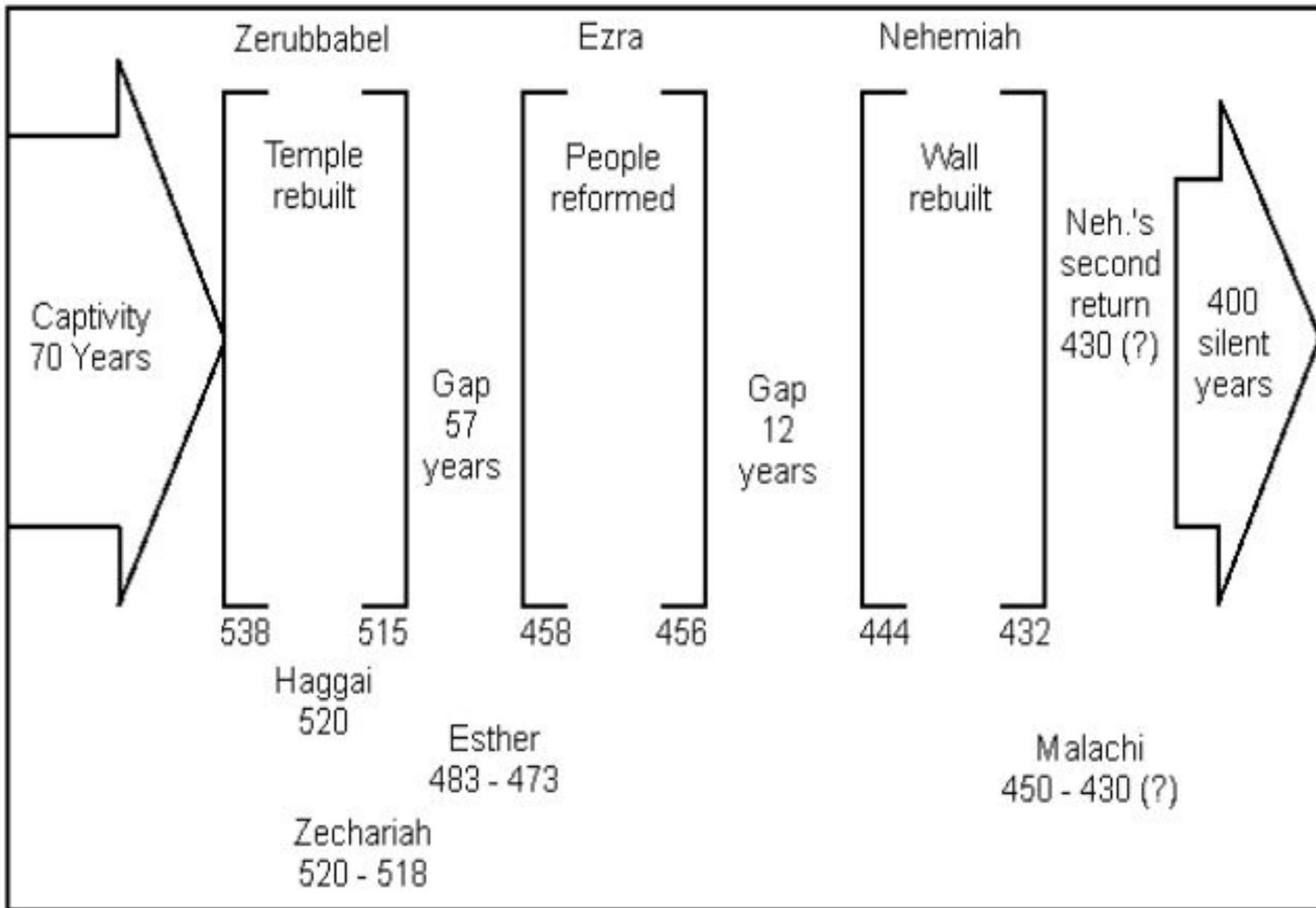
³ Any of his people among you may go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build **the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem**, and may their God be with them. ⁴ And in any locality where survivors may now be living, the people are to provide them with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for **the temple of God in Jerusalem.**”

⁵ Then the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites – everyone whose heart God had moved – prepared to go up and build **the house of the LORD in Jerusalem.**

EZRA 1-6

EZRA 7-10

NEHEMIAH 1-12(-13)



The Three Returns from Exile

EZRA 3:1-6: Rebuilding the Altar FEARING THE LORD NOT PEOPLE

¹ When **the seventh month** came and the Israelites had settled in their towns, the people assembled together as one in Jerusalem. ² Then Joshua son of Jozadak and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates began to build the altar of the God of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, in accordance with what is written in the Law of Moses the man of God.

³ **Despite their fear of the peoples around them**, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the LORD, both the morning and evening sacrifices. ⁴ Then in accordance with what is written, they celebrated the Festival of Tabernacles with the required number of burnt offerings prescribed for each day. ⁵ After that, they presented the regular burnt offerings, the New Moon sacrifices and the sacrifices for all the appointed sacred festivals of the LORD, as well as those brought as freewill offerings to the LORD.

⁶ **On the first day of the seventh month** they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, though the foundation of the LORD's temple had not yet been laid.

Leviticus 23: Feast of Tabernacles

³³ The LORD said to Moses, ³⁴ 'Say to the Israelites: "**On the fifteenth day of the seventh month** the LORD's Festival of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. ³⁵ The first day is a sacred assembly; do not do any of your ordinary work. ³⁶ For seven days present food offerings to the LORD, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present a food offering to the LORD. It is the closing special assembly; do not do any of your ordinary work.



Leviticus 23: Feast of Tabernacles

³⁹ “So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the LORD for seven days; the first day is a day of sabbath rest, and the eighth day also is a day of sabbath rest. ⁴⁰ On the first day you are to take branches from luxuriant trees – from palms, willows and other leafy trees – and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days.

⁴¹ Celebrate this as a festival to the LORD for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² Live in temporary shelters for seven days: all native-born Israelites are to live in such shelters ⁴³ so that your descendants will know that I made the Israelites live in temporary shelters when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”



EZRA 3:1-6: Rebuilding the Altar

PUTTING THE LORD FIRST

¹ When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns, the people assembled together as one in Jerusalem. ² Then Joshua son of Jozadak and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates began to build the altar of the God of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, **in accordance with what is written in the Law of Moses the man of God.**

³ Despite their fear of the peoples around them, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the LORD, both the morning and evening sacrifices. ⁴ Then in accordance with what is written, they celebrated the Festival of Tabernacles **with the required number of burnt offerings prescribed for each day.**

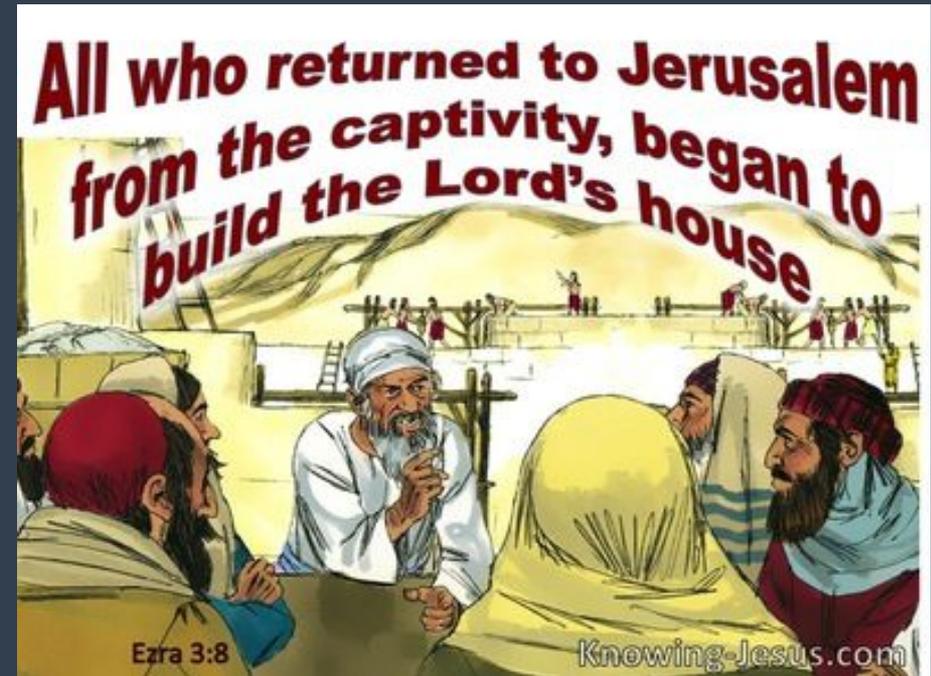
⁵ After that, they presented the regular burnt offerings, the New Moon sacrifices and the sacrifices **for all the appointed sacred festivals of the LORD**, as well as those brought as freewill offerings to the LORD. ⁶ On the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, though the foundation of the LORD's temple had not yet been laid.

EZRA 3:8-9: Organising the Work

SERVING WHOLEHEARTEDLY

⁸ In the second month of the second year after their arrival at the house of God in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak and the rest of the people (the priests and the Levites and **all who had returned** from the captivity to Jerusalem) **began the work**. They appointed Levites twenty years old and older to supervise the building of the house of the LORD.

⁹ Joshua and his sons and brothers and Kadmiel and his sons (descendants of Hodaviah) and the sons of Henadad and their sons and brothers – all Levites – joined together in supervising those working on the house of God.



EZRA 3:10-11: Celebrating the Foundations

CELEBRATING THE LORD

¹⁰ When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their places to praise the LORD, as prescribed by David king of Israel.

¹¹ With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the LORD: 'He is good; his love towards Israel endures for ever.'

And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.



“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;

*his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.”*

-Lamentations 3:22-23

EZRA 3:11-13: Weeping over the Temple

HAVING THE LORD'S PERSPECTIVE

¹¹ With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the LORD: 'He is good; his love towards Israel endures for ever.' And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

¹² But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, **wept aloud** when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy.

¹³ No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from **the sound of weeping**, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away.



HAGGAI 2:1-5, 9: The Lord's Promise

In the second year of King Darius, ¹ on the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: ² ‘Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people. Ask them, ³ “Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing?

⁴ But now be strong, Zerubbabel,” declares the LORD. “Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,” declares the LORD, “and work. **For I am with you,**” declares the LORD Almighty. ⁵ “This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. **And my Spirit remains among you.** Do not fear.” ...

⁹ **“The glory of this present house will be greater** than the glory of the former house,” says the LORD Almighty. “And in this place **I will grant peace,**” declares the LORD Almighty.’

LESSONS from EZRA 3:1-13: Rebuilding

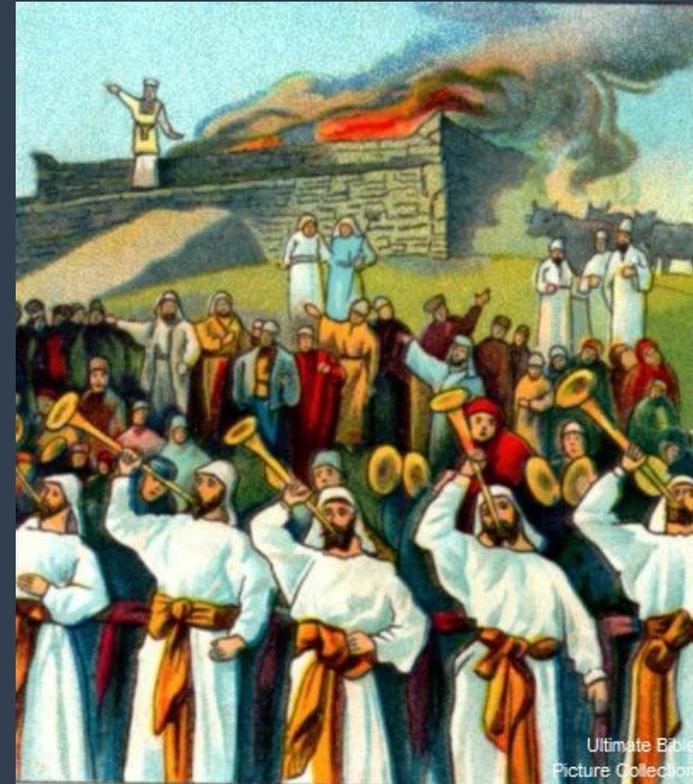
FEAR THE LORD NOT PEOPLE

PUT THE LORD FIRST

SERVE THE LORD WHOLEHEARTEDLY

CELEBRATE THE LORD

HAVE THE LORD'S PERSPECTIVE



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION



PRAYER FOR THE WORLD

ALL

LORD, in your mercy, hear our prayer

PRAYER for the persecuted church – INDIA

#10 on Open Doors World Watch List 2021



There are 67.4 million Christians in India, less than 5% of the population of almost 1.4 billion people. Hindu extremists believe that all Indians should be Hindus and that the country should be rid of Christianity and Islam. They use violence to achieve this goal, particularly targeting Christians from a Hindu background.

PRAYER for the persecuted church – INDIA

Christians are accused of following a 'foreign faith' and even blamed for bad luck in their communities.

Believers are often physically attacked and sometimes killed, as well as being under constant pressure from family and community to return to Hinduism. If they do not 'reconvert', they may be boycotted by their community, with a devastating effect on their ability to earn income. Many believers are isolated and don't know any other Christians.

Christians are persecuted in all areas of public and private life.

Anti-conversion laws (currently in nine states, with more considering adoption) are abused to harass and intimidate Christians.

The Covid-19 pandemic has offered a new weapon for persecutors, though, and Christians are often deliberately overlooked when official Covid-19 food and aid is distributed. This has left many desperate for food, particularly since many Christians are from the Dalit caste and thus very poor and have lost their sources of income this year.

PRAYER for the persecuted church – INDIA

Persecution in India has increased significantly over the past five years and has now remained relatively unchanged for the past year.

Gaurav (name changed) was falsely accused of forcing people to convert to Christianity. Few people are actually convicted under these laws, but cases can drag on for years. He was one of the unluckiest ones as he was imprisoned for four months, along with two of his friends.

When they were finally released, it took them three years to prove their innocence. “Meanwhile, I and my friends had no proper jobs,” says Gaurav. “We were viewed as criminals by our community, and no one wanted to associate with us.”

God didn’t abandon them, even while they faced tough opposition from their community. Open Doors partners were able to help with essentials, as well as guidance for the court case. “God is so faithful,” says Gaurav. “We lacked nothing – He is so good!”

PRAYER for the persecuted church – INDIA



PRAYER: Lord, thank You that faith is growing in India despite so much opposition faced by Christians in public and private life. Please keep bringing new believers to faith and give strength and resilience to Christians from a Hindu background. Frustrate the plans of Hindu extremists who want to rid the country of other faiths and change the hearts of those in power. Amen.

PRAYER for the CHURCH and PERSONAL NEEDS

ALL

LORD, in your mercy, hear our prayer

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours
now and for ever.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

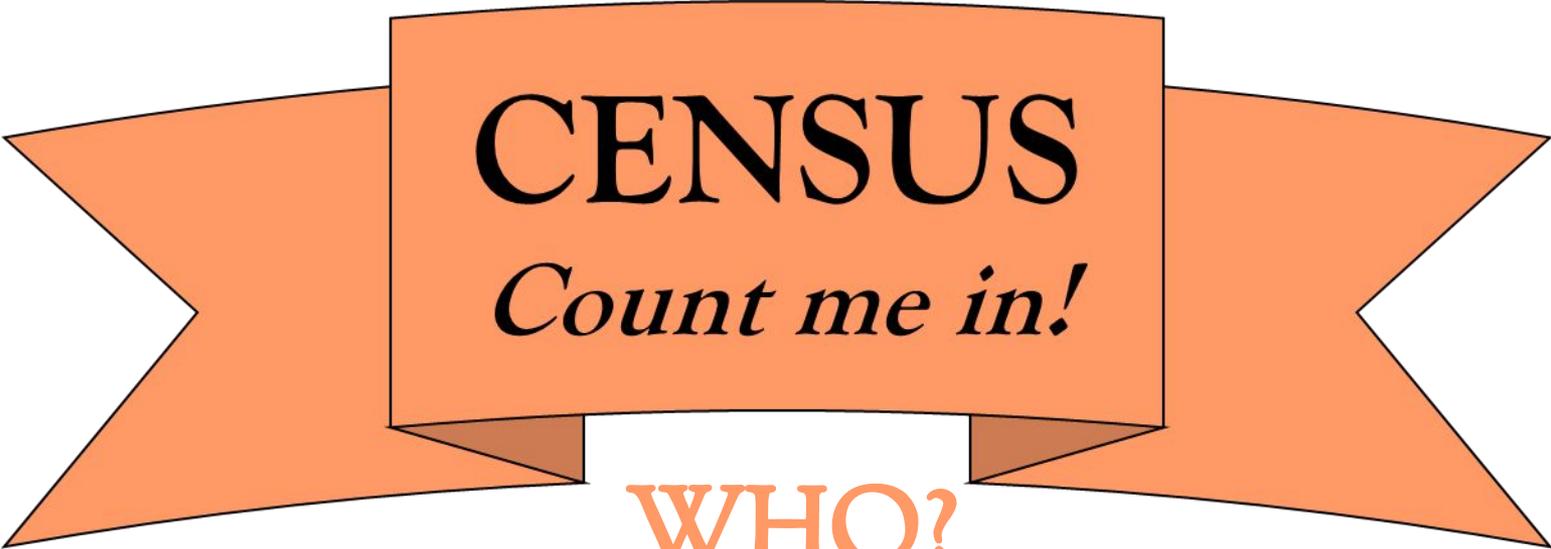




APRIL & MAY AT IBCP



TODAY Sunday 25	Ezra 3: 'Rebuilding the altar' Online at 11.00 IBCP FB page & website
Wednesday 28	19.00 Fellowship Group via ZOOM
Friday 30	19.00 Students' Fellowship via ZOOM 19.30 Friday Fellowship via ZOOM
Sunday 2 May	Psalm 16 & Communion Online at 11.00 IBCP FB page & website
Wednesday 5	19.00 Prayer Fellowship
Sunday 9 May	Ezra 4: 'Opposition' Online at 11.00 IBCP FB page & website



CENSUS
Count me in!

WHO?

Everyone who has a temporary or permanent residence
in the Czech Republic

HOW?

Online OR On Paper: until 11 May

HELP!

<https://www.scitani.cz/csu/scitaniz021/home> or [scitani.cz](https://www.scitani.cz)

Contact: Anna at axai.hr@gmail.com



Benediction

The Grace ...

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
And the love of God,
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with us all,
Now and forever more.

Amen





To
God
be the Glory!