

Restoring Foundations

The Restoration of a Remnant: Ezra 1:1-11

This Bible study lesson is developed to use in preparation for Pastor Jared's sermon on Ezra Chapter 1.

1. From Dr. Smith's sermon and notes, what is the historical context of the book of Ezra? How does this book fit into the unfolding story of God's redemptive plans? How can the book of Ezra help you, as a believer in Christ, to respond to the social and political issues we face today?
2. Read 2 Chronicles 36:15-21 with Jeremiah 25:1-14. What was the cause of Judah's captivity and who did God use to carry out his judgement? How many years would the Jewish people be in captivity and what would happen to Babylon at the end of that time? In what ways are we similar to the Jewish people and their attitudes prior to captivity?
3. Read Ezra 1:1 with 2 Chronicles 7: 11-14, Jeremiah 25:8-14 & 29:1-14 and Daniel 9:1-19. What brought about Cyrus' proclamation and who did he say was responsible for it? What promises are given by God to Solomon at the dedication of the temple and how are these reinforced by Jeremiah? What does Daniel pray for and how can we as a church follow his example?
4. Read Ezra 1:2 with Isaiah 44:24-45:4. Considering Isaiah was written 160 years before Cyrus became king, how do you think Cyrus came to know God wanted him to have the temple rebuilt? What does this teach you about God? How does this knowledge help you in times of trial and tribulation?
5. Read Ezra 1:3-4 with Isaiah 48:17-20. What are the specifics of Cyrus's decree? What do you think Cyrus believes about God? Where is Cyrus's allegiance? What different reactions do you think the Jews had when they heard the decree?
6. Read Ezra 1:5 with 2 Chronicles 11:5-17, 2 Kings 17:7-23 and Isaiah 10:20-22. Why were only the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi involved in preparing to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem? What happened the other tribes (sometimes referred to as Israel or Ephraim) that kept them from being taken to Babylon? What encouragement and what warning do you find in God's restoration of a remnant of his people?
7. Read Ezra 1:6-11 with 2 Kings 24:10-14. Who provided for the needs of those returning to rebuild the temple? What did each give and for what purpose? When and by whom were the temple articles taken to Babylon? What does this show about God that these valuable items had been kept safe for 70 years and that there is an inventory of what is returned?
8. Why do you think God chose to use a pagan king to initiate the rebuilding of His temple? How does God show his faithfulness in bringing a remnant back from captivity? How can the study of Ezra chapter 1 help you to view the conditions and circumstances of the world today from God's perspective? How would that view change your everyday life?