

S U M M E R 2 0 1 7

W E E K T H R E E

The Groundwork of Biblical Truth



OPENING QUESTION

What intrigues you about the Bible? What do you find difficult?

SCRIPTURE

Read Ezra 7:1-10, 27-28, 8:35-36

DISCUSS

The big idea behind Sunday's sermon was this: **Belief in biblical truth is more vulnerable than you think but more important than you know.**

60 years after the first exiles arrived in Jerusalem with Zerubabel, Ezra arrived. The temple construction was complete, but there was still no major focus on the Torah – the Word of God. One commentator said, "Temple without Torah had proved disastrous before the exile, so the next stage of the return is the establishing and teaching of the Law of Moses, and the man who is to do this now comes on to the stage."¹

>> *What was the problem before the exile with having a temple but little Torah obedience? How does that relate to us now?*

There are three main factors that make belief in biblical truth vulnerable in our lives: the world, the flesh, and the devil. By "the world," we mean not the planet, but the systems of thought and belief that are arrayed against the gospel. That was a problem for Ezra. There were beliefs that were present in the people of Jerusalem that made belief in the Bible hard or impossible.

>> *What beliefs do we have in the culture, and do you have in your own head and heart, that make belief in the Bible hard?*

The second vulnerability to our belief in the Scriptures comes from God's enemy, the Devil. He constantly attacks our faith in the Scriptures, as he has done from the beginning. His attack coordinates

with our our internal problem, our flesh. We are sinful, deep in our bones. These were the same problems with which Ezra had to contend, and the same ones with which we contend.

>> *Of these three: the world, your flesh, and the devil, which seems most problematic for your faith?*

Belief in biblical truth is more important than we may have known. The outcome of faithful Bible study is amazing.

>> *Read Ezra 8:35-36. What happened as a result of faithful biblical exposition? Do you want to see these things happen through our church?*

Laying the groundwork of biblical truth means holding on to the Bible. So, if we want to see everything that happened in 8:35-36 happen for us, what do we need to do? We can find that Ezra did three things.

>> *Read Ezra 7:10. What things did Ezra do with reference to the Bible? Which of these practices do you need to embrace?*

The good news for us is that truth has become a man in Jesus Christ. John tells us that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. So, even though Ezra's revival was short-lived, the work of Jesus in world will never cease.

>> *How is our relationship to the Bible different than Ezra's? What does it mean to be Christians in love with the Bible but not condemned by legalism or lost in biblical ignorance?*

PRAY

Pray for God to awaken a passion for the bible in our hearts.

¹ Robert Fyall, [The Message of Ezra and Haggai: Building for God](#), ed. Alec Motyer and Derek Tidball, The Bible Speaks Today (England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2010), 100.