

# RESTORE

## EZRA

### EZRA, PART 1: RESTORING PEOPLE

Have you ever had a problem that was just so big—so daunting—that you just didn’t know where to begin? There is just so much to do. You’re overwhelmed and don’t know where to start tackling an unsurmountable problem. The problem is just a tangled ball of mess, and it won’t be solved by panicking or doing what you’ve always done. You have to do something different if you want different results.

BIG IDEA: If it’s God’s will, it’s God’s bill.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*\* Remember the goal is to use the questions to generate discussion, not to complete every one.*

1. Have you ever had a problem so big and daunting that you just didn’t know where to begin? Tell the group about your experience. How did you get through it?
2. *With the Bible or Bible App, [read Ezra 1:1-5, 7, 11](#).*

*<sup>1</sup> In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, the LORD fulfilled the prophecy he had given through Jeremiah. He stirred the heart of Cyrus to put this proclamation in writing and to send it throughout his kingdom:*

*<sup>2</sup> “This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: “The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a Temple at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. <sup>3</sup> Any of you who are his people may go to Jerusalem in Judah to rebuild this Temple of the Lord, the God of Israel, who lives in Jerusalem. And may your God be with you! <sup>4</sup> Wherever this Jewish remnant is found, let their neighbors contribute toward their expenses by giving them silver and gold, supplies for the journey, and livestock, as well as a voluntary offering for the Temple of God in Jerusalem.” <sup>5</sup> Then God stirred the hearts of the priests and Levites and the leaders of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And all their neighbors assisted by giving them articles of silver and gold, supplies for the journey, and livestock. They gave them many valuable gifts in addition to all the voluntary offerings. <sup>7</sup> King Cyrus himself brought out the articles that King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Lord’s Temple in Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of his own gods. <sup>11</sup> In all, there were 5,400 articles of gold and silver that was brought when the exiles went from Babylon to Jerusalem.*

*[Ezra 1:1-5, 7, 11 \(NLT\)](#)*

3. What do you think it means when Ezra writes that God “*stirred the heart of Cyrus*” (verse 1) to issue a decree for the Jewish exiles to return home?
4. What instruction did Cyrus give to the Jewish people? To their neighbors?
5. Why do you think Cyrus gave the articles from the temple that King Nebuchadnezzar carried away back to the Jewish people?
6. Why is it often difficult to step out in faith when you feel that God is leading you?
7. How have you learned to distinguish between the different “voices” when it comes to discerning whether God is asking you to take a certain action?
8. What are some ways that God communicates His will to us today?
9. In what ways has God helped you accomplish the things He has asked you to do? *If it’s God’s will, it’s God’s bill.*

10. Chris said only about 50,000 of the 3 million Jews living in Babylon chose to move back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. Why do you think so few chose to come back?

*(By the way, the book of Esther happened to those who stayed behind—they almost got entirely wiped out.)*



11. With the Bible or Bible App, [read Ezra 7:1, 6, 9-10](#).

<sup>1</sup> Many years later, during the reign of King Artaxerxes of Persia, there was a man named Ezra. He was from the family of priests, and was <sup>6</sup> a scribe who was well versed in the Law of Moses. Ezra came up to Jerusalem from Babylon, and the king gave him everything he asked for, because the gracious hand of the Lord his God was on him. <sup>9</sup> He had arranged to leave Babylon on April 8, the first day of the new year, and he arrived at Jerusalem on August 4, for the gracious hand of his God was on him. <sup>10</sup> Ezra had determined to study and obey the Law of the Lord and to teach those decrees and regulations to the people of Israel. [Ezra 7:1, 6, 9-10 \(NLT\)](#)

12. In Ezra 7, what do you learn about Ezra's vocation? His character? His motives?  
13. Three times in Ezra 7 (Ezra 7:6, 7:9, 7:28) it says, "the gracious hand of the LORD my God was on me." Why Ezra? Ezra wasn't a public Superman or superstar. What set him apart? What made him tick?  
14. Chris asked, "What is your objective in life?" You will spend 50 to 60 years, some 70 or 80 years on this Earth. What will be your contribution? What are you setting your heart on?

## MOVING FORWARD

### *Principles to Live By*

- *The Lord is in control of this world, calling the shots and changing hearts.*
- *The majority won't follow God and do what He wants, because they're too comfortable.*
- *Make your passion knowing and understanding God's Word.*
- *If God moves you to do something, He will give you the resources to make it happen.*

What step of obedience do you feel God is calling you to make this week?

## CHANGING YOUR MIND

*Ezra had determined to study and obey the Law of the Lord and to teach those decrees and regulations to the people of Israel.* [Ezra 7:10 \(NLT\)](#)