

THE BOOK OF EZRA – LESSON 1

The Why Must Be Explained and Explored

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 1:5 NIV**

Main Theme: The Book of Ezra provides a historical account of God preserving the Jewish people who returned from exile. The people had been deported to Babylon, and many were later allowed to return under the leadership and decree of the Persian king Cyrus.

The act of rebuilding helped them, and others understand their relationship with God and their religious identity after a national crisis of oppression.

V5 The households of Judah and Benjamin—Levites and Priests came together those who were moved by the Spirit of God.

"If there are two persons praying, there are three. If three meet to pray, there are four praying. There is always one more than you can see."

— S. D. Gordon

Three Confirmations of God's Character

A. This confirms that God is faithful

- He is a covenant-keeping God, even in the middle of calamity.
- God sees us.
- God knows us.
- God is not shocked by our trouble.

B. This confirms the Prophecy of Jeremiah

Ezra 1:1

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing:

C. This confirms that God is sovereign

- God is over nations.
- God orchestrates world events.

- God has a plan for Israel and for you.

"Long obedience is deep trust combined with deep devotion to God, even when you do not understand."

Consider the Children of Israel Obedience

A. They restored the Second Temple

Job 8:7 (NKJV)

Though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would increase abundantly.

There is nothing small about your assignment; the reconstruction project should keep you dreaming about the possibilities of God.

Note: Their identity was symbolically connected to the house of God.

Many of us like solo acts, but God works through community.

"I have never yet known the Spirit of God to work where the Lord's people were divided."

— Dwight L. Moody

B. A record of faithfulness and fulfillment

Ezra is traditionally credited with writing the book even though he appears later in the narrative. The writing of the book reinforces the importance of purity and commitment.

We cannot serve other gods or idols. God influences their culture of faith in the midst of exile.

"It must be God first, God second, and God third."

— Oswald Chambers

"When I put God first, God takes care of me and energizes me to do what really needs to be done."

— David Jeremiah

They Confirmed Their Reservations

Unity and harmony in the Spirit

- They returned.
- They rebuilt.
- They renewed their relationship with God.

