



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FROM JANUARY 13/14 SERMON

If you missed the sermon, check out biblechapel.org/sermons.

1. This past weekend, we kicked off our series through the book of Ezra. For those who were present this weekend, what was your biggest takeaway from our first weekend in Ezra?
2. We set a lot of historical context this weekend with Ezra that we won't repeat in our group time this week. Again, if you missed the sermon, we encourage you to go back to hear that context in more detail. With that said, we stated that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah tell the story of God redeeming and restoring His people back to Jerusalem from captivity. Specifically in Ezra, we'll see the first two returns of the exiles as God first rebuilds His temple and restores the heart of worship from His people.

Read as a group, [Ezra 1](#) together. Then discuss what sticks out to you overall in this opening chapter.

3. We discussed this weekend that it was God alone who "stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia", to release His people. All of these events, including the timing from when Judah was first captured to when God solidified this first wave of returning exiles in Jerusalem, perfectly executed the prophesy that after 70 years of captivity in Babylon, God would restore His people with the mission to rebuild His temple. Even Isaiah prophesied roughly 150 years before this moment the fact that Cyrus would be used by God to set His people free.

Read [Jeremiah 25:11-12](#), [29:10-11](#), [Isaiah 44:28](#), [Proverbs 21:1](#), and [Isaiah 40:28](#).

We said this weekend, a major theme is Ezra is this:

Ezra loudly proclaims the SOVEREIGNTY of God.

What sticks out to you regarding the sovereign hand of God early on in Ezra?

How should the sovereignty of God impact our daily lives today?

4. We also see in chapters 1 and 2 of Ezra how God provided everything they needed in their return - including the 5,400 vessels of gold and silver, the aid from Cyrus' own officials, and the leadership necessary starting with Zerubbabel and Jeshua/Joshua. Therefore, as God's people reached the site where the temple would be rebuilt, we're told the following:

Read [Ezra 2:68-69](#).

The freewill offerings given back to God were a proper response of worship in acknowledgement of God's faithfulness. That led us this weekend to a second major theme of Ezra:

Ezra loudly proclaims the FAITHFULNESS of God.

Read [2 Timothy 2:13](#), [Hebrews 10:23](#).

Throughout Israel's history, no matter how many times they were unfaithful to God (and yes, that unfaithfulness brought consequences), God never wavered from his promises to them, including this promise of restoration.

Talk about the faithfulness of God in your group. How has God been faithful to us as followers of Jesus? Share how you personally have experienced the faithfulness of God in your life.

Discuss the powerful fact that as believers, when we fall short into sin, God is still faithful regarding our eternal security in Him. How should that faithfulness of God impact our daily walk with Him?

5. Finally, we ended our time this weekend unpacking the significance of Jeshua/Joshua as the high priest during this period. We looked specifically at Zechariah 6 and how God used Joshua as a foreshadowing of the ultimate final Priest/King to come, our Savior Jesus Christ. We said this weekend:

Ezra reminds us God's Word from
Genesis to Revelation loudly proclaims JESUS!

Read [Hebrews 4:14-16](#) and [1 Thessalonians 5:23-24](#).

How should the titles of High Priest and King for Jesus impact our relationship with Him? What does Jesus offer us daily as our final High Priest and King?

End your time in prayer this week - praying that God would empower us this year to trust in His sovereignty and faithfulness, and to keep our eyes always on Jesus.