

# BACK TO CHURCH

“Faithful to Fulfill: A Study of God as Revealed in Post-Exilic Scripture”

Ezra 6-7:10 / Part 17 / Pastor Matthew Jones

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## **Fruition (Ezra 1-6, cf. Jer. 25, Isa.44, Dan.9)**

## **Favor (Ezra 6:13-15)**

## **Festivity (Ezra 6:16-18)**

## **Feast (Ezra 6:19-22)**

## **Faithfulness (Ezra 7:1-10)**

## **COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS**

Reflective Questions for You and Your Small Group

1. What is the first thing (or texts) that come to mind when you think about fulfilled prophecy in the Bible? Share.
2. Our study in Ezra 6-7 reminded us of how God brought to fruition His prophecies in real human history. In light of this, think about and discuss the yet-fulfilled prophecies of our Bible we are still waiting today to see happen. How should these inform our faith and worship, as well as our daily lives? Share.
3. From the text of Ezra we—as a church—were reminded that God is in control of the Kingdom of Darkness, even pagan governments and politicians, in order to accomplish His will. Genesis 50:20 reminds us that what humans can do for evil intentions against God’s people, nevertheless God uses it for His will (“And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive”). In our culture where people freak out when their political party is not in control, how does this reminder help us stay cool and on mission, namely as we trust that ultimately they (human powers) are not in control and God alone is sovereign over it all? Discuss.
4. Building on the last question, let’s try to get personal about it and share how God is teaching you in this area of trusting Him in the face of political and human powers of darkness. Reflect on the following biblical cross-reference shared in the sermon: “Do not put your trust in princes [and I would add, or in presidents, politicians, premiers, or prime ministers], in mortals, in whom there is no help.... Happy are those who hope in the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God” (Psalm 146:3, 5). Discuss.
5. As we are studying Israel’s sacred calling to the promised land, their priesthood, and the importance of rebuilding the temple, it is important to remind ourselves that in the New Testament the temple of God is said to be the church of Jesus Christ in this present age (e.g., 1 Cor 3:16-17, 6:19-20, Eph. 2:19-22). With this in mind and also with Israel’s failure to rebuild the temple in their dispensation, let’s be challenged together to personally consider how we doing and/or failing to fulfill our responsibilities to the current Temple of God, that is, the church of Jesus. How can you personally be more involved if you’re not already? How can you encourage others? How does the Spirit empower us in this work?
6. Having focused on our failings to serve God’s mission as we should, it is vitally important for us to pause and discuss the crucial role rehearsing the gospel of Jesus plays in our lives in the face of our failures, compromises, and more. How does the gospel inform us in the face of our sin to free us and give us joy?
7. What are your take-aways from the sermon concerning how we view God and what He is doing in the world? How did the sermon both inform you and call you to action? How can you personally apply the Scripture we studied to your life? How can others be praying for you as you apply the word of God to your life and seek the Spirit to empower you in your witness of Christ and joy in the Lord?