

A Life in the Word

I. Announce:

- A. Slide1 Ezra 7 - Welcome to those **online**.
- B. Slide2 VBS: This year's VBS is **June 15-19**, at 8:30am-12pm here at Calvary Murrieta. The cost is \$15 per student. This event is for students 1st-5th grade for the 2026-27 school year. Please invite kids in *your community/neighborhood/your children's friends from school* to come. Register online at our website or App (events).

II. Slide3 Intro: A Life in the Word

A. The Returns:

1. **Trip #1** 49,897 people return [Zerubbabel leads, 538bc] [purpose rebuild temple]
2. **Trip #2** 1,754 return [Ezra is in] (80 yrs. later) [purpose to rebuild the people]
3. **Trip #3** Nehemiah leads (14 yrs. later) [purpose to rebuild the wall]

- B. "Ezra was a man whose heart was devoted to **knowing** God's Word, **living** God's Word, and **helping** others do the same." [Ezra means? *help/er*]

C. *Prayer:

- D. **Ezra 7** shifts to *Ezra*. This ch is one of the best **leadership** and **discipleship** chapters in Scripture.

1. (vs.10) *For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.*

E. Theme: A Life in the Word

1. What shapes your daily decisions most? Your emotions? Experience? Culture? Friends? News? Circumstances? Or God's Word?

- F. Big Idea: God transforms lives through His Word as we **study it, obey it, and share it** with others. [Transformation flows: Study → Do → Teach]

- G. Brief Setup: Nearly 60 years have passed since the temple was completed. The temple has been rebuilt, but something is still missing. The people need spiritual

renewal. God's answer is not merely a project. God's answer is **a person** immersed in His Word ... **Enter Ezra**.

III. Slide4 1 **EZRA'S IDENTITY (1-6) READ**

A. **Ezra** – A godly patriotic Jew. His name means? *Help*.

1. He was a devoted **student** of the Scriptures.
2. He helped to **restore the Law** to the nation.
3. He was a man of **prayer** (8:21-23).
4. He was greatly burdened for the **spiritual welfare** of his people (9:3,4).
5. *He does not come on the scene till now, in chapter 7.*

B. **Ezra was introduced as: a priest, scribe** (סֹפֵר - sōpher; someone employed for his ability to read and write. Writer/secretary), **a skilled teacher of God's Word, and spiritual reformer** whom God used to lead His people back to Scripture after the Babylonian exile.

1. The emphasis **isn't** on charisma. It **isn't** on talent. It **is** on **God's Word**.
2. He was born during the exile, descended from **Aaron** the high priest. When many Jews had already returned to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel, **Ezra led a second return around 458 BC**. His primary mission was not to rebuild walls or buildings, **but to rebuild hearts through God's Word**.
3. Ezra discovered that many of the people, including leaders, had **drifted into compromise and disobedience**. Rather than merely condemning them, **he humbled himself before God, confessed the nation's sins, and called the people to repentance**. Through his faithful teaching, God brought spiritual renewal among His people.

C. How would the people closest to you describe **what most defines your life?**

IV. Slide5 2 **GOD'S FAVOR ON EZRA (6-9) READ**

A. Repeated phrase: *The gracious hand of God was upon him.*

1. This appears multiple times throughout Ezra (Ezra 7:6,9,28. 8:18,22,31) **Why?**

a) Maybe because God's Presence comes first, rt before key vs. (studying, doing, & teaching).

b) Because God's blessing often accompanies God's purposes. Ezra wasn't self-made. He was God-helped.

B. Slide6 (8) And Ezra came to Jerusalem - The trip from Babylon to Jerusalem took 4 months and covered roughly 900 miles.

C. Where have you seen God's hand on your life that cannot be explained by your own ability?

V. Slide7a 3 THE HEART OF THE CHAPTER (10) READ key vs.

A. Everything builds toward this verse!

B. Ezra prepared his heart: To seek God's Word. To do God's Word. To teach God's Word.

1. Notice the order: Not teach first. Not lead first. Not influence first.

2. Slide7b Seek. Do. Teach.

C. We'll loop back around to this!

VI. Slide8,9 4 THE KING'S SUPPORT (11-28) READ or king of kings?

A. Artaxerxes provides resources and authority.

1. Once again, God is working behind the scenes through *earthly rulers*.

The king thinks he is helping Ezra. But God is advancing His own purposes

B. (28) I gathered leading men - This final phrase is better seen as an introduction to chapter 8 than a closing to chapter 7.

C. Have you ever looked back and realized God was arranging circumstances before you understood what He was doing?

D. Summary of the Text: God raises up a man whose life is anchored in Scripture because God's people need spiritual renewal.

VII. Slide10a 5 THEME OF THE CHAPTER

A. A Life in the Word.

1. The **temple** had been **rebuilt**. **Now the people** needed **rebuilding**.
2. Buildings can be rebuilt quickly. **People are rebuilt slowly**.

B. And God rebuilds people through His Word!

1. **10b EZRA SET/PREPARED HIS HEART 10** for Ezra has **set** his heart ...
 - a) **This wasn't accidental**. Spiritual growth rarely happens by accident.
 - (1) The word **set** means *prepared/determined* speaks of **intentionality**.
 - b) Ezra **didn't drift toward** God. **He pursued Him**.
 - c) **Are you intentionally growing spiritually, or merely hoping to grow?**
2. **10c EZRA STUDIED THE WORD 10** to **study** the Law of the Lord ...
 - a) **He sought God's Word! Not** simply information. **Not** trivia. **Not** facts.
 - (1) He wanted to **know** God. **Bible study is not merely collecting knowledge, it is pursuing relationship**.
 - b) **When you open Scripture, are you looking for information or transformation?**
3. **10d EZRA PRACTICED THE WORD 10** and to **do** it ...
 - a) **This is where many stop**. **But** knowledge without obedience **produces pride**.
 - (1) Truth becomes powerful when it becomes **practice**. The goal of Scripture is **not** simply to **fill** our minds, it's to **shape** our lives.
 - b) **What truth do you already know that God is asking you to actually obey?**
4. **10e EZRA TAUGHT THE WORD 10** & to **teach** His statutes & rules in Israel.
 - a) **Influence flowed from integrity**. People **listened** because Ezra **lived** what he taught. His message matched his life. [I got to teach 75 *leaders/wives* last week]

C. *Vance Havner said, *A leader is a person with a magnet in his heart and a compass in his head*, he was describing the 2 essential qualities of spiritual leadership:

1. **A Magnet in the heart** speaks of influence, warmth, conviction, and character. **People are drawn to leaders who genuinely love God and love people**. It is the inward passion, sincerity, courage, and spiritual

authenticity that attracts others. A magnet **pulls** people toward something. Great leaders do not merely *manage people*; they inspire and draw them.

a) Not magnetism, the ability to attract & charm. *That's attracting them to you!*

2. **A Compass in the head** speaks of direction, wisdom, discernment, and clarity. A compass keeps you **oriented** when everything around you is **confusing**. Leaders must know **where** they are going, **what** matters most, and **how** to navigate difficult terrain. **It is not enough to attract people if you do not know where to lead them.**

a) **So Havner's point is:** A true leader both **draws people** and **directs people**.

(1) **Healthy leadership requires both:** a **heart** people trust, **and** a **mind** grounded in truth and direction.

(2) **In ministry:** people are drawn first to ***who you are** before they follow **where you are going**. [and that's our Ezra]

D. Anchor: God's Word changes us most when we *move beyond studying* it **to living it and sharing it**.

E. Practical Challenge: Don't skip steps. Many want to teach before they **learn**. Many want influence before **obedience**.

F. God's pattern is: **Seek. Do. Teach.**

VIII. Slide 11a **6 CHRIST CONNECTION**

A. **Jesus Is the Word Made Flesh**

1. **Ezra** studied the Word. **Jesus** is the Word.

a) John tells us: *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*

b) **Jesus** didn't merely teach truth. He **embodied** truth.

2. Everything Ezra pointed toward *finds fulfillment in Christ*.

B. **11b Jesus Perfectly Lived the Pattern**

1. **Ezra** **sought**, **did**, and **taught** God's Word.

2. **Jesus** perfectly fulfilled God's will.

- a) Every **word** He spoke. Every **action** He took. Every **step** He walked.
- b) Perfect **obedience**. Perfect **truth**. Perfect **integrity**.

C. 11c Jesus Makes Transformation Possible

1. **The law** can reveal our **failures**. **Jesus** provides **forgiveness** and **transformation**.
2. He **doesn't** simply tell us what to do. He **gives us His Spirit** to help us do it.
3. **The Christian life** is *not self-improvement*. It is **Christ transforming** us from the inside out.

D. 11d Jesus Still Speaks Through His Word

1. The same Christ who walked the roads of Galilee **still speaks today** through Scripture.
2. When we open God's Word, we are not merely reading ancient words. **We are encountering the living Christ**.

E. Christ Connection Questions

1. Do you view the Bible as a book to master **or** a place to meet Jesus?
2. What would change if you approached Scripture expecting Christ to speak to you?
3. Are you relying on *willpower* to change, **or** on Christ's power within you?

F. **Prayer:** Lord, give us **hearts like Ezra**. Help us to **seek** Your Word, **obey** Your Word, and **faithfully share** Your Word. **Root us deeply in Scripture so that our lives reflect Christ**. Shape our decisions, our priorities, and our character **by** Your truth.

G. Keywords: Ezra. Seek. Do. Teach.