

Ezra Bible Study Questions (Based on the NIV Translation)

Ezra 1:1-7, 2:68-3:6 Recovering from Disaster

1. What was the situation of the Lord's people at the beginning of the book of Ezra? See 2 Chronicles 36:15-23
2. Why had things gone so badly wrong? See 2 Chronicles 34:22-25 and 2 Chronicles 36:11-16
3. What was the first thing that the exiles think to do when they returned to the promised land?
4. What does this tell us about what is important in the Christian faith? See Matthew 22:34-38 and John 4:21-24.
5. There is no Temple yet. Why was building one so important for the people of God at that time, and why isn't it now? See Hebrews 10:8-14

Ezra 3:7-13 The Day of Small Things

1. What are the indicators that the returning exiles are short of political influence, money and people? (see verses 7 & 8)
2. What is praise? How is it different from thanksgiving? Why is praise especially important?
3. The New Temple was the same size as the old Temple, and on the same site BUT
There was no Ark of the Covenant;
There were no tablets with the Ten Commandments
There was no Eternal Flame
The nothing to put in the Holy of Holies so it was smaller, and empty
There was no royal palace next door; they were being ruled by a pagan foreign power
So, it could be hard to enter positively into a future which is on a smaller scale than the past.
Why is it important to acknowledge both the joys and the sorrows of life? See 1 Corinthians 12:21-24
4. How does the New Testament say we should think about the hurts and frustrations of life? See eg Romans 8:28-39; James 1:2-4; Ephesians 6:10-20
5. How can we have a positive balance between mourning the past and rejoicing in the present and the future? Have a time reflecting on the last verse of "Soldiers of Christ Arise":
"From strength to strength go on, wrestle and fight and pray
Tread all the powers of darkness down and win the well fought day
That having all things done and all your conflicts past
Ye may overcome (*o'ercome in the hymn*) through Christ alone and stand entire at last"

Ezra 4:1-5, 24-5:5 Discouragement and Blessing

1. Why is Zerubbabel doing the right thing in Ezra 4:3, even though this leads to a halt in the building of the Temple?
2. How might Ezra 4:4 apply to today? What weapons might we use against discouragement? See eg Isaiah 61:3; Romans 1:11-12; Romans 13:14 & 14:1; John 15:16-17; Hebrews 10:24
3. What, according to Ezra 5:1-5 was helping the building of a new Temple?
4. How did God signal to His people that they needed to persevere in building? See Haggai 1:3-11
5. What blessings did God promise as a result? See Haggai 2:15-19
6. How do we interpret passages about material blessing in the New Testament? See eg John 15:16 and Matthew 9:36-38
7. The New Testament version of the Temple is the Church (1 Peter 2:4-5). Why is building the Church so important, and how might discouragement and opposition get in the way?
8. If you have time, reflect on Romans 12:14-21 as you close.

Ezra 6:1-8, 13-22: Zechariah and the Restoration of Godly Worship

1. What event that took place in Babylon might have stimulated Darius to ensure that the decree of Cyrus was carried out? Clue: Rooooarrrr!!! Or see Daniel 6:25-28

2. How did the preaching of Zechariah in these three passages help to deal with discouragement and encourage the people of God to rebuild the Temple?

See

Zechariah 1:14-18

Zechariah 2:11-13

Zechariah 4:6-10

3. In Zechariah's preaching there are Messianic implications or, to put it another way, he appears to be talking about Jesus. Old Testament passages can have multiple meanings, one for that day, one for the New Testament period, and one for today or even for the Second Coming. How do the following passages speak of Jesus:

Zechariah 3:9 (don't worry about the stone and the eyes) – What day is being referred to?

Zechariah 6:11-13 Why does the unity between priest and ruler point to Jesus?

Zechariah 9:9-11 what day is being referred to?

4. What things that were done for the first time since the destruction of Solomon's Temple in Ezra 3:16-22?

5. What emotion accompanied the renewal of biblical (in the case according to the law of Moses) worship?

6. How does this help us to identify godly worship in today's Church?

Ezra 7:1-10 Elements of Spiritual Leadership

1. Why was heritage so important to God's people after the Exile to Babylon?

2. What is the most important thing about the Law of Moses? See also 2 Timothy 3:14-17

3. What are the nearest equivalents today of the roles listed in Ezra 7:7?

4. What does Ezra 7:8-9 remind us to pray and look out for?

5. What was Ezra's role? How does this relate to Acts 6:1-4?

6. What is and is not the role of the spiritual leadership? See Ephesians 4:11-13.

Ezra 9 Intermarriage

1. Why is the issue of intermarriage important to God's people at that time?

2. Why was intermarriage with foreigners a problem earlier in the Old Testament? See eg Judges 3:5-8; 1 Kings 11:1-6

3. How does this principle transfer into the New Testament? See 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

4. What advice does the New Testament give to those who are married to a non-believer?

See 1 Corinthians 7:12-17; 1 Peter 3:1-4

5. In Ezra 9:15 what is Ezra afraid that the sin of the people will do to their relationship with God?

6. What is the message of this passage for today? See Romans 12:2; 1 Peter 1:13-16; Colossians 1:9-12;