

Ezra

1

The Big Picture

- Ezra 1-6 covers the period of the initial return under Cyrus to the completion of the Temple 539 B.C. to 515 B.C.
- Ezra 7-Nehemiah 13 cover the period beginning with Ezra's return from exile 458 B.C. and extends to 430 B.C.

2

God provides the opportunity, motivation and means to accomplish His purpose. 1:2-11

- The purpose: Rebuild the Temple
- The opportunity-God moved on the heart of a pagan king, Cyrus, to issue the decree allowing for the return.
- The motivation
 - God stirred their spirit v.5
 - Return of the Temple vessels

3

God provides the opportunity, motivation and means to accomplish His purpose. 1:2-11

- The means
 - Leaders v.5
 - Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. This would be the Chaldean name of Zerubbabel. (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 3) Zerubbabel was a descendant of David through Solomon 1 Chronicles 3:10-19; Matthew 1:12
 - The heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin
 - Priests
 - Levites

4

God provides the opportunity, motivation and means to accomplish His purpose. 1:2-11

- The means (cont'd)
 - Finances v.6
 - Travel provision v.6
- Note the stewardship and sense of responsibility in the accounting of the Temple vessels entrusted to Sheshbazzar (Zerubbabel) vs.9-11

5

Those who returned 2:1-67

- Men of the people of Judah and Benjamin
- The priests
- The Levites
- The Temple Servants and Sons of Solomon's servants
 - These were people who were descendants of people who were not ethnically Jews but had been pressed into service by Solomon during the building of the temple.
- Those who could not prove their descent

6

Those who returned 2:1-67

- Priests who could not document their genealogy
 - Excluded from practice and privileges of the priesthood
 - Required confirmation by the high priest by the Urim and Thummim. Exodus 28:30 gives origin) (1 Samuel 14:41-42 is the only description of the uses of the Urim and Thummim)
 - Barzillai is noted for helping David as he fled Absalom. 2 Samuel 17:27; 19:31-40

7

Immediate actions upon return 2:68-70

- Finances given for the construction of the Temple
- People began to reclaim property

8

Lessons

- God stirs the hearts of people to accomplish His plans and purpose.
- God makes provision for His plans and purpose.
- God gives people the responsibility to practice responsible stewardship of His provisions.
- God gives His people the opportunity to contribute toward His plans and purpose.

9
