

## Rebuilding the People

### I. Slide1 Announce:

A. Daylight Savings this Sat night.

### II. Intro:

A. Slide2 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. Slide3 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.*

### III. Slide4 PREPARATIONS (7:1-10) [vs.1-10 gives an overview of the next chapters]

- A. (1) King Artaxerxes permitted **Ezra** to return to Jerusalem to assist the people in their **spiritual needs**.
- B. (1-5) *Why the need for Ezra's genealogy here?* To prove he was a **priest** from the family of **Aaron** (17th gen.)
- C. It took **4 months** for this long journey from Babylon to Jerusalem.
- D. Slide5 (10) Here's a life verse for us: *Study it. Live it. Teach it.*
  1. **Martin Luther** gave *qualities and virtues of a good preacher*: Able to teach in a right and orderly way. A good head. A good voice. A good memory. Knows when to stop. Is sure of his material and is diligent. Stakes body and life, goods and honor on it. Suffers himself to be vexed and flayed by everyone. **Study it** - He prepared his heart to seek/study the Law of the Lord, meaning he made it his purpose to *know, then live, then teach the Scriptures*.
  2. Of course it was possible for a scribe to simply **stockpile info**. Ezra made it his purpose to **go beyond that**.
    - a) *Next*, he didn't only **crave it** for himself but for the **others**.
  3. What was it to **physically** return to **Israel's land** & **not spiritually** return to **Israel's God**?

- E. **Live it - Do it** – listen to the contrast Jesus gives (Mt.23:3) **Therefore whatever they** (Pharisees) **tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.**
- F. **Teach it** - so many excuses...*But I don't know if I have the gift of teaching.* We were all told to go make **disciples**, were we not?
1. I think **every Christian** has the call to **teach** the fallen world *about the savior & the saved world* about *walking with Him.*
- G. When God needs an instrument, He will come to men/women of Ezra's spirit. *Are you of this spirit?*
1. **Which of these 3 areas do you need to work on?** [studying/living/teaching?]
- H. **So far, what do we learn about Ezra here?**

#### IV. Slide6 **PERMISSION (7:11-26)**

- A. (12-26) This is written in Aramaic.
1. **Why change to Aramaic?** - That's what they spoke there.
  2. **Chaldea** = name of a district of so. Babylonia present day Iraq. They spoke & wrote Aramaic there because of the Assyrian domination there about 3 cent. Earlier.
    - a) **Noah's** boy Shem, has Aram, who becomes the Arameans living in Assyria (Syria).
- B. (12) *note: king of kings :0*
- C. (13) **Any Jew** could go up w/Ezra.
- D. (15,16) They got to take a large *freewill offering* from Babylon to assist in the work of the Lord.
1. **Slide7a** Prov.16:11 **When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.**
- E. (20-22) They were even given an **expense account** from Darius.
1. **Slide7b** Eph.3:20 **Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.**
  2. **Slide8** Hear are **Daniels** prayers & tears being answered. **Read** 9:16-19 msg
- F. (22) **Salt** was *without limit.*
1. **Slide9a** Lev.2:13 **And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.**
  2. Note everything else in the vs. was **meted out w/exactness**, except the **salt**.
    - a) **Salt** becomes a great example of Gods divine **grace** to our soul.
    - b) **Slide9b** *The vinegar & gall of life are given to us w/such exactness, but the salt of grace...no measure seems to be made.* Spurgeon
- G. **Slide9c** (23) **Diligently** - **Work** as if everything depended upon your **work**, **and pray** as if everything depended upon your **prayer**. William Booth

H. (25,26) Ezra's task was to **establish order & religious worship** in the land.

1. Understand there had been 57 years between the completion of the temple & the arrival of Ezra. (Book of **Esther** took place during that time)
  2. So, unfortunately the people had ***lapsed into sin***.
    - a) That makes Esther's story even more interesting, that God saves the Jews from extinction at a time they were **not walking** with Him.
  3. It was Ezra's job to bring them ***back to the Lord***.
  4. Remember **James'** admonition as he closes out his book w/**Brethren**, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone **turns him back**, let him know that he who **turns** a sinner from the error of his way will **save** a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.
- I. (26) Here is the balanced life for the Christian...*obedience to God & Country*.
1. No separation of church & state (6:8). Tax exempt status (7:24).

#### V. Slide10 **PRAISE (7:27,28)**

A. Ezra's **doxology** shows just how **appreciative** he was to the Lord for **answering** his prayers.

#### VI. Slide11 **COMRADES & COMPANIONS (8:1-14)**

A. (1) This was simply the list of those who returned w/him.

#### VII. Slide12 **LOOKIN FOR LEVITES (8:15-20)**

A. (15) **Ahava** – Exact location unknown, most likely a tributary off the Euphrates River. Here Ezra assembled the returning exiles before their journey to Jerusalem.

B. So now there only about 100-200 miles into their 400 mile journey.

C. (15-20) **No Levitical priests were coming???**

1. Ezra had to **draft** some because they didn't volunteer.
2. **Again, this shows the state of the people. It also shows they would have...**
  - a) **To Uproot Everything**: Kids were in school, have to sell the house.
  - b) **Heavy Hardships**: they'd have to load up the covered wagons & move west.
  - c) **Radical Job change**: They'd move from ordinary pursuits to the strict routine of Temple service.

#### VIII. Slide13 **FASTING FOR FORTIFICATION (8:21-23)**

A. (22) **What a great leader**. He cared more for **God's reputation** than his own safety. **What integrity**.

1. To Ezra their nations testimony was at stake.

2. He told the king *we don't need a military escort...* **God will be our escort!** He would care for them. [no **visible** protection needed...we have **invisible** protection]
    - a) Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.
  3. When do we take the escort & when don't we?
    - a) Once in Russia in the city of Lipetsk (S/E of Moscow) we received a police escort *lights-a-flashin & sirens a blarin* all the way through the city.
      - (1) But they were trying to honor us...& probably wanted us out of their city.
  4. When do we expect the help of Caesar or the unbeliever & when don't we? **ASK?**
    - a) In this case it is when *Gods name, testimony, & his people* are at stake.
  5. This is a healthy, *holy shame-facedness*.
    - a) The king would think that Ezra's profession of faith in God was just hypocrisy...*i.e. The God of Israel couldn't take care of His own worshippers?*
    - b) *He couldn't bring his mind to lean on an arm of flesh.* F.B.Meyer
    - c) Here's what helped him: (a) He knew this was *of the Lord* (b) He knew since it was *of Him*, he would be guarded by Him who is his **sword & shield**.
      - (1) Deut.33:29 **Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, The shield of your help And the sword of your majesty.**
- B. (23) This verse ought to encourage **us** also to have this similar behavior.
1. Mt.6:15,16 says twice, *when you fast...* inferring you will,...it **doesn't** say, *if you fast.*
  2. Has the Lord shown you to **fast** for anything lately? Were you **obedient** to it? How about this week? Is there anything you are not getting answers to in prayer? **Fast.**
- C. What do we learn about our **God** here?

## IX. Slide14 GIFTS FOR GOD (8:24-27)

- A. 22 men were **entrusted** w/the goods.

## X. Slide15 GUARDING GODS GIFTS (8:28-30)

- A. 22 were held **accountable** to the delivery of their task.
1. The Lord does the same with **us**. **Entrusting** us as His stewards & one day to stand before his Bema seat for **accountability**.

## XI. Slide16 JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM (8:31-36)

- A. Do you ever pray the prayer for *Traveling Mercies*?
1. Like when you hop in your cars with your family before trips.
    - a) Here is a place in scripture where they prayed for *Traveling Mercies*.
    - b) Vs. 21-23's prayer & fasting...*answered!*

- B. (33-35) Everything...all was delivered & weighed in...all watched & kept (29).
  1. They left in April 458bc & arrived in July. They averaged 7 miles a day.
  2. They all deposited their treasures...each man found faithful.
  3. A great reminder to us to **Watch & Keep** all that He bestows into our care.
- C. (36) Prov.16:11 **When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.**

## XII. Slide17 EZRA'S SECRET TO SUCCESS

- A. God's Hand was with him: It's a **Providing** hand (7:6). It's a **Guiding** hand (7:9). It's a **Encouraging** hand (7:28). It's a **Protecting** hand (8:31)
- B. We also see **Ezra's Hand**: The word of God was *in his hand* (7:14).
  1. The word of God is in **your hand** also, **whatcha doing with it?**
- C. We also see God using **the people's Hands**: Their hands carried & faithfully delivered all the treasures *in their hands* (8:26,33). **So, watch & keep** (29).
  1. **Here's how it works: God's** strong but tender hands **are** laid upon **our** frail hands, as a father does his son in the turning of a wrench.
    - a) With joy the little boy says, *Look what I'VE done*, when really the credit should go to the **Father**.