

Lesson 8: A Second Chance

Ezra 1:1-4:5

1. Read Ezra 1-4. Use your outlines to make notes and comments for class discussions.
2. Read Lesson 8 in your books.
3. Answer questions in Dimension 1.
4. Consider the following questions:
 - a. God moves hearts of kings and families. Considering Ezra 1:1 and 1:5, how has God “moved your heart?”
 - b. If you must wait, as Israel did, for God to restore your place in His service, are you content to do so? Or are you pushing for change? How so?
 - c. The initial return from the exile is described in Ezra 2. What is the ratio between the total number of priests (2:36-39) and the total membership for the restored community (2:64)? Does that ratio sound top-heavy to you? What long-term needs of the community would be served by that many priests?
 - d. Rebuilding the Temple required raising money (see Ezra 2:68). Why is it often easier to raise money for a building than a church program?
 - e. When have you experienced a time of spiritual restoration? After lapsing in your faith? After moving away from organized religion? After a time out to explore other things? After an interaction by someone else?
 - f. Ezra 2 underscores the importance of spiritual ancestors to Israel. Who are your spiritual ancestors? What has been passed on to you, spiritually, from your ancestors? What one quality are you now developing as one of God’s people that you want to pass along to any children and grandchildren? How do you intend to do this? What ideas does Ezra 2 give you in that regard?
 - g. Ezra had the temple rebuilt on Solomon’s original foundations. What is the lesson for you in this?