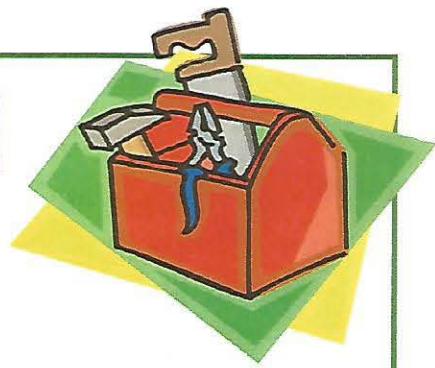


# Building Your Life for God



Lesson 9

## Ezra Helps the People

**Theme:** Obedience—Confessing sin, turning back to God

### Memory Verses

"Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people...and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord the great God. And all the people answered 'Amen, Amen!' while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground." Nehemiah 8:5-6

### Daily Bible Readings

|          |                       |
|----------|-----------------------|
| Thursday | Ezra 7:6-17, 27-28    |
| Friday   | Ezra 8:21-25, 30-32   |
| Saturday | Ezra 8:35-9:4         |
| Monday   | Ezra 9:5-12           |
| Tuesday  | Ezra 10:1-3, 7, 10-14 |

About eighty years after the first group of Jews came back to Jerusalem from captivity, Ezra asked permission from the king of Persia to take more people back home. King Artaxerxes (pronounced *arta ZERK seez*) allowed Ezra to return. The king also gave silver and gold to support Ezra's work and gave Ezra authority to appoint leaders in Jerusalem. Ezra knew God was using the Persian king to help his people.

### God Helps Ezra Return

Ezra was a scribe – a man who studied and taught God's Word. His knowledge of God's Word helped Ezra lead people in God's way.

### Ezra 7:6-17, 27-28

Whose hand was upon Ezra so that he was able to help the Jews?



What three important actions did Ezra take toward the Law of the Lord?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



### Ezra 8:21-25, 30-32

What did Ezra do with the money so everyone would know he was being honest?

Ezra told the people who were returning with him to ask God for help on their journey. Ezra took care of the gold and silver in an honest way. With God's help and protection, the people traveled safely and arrived in Jerusalem.

### Ezra Helps People Be Right with God

Soon after Ezra's group arrived in Jerusalem, he led people in offering sacrifices to God, honoring and thanking Him for their safe journey. But Ezra soon discovered some serious problems.

Leaders in Jerusalem came to tell Ezra that some men and women of Israel had married Canaanites, Hittites, Jebusites, and other foreign people. Even some priests and princes had done this. God had told His people not to marry people from other countries because most of them served other gods. God knew if the Jews married these people, they would begin serving other gods with them.

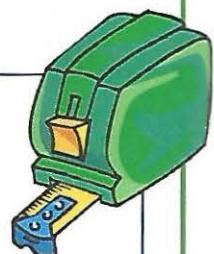
When Ezra learned what people had done, he was both sad and angry. He wanted people to see the danger of marrying those who worshiped idols. He led people to confess their wrongs to God.

God had sent His people out of their land because they served other gods. God had been kind in bringing His people back to their land. Ezra saw that people were making the same mistakes that led to captivity in the first place. Ezra knew people needed to turn from their sins and ask God for forgiveness.

### Ezra 8:35-9:4

Who had people married that caused Ezra to be deeply concerned?

- people who served other gods
- people with different colored skin
- people who spoke a different language



How did Ezra react to the news of the people's sins?

### People Turn From Sin

People saw Ezra's praying and crying, and they confessed their sins. They asked Ezra to help them follow God and have courage to do the right thing. Ezra asked the leaders to help him. They decided to bring all Jews to Jerusalem to talk about their situation before God. Three days later, they were all in Jerusalem.



### Ezra 9:5-12

Why did Ezra feel ashamed to come before God?

God did not want His people to marry people from other countries because

- they had different colored skin.
- they were lazy.
- they served other gods.

It was the time of year when it rained a lot. People were standing outside in the rain, and Ezra stood before them and pointed out their sins. The people agreed that their marriages were wrong and that they should separate from the people of the land — even from their wives who were not Israelites. Working through the problem would take some time. Instead of standing out in the rain, people were given an appointment to talk with the leaders and decide what to do. With Ezra's teaching and encouragement, people decided to do whatever was necessary to be right with God.

To live for God, we must sometimes change our attitudes and actions. We will need to say we are wrong and ask God to forgive us. We must also stop doing what is wrong and do God's will. We must decide to do whatever it takes to live for God!

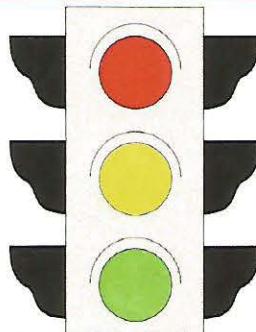


### Ezra 10:1-3, 7, 10-14

*True or False?* Ezra saw wrong in what people had done, but the people would not admit it.

*True or False?* The people said they were sorry for mixing with people of other lands but kept their relationships with them.

I say I'm sorry for what I did wrong, but I keep doing it.



Put an X in the light that best describes you.

**Red — most of the time**

**Yellow — sometimes**

**Green — never**

# Think About It ...

Look up “prejudice” in a dictionary. Write a definition in your own words here:



Give two reasons why we should not be prejudiced but think about and treat all people the same.



# Nail Down the Bible Facts

Without using the table of contents or index tabs, turn to the book of Esther. Turn to Titus, and then to Hebrews. What book is after Hebrews?

Which books of the Old Testament are about kings ruling Israel and focus on the temple?

On a map inside the back cover, study the way Israel left Egypt. What Sea did the Israelites cross to escape the Egyptians and Pharaoh?