

Manifest Destiny

Studies in Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther

Laying Down the Law

Introduction to Ezra 7-10

Whenever a new sheriff would come into town in the old west he would begin to "lay down the law". This would let the townspeople know the standard of behavior that he would enforce. In the same way the priestly scribe, Ezra, journeyed to Jerusalem with the permission and support of the Persian king to "lay down the law" of Moses to the people who had returned about 75 years earlier. The task of asking people to conform to a standard is often difficult, yet this is just as important as the job of rebuilding the temple was in Ezra 1-6. The people had intermarried with the inhabitants of the land, which was a direct violation of the Mosaic law, and a contributing factor to the reason they were expunged

from the land almost 150 years before. Ezra's initial job was to teach the people God's laws, then to ask them to be accountable to that standard. His example reveals four steps to helping people become obedient to God's standards. First, Ezra prepared himself through intense studying of and personal obedience to God's law. We can't ask someone to adhere to a standard that we ourselves do not understand. Secondly, he positioned himself to be able to ask for obedience. This occurred because God allowed him to return to Israel and be with the people. We must develop a personal relationship with the people if we are to ask them to be obedient to



Understanding how God's destiny for us is fulfilled.

God. Then, when Ezra discovered a glaring instance of disobedience, he prayed to God about it, rather than first asking the people to change. Finally, he proclaimed God's Word to them, confronted them with their sin, and challenged them to repentance. The outcome was that the people did conform to God's standards because of Ezra's correct approach in "laying down the Law".

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- Worship—You were planned for God's pleasure
- Fellowship—You were formed for God's family
- Discipleship—You were created to become like Christ
- Ministry—You were shaped for serving God
- Evangelism—You were made for a mission

Daily Questions for Ezra 7-10

(For answers to questions attend an ABF or go to www.celebrationnet.com/resources/leader resources)

<p>1. Read 7:1, 6-10. How was Ezra prepared to be used by God (v6, 10)? What did he request from the king (v6), and why (v6, 9)?</p>	
<p>2. Based on 7:11-26 what did the Persian king authorize (v13), how did he support them (v15-22, 24-26)? Why did he do this (v23)?</p>	
<p>3. According to 7:27-28 how did Ezra interpret the king's support (v27), and how did it make him respond (v27, 28)? Apply this to your life.</p>	

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Ezra 7-10 Study Questions (cont)

<p>4. From 8:1-20 who did Ezra need to go with him besides common people (v15-17)? Why did he need them, and what does this say about his mission?</p>	
<p>5. In 8:21-30 what did Ezra do (v21) and why (v22), and how did God respond (v23)? What else did Ezra do (v24-25, 30)?</p>	
<p>6. Looking at 8:31-36 what showed that God had heard their prayer for protection (v31)? How did they respond to God (v35)? What does this teach?</p>	
<p>7. Using 9:1-7 what did Ezra find out from the leaders (v1-2)? How did he react to this news (v3, 5-7), and what effect did this have (v4)?</p>	
<p>8. Read 9:8-15. What did Ezra realize about God (v8-9, 13)? What did he fear (v14-15)? Why was this a good response?</p>	
<p>9. According to 10:1-8 how did the people react to Ezra's confession (v1), and how did they deal with this (v2-5)? How did Ezra reinforce this (v7-8)?</p>	
<p>10. Based on 10:9-44 what final step had to be taken (v9-11), and what was the response (v12-14)? Why was this last step vital?</p>	
<p>11. When you consider Ezra's example of calling people to obedience, which action of his—preparation, positioning himself to be with the people, prayer, or proclaiming the word—do you need to work on the most? What will you do?</p>	

Scripture to Remember

"For we are slaves; but in our bondage, our God has not forsaken us, but has extended lovingkindness to us."

Ezra 9:9 (NAS)

Celebration Fellowship

Reaching—
Restoring—Raising Up

We're on the web

www.celebrationnet.com

Life Group Questions—The Transforming Power of Faith

(Using questions based on today's message, Life Groups meet in homes to build supportive relationships with others at Celebration Fellowship that enable us to grow in Christ.)

1. Talk about why you think God is so pleased (Hebrews 1:6) when we have faith in Him. How much faith do you normally have—1 to 10 (10 the most)?
2. How "free" do you think our will is? Why is it necessary that God gives us the gift of faith?
3. As a group talk about some of the "forerunners" to your faith in Christ. How does that make you feel? Why do you think God works through a process?
4. How do we know when we really have faith (use Rahab as an example).
5. Share some ways that God has blessed you when you have demonstrated genuine faith in Him. Why is faith in God necessary for salvation and for significance?
6. Discuss anything else important to you from the message today if you have time.