



# SMALL GROUP STUDY

## Ezra--The Second Exodus

Ezra was a priest and a direct descendant of Aaron. He was a well educated priest and was called a scribe. Ezra was a man of his word and he was a man of prayer. He was only one man, but he was totally devoted to God. In this book we see two different returns from captivity. King Cyrus was the king who was in control of the world at the time--the Mede Persia Empire. Through a very small event, God uses Ezra to bring the people out of captivity.

## National Restoration: Return! Rebuild! Resist! (Ezra 1-6)

The people return to the land, they begin to rebuild the temple and they resist the enemy that is trying to stop them. Ezra is a gutsy guy who takes a small group of people on a long journey because he believes, “maybe God wants to use my life.”

### Discussion Questions:

- a. Why is the book of Ezra referred to as the 2nd Exodus?
- b. What is the wild prediction made about Cyrus by Isaiah the prophet (Isaiah 44) one hundred fifty years before Cyrus was even born?
- c. Why did so few come back from the captivity?
- d. What was the big deal about getting the alter up and running so quickly?
- e. What is the center of our worship today?
- f. Why did some of the people weep while others shouted for joy when the foundation of the temple was laid?
- g. What were the 5 things missing from the temple that were in Solomon’s Temple?
- h. Examine your heart: How has God used your life in the past? How is He using it right now? What has God put on your heart to do now?
- i. Who tried to discourage the rebuilding of the temple? How did the Jews respond to the efforts of discouragement?

## Spiritual Reformation (Ezra 7-10)

The priest, Ezra, comes back to Jerusalem after 58 years from the completion of the temple. It’s all about Spiritual Reformation. When he gets back to Jerusalem, Ezra hears of the mixed marriages, realizes that they are committing the same sin that got them into captivity in the first place and he mourns and then prays.

### Discussion Questions:

- a. What took place in the 58 year gap between the completion of the temple and the arrival of Ezra?
- b. What were the physical signs of Ezra’s mourning?
- c. What plan did the people come up with to sort out the mess they had made with their intermarrying?
- d. Where do we see Jesus in the book of Ezra?