

Nehemiah and Rebuilding

Study 2 – Zerubbabel and Ezra

Welcome

Think about a decision you made recently.
What influenced you during the process, both positive and negative?

Worship

Create a space to 'put down' the things that preoccupy us from the day or the week; including the conversations you have just shared; to hand them to God for safe keeping, so you can focus on listening to each other and to God's word.

Music – choose something peaceful, for example:

'Be still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy one is here.'

Harp music, quiet worship: www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCbQuajzShs

Pray for openness to hear God's word and support one another

Word – Study 2 – The first returning to Jerusalem

1. With Zerubbabel, Joshua and Ezra

Find out about them:

Ezra 2.1-2; Ezra 7.1-10; Ezra 3.1-2, 8-9; Haggai 1.1; 2.1-9; Zechariah 4.6-10;

Returning dates:

537BC – with Joshua and with Zerubbabel, who is mentioned in Matt 1 as part of Jesus' family line.

458BC – with Ezra, who returned to Jerusalem with priests and Levites.

Nehemiah – later, this is covered in a later study.

2. The Providence of God

Look at the strands that came together for the return to Jerusalem:

- Prophecy: Jeremiah 25.11-12; Jeremiah 29.10-11
- God working through leaders – outside - Persian king: Ezra 1.1-4
- God working through leaders – inside – Zerubbabel, Ezra: Ezra 1.5
- People stepping out in faith - Ezra 1.5-6
- People supporting: Ezra 1.6-8
- Pressing on through opposition: *Ezra chapters 5 and 6 (no need to read in detail)*
- Protection of God: Ezra 8.21-32

What does Providence mean to you? The theory – the reality?

3. People's response to God's Providence

Worship: Ezra 3.10-13; 6.13-19.

Discuss ways that we can weave more recognition of God's gifts into our active 'projects' and our worshipping life.

Witness

Consider how you will actively share your confidence in God's provision and providence with your neighbours.

Make time to plan carefully.

Feed back on any times you have become aware of the answers to prayer from your last meeting.

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