Building Your Life for God

Studies in Ezra, Nehemiah, Ezra, Daniel, Ezekiel, Haggai, & Malachi

[Shaping Hearts for God Curriculum]

**Lesson 9 – Ezra Helps the People**

**Theme: Obedience: Confessing Sin, Turning Back to God**

**Memory Verse - Nehemiah 8:5-6**

“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 worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.”

**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, 7-14

**Questions**

1. **Whose hand was upon Ezra so that he was able to help the Jews?**
2. **What three important actions did Ezra take toward the Law of the Lord?**
3. **What did Ezra do with the money so that everyone would know that he was honest?**
4. **Who had the people married that caused Ezra to be deeply concerned?**
5. **How did Ezra react to the news of the people’s sin?**
6. **Why did Ezra feel ashamed to come before God?**
7. **Why did God not want His people to marry the people from other countries?**
8. ***True or False*. Ezra saw wrong in what the people had done, but the people would not admit it.**
9. ***True or False*. The people said they were sorry for mixing with the people of other lands but kept their relationships with them anyway**

**Teacher Notes:**

**About 8o years after the first group of Jews returned to Jerusalem from captivity, Ezra asked permission from the king of Persia to take more people back home. King Artaxerxes 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.**

**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 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.**

**Soon after Ezra’s group arrived in Jerusalem, he led the 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 intermarry because most of them served other gods. God knew if the Jews married foreign women, they would begin to serve their gods.**

**When Ezra learned what the people had done, he was both sad and angry. He wanted people to see danger in what they were doing. He led them 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 them 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 wicked ways and ask God for forgiveness.**

**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. The decided to bring all the Jews to Jerusalem to talk about their situation before God. Three days later, they were all in Jerusalem. It was the time of year when it rained a lot. People were standing out 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 pleasing to 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!**