

# 2 Chronicles 36

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### The God of Persistent Faithfulness

The final chapter of 2 Chronicles sets the stage for our study in Ezra. Despite repeated warnings from prophets, the people mocked God's messengers, leading to judgment. However, God's faithfulness shines as He fulfills His promises of restoration, reminding us of the hope found in God's relentless grace.

**READ:** To prepare your heart for this study, please read 2 Chronicles 36.

**LISTEN:** To hear Pastor Jonathan's message on this passage, [click here](#).

- 1 Why do you think the Israelites ignored so many of the prophets that God sent them? What leads people (Christians and non-Christians) to ignore the Word of God today? What causes you to ignore the word of God?
- 2 In his sermon, Pastor Jonathan said that we as humans tend to persist for a very long time in patterns of sin, even when the consequences are clear. What is an example from your own life of persisting in sin despite feeling the consequences, and what helped you break out of this pattern?
- 3 In what ways might this passage call you to repent of ongoing sin in your life? What might repentance look like in your context?
- 4 The Lord was faithful in giving His Word to the Israelites. How has the Lord been faithful in bringing you His Word at times that you've needed it?
- 5 2 Chronicles 36 teaches us that the Lord is faithful in bringing judgment for sin. How might that be a source of anxiety for you? How might that be a source of comfort?
- 6 The Lord would use King Cyrus to bring about His sovereign plan of redemption for His people. How has the Lord brought redemption from your own sin, weakness, and inadequacy?

# EZRA 1 & 2

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Who Is Ultimately in Control?

In the beginning of Ezra, God's sovereignty is demonstrated in fulfilling His promises. Despite Judah's long exile, God stirred King Cyrus of Persia to issue a decree allowing the Israelites to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.

**READ:** To prepare your heart for this study, please read Ezra 1 & 2.

**LISTEN:** To hear Pastor Jonathan's message on this passage, [click here](#).

- 1 In what situations in your life or in the world right now are you tempted to think God won't work? What might it look like for you to trust God more in this situation?
- 2 In his sermon, Pastor Jonathan talked about how, in Christ, we have immediate access to God. Do you think your prayer life accurately reflects this reality? Why or why not?
- 3 Share a time where the problem in your life became the solution, by God's provision.
- 4 What do you think is the difference between trusting God to provide and believing in a false prosperity gospel?
- 5 What is the significance of knowing that God cares about people as individuals as opposed to simply being concerned with a grand plan of redemption?

## EZRA 3

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### First Things First

In Ezra 3, we see the rebuilding of the altar and the laying of the temple's foundation after the exiles returned to Jerusalem. The people, unified and humbled by their experiences, prioritized worship over construction, reestablishing sacrifices to address sin and draw near to God.

**READ:** To prepare your heart for this study, please read Ezra 3.

**LISTEN:** To hear Pastor Jonathan's message on this passage, [click here](#).

- 1 The Israelites were united in their work because of their humble response to the Lord's discipline. How might you personally grow in promoting unity within the body of Christ?
- 2 Why is it important that we worship Christ before we try and work for Christ? In what ways might you need to "deal with the state of your heart" before you try to serve Christ?
- 3 Have you found your place to serve in the church yet? If yes, how did you find it? If no, where might you potentially look into serving?
- 4 How do you fight the temptation to praise yourself for your work or service? What does it look like to praise the Lord instead of ourselves in all that we do?
- 5 How do you deal with grief over the difficulties and "marks of sin" that you see in your work for Christ?

# EZRA 4

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### When Trouble Comes Knocking

The deception, discouragement, and accusations from adversaries that the returned exiles faced while rebuilding the temple reminds us to expect challenges when serving God. Despite setbacks, God's purposes will ultimately prevail.

**READ:** To prepare your heart for this study, please read Ezra 4.

**LISTEN:** To hear Pastor Jonathan's message on this passage, [click here](#).

- 1 In his sermon, Pastor Jonathan stressed how we must have the right expectations going into any endeavor. How have you seen rosy idealism interfere with your walk with Christ and His church?
- 2 What optimistic dreams of "what the Christian life should be" do you still hold onto? In what circumstances might these dreams be helpful and how might you be able to identify when they are harmful?
- 3 How can you tell whether someone is a deceptive adversary or an unhealthy/immature believer? How might your response to these different types of people look different?
- 4 What discouragements do you currently face in your Christian life? What are some sources of strength you may rely on as you seek to overcome these discouragements?
- 5 How does knowing that the people of God have always faced opposition, and that you will likely always face some kind of opposition, change how you think about your life and your future?

# EZRA 5 & 6

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### The Lord's Purpose Prevails

The faithfulness of God is shown as the temple rebuilding is completed after years of opposition. We see the people worshipping and joyfully celebrating, reminding us that God's purposes prevail not only for the accomplishment of tasks but ultimately for His people's worship and His glory.

**READ:** To prepare your heart for this study, please read Ezra 5 & 6.

**LISTEN:** To hear Pastor Jonathan's message on this passage, [click here](#).

- 1 What does it mean for those of us who don't regularly preach to live in light of the truth that God's purposes prevail through the preaching of His Word?
- 2 What does it mean to have our identity as "servants of the God of heaven and earth" (see Ezra 5:11)? How does this give us confidence and security?
- 3 In his sermon, Pastor Jonathan mentioned how the Lord not only provided the bare minimum for His people to rebuild the temple, but superabundantly provided for them out of the Royal Treasury of Persia. How does the Lord's superabundant provision shape how we think about Him and His care for us?
- 4 Where do the threats to the work of God feel large right now? Either in the Met or in the universal church?
- 5 How can we prevent ourselves from losing sight of the end goal of worshipping the Lord in the midst of the business of serving the Lord?

# EZRA 7

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### The Teacher Who Brings Renewal

Ezra is described as one who studied, obeyed, and taught the Law of the Lord, demonstrating the qualities God uses to inspire transformation among His people. We see the importance of leaders with a heart for God's Word and a reliance on His divine provision to bring renewal and growth to His people.

**READ:** To prepare your heart for this study, please read Ezra 7.

**LISTEN:** To hear Pastor Jonathan's message on this passage, [click here](#).

1

How might you grow in having a heart that loves to study the Word?

2

How can we try and ensure that our "doing" of the Word keeps up with our study of the Word?

3

In his sermon, Pastor Jonathan said "Renewal in the people of God comes from the teaching of the Word of God." Why do you think this is? How do we live in light of this reality?

4

What could it look like for you to help raise up more future teachers for the church?

5

Pastor Jonathan said "If we do anything useful to bring spiritual renewal, it will be because the Lord's hand is on us." What is one way that you might grow in living in humble dependency on the hand of the Lord?

# EZRA 8

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### The Good Hand of God

God's provision, guidance, and protection for His people is shown as Ezra leads a group of exiles on a perilous journey back to Jerusalem. Ezra models dependence on God through prayer and fasting, emphasizing the Lord's hand in ensuring their safe arrival.

**READ:** To prepare your heart for this study, please read Ezra 8.

**LISTEN:** To hear Pastor Jonathan's message on this passage, [click here](#).

- 1** Ezra 8 is a travel log of the pilgrim people of God journeying from Babylon to their home in Jerusalem. What does it mean for us to think of ourselves as being the pilgrim people of God journeying from the corruption of this world to the heavenly New Jerusalem? How does this change the way we think about our lives here and now?
- 2** Pastor Jonathan highlighted how, in Ezra 8, we see that despite the turmoil and pain of the exile, the Lord's plans were still on track and could not fail. What is one area of your life that feels like it is not going according to plan? How might you shift your perspective to see this in light of the Lord's plan for redemption in your life?
- 3** While the Levites originally did not respond to Ezra's call for help, eventually they did. Has the Lord placed a call on your life that you have been ignoring so far? What might it look like for you to respond to this call?
- 4** In Ezra 8:21-23, we see that Ezra does not ask the king for help but instead has the people fast and pray for the Lord's protection. In your own life, what is one area where you may need to trust the Lord instead of relying on more seemingly pragmatic alternatives? On the flip side of this, how can we know if we are over-spiritualizing our problems instead of taking necessary action?
- 5** Pastor Jonathan suggested that the earthly wreckage caused by our sin can help us long for the full restoration that will come with the new heavens and new earth. Have you found this to be true? How might we grow in a healthy longing for the new creation?



# EZRA 9

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### The Disruptive Power of the Word of God

Ezra grieves as the returning exiles sin by intermarrying with non-Israelite peoples, leading to spiritual compromise. Here we find the ongoing need for repentance and reliance on God's abundant grace, pointing forward to the ultimate redemption found in Jesus Christ.

**READ:** To prepare your heart for this study, please read Ezra 9.

**LISTEN:** To hear Pastor Jonathan's message on this passage, [click here](#).

- 1 Pastor Jonathan highlighted how the daily task of the people of God is to separate ourselves from the false gods and idols of the world around us. What steps are you taking to accomplish this in your own life?
- 2 Why do you think we try to minimize and ignore sin when it is exposed?
- 3 In verses 3 and 4, Ezra demonstrates a deep and heartfelt grief over sin. What's the difference between this kind of godly sorrow and self-flagellation (attempts to punish ourselves after we sin to make up for it)?
- 4 How might you grow in becoming more sensitive to the seriousness of your sin?
- 5 How does knowing that the grace of God is greater than all our sin impact how we relate to Him and our own failures?



# EZRA 10

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Dealing with the Mess of Sin

We see the people's collective brokenness over their sin of intermarrying with unbelievers, leading to genuine repentance and decisive actions to address their wrongdoing. And the hope in God's forgiveness serves as a reality check that the consequences of sin often remain, urging us to turn from sin before it takes root.

**READ:** To prepare your heart for this study, please read Ezra 10.

**LISTEN:** To hear Pastor Jonathan's message on this passage, [click here](#).

- 1 In his sermon, Pastor Jonathan highlighted how sensitivity to our sin can fade over time and we eventually need the Lord to break our hearts over our sin again. How can we maintain a sensitivity to the seriousness of our sin?
- 2 What's the difference between "crocodile tear repentance" and real repentance?
- 3 In Ezra 10, the Israelites develop a plan for a very serious and very practical response to their sin. What is one sin (large or small) that you could similarly take serious, planned, practical action to address? What might that plan of action look like?
- 4 Ezra 10 illustrates how the earthly messiness of sin often remains, even when there is spiritual forgiveness. Why do you think we are often more concerned with the earthly effects of our sin than the spiritual effects? What does it look like to love and trust in the Lord while accepting that He will not necessarily spare us from the earthly consequences of our sin?
- 5 Pastor Jonathan suggested that the earthly wreckage caused by our sin can help us long for the full restoration that will come with the new heavens and new earth. Have you found this to be true? How might we grow in a healthy longing for new creation?