A Renewed Remnant

Lesson 2

The Decree Of Cyrus & The 1st Return Led By Zerubbabel (Ezra 1-2)

Introduction

After 70 years in captivity, the "decree of liberation" finally comes! Though God sent His people into a situation where they had no freedom, He hoped it had a "cleansing effect" to prepare them for a fresh start. The purpose for which they returned would correct a tragic reality that had born testimony for the last 49 years...Solomon's temple that had been in ruins ever since Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it in ***586 B.C.***

1) What is recorded in 2 Chron. 36:14-23? How does the end of this chronicle lead to the start of Ezra's record?

2) What date is given in 1:1a? What prophecy of Jeremiah does Ezra reference that needs to be fulfilled? *Thought question*: how does this emphasize God's word? (Isa. 55:11; Mt. 24:35)

3) What did God do to Cyrus? (1:1b) How did He do this? (1:2) How do you think the Persian king knew what God wanted him to do?

4) Re: the decree of Cyrus, what 2 groups of people are addressed? (1:3-4) *Thought question*: why would some decide not to return to their homeland? Consider Jer. 29:1-7 in your answer.

5) Who is mentioned in 1:5? Who is mentioned in 1:6a?

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6) In what 2 ways are those planning to return to Jerusalem encouraged? (1:6b-11)

7) What is recorded in 2:1-67? Besides being just a "list" of those returning from captivity to a destroyed city, what does this "list" *really* represent?

8) How does Ezra 2 begin to declare God as a gracious God of 2nd chances? Before answering, read Jer. 7:16-34, Hos. 5:1-7, & Ezek. 10:18.

9) What incident is recorded in 2:61-63? (cp. Num. 16:40) Why would this be important, especially considering the remnant's attempts at starting over?

10) What is recorded in 2:68-69? (cp. Ex. 25:2-7; 35:4-9) What would this indicate?