

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Ezra 1-2

The Lord of History

Getting Started

How have you seen God sovereignly at work in your own life?

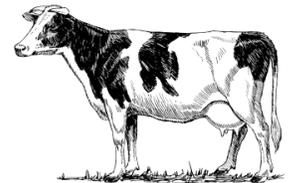
Background

The northern kingdom (Israel) was taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 BC. The southern kingdom (Judah) was taken into captivity by the Babylonians in 586 BC. In 539 BC Cyrus II, king of Persia, conquered Babylon. We read of the decree that Cyrus issued to free the Jewish exiles in Ezra 1.

- **Read 2 Chronicles 36:15-21.** Describe the destruction of Jerusalem.
- Was the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians a random attack, or part of God's sovereign plan? Explain.
- What had the Israelites done to incur God's judgment?

Digging In

1. **Read Ezra 1-2.** Write down your initial observations.
2. **Read Ezra 1:1-4.** Write a brief summary of Cyrus' decree.
3. How is God's sovereignty (God's control) seen in these verses?
4. **Read Ezra 1:5-11.** How did the people respond?
5. How is God's sovereignty seen in vss. 5-11?
6. **Read Ezra 2.** Why was it important to have accurate family records? (see vss. 62-63)
7. What did the people do when they arrived in Jerusalem? (1:68-70)



Getting Personal

- Would you agree that the Church is facing serious difficulties in many countries of the world today? How can we be encouraged as we see God's hand in history 2500 years ago?
- Think of the challenges you are personally experiencing. How can Ezra 1-2 help you trust the Lord more fully and follow him more wholeheartedly?