



# Biblical Literacy

Scripture • Substance • Spiritual Passion

## Lesson 57.2

## Old Testament Survey: Return from Exile (Part 2)

### Outline for Class

- Welcome
- Theme Today  
*As we continue our study of the Jews' return from the Babylonian exile to Jerusalem and Samaria/Judah, it is helpful to put certain events into a timeline. The below timeline sets out historical events of Persia above the line while the Biblical events detailed in Ezra are below the line.*
- Prayer for Hearts to Trust God's Providence and "Build" His Kingdom at His Command
- Video (43 minutes)
- Discussion & Points for Home

### Points for Home

- ❖ "The LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus... Then rose up...everyone whose spirit God had stirred up" (Ezr. 1:1-5). The LORD, the Master Baker, who stirs up and awakens the spirits of man—are we sensitive to what he has to say to us? We see in this story the many ways God communicates. He stirs the spirit and motivates or awakens in us what he would have us do. He moves in conviction. He also spoke to his people through the prophets, giving motivation and encouragement, as well as rebuke and correction. Unlike the generations that went into exile, the returning people who were listening, took heed to the word of the prophets. They honored what the prophets said, and built the house of the LORD. I want to be like those people. When God stirs my heart, I want to be sensitive and move as he convicts me. I want to read his word, to hear the words of the prophets even today, and see how God would have me live for him and not miss an opportunity to serve him!
- ❖ "They built the altar" (Ezr. 3:2). It started for the Jews at the temple site. They did not first rebuild the temple; they started with an altar. Before anything else, the people set sacrifices before God for their sins. Sin is the impediment to fellowship with a holy God. It must be dealt with properly. It is not enough to live with it in secret, or to try to stifle and forget it. Sin needs to be set before the Father and sacrifice for that sin must be made. It is a first priority. This is the beauty of the Cross of Christ. He came and offered a full and real sacrifice, bearing the sins of many all at once. The sacrifice of Christ meets all requirements of God's holiness as no other sacrifice ever could. Before the cross of Christ, with his sacrifice, we have full forgiveness. In Christ, we have His Spirit indwelling and keeping us for Him, no matter where we are—in exile, in joyful return, or in permanent diaspora!
- ❖ "Who gave you a decree to build this house?" (Ezr. 5:3). When the governor Tattenai interrupted the Jews work to ask this question, I wonder if it upset the workers. By the direction of God, not only was the decree of Cyrus reasserted by Darius, but the province also was required to pay for all future construction. Persia became an umbrella of protection for the Jews, who faced constant opposition from the Samaritans, Ammonites, and other adversaries in the land. God's road is to God's destination, not mine and not yours. In John 13, Jesus taught his disciples a lesson in service and humility, washing their feet in preparation for his coming arrest and crucifixion. In his explanation afterwards there is an interesting turn of words: You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet (Jn 13:13-14). For the apostles, Jesus was Teacher first ("Rabbi"), then "Lord." Jesus reversed the order to emphasize that he is first and foremost Lord. That is why his lessons as teacher have value.

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