

THE TEMPLE WAS COMPLETED

Nothing stops God from redeeming His people.



THE STORY: EZRA 6:13-15

MONDAY

God worked through Darius and the temple was completed

God worked through Darius and the temple was completed – In this passage we see how God moved on the heart of another secular leader in an astonishing way (Ezra 6:22). Darius retrieved the decree of Cyrus and gave his own order for the temple construction. The cost for the rebuilding was paid in full! Everything needed, including the animals for the sacrifice, were provided. If the Israelites were left to themselves, they would have been unable to afford both the cost of construction and the provision of animals. Once again, God provided! He paid the price and provided the sacrifice – all of grace!

TALK ABOUT IT:

What do we learn about God from this story? (*God controls all things, even the hearts of kings. He is sovereign! Read Proverbs 21:1*)

Does God work in our lives like He worked in the lives of Darius and the returning Jews? (*Yes. God works the same way today. Without the grace of God in our lives, we would all be actively resisting God.*)

PRAY:

Thank God for reaching out to us and drawing us to Himself and His purpose.





The Passover was celebrated

The Passover was celebrated – In a continued testimony to the ongoing plan of God, the people celebrated and remembered the Passover. One day, Jesus would sit in the upper room with His disciples and announce the New Covenant during the Passover meal. In light of that day, God preserved the celebration of the Passover after this rededication of the temple. God ensured the lasting ordinance of the Passover would continue until it was fulfilled in Christ.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What did God do in the heart of the king of Assyria? *(God turned his heart so that he aided the people of Israel.)*

How is the Passover like the sacrifice of Christ? *(Both required death to pay for sins. Both celebrate God's salvation of those who trust in Him. Jesus was the final Lamb to be sacrificed!)*

PRAY:

Thank God for sending us the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.



Where is Jesus?

After rebuilding Zerubbabel's Temple, seven hundred animals were sacrificed. At the completion of Solomon's temple long before that, 142,000 animals were sacrificed. Neither temple remains today. Those hundreds and thousands of sacrifices were temporary. Those temples were temporary. Jesus is God's temple (Revelation 21:22) just as Christ's body of believers (the church) is God's temple (Ephesians 2:19-22).

As part of the church, we are each, individually, God's temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

We are God's temple because the Holy Spirit dwells in us. Together we make up His church and all of us form the body of Christ. In Christ we have become the new Temple of God. Only one sacrifice was made, and only one was ever needed – the death of Christ on the cross.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why couldn't animals take away the sin of fallen men? *(Men are made in the image of God. An animal, or a thousand animals are not worth what even one man is worth in the sight of God. In order for redemption to take place, a perfect sacrifice had to be made. Jesus came as the perfect man to redeem imperfect men. Animals are not acceptable as a final "once for all" sacrifice. But Jesus was.)*

Read Romans 10:9. What do we need to do to be saved? *(We simply need believe in and receive the free gift of Christ's salvation. No good works are required because they would never be enough to satisfy God's wrath toward sin. We cannot earn our salvation. We receive it by grace when we believe and confess that Jesus is Lord.)*

PRAY:

Thank God for sending His Son Jesus to die in our place as an acceptable sacrifice for our sin.



THE STORY: EZRA 7

THURSDAY

Artaxerxes sends Ezra to teach the people

Artaxerxes sends Ezra to teach the people - About sixty years after the Passover was celebrated, God placed Ezra on the heart of another king. Ezra was sent by the king to the people to teach them God's law. When we read the letter Artaxerxes sent with Ezra, we see just how powerfully God can work on the heart of a king to accomplish His will.

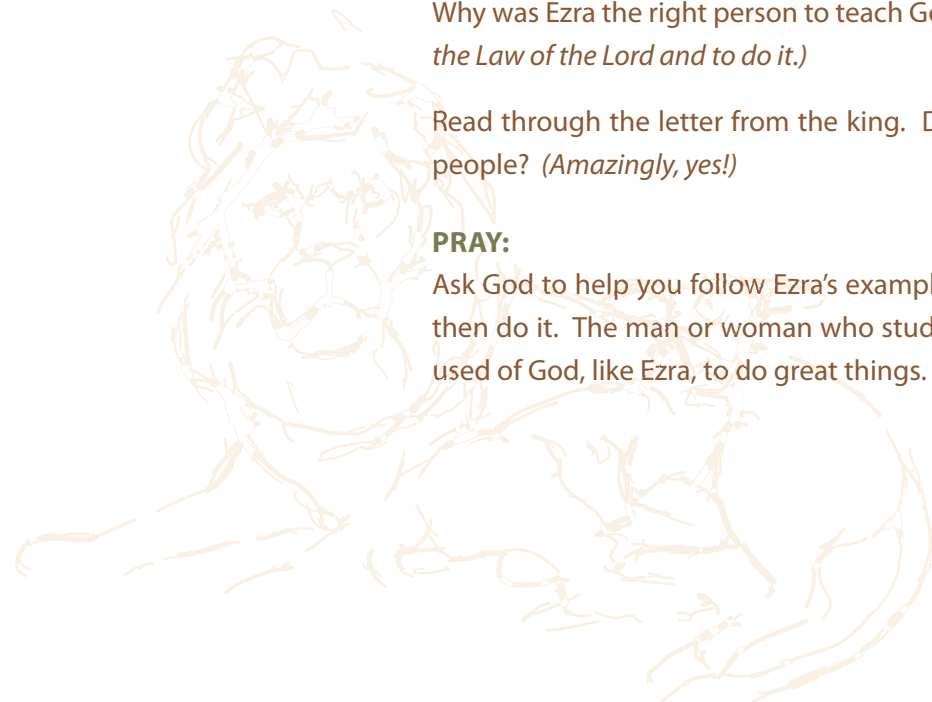
TALK ABOUT IT:

Why was Ezra the right person to teach God's people? *(Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord and to do it.)*

Read through the letter from the king. Did God use a gentile king to direct God's people? *(Amazingly, yes!)*

PRAY:

Ask God to help you follow Ezra's example. Set your heart to study God's Law and then do it. The man or woman who studies and practices the Word of God will be used of God, like Ezra, to do great things.





On the road to Emmaus.

The scene depicted is a courtroom where the accuser is about to bring a charge against Joshua who represents God's chosen. Before Satan can even open his mouth, the Lord rebukes him. No accusation can be brought because the Lord Himself has plucked His people like a brand out of the fire. He commands that new clothes be placed upon Joshua. These clothes are called pure vestments. When the old clothes were taken away, so was the iniquity. Standing by the whole time was the angel of the Lord, the Son of God, who declared that He would take away the iniquity of the defiled priest.

There is only one person and one way to remove iniquity. Jesus is the person and His sacrifice on the cross is the way. Paul used this imagery in Ephesians 4:22 when he speaks of putting off the old self, which is corrupted by sin, and putting on the new self, created in true righteousness.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Who is the angel of the Lord who can remove the iniquity of Joshua? (*Christ is the only one who can take away the iniquity of the people of God.*)

Who does the work to obtain righteousness, God or man? (*God does the work. It is God who plucks the unrighteous one from the fire like a brand, and it is God who orders the clothes replaced. It is God who declares the iniquity removed. It is all the gracious work of God from first to last.*)

PRAY:

Thank the Lord for Jesus who takes away our sin so that no accusation can be made against us.

