

The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 5: Ezra Comes to Jerusalem

Ezra 7:1–8:36

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

The aim of this lesson is to set before the class the portrait of Ezra as a man whose whole life was organized around the word of God, and to press home three convictions that flow from his example. First, that God's gracious hand and our wholehearted diligence are not enemies but partners. The repeated refrain that the hand of God was upon Ezra (7:6, 7:9, 7:28, 8:18, 8:31) never cancels Ezra's labor; it crowns it. Help the class see that genuine dependence on God produces more diligence, not less, and guard against both the laziness that hides behind grace and the pride that forgets the source of every good thing.

Second, lead the class deep into the heart of the lesson, the threefold order of Ezra 7:10. Ezra set his heart to study, to do, and to teach, in that order. This is the spiritual backbone of the whole study. Make sure no one leaves thinking the goal is merely information. The goal is a heart bent to obey what it learns and then to hand it on. This is the heaviest doctrinal weight of the lesson, tied to the abiding authority of Scripture (Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16–17). Be ready to show, gently and clearly, that while Ezra served under the Law of Moses, we today live under the New Covenant in Christ, and so we do not bind the old law on Christians; yet the principle of a heart set to know, obey, and teach God's revealed will is timeless and binds us still.

Third, draw out the practical holiness of dependence and integrity: Ezra fasting and praying rather than trusting an armed escort (8:21–23), and Ezra weighing every vessel before witnesses so that all could be accounted for (8:24–34). Aim to send each person home asking two questions. Where am I trusting soldiers instead of seeking God? And where do I need to handle holy things, the Lord's work, His money, His people, His word, with greater care and transparency? Let the lesson move from the page to the conscience.

Question 1

Student Question:

Ezra 7:6 and 7:9 say the hand of God was upon Ezra, and yet the same chapter shows Ezra studying, preparing, and laboring diligently. According to this passage, how do God's gracious work and a believer's diligent effort fit together, and what does this teach us about the way God accomplishes His purposes through faithful people?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The genealogy that opens chapter 7 (7:1–5) is not the dull list it first appears to be. It traces Ezra's line back through Seraiah, the last high priest of Jerusalem before the fall, all the way to

Aaron the chief priest. The point is identity. Ezra is a true son of the priestly line, and yet the title the text fastens to him is not priest but scribe, a man skilled in the Law of Moses (7:6). His authority will rest not on his birth alone but on his mastery of and submission to the word of God.

Verse 6 then gives us the first sounding of the lesson's great theme: the king granted him all that he asked, because the hand of the Lord his God was upon him. Notice the cause and effect. Ezra asked; the king granted; and the reason behind both was an unseen hand. The journey takes shape in 7:7-9, a four-month trek of some nine hundred miles, begun on the first day of the first month and completed on the first day of the fifth, again because the good hand of his God was upon him.

It is worth pausing on how a sovereign hand and a human request sit side by side here without the slightest tension. Ezra does not say, since God is at work I need not bother the king. He asks, and he asks specifically, and when the request is granted he gives the glory to God. This is the texture of faith throughout Scripture, prayer and providence woven together so tightly that you cannot pull them apart.

For us, the refrain is an invitation to read our own lives with grateful eyes. The doors that open, the favor we receive, the safe arrivals we take for granted, these are not the random kindnesses of fate. The same God whose hand rested on a scribe in Babylon governs the affairs of those who seek Him still, working all things together for good for those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's sovereign hand and human responsibility are taught together here, not as rivals; Scripture consistently holds both (Philippians 2:12-13).
- Ezra's authority flows from his skill in and submission to the word of God, a model for how spiritual leadership is to be grounded today.
- The phrase the hand of God was upon him describes God's providential favor, not a miraculous sign-gift, and should not be read as a license for claiming personal revelations today.
- Giving God the credit for opened doors guards us against the pride that imagines we are self-made.
- Providence is not fatalism; Ezra still asks, prepares, and acts.

Discussion Prompts

- Read 7:6 and 7:9 aloud and ask the class to count how many good things in these verses are traced back to the hand of God.
- Where have we recently seen a door open that we were too quick to call luck or coincidence?
- How can a church teach dependence on God without sliding into passivity?

Question 2

Student Question:

Where in your own walk have you most clearly sensed the hand of God upon you, and have you been quick to give Him the credit, or have you quietly taken it for yourself?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Verse 10 is the hinge of the whole passage and arguably the key verse of the book: Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel. Three verbs, in a deliberate order, describe the architecture of a faithful life. He studied, he obeyed, and only then did he teach.

Consider the phrase set his heart. This was no casual interest or weekend hobby. The Hebrew pictures a settled, fixed resolve, a heart anchored. Ezra had decided what his life was for. Long before there were any pupils to teach or any caravan to lead, there was a man in Babylon who had quietly made the word of God the organizing center of his existence.

The order matters enormously. Study comes first, because we cannot obey or teach what we have not labored to understand. Obedience comes second, because the goal of study is never mere information; it is transformation, a life bent to the will of God. And teaching comes last, because only the person who has studied and obeyed has anything real to give. Reverse the order, and you get teachers full of knowledge they have never lived, or zealous activists obeying a Bible they have never carefully read.

Here is the heaviest truth of the lesson, and it presses on us still. We do not live under the Law of Moses as Ezra did; we are under the New Covenant in Christ, and so we do not bind that old law on Christians. But the abiding principle stands: God still calls every disciple to set the heart to study His word, to do it, and to teach it. The Scriptures were written for our instruction (Romans 15:4) and are profitable to equip us for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The order of study, then doing, then teaching is the timeless shape of a useful life in the kingdom.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Ezra 7:10 establishes the God-given order of the Christian life with the word: study, then obedience, then teaching.
- The goal of Bible study is never information alone but obedience, a heart and life bent to God's revealed will (James 1:22-25).
- We are under the New Covenant in Christ and do not bind the Law of Moses on Christians, yet the principle of a heart set to know, do, and teach God's word abides (Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- Teaching what one has not first studied and obeyed produces hypocrisy and error (James 3:1).

- Set his heart describes a fixed, deliberate resolve, not a passing interest; discipleship requires this kind of settled commitment.
- The authority of Scripture, not personal opinion or popular feeling, governs the faith and practice of the church.
- Reversing the order, teaching before obeying, or obeying before understanding, leads churches into both hypocrisy and zeal without knowledge (Romans 10:2).

Discussion Prompts

- Have someone read 7:10 slowly twice, then ask the class to name the three verbs and their order.
- Which of the three, study, do, or teach, is most often skipped or rushed in our own discipleship?
- What would change in our week if we truly set our hearts to study, do, and teach God's word?

Question 3

Student Question:

Ezra 7:10 says Ezra set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, to do it, and to teach it. Why is this God-given order of study, then obedience, then teaching so important, and what does it reveal about the kind of heart God uses to spread His word?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Verses 11–20 record the remarkable letter Artaxerxes gives to Ezra. A pagan emperor authorizes Ezra to lead any willing Israelite back to Jerusalem, funds the journey from the royal treasury, supplies the temple with silver, gold, and vessels, and even commissions Ezra to inquire about how the law of God is being kept. It is an astonishing grant of favor from a man who does not worship the God of Israel.

The careful reader sees the unseen hand again. The text never says Artaxerxes had a sudden religious awakening. It simply shows a king moved, by interests and motives of his own, to do exactly what God's people needed. Later Ezra will say it plainly: blessed be the Lord who put such a thing as this into the heart of the king (7:27). The decree is the king's; the heart behind it belongs to God.

This is a steadying word for believers in every age who feel small before the powers that be. God is not confined to working through His covenant people. He can turn the heart of a king like a stream of water in His hand (Proverbs 21:1), bending pagan rulers and indifferent institutions to serve His purposes without their even knowing it. The kings of the earth are not the final word; the King of heaven is.

We should be careful here. This does not mean every ruler is godly, nor that we should baptize earthly powers as somehow holy. Artaxerxes remained a pagan king. But it does mean we can pray for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-2), respect the governing offices God has ordained (Romans 13:1), and trust that no headline, election, or empire lies outside the reach of the God who moved a Persian heart for the good of His people.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God works providentially through rulers and powers outside His covenant people to accomplish His purposes (Proverbs 21:1).
- Artaxerxes' favor is not a religious conversion but God's hand moving a heart, as Ezra confesses in 7:27.
- Believers are to pray for and respect those in authority while trusting God's higher rule (1 Timothy 2:1-2; Romans 13:1).
- We must not confuse God's use of a ruler with God's approval of all that ruler is or does.
- No earthly power lies outside the reach of God's providence.

Discussion Prompts

- Read 7:27-28 and notice how Ezra interprets the king's decree; who gets the credit?
- How does it change our anxiety about current events to believe God can move the hearts of leaders?
- How do we honor governing authorities without treating any earthly power as holy?

Question 4

Student Question:

Is there a portion of God's word you already understand clearly but have not yet brought yourself to obey? What is one concrete step of obedience you have been putting off?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Verses 21-26 extend the king's decree with striking generosity and reach. Artaxerxes orders the royal treasurers to supply Ezra with silver, wheat, wine, oil, and salt without limit, exempts the temple servants from taxation, and authorizes Ezra to appoint judges and to enforce the law of God on pain of real penalty. The whole apparatus of empire is placed, for a moment, at the service of God's word.

Notice the phrase that recurs in the decree: whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done diligently (7:23). A pagan king, perhaps for political reasons of his own, nonetheless gives voice to a truth deeper than he knows. The commands of God are not to be handled carelessly. They call for diligence.

There is also a sober note in verse 26, where the law of God and the law of the king stand side by side, and disobedience carries consequence. We must read this within its own covenant moment. This was the theocratic arrangement of restored Judah, under the Law of Moses, backed by the civil authority of Persia. We do not transfer that arrangement to the church. Christ's kingdom does not advance by the sword or by the enforcement of the state (John 18:36).

Yet the underlying reverence remains instructive. God's word deserves diligence, not carelessness. The same Scriptures that Ezra received with such seriousness now come to us, completed and crowned in Christ, and we are called to handle them with no less reverence, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's word calls for diligence and reverence, not careless handling (7:23; 2 Timothy 2:15).
- The civil enforcement of God's law in restored Judah belonged to the Mosaic and Persian arrangement and is not transferred to Christ's church.
- Christ's kingdom advances by the word and the Spirit, not by the sword or the power of the state (John 18:36).
- Even a pagan king can voice a true principle, that God's commands deserve diligent obedience.
- Reverence for Scripture is a mark of those who truly love its Author.

Discussion Prompts

- What does diligently in 7:23 suggest about the attitude God's word deserves from us?
- Why must we be careful not to make Christ's kingdom advance by political force?
- Where might we have grown casual or careless in our handling of Scripture?

Question 5

Student Question:

In the letter of Artaxerxes (7:11-26), a pagan king grants Ezra extraordinary favor and resources. What does this show us about God's ability to work through rulers and circumstances that lie completely outside His covenant people, and how should that shape the way we view our own leaders and times?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

In verses 27-28 the curtain pulls back and we hear Ezra's own voice for the first time, breaking into praise. Blessed be the Lord, the God of our fathers, who put such a thing as this into the heart of the king. Ezra does not boast of his negotiating skill or his impressive credentials. He immediately traces the whole favorable turn of events back to God.

This is the heart of a truly humble man. Many would have come away from a royal audience congratulating themselves. Ezra comes away worshiping. He has trained himself to see the hand of God behind the kindness of men, and so the natural overflow of good fortune is not pride but praise.

He goes on to say that God extended His steadfast love to him before the king, and that he was strengthened because the hand of the Lord his God was upon him. The same hand that moved the king now strengthens the servant. Providence does not merely arrange circumstances; it also steadies the heart of the one who must walk into them.

There is a lesson here about how to receive good things. When favor comes, when a prayer is answered, when a door swings open, the godly response is to look past the secondary causes to the first cause, and to say with Ezra, blessed be the Lord. A grateful eye that sees God behind every gift is one of the surest marks of a heart set on Him.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Ezra's first response to success is worship, not self-congratulation (7:27–28).
- Humility traces every good gift back to God as its true source (James 1:17).
- God not only arranges circumstances but strengthens the hearts of those He sends.
- A grateful eye that sees God behind every kindness marks a heart set on Him.
- How we receive blessing reveals as much about our hearts as how we endure trial.

Discussion Prompts

- Read Ezra's outburst of praise in 7:27–28; what does it reveal about his heart?
- When something goes well for us, is our first instinct praise or self-congratulation?
- How can we train our eyes to see the hand of God behind the kindness of people?

Question 6

Student Question:

When you read of a king's heart being moved to do good, do you find it easy or hard to believe that God is still quietly at work in the headlines and powers of our own day? Why?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Chapter 8 opens with a roster of the family heads who returned with Ezra (8:1–14). Lists like this can feel tedious to modern readers, but they carry weight. These are real people, named and counted, who left the settled comfort of Babylon to make a dangerous journey to a ruined city because they believed God's purposes lay in Jerusalem, not in exile.

When Ezra reviews the gathered company at the river Ahava, he discovers a problem: there are no Levites among them (8:15). The work of God in Jerusalem required those set apart to serve in the house of God, and not one had volunteered. Ezra does not shrug and press on. He stops, and

he sends a careful delegation of leading men to a place called Casiphia to find ministers for the house of God (8:16–17).

What follows is one of those quiet refrains again: by the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of discretion, and Levites, and temple servants (8:18–20). Ezra prayed, planned, and sent capable men, and God supplied the need. Once more, diligence and dependence walk together. He did not simply wait for Levites to appear; he organized a search. Yet he gave God the credit when they came.

There is a practical wisdom here for the Lord's work in every age. When there is a gap in the service of God's people, the answer is neither passive waiting nor frantic self-reliance, but prayerful, deliberate action that trusts God to provide the workers. The Lord of the harvest still sends out laborers in answer to prayer (Matthew 9:37–38), and He still uses thoughtful leaders who will not press forward until the work is properly staffed for faithful service.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The named lists remind us that God's work is carried by real, counted, committed people, not abstractions.
- Ezra would not advance the work until those set apart for the service of God were in place (8:15–17).
- Provision of workers came by the good hand of God in answer to deliberate, prayerful effort (8:18).
- Dependence on God and careful planning belong together in the Lord's work.
- The Lord still supplies laborers for His harvest in answer to prayer (Matthew 9:37–38).

Discussion Prompts

- Why did Ezra refuse to press on without Levites for the service of God's house?
- When there is a gap in the work of our congregation, do we tend toward passive waiting or frantic self-reliance?
- How can we pray more earnestly for the Lord to send workers for His harvest?

Question 7

Student Question:

At the river Ahava, Ezra was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers because he had testified that the hand of God is on all who seek Him (8:21–23). What does his choice to fast and pray instead of asking for an armed escort teach us about the relationship between our public confession of faith and our private decisions?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

At the river Ahava, Ezra proclaims a fast (8:21). The purpose is plain: to humble themselves before God and to seek from Him a safe journey for themselves, their children, and all their goods. Before this caravan loaded with treasure sets out across hundreds of miles of bandit-prone country, its leader does not first count his swords. He calls his people to their knees.

Then comes one of the most searching admissions in the book. Ezra says he was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect them, because he had already told the king that the hand of our God is for good on all who seek Him (8:22). His public confession had set a standard, and now his private decision had to match it. He could not testify of God's protecting hand by day and then quietly hedge his bets by night.

This is faith with its reputation on the line. It would have been easy, and not even obviously wrong, to accept an armed escort. But Ezra had made a claim about his God before a pagan court, and his integrity would not let him undercut that claim the moment it cost him something. So he fasted, he prayed, and verse 23 records the result without fanfare: so we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

We must be careful with the application. The text is not laying down a blanket rule that using normal means is always faithless; Scripture elsewhere commends prudent preparation. The issue here is the integrity of a confession. Ezra's no to the soldiers was the necessary shape of a particular promise he had publicly made. The abiding lesson is this: our private choices ought to match our public profession of trust in God, so that our walk and our words tell the same story.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Ezra sought God in fasting and prayer before a dangerous journey rather than leaning first on human protection (8:21–23).
- His refusal of soldiers flowed from the integrity of a public confession he had made about God's protecting hand.
- The text does not condemn all use of ordinary means; it commends the integrity of matching our choices to our profession.
- Our private decisions should match our public confession of trust in God, so walk and words tell one story.
- God listened to their entreaty; faithful prayer is heard (8:23; 1 John 5:14–15).

Discussion Prompts

- Why was Ezra ashamed to ask the king for soldiers (8:22)?
- Where might our private choices be quietly contradicting our public claims to trust God?
- How do we tell the difference between prudent preparation and faithless self-reliance?

Question 8

Student Question:

Is there a place where your stated trust in God and your actual choices do not yet match? Where is God asking you to let your walk catch up with your words?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Having sought God, Ezra now turns to the meticulous business of the treasure (8:24–27). He sets apart twelve of the leading priests and weighs out into their hands the silver, the gold, and the vessels, a staggering quantity offered by the king, his counselors, and all Israel for the house of God. Every item is weighed and recorded before witnesses.

Then Ezra speaks to these men, and his words lift the whole transaction onto holy ground: you are holy to the Lord, and the vessels are holy, and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to the Lord (8:28). Because the things are holy, the handling of them must be holy too. He charges the men to guard the treasure and keep watch until they could weigh it again before the chief priests and Levites in the chambers of the house of the Lord (8:29).

Notice the structure of accountability Ezra builds. The treasure is weighed at the start, entrusted to named and counted men, guarded along the way, and weighed again at the destination (8:33–34). Nothing is left to a single person's word or a single person's hands. Everything is open, measured, and accountable. Ezra, who could surely have been trusted, deliberately refuses to make himself the sole keeper of holy things.

This is integrity built into a system, not merely hoped for in a heart. And it speaks directly to the church. When we handle the Lord's money, the Lord's work, the Lord's people, we are handling holy things, and we are stewards who must above all be found faithful (1 Corinthians 4:1–2). Transparency, shared responsibility, careful records, these are not signs of distrust but marks of reverence. We do well, like Ezra, to provide things honest in the sight of all (2 Corinthians 8:21).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Because the offering was holy to the Lord, its handling had to be holy and accountable (8:28).
- Ezra built integrity into a system of weighing, witnesses, guarding, and re-weighing, not merely trusting one person's honesty (8:24–34).
- Those who handle the Lord's resources are stewards who must be found faithful (1 Corinthians 4:1–2).
- Transparency and shared accountability in the Lord's work are marks of reverence, not distrust (2 Corinthians 8:21).
- Holy things, the Lord's money, work, word, and people, deserve careful, honest, transparent handling.
- Ezra refused to make himself the sole keeper of the treasure, a wise guard against both temptation and suspicion.

Discussion Prompts

- Why did Ezra weigh the treasure before witnesses and weigh it again at the end (8:33–34)?
- How does our congregation guard the integrity of the Lord's money and work?
- What holy things has God entrusted to you that call for greater care and transparency?

Question 9

Student Question:

Ezra weighed out the silver, the gold, and the holy vessels to named, counted men, who carried them and weighed them again at journey's end so that everything could be accounted for (8:24–34). Drawing on the centrality and authority of God's word in this whole passage, and on Ezra's heart set to study, do, and teach it, what does the careful handling of these holy things teach us about how God's people are to treat what is holy, and how does the authority of Scripture still govern the church under the New Covenant in Christ (Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16–17)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Verses 31–32 record the journey itself in a single, weighty sentence. They set out from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month to go to Jerusalem, and the hand of our God was on them, and he delivered them from the hand of the enemy and from ambushes by the way. The fast at the river was not a religious formality. God answered. The very protection Ezra had declined to seek from soldiers, he received from the hand of God.

We should let the irony land gently. Ezra had been ashamed to ask for an armed escort because he had testified that God protects those who seek Him. He sought God, and God protected. The story does not promise that every faithful traveler will be spared every danger; many of God's most faithful servants have suffered greatly. But here, in this instance, the integrity of Ezra's confession was vindicated, and the deliverance was unmistakably God's, not the achievement of an army.

This brings us to the deepest doctrinal current of the whole lesson, which runs beneath every scene: the authority and centrality of the word of God, and the kind of heart that bends to it. Ezra studied the word, obeyed the word, taught the word, and staked his reputation and his safety on the God of that word. His entire life was organized around Scripture as the final authority.

That authority did not pass away when the old covenant gave way to the new. The Scriptures were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of them might have hope (Romans 15:4), and all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16–17). We who live under the New Covenant in Christ do not bind the Law of Moses on ourselves, yet we revere the whole counsel of God and order our lives by it, with hearts set, like Ezra's, to study, to do, and to teach.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God delivered the caravan from ambush, vindicating the integrity of Ezra's confession (8:31).
- The passage does not promise the faithful are always spared every danger, but here God's deliverance was unmistakably His doing.
- The deepest current of the lesson is the authority and centrality of God's word and a heart bent to obey it.
- Scripture's authority abides under the New Covenant; it was written for our learning and equips us for every good work (Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16–17).
- We do not bind the Law of Moses on Christians, yet we revere the whole counsel of God and order our lives by it.
- A life organized around the word of God, studying, doing, teaching, is the timeless shape of faithfulness.

Discussion Prompts

- How did God answer the fast at the river Ahava (8:31)?
- What does it mean for us to make God's word the final authority over our lives, as Ezra did?
- How do Romans 15:4 and 2 Timothy 3:16–17 shape the way we read even an Old Testament book like Ezra?

Question 10

Student Question:

Name one specific way the Lord Jesus is using this lesson to shape you right now: a habit of study to begin, an act of obedience to take up, a fear to surrender to God's hand, or a holy thing to handle with greater care and integrity.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The chapter closes with the safe arrival in Jerusalem and a final, careful accounting (8:33–36). On the fourth day the silver, the gold, and the vessels are weighed again in the house of God, into the hands of named priests and Levites. The whole was counted and the weight of everything was recorded that day. The system Ezra built held; nothing was lost, and everything could be accounted for.

Then the returned exiles offer burnt offerings to the God of Israel, and they deliver the king's commissions to the satraps and governors, who in turn aid the people and the house of God (8:35–36). The journey that began with a fast ends with worship and with the resources of empire still serving the work of God. The arc of the chapter bends from prayer to provision to praise.

Step back and see the whole portrait one more time. Ezra arrives in Jerusalem having modeled, in a single journey, nearly everything a faithful life requires: a heart set on God's word, diligent labor joined to humble dependence, the courage to let his public confession govern his private

choices, and scrupulous integrity in handling holy things. He is not a flashy hero. He is something better, a faithful one.

And every faithful one points beyond himself to the truly Faithful One. Ezra brought the law to Jerusalem; Christ came to fulfill it. Ezra handled holy vessels with trembling care; Christ offered Himself, the spotless sacrifice, and now reigns as our great High Priest at the right hand of God. The Scriptures Ezra loved were written, in the end, to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:15). The scribe set his heart to study, do, and teach the word; let us set ours to do the same, that Christ may be formed in us.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The careful re-weighing in Jerusalem proves the integrity of Ezra's system; nothing was lost (8:33–34).
- The journey moves from prayer to provision to worship, the rhythm of a God-centered life (8:35).
- Ezra models a whole portrait of faithfulness: study, diligence, dependence, integrity, and worship.
- Every faithful servant points beyond himself to Christ, the truly Faithful One who fulfilled the law (Matthew 5:17).
- The Scriptures Ezra loved were ultimately written to make us wise unto salvation in Christ (2 Timothy 3:15).
- Christ is our great High Priest, reigning now at God's right hand over His church (Hebrews 4:14–16).

Discussion Prompts

- What is the significance of weighing the treasure again upon arrival in Jerusalem (8:33–34)?
- How does Ezra's whole journey, from prayer to provision to worship, model a God-centered life?
- In what specific way is the Lord Jesus calling you to imitate Ezra's heart set to study, do, and teach His word?