

PREPARING OUR HEARTS FOR THE WORD OF GOD

As we noted last week, the Persians conquered the Babylonians in 539 B.C., and Cyrus authorized the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild the temple (**2 Chronicles 36:11-23**). We looked at the scriptures that encouraged the people to rebuild, and we considered some spiritual applications God intended for them to make in light of His plan to send Jesus as the Messiah.

In the 458 B.C., Ezra led another group of Jews to help settle and rebuild in Judah (**Ezra 7:7-9**). They were going to further the restoration of worship as well as physical structures (**Ezra 7:19**).

Ezra first prepared himself so that he could lead and teach the people of God. **Ezra 7:10** says, *“For Ezra had **prepared** his heart **to seek** the Law of the Lord, and **to do** it, and **to teach** statutes and ordinances in Israel.”*

First of all, we must have a love of the truth that will motivate us to **seek it** with diligence (**2 Tim. 2:15**). Not having a love of the truth puts us in danger of being deceived (**2 Thess. 2:10-12**). Search the scriptures each day (**Acts 17:11**).

Secondly, we must be willing to **apply** what we learn. To know to do what is good and not to do it is sin (**James 4:17**) It is also hypocrisy and foolishness (**James 1:22-25**). An unwillingness to obey can also lead us not to know God’s will (**John 7:17**).

Finally, God always wants us to **teach others** what we know (**Matt. 28:12-20**). If we practice the word of God, then people will notice and perhaps even ask us why we do what we do (**1 Peter 3:15**). Let us prepare our hearts by sanctifying Christ as Lord in our hearts and then, like Ezra, share our faith as we have opportunity.