

1. The Most High rules

- a) Daniel 4:17 What important truth did the prophet Daniel share with King Nebuchadnezzar?
- b) What prophecy did Daniel see fulfilled in 539BC? (Daniel 2:39, Daniel 5:1-31)
- c) How did Ezra witness God directing history in fulfillment of a prophecy given by Jeremiah? Ezra 1:1-11 (see Daniel 1:1-2)
- d) Why is it important to remember the Most High rules over history?

2. Returning to Judah with Zerubbabel

- a) How many Jewish exiles returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel? Ezra 2:64
- b) Why do you think so many Jewish exiles decided to remain in Babylon?
- c) Why did Ezra and Nehemiah devote so much space recording the names of those who returned from Babylon (Ezra 2) and assisted in the rebuilding of the city walls (Nehemiah 7)?
- d) Share an opportunity God gave you to participate in His work. How did your involvement affect you then and now?

3. Trials and Tribulations along the way

- a) What challenge did Ezra notice as the Jewish exiles were leaving Babylon? Ezra 8:15
- b) How did Ezra decide to meet this challenge? Ezra 8:16-20, 21-23

- c) Why is fasting and prayer appropriate when facing a challenge or trial?
- d) We also can face challenges when trying to follow God's direction in our lives. How should we respond when we face those trials and tribulations?
- e) Share a time when you fasted and prayed, and God answered your prayer in a remarkable way.
- f) What promises from the Scripture assure us of God's enabling presence in the midst of our trials?

4. Living in Jerusalem

- a) Nehemiah 11:1 Why would the people cast lots to decide who would live in Jerusalem?
- b) How can we discern God's plan for our lives today?
- c) Nehemiah 11:2 Why did the people bless those who volunteered to live in Jerusalem?
- d) Name some other Bible characters who were willing to follow God's leading even when the way was hard.
- e) Who has inspired you as a living example of sacrificial service?
- f) Share a time when you volunteered to leave the comforts of your familiar surroundings in order to follow God's plan for your life.

