

GOD'S BUILDERS

Bible
Adventures

LESSON 8

IN THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS, WE'VE LEARNED OF MANY PEOPLE WHO WERE "GOD'S BUILDERS." THEY WORKED WITH GOD TO BUILD HIS KINGDOM. USING THE CLUES PROVIDED, CAN YOU FILL IN THE NAMES OF THESE BIBLE-TIME BUILDERS?

1. _____ C _____

2. _____ O _____

3. _____ O _____

4. _____ P _____

5. _____ E _____

6. _____ R _____

7. _____ A _____

8. _____ T _____

9. E _____

KEY VERSE

Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:58

1. He refused to bow to the prime minister, Haman.
2. His assignment was to tell the people of Nineveh to repent.
3. This shepherd preached against dishonesty.
4. Their mission was to spread the good news of Jesus' resurrection.
5. He rose from the dead and is the Son of God.
6. He returned from Persia to Jerusalem to teach the people God's laws.
7. God blinded the Syrian soldiers when they tried to capture him.
8. She saved her people from Haman's hate.
9. He challenged the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.



A PLAN FOR THE PEOPLE

The nation of Judah had been in captivity for many years. In the years after Queen Esther lived, Persian kings permitted groups of Jews to return to Jerusalem.



¹Scribes were important religious leaders during the captivity.

They taught the law of Moses to the Jews and made copies of Old Testament writings.

Thousands of Jews returned, and they began rebuilding their ruined city and temple. But troubles arose with unfriendly neighbors, and much of the work was

forgotten. Meanwhile,

some Jews who remained in Persia worked as scribes.¹ One scribe, Ezra, who led the Jews in Persia, was allowed by King Artaxerxes² to return to Jerusalem. The king honored Ezra and permitted some Jews, including priests and other temple workers,³ to return with him.⁴

²Pronounced ar-tu-ZERK-sees.

Read Ezra 7:6-7. Why did King Artaxerxes grant Ezra what he asked? Who also returned to Jerusalem with Ezra? Why do you think this was important?

³Priests, Levites, musicians, gatekeepers, and temple servants were used in temple worship. Ezra used them to reestablish temple worship for the Israelites who returned.



Read verses 8-10. What had Ezra done in Babylon that helped the Jews? How did this help the people once they got back to Jerusalem?

King Artaxerxes gave a letter to Ezra explaining how the Israelites would be governed in Jerusalem.



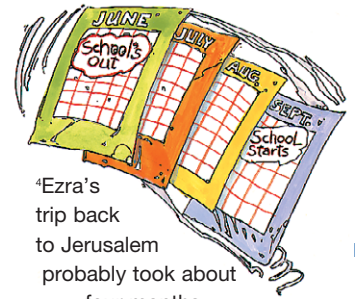
Ezra 7:21, 23-26

"Now I, King Artaxerxes, decree that all the treasurers

of Trans-Euphrates⁵ are to provide with diligence whatever Ezra the priest, the teacher of the Law of the God of heaven, may ask of you. Whatever the God of heaven has prescribed, let it be done with diligence for the temple of the God of heaven. Why should his wrath fall on the realm of the king and

of his sons? You are also to know that you have no authority to impose taxes, tribute or duty on any of the priests, Levites, musicians, gatekeepers, temple servants or other workers at this house of

God. And you, Ezra, in accordance with the wisdom of your God, which you possess, appoint magistrates and judges to administer justice to all the people of Trans-Euphrates—all who know the laws of your God. And you are to teach any who do not know them. Whoever does not obey the law of your God and the law of the king must surely be punished by death, banishment, confiscation of property, or imprisonment."



⁴Ezra's trip back to Jerusalem probably took about four months.

⁵Tranz-you-FRAY-tees. An area of Persia. To the Persians it was the land west of the Euphrates River where the Jews' homeland was.

Name the things the king told Ezra to do. How did the king seem to feel about Ezra's God?

Read Ezra 7:27-28. Why do you think Ezra praised God? How had God used Ezra to accomplish His plans?



TACKLING THE TASK

How about it? Want to take on a special job for God in the coming week? It can be anything you want—maybe planning a special family worship time, bringing a friend to Sunday school, or preparing a Sunday school devotion for your class—you name it!

To help you organize your thinking as you tackle the task, fill out the planning sheet below.

TASK PLANNING SHEET

1. My task: _____
2. In order to complete this task in the coming week, I'll need to do these things:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
3. The following people might be able to help me with the task.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

How They Could Help:

I plan to begin the task on _____

I will finish the task by _____

Signed _____

A PRAYER FOR TACKLING THE TASK:

Dear Lord, during the coming week help me to

I'll do what I can, and I'll try to get others to help, but most of all, I'll need Your help. Give me the skills, the people, and the courage I need to tackle and finish this task for You. In Jesus' name. Amen.