

Study Hints for Thinking Further
International Bible Lessons

Ezra 3:1-7

Sunday, June 30, 2013

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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be answers to the discussion questions, but hints a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Give at least one reason why it is important to study Ezra.

To learn more and more about how God fulfills His promises and can work through leaders and people around the world who do not know or worship the true God.

2. Why do you think some (or many?) of the Jews who had been in exile chose to stay in Babylon under the rule of King Cyrus rather than return to Jerusalem and Judah?

Some had settled comfortably in Babylon. Some had moved into positions of leadership in Babylon. Under the benevolence of King Cyrus, some who had been born there wanted to stay in familiar places rather than move to a location unknown to them. Some felt too old to return. Some did not feel called by God to go back to Judah. Some may have been called by God to stay and represent Him and His will under Persian rule.

3. What are some of the challenges the returning Jews would have faced in their homeland after they returned?

Hostile neighbors. People who had taken possession of their land when they abandoned it and went into exile. Wild animals. Land that had not been cultivated for many years.

4. What is the reason Ezra gave for the Jews rebuilding the altar of the Lord and making morning and evening sacrifices?

Dread (or fear) of their neighbors.

5. Give some possible reasons why some people go to church or worship God in a variety of ways.

Some love God and want to be near God. Some fear God and think that by going to church they will receive God's blessings. Some want God's help to succeed in life.

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