

0 (2s):

Welcome to the Bible teaching ministry of Dr. Ron Jones. Our prayer is that God will use his word to change your life and fill your heart with hope. And now here's Ryan.

1 (16s):

Robert Robinson was a barber's apprentice. When he first heard the preaching of George Whitfield. If you know, church history or know your way kind of around the 18th century, revivalist preaching, George Whitfield was the Billy Graham of his era. According to a hymn knowledgist named Kenneth osbeck. Robinson was living in London at the time, and he had quote associated with a notorious gang of hood limbs and lived a <inaudible> life. Can you imagine your life being described that

2 (50s):

Way, but that was Robert Robinson.

1 (53s):

And after hearing the preaching of George Whitfield, Robinson and returned to the Christian faith that he learned from his mother, he became a Baptist preacher, and he wrote many hymns, including one that we sing from time to time titled come thou fount of every blessing. Remember that one, there is a lyric in there that really is more well-known than the title. And it's that lyric that says, are you ready for this prone to wander Lord? I feel it prone to leave the God. I love this was true of Robert Robinson who apparently met Jesus at his mother's knee, but had wandered far, far away from God and found himself in London as a barber's apprentice.

2 (1m 41s):

When God found him

1 (1m 43s):

Through the preaching of George Whitfield, the God of Israel was truly a fount of many blessings to his chosen people, but they had wandered far from the expectations of the covenant relationship that God had made with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And of course, king David. And because the roots of Christianity run deep into Judaism, their story is really the story of many of us, many new Testament believers in Jesus Christ. If we were honest with ourselves and others, we would say, yeah, we're prone to wander Lord. Oh, I feel it today. Prone to leave the God. I love if you just knew where

2 (2m 20s):

I was pastor. Well, the Lord knows

1 (2m 23s):

Maybe there was a time when you were closer to him a time when you look back and you said there, the intimacy I shared with Jesus, the intimacy I had with all mighty God was, was greater and more palpable at

that time, but I've wandered away. I've wandered into to some sin and I want to come home today. Well, as HRA is the next stop on the ultimate road trip through the Bible and it recalls God's people and how they returned to him from disciplinary exile, the old Testament historical book, this one called Ezra begins the same way that Chronicles ends. And that's what the decree of king Cyrus king of Persia.

1 (3m 6s):

And this decree came around 536 BC, keep the historical timeline in your mind as best as you could. This decreed from Cyrus encouraged the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem and restore the house of God. God had sent his chosen people into Babylonian captivity. Do you remember that the Southern kingdom and they were there for 70 years as chastisement, as, as discipline for breaking covenant with God. But now it was a time for them to return home, to come back to the holy land, to rebuild the temple, to reestablish their worship celebrations and to reconnect with their identity as the chosen people of God.

1 (3m 51s):

Now, surprisingly, as you read the book of Ezra, only a small remnant of the Jewish exiles return about 50,000 of them, think of how many came out of Egypt under Moses's leadership centuries earlier about something north of 2 million. Most people estimate now it's, it's down to a remnant of people in the Southern kingdom coming out of Babylonian captivity, given the opportunity by the decree of Cyrus to go home, to go back to their spiritual roots and only a small remnant of them want to return one Bible scholar notes.

1 (4m 36s):

When the providential opportunity came for repatriation, the bulk of the nation to their shame preferred they're tolerable, and perhaps even lucrative life under Persian rule to which they had now become quite accommodated. In other words, they had become cozy and comfortable in Babylon

2 (4m 56s):

And the majority

1 (4m 57s):

Of them chose to stay there. They did not consider themselves worse off for having wandered away from God. And so we come to the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, and it completes a study of the old Testament historical books, but we must read these three books and understand them together. Ezra and Nehemiah were once combined as a, as a single narrative. And they addressed the Jewish remnant that returned to Jerusalem, that small remnant Esther, on the other hand recalls what happened to those Jews who remained in Babylon. And we'll get to Esther in a couple of weeks here, but today we're in the book of Ezra and the book of Ezra divides naturally into the ministries of two key figures, Zuora bubble.

1 (5m 47s):

And he dominates the first six chapters. And then the ministry of Ezra, which has chapters seven through 10.

I love to say the name. <inaudible> say that with me. Zerubbabel you can't even shorten it. There's no nickname or Zerubbabel, it's just Zerubbabel isn't it? Well, <inaudible> were key figures in the book of Ezra and the rubble was a direct descendant of king David. So you have the Royal line coming through <inaudible> and he leads the major portion of the 50,000 or so exiles who return as the on the other hand is, is related to Aaron Moses's brother.

1 (6m 34s):

And so one from the Royal kingly line, the other from the priestly line and in a very large sense, the book of Ezra reminds us that it takes a king and a priest to return God, to return to God and to revive the soul of the nation. And here in is our, our Christ connection. We talk about Jesus's ministry as prophet priest and king. And what we have in Ezra is a king and a priest as their operable. Wasn't exactly a king, but he came from the Royal line, the king and the priest. It takes that ministry to bring the nation back to God. Now, though, he is not the namesake of the book.

1 (7m 15s):

Again, zero bubble dominates the first half. He is a child of X

2 (7m 21s):

Born in Babylon.

1 (7m 23s):

He has no a memory of being in Jerusalem in the holy land. All he has known his whole life is exile and babbling, but he is the man God used to lead the first return that began in 530, 6 BC. After that breathtaking decree that comes from of all people, Cyrus, the king of Persia and Zerubbabel's accomplishments are worth noting. He models for us in a way, how one returns to God after wandering far from him, let's just go to 30,000 feet here real quickly. And then we'll dive in on each of these, but <inaudible> led the return that's chapters one and two.

1 (8m 5s):

When he got there, he built an altar to God. That's the first part of chapter three. Then he laid the foundation for the temple latter part of chapter three. Remember when king Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians came 70 years earlier, they destroyed the temple decimated Jerusalem. It's been in ruined since then. And so he leads the return. He builds an altar. He lays the foundation for the temple, and then he completes the rebuilding of the temple in the face of much opposition. And we'll get to the opposition in a moment. Zuora bubble really lays out for us a pathway. I call it the way up or rather the way back as rebel will show us the way up to a more intimate relationship with God.

1 (8m 52s):

But as the HRA shows us the way back from spiritual, and again, you may be here today, a believer in Jesus

Christ, but you've wandered far from him. And you're wondering, how do I come back? How do I come back to that place of intimacy with the almighty and fellowship with Jesus? No, you haven't lost your salvation, but you've wandered far from him as there is the book for you. Let's learn first from Zuora bubble. The first step I see is repentance and return. As a chapter, two records, a detailed list of the Jewish exiles who chose to return to the holy land, their names, and the numbers of them are recorded in chapter two.

1 (9m 35s):

And like some of the genealogies of the Chronicles, it can be a little bit of a tedious read, but it's a reminder that God is a careful record keepable keeper. And he knows us by name. He doesn't, he doesn't forget a one of us. We, we don't get lost in the shuffle even today of billions of people on planet earth know, God knows your name. He knows your whereabouts. By the way, is your name written in, in the, in the book of life? Are you a believer in Jesus Christ? That's the first question to ask this morning. And if you say yes, it is. I, I placed my faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

1 (10m 17s):

Have you wandered away from him like a sheep who has lost her way? Are you a backslider? And when was the last time you heard that word in church, anywhere a backslider, we used to call those who wandered away. Backsliders maybe prodigals any one of them might apply to any one of us today because just like Robert Robinson, we're prone to wander aren't we we're prone to leave the God. I love if I made a list of the people today in this place who desired to come back to find their way back to return to a place of fellowship and intimacy with the almighty. Would your name be on the list?

1 (10m 57s):

Just like these Jewish exiles who are listed in chapter two, they're returned to the holy city of Jerusalem, just mark it down. Started it started with turning away from pagan Babylon. And what we have here is a wonderful picture of the repentance that God requires. When we want to come back to him, it's turning away from Babylon and turning toward Jerusalem. It's turning away from the idols in the sin that you have come to love and to grow comfortable with turning away from that and turning to God. This is the way of repentance following repentance.

1 (11m 40s):

And following the example of Zerubbabel. We have consecration and offering there's repentance in return, and then a time of consecrating ourselves to God and offering ourselves to him. And we see this in what <inaudible> does next upon returning. He builds an altar with the people who came with him and the Bible tells us wonderfully in chapter three in verse one, they were all United as one man, and then a wonderful place to be where the brothers and sisters of God are, are United in the purpose that God has placed before them Zerubbabel came back with the majority of those Jewish exiles who returned and they were reunited.

1 (12m 23s):

They were together as one and amidst the ruins of the holy city. They set the altar in place. They made it a priority to begin the daily offerings again that were prescribed in the mosaic law. They also kept the appointed feasts and all of this. As a reminder of the next step in returning to God consecration and offering, we could go to Romans chapter 12, where it tells us to make an acceptable offering of ourselves, even as new Testament believers to a living God, and, and as a living and holy sacrifice unto him is the idea here to yield yourself to him wholeheartedly and without reservation, you've wandered away and you've replaced God with self and your own selfish desires and fleshly desires.

1 (13m 18s):

Now it's a time to re consecrate yourself to him and to offer yourself to him as a living and holy sacrifice, and then comes a worship and witness. This is the first third step that I see here. It was one thing for Zerubbabel to rebuild the altar with the people's help. But as there a chapter three in verse six tells us that the foundations of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid. Remember the temple that was built under Solomon was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC Nebuchadnezzar, and his crew came in there and it had been an exile or had been in ruins ever since then, the exiles still needed a physical place to gather for worship as the people of God.

1 (14m 6s):

And remember friends that back then the temple first built under Solomon. The second temple built by <inaudible>. This is the visible witness of God and his presence in the world. And it was a spiritual house of praise and worship to the God of Israel. Now, of course, in the new Testament, according to first Corinthians chapter six, we as believers in Jesus Christ are the temple of the holy spirit. There's not a physical temple in Jerusalem where God dwells in the new Testament. We are the temple of the holy spirit. And as you've heard me say before, that makes us all traveling worship facilities and not only worship facilities that travel from place to place, but as we do, we give witness to the presence of God in this world and his presence in our lives.

1 (14m 57s):

And that should make every one of us think twice about how we conduct ourselves anywhere we go in this

2 (15m 2s):

World. All right. So

1 (15m 4s):

Let's rewind a little bit and review our steps on the way back. There's repentance and return there's consecration and offering there's worship and witness. And finally there is the idea of standing strong and finishing well, Zerubbabel came back and led the return. He built the altar, he laid the foundation for the temple and began building the temple. And then the opposition game, as it always does, right? Two years after returning to Jerusalem, they began the foundation of the temple. And when they did everybody

responded with exuberant joy as a chapter three in verse 11, it says they sang responsively, praising and giving.

1 (15m 51s):

Thanks to the Lord for he is good. And for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel and all the people shouted with great joy. But the book of Ezra tells us that there, while there was a fly in the ointment of their, of their praise and that's my, my terminology there, but it came from those who had some remembrance of the previous temple and they were old men by now, chapter three in verse 12 says that their sorrow was mixed in with their joy, that these were people who were probably teenagers when king Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the temple and besieged the holy city among them, or people like Daniel, and they were taken captive.

1 (16m 45s):

They were there for 70 years. Now, some of them were returning to Jerusalem and they had a memory of Solomon's glorious temple. Why were they sad? Because the foundation for the rebuilding of the temple <inaudible> was smaller. And, and you know, it, wasn't a big thing as her says, you really couldn't distinguish between the shouts of joy and praise and the, and the whimpering and the sorrow. I think joy, he says kind of won the day and that's good, but you can almost expect, you know, some kind of a response from those who had been there during the glorious days of Solomon, but the fact that they were back in their Homeland, back in a relationship with God United as one, and committed to serving the Lord and rebuilding the temple, while again, joy won the day word traveled fast.

1 (17m 39s):

And when it did the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin began their opposition as most opposition begins, and that was subtlety and friendly solicitude. Is there some nice guys coming up to Zerubbabel and others and saying in chapter four in verse two, let us build with you for we work, your God is you do. And we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of the king of Syria who brought us here. It sounds like a group of nice people who came and said, Hey, we want, we want to help you in the building here, but Zerubbabel detected something more, more devious here.

1 (18m 20s):

And he saw through there they're fakery and he returns to them a thanks, but no thanks kind of response. We don't need your help. Now, chapter four in verse three, you have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God, but we alone will build to the Lord, the God of Israel as king Cyrus, the king of Persia has commanded us and he refused their help. Why was he so terse with them? Because the rebel models for us, the spiritual discernment than any spiritual leader needs, and those times when he needs to refuse, we might say even the kindest offer of worldly wisdom, when you're doing the Lords of work, he saw through all of that.

1 (19m 4s):

I can't tell you the number of times in almost 30 years of ministry, where, you know, as, as a team of spiritual leaders and pastors and elders and deacons, we we've needed that kind of discernment because those with a kind of subtle and friendly ways of addressing will introduce what would have otherwise been some worldly wisdom that we don't need to follow. And so Solomon or rather, Zerubbabel just kind of says, thanks, but no thanks. Well that didn't satisfy these vision vandals. They were really up to something more devious and it stirred up their resolve to stop the building of the Lord's temple.

1 (19m 44s):

And they stepped up their efforts, the friendly solicitude didn't work. And so they began discouraging some of the exiles and they implemented a disinflation campaign first by bribing, those who were giving counsel desirable and others. And then if you can imagine this, and it's really not hard to imagine, they wrote a, an open letter to king Artaxerxes, who is now on the Persian throne that was full of lies and false hoods and all kinds of stuff about these rebellious and seditious, you know, Jewish exiles who have bad intentions. And they floated that out there while it was par for the course, this is the way opposition rises against the Lord's work.

1 (20m 30s):

And when you, you and I would search in vain at any time in a spiritual history to find a time when the Lord's work did not face opposition. This is just the start of it. When Nehemiah returns to rebuild the walls, oh, we're going to meet three vision vandals named Sanballat Tobiah and Geshem. And they were nipping that Nehemiah's heels the whole way Zuora bubble just gets, you know, what started out to be a, a friendly kind of thing that turned into outright, you know, fake news problem, as it worked king Artaxerxes believed it.

1 (21m 13s):

And he ordered their work on the temple to cease as a chapter four in verse 24 says then the work on the house of God that is in Jerusalem stopped. And it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia. The work on the temple was delayed for another four teen years drop in the profits of Hedgie I and Zachariah we'll get to them on another road trip, but the Lord sent them to minister to these returning exiles and to urge them to resume building.

1 (21m 54s):

And it took another 14 years before they had the courage to do so. And with the transition from king Artaxerxes now to king Darius on the Persian throne, king Darius searched the person, person archives, and he found Cyrus's original decree that said, you know, the, the Jewish exiles can return. And he was compelled by that Darius was, and he issued his own proclamation. And that's when Zerubbabel resumed construction and ultimately completed the temple. But 14 years of delay, you know, we're, we're in the middle of our forward initiatives. Can you imagine some kind of opposition that delayed us for another four, 14 years?

1 (22m 38s):

This is what happened in old Testament, Israel, but three chairs for <inaudible> who led the return repentance in return, who, who laid and built the altar there is offering and sacrifice who, who laid the temple foundation for worship and witness, and then completed the project against great opposition. He, he finished, he finished, well, I call that the way back now, let's transition in the book to chapter seven, to the end of the book, chapter 10, it's only 10 chapters, much easier to read than, you know, the 36 chapters of some of the Chronicles in the Kings and so forth.

1 (23m 23s):

But as the, it takes center stage in chapter seven, and what he models for us is what I call the way up as he brings them back. But now, now the priest comes as her as the high priest at the time, and he's going to lead the, the exile. He brings back a few more, but most of them have already been there. Remember the ministries of, and Ezra are separated by, and scholars differ on this, but let's just say approximately 80 years insert the book of Esther between Zerubbabel and Ezra. Alright, cause that's a, that's a book about what's happening back in Babylon, but now that time has passed and Ezra, the priest and the scribe is bringing back a few more exiles.

1 (24m 13s):

And now that the temple is rebuilt, they're ready for the high priest to begin his duties as rhe is an amazing, amazing character in scripture. Very impressive. Let's just start with his academic accolades. He was a learned man who studied and knew the scriptures. Well, he was also considered an expert instructor and a professor in our language today. He might be the visiting professor from the seminary. Who's just won all kinds of academic awards. According to Jewish tradition, Ezra led the effort to compile the Canon of old Testament scriptures, according to the Hebrew Bible, according to the law of the prophets and the writings.

1 (24m 58s):

And that's, that's how the Jewish people even today think of their old Testament scriptures in three sections, the law, the prophets and the writings, a Jewish tradition also says that he founded a gathering of Jewish scholars known as the great synagogue. Plus Ezra is the one. And this leads us into the new Testament times who instituted the gathering in local synagogues as places of worship for the Jewish people, as it were also reminds me a little bit of the apostle Paul, a very learned man, whom God used to write much, much of the new Testament as inspired holy scripture, as Zara is a prolific writer as well.

1 (25m 41s):

He's credited with first and second Chronicles, he's credited with the book of Nehemiah. And of course the book that bears his name. And if all of this is true of Ezra, according to Jewish tradition, then he is worthy of the special place given to him in Jewish religious history. And they really Revere Ezra as one of those, those incredible old Testament figures who helped lead the return from exile following <inaudible>, but even more

impressive as, as a risk character, he was a man of God in three ways that I want to identify as we finish up today. First of all, he models for us again, that person who ascends into the holy presence of God almighty Zerubbabel shows us the way back as the HRA shows us the way up.

1 (26m 32s):

And he was first a man of integrity, a man of integrity who possessed a strong commitment to the word of God. Now is the time to go to Ezra chapter seven in verse 10, really the key verse of the whole book and one that I encourage you to commit to memory. It says of Ezra for he, Ezra had his head set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel. Now, if you take out the part and do it, you're missing integrity because it's possible to study the word of God and teach it, never practice it yourself.

1 (27m 15s):

You would be a person who lacks integrity, but as there is a man of integrity, Rudy who set his heart to study the words word of God, you know, Paul said to Timothy in the new Testament, and this applies not just to pastors and Sunday school teachers, it applies to every one of us study to show yourself approved under God. I always say a disciple is first a learner, somebody who just can't get enough of the holy scriptures, you set your heart to study the word of God, but just not for knowledge sake, you study it, not for information, but for transformation, you study it to do it, to put the truth you've learned into practice.

1 (28m 2s):

And then when you study it and you do it, then you're ready to teach it to others. And in that way, as Ruh is this, this incredible example of integrity in his ministry, he also modeled humility, a humility by depending wholly on God. Let's go to chapter eight in verse 21 for just a moment as he now has arrived in Jerusalem. And it says, he says, then I proclaimed a fast there. Actually he's getting ready to travel there. He says, then I proclaimed a fast there at the river. Ahava that we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children and all our goods.

1 (28m 51s):

There's just a sense of, of, of complete and humble dependence on God for the journey, from where they were in Babylonia to Jerusalem. And we got to give Ezra credit for that. Now you read further on in chapter eight and Ezra admits that he could have asked the king for a security detail, and I would have suggested as her a pray like your security and safety is entirely up to God, but hire the security team. We have a security team all around this campus and we, we pray over them and we pray over this campus, but it's also wise to hire the security team that God will use.

1 (29m 38s):

Well, as he has said, he said to the king kind of overplayed, the Lord's hand that the Lord will protect us. The Lord will protect us. And he says, I was in Harris to ask the king for security. So is he called a fast at the river

Ahava and they prayed, okay. You know, I would have done it a little bit differently, but you gotta give as a credit for a holy and humbly, depending upon the Lord to travel the distance. And it was, it was many days distance from Babylonia back today. Awesome. So there's integrity in the man. There's humility in the man.

1 (30m 19s):

And then finally, as a possessed, this incredible sensitivity to the things that displeased God, his heart was easily convicted by personal sin and national sin. For example, let's just go to Ezra chapter nine, and I want to pick up reading in verse one. They've now arrived safely in Jerusalem. And it says after these things had been done, the officials approached me, as Russ says and said, listen to this, the people of Israel and the priests and the Levi's have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the parasites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians and the Amorites for, they have taken some of their daughters to be wives for themselves and for their sons so that the holy race has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands.

1 (31m 23s):

And in this faithlessness, the hand of the officials and chief men have been foremost. In other words, the leaders have been the biggest offenders here as there. It goes on to say, as soon as I heard this, I tore my garment and my cloak and pulled hair from my head and beard and sat appalled. Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel because of the faithlessness of the returned exiles gathered around me while I sat appalled until the evening sacrifice. And at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my fasting, with my garment and my cloak torn and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the Lord. My God saying all my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you.

1 (32m 9s):

My God for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads. And our guilt has mounted up the heavens what's happening here 80 years after Zerubbabel leads 48, 40 9,000 of the exiles back to Jerusalem. Let's just say eight decades have passed. Now as recovered, you know, what's happened in those eight decades, the returning exiles went back to their old ways. They went down the same unrighteous idolatrous pathway that led them into captivity in the first place.

1 (32m 50s):

And as her as literally pulling out his hair and pulling the hair out from his beard, sitting down on his face before God, he says, I am appalled at what is happening here.

3 (33m 2s):

Did they that learn anything

1 (33m 5s):

From 70 years of captivity? Pastor Ray Stedman make some observations at this point. And he says, this,

this is a vivid reminder that the flesh within us never changes. No matter how long we may walk in the spirit, we will never arrive at a place where we cannot revert to the worst we have ever been. That is if we depart from dependence upon the spirit of God, what an insight there,

2 (33m 40s):

What a picture.

1 (33m 42s):

And it's important to lay down and clarify a little bit of theology here when you came to faith. And when I came to faith in Jesus Christ, we are not now new and improved, right? God, God's not in the improvement business of improving our flesh. That's behavioral psychology do better. Next time. The Bible says, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation, not new and improved, but a brand new creation. We're old things are passed away and all things have become new. And then the new Testament tells us as new Testament believers walk by the spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

1 (34m 22s):

The flesh is the flesh friends. The old you is the old you, and it ain't never getting better, do better. And a self-improvement behavioral psychology plan. Ain't the way to grow in Christ likeness. You got to walk by the spirit that now lives inside of you. And because of that, as Steadman says any of us, if we fail to walk by the spirit, we're that close to going back to the worst we've ever Ben. Cause the flush never improves. This is why Jesus said, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me.

1 (35m 7s):

The way we walk with him in the Christian life is to

2 (35m 11s):

Mortify the flesh

1 (35m 13s):

To, to, to, to kill the flesh, to, to, to bring death to the flesh. Cause the flushing ain't getting any better. The old you ain't, ain't improving. It's the new life we have in Christ. That must be activated. And we live by the spirit because the spirit of God lives inside of us. He comes to live inside of us at the moment of salvation, right? That's called the baptism of the spirit. But then the new Testament talks about something called the filling of the spirit. Baptism happens once at the moment of salvation, you've got the spirit, the filling of the spirit happens many times. It's a day by day, moment by moment experience whereby we say yes to the spirit of God and no putting to death and mortifying the world, the flesh

2 (35m 59s):

And the devil. I

1 (36m 2s):

Begged to say many believers in Jesus. Haven't quite figured this out. They're still on the, I'm trying harder over here. I'm trying to improve myself, the flesh, the flesh. And this is why these captives, these Jewish exiles, when they returned, given the opportunity they went yeah, back to the worst

2 (36m 24s):

They had ever been

1 (36m 26s):

On the pathway to spiritual exile. Fortunately, they had a spiritual leader like Ezra who had a heart that was full of integrity and humility and a sensitivity to what displeased the Lord as Euro arrives. He hears the report from the officials.

2 (36m 48s):

He is appalled.

3 (36m 50s):

His heart is

1 (36m 52s):

Torn in two. When was the last time your heart was so convicted by personal or national sin that you responded like Ezra did I long for that to be in that place? Always where my heart is that sensitive to the things in my life or in anybody's life or our nation's life that is displeasing to God. And as I had the courage to call these people out to say, listen, what did you not learn? Anything from 70 years of captivity, don't go down this path again. And chapter 10 records, the repentance of the people when, when their sin was brought to their attention, they were just as appalled

2 (37m 37s):

At where they were going.

1 (37m 39s):

And the book ends with the list of people who were faithful to God's word and who repented of their sin. And after reading the book of Ezra, I'm compelled myself to ask God, to keep my heart sensitive to what displeases him. And then to have the courage to ruthlessly, go after anything in my life, or if necessary in our corporate life. That displeases him.

2 (38m 10s):

That's the way up, the way back

1 (38m 13s):

Repentance and return consecration and offering worship and witness standing strong and finishing. Well, the opposition will come to the rebuilding of any thing in our life. That is Godward. And that opposition comes in the form of the world, the flesh and the devil that is relentlessly after us every day. And you can come back, but don't just come back and sit on the sidelines somewhere and watch other people have a close relationship with God. Ezra shows us the way up a heart of integrity, a commitment to studying and doing the word of God, a humble heart before God and a sensitivity to the things that displease the Lord that make those alarm bells go off.

1 (39m 1s):

Anytime you come close to walking down a pathway, the, the, the, the, the flesh wars against the spirit, the spirit wars against the flesh. The Bible says that that's, that's the experience of the new Testament believer all the way home to heaven. Heaven is a place where there is no sin. There is no struggle between the spirit and the flesh, but when we are here, there's that struggle. The flesh will never get better. You're just that close to returning to the worst you've ever been, or the worst I've ever been, which is why every day I got to walk by the spirit, live by the spirit. Keep in step with the spirit abide in me. Jesus says day by day, moment by moment, as we find our way, moving closer and closer and closer to intimacy with the almighty.

1 (39m 52s):

I love Ezra observable, just cause he has a cool name to say zero bubble, right? You can't shorten it. You can't give him a nickname. It's just zero bubble, right? And next week, we'll talk about Nehemiah who comes back later and rebuilds the broken walls. We'll talk about building a better life. And then we finish up with Hester. What's happening back in Babylon. It's a fascinating story. Are you getting some sense of this historical flow? Because in the road trips ahead, we'll land in the wisdom books. And we'll talk about where in this historical flow, the Psalms and Proverbs and song of Solomon and all that were written, then we're going to talk about the major prophets and the minor prophets, because all during this historical flow, God sent his prophets to the Northern kingdom, to the Southern kingdom.

1 (40m 49s):

Most of them had little success. Some of them had no success at all, but they carried out the Lord's work. We'll drop in guys, even like Hagai I and Zachariah who ministered to the exiles during those 14 years, when they had stopped building the temple, urging them, come on now, come on now, rebuild the temple. It's just a fact fascinating read. That'll bring us up to about

2 (41m 11s):

A 400 BC

1 (41m 14s):

We're after that the 400 silent years, not a prophet of God, not a word from God. All they had

0 (41m 22s):

Was their history and the word of God. And then Bethlehem in fulfillment of all of that.

1 (41m 30s):

It's a fascinating, the story of God

0 (41m 35s):

Is fascinating and your story. And my story is part of that. That's what we're trying to get a grasp on in the ultimate road trip. You've been listening to the Bible teaching ministry of Dr. Ron Jones for a complete list of resources available from Ron's ministry, visit [something good radio.org](http://somethinggoodradio.org).