



5 Restoring Worship

Key Theme

- God is sovereign over all things.

Key Passages

- Ezra 1:1–6, 2:64–65, 3:10–11, 4:4–5, 6:15–17; Proverbs 21:1

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe God's role in the rebuilding of the Temple.
- Describe the people's reaction to the new Temple.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

page 5

Students will put the Memory Verse Cards into order and then practice saying the verses together and/or with a partner.



Activity 1: Restoring Worship Class Notes Booklet

page 5

Students will fill out the Restoring Worship Class Notes Booklet as you study the lesson. Pass out the booklets before you begin to teach.



Studying God's Word

page 5

The prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah finally came true! The Jews, who had been taken captive 70 years earlier, were released by King Cyrus to go back to their homeland. They went to work once they arrived. First they restored worship. Then they rebuilt the Temple. And when the Temple was completed, they rejoiced.



Activity 2: Restoring Worship Review

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Students will play a review game to answer questions about today's lesson.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- If you haven't done this, print and cut out one set of the Memory Verse Cards from the Resource DVD-ROM for every 2–3 students.
- If you want to do this as an individual activity, make one set per student.
- Put complete sets into envelopes or plastic bags.

- Memory Verse Poster
- Memory Verse Cards in envelopes or plastic bags



RESTORING WORSHIP CLASS NOTES BOOKLET

- Print, cut out, collate, and staple one Restoring Worship Class Notes Booklet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- Restoring Worship Class Notes Booklet for each student
- Restoring Worship Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets



RESTORING WORSHIP REVIEW

- Print and cut out the Restoring Worship Review Question Strips from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Put them in a small bag or other container.
- Print one Restoring Worship Answer Key from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- Restoring Worship Review Question Strips in small bag or container
- Restoring Worship Review Answer Key
- Music player if appropriate



Memory Verse

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

► **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the lesson key passages along with this background.

You have probably heard Proverbs 21:1: “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.” We have looked at several instances in the history of the nation of Israel where God providentially directed rulers to accomplish His will: Pharaoh released the Israelite slaves; Assyria overthrew the Northern Kingdom; Babylon conquered Jerusalem in the South. All of these rulers were under the divine guidance of God. Just as the Israelites were taken captive under God’s direction, so, too, were they released from that captivity.

The opening words of the book of Ezra point directly to God’s sovereign hand in fulfilling the prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah. Both of these men had foretold the captivity of the Jerusalem Jews. Nearly 200 years before these events even happened, Isaiah had named Cyrus as the one who would allow the return to Jerusalem (Isaiah 44:28–45:1). It was Jeremiah who told of the duration of the captivity and the end of that time had come. The 70 years were completed. The Jews were about to return to Israel . . . and God was intimately involved.

Although the Babylonians had conquered Jerusalem in 607 BC when the 70 years of captivity began, the Medo-Persian Empire had risen to take control over Babylon under King Cyrus in 538. Contrary to the policies of the Babylonians, the Persians allowed the people they conquered to remain in their lands and for those who had been previously taken captive to return to their homelands. And that is exactly what God stirred Cyrus to do for the Jews in 537 (Ezra 1:1). Cyrus wrote a proclamation announcing that the Lord God (*Yahweh Elohim*) had given him the kingdoms of the earth and that he was to send the Jews back to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple.

Not only did God stir the heart of the king, but He also stirred the hearts of many of the leaders of the Jews to return to Jerusalem. Many of the Jews and the others around them also gave richly for the rebuilding. Not to be outdone, Cyrus gave back all of the treasures that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple 70 years earlier. These were given to Sheshbazzar, prince of Judah, who took them back to Jerusalem. Along with him, Zerubbabel led the return and became the main governor over the people in Jerusalem (Ezra 2:1–2). The rest of chapter 2 details in amazing specificity those

who returned to Jerusalem to begin to repopulate the city and rebuild the Temple—42,360 Jews plus their servants and thousands of animals.

As the people arrived in Jerusalem, they settled into homes and then gathered together at Jerusalem in the seventh month after their return (Ezra 3:1). They rebuilt the altar and began offering sacrifices again for the first time in 70 years. They also kept the festivals that had been neglected for so long and remembered all that God had done for them and what He would still do. They were still looking forward to when the sacrifices would be set aside and the Messiah would reign.

The next step was rebuilding the Temple. The Temple had been burned and leveled in 588 BC at the hands of the Babylonians (2 Chronicles 36:17–21), and its foundations had to be restored so that God could be worshipped in the way He had prescribed. As the foundation for the Temple was completed, the people and the priests gathered around to the sounds of the singers and instruments (Ezra 3:8–11). “And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord: ‘For He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel.’ Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.”

But soon after . . . the jubilation stopped. Those people who had settled in the land in the absence of the Jews opposed the rebuilding and did all they could to frustrate the plans. This lasted for 16 years, during which the people become complacent and lost their focus on rebuilding the Temple (4:1–23).

At this time, God sent the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to the people to encourage them to continue to build. As they restarted the construction, more opposition was raised and a letter was sent to the new king, Darius, to settle the matter (Ezra 5). Darius had the archives searched and found that Cyrus had ordered the rebuilding of the Temple. Darius also commanded that more provisions be given to the Jews to finish the construction (6:1–12). God’s mighty hand had, again, assured that the Temple would be rebuilt.

As the construction continued, Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the people. Construction was finally completed in 515 BC—21 years after Zerubbabel had begun the work (6:13–15). As the people gathered together with the priests at the dedication of the Temple, the scene was again jubilant; the sacrifices for the covering of sins could once again be performed (6:16–18). There was hope in God’s plan for covering sin until the Messiah would come.

God directed the heart of the king. God directed the hearts of the leaders. God directed the messages of the prophets. His fingerprints are everywhere. Undoubtedly, He was guiding the hearts of the kings, and the Jewish leaders and people, to restore His worship at the Temple (6:22).

Let us not forget that all of this was done to point forward to Jesus. The Temple and the sacrifices that took place there were a shadow of Jesus. The Passover and the other festivals that were celebrated all pointed forward to Jesus. God was continuing to guide history to the birth of the Messiah and the redemption that would be accomplished when God took on flesh to dwell with men. Now that redemption is accomplished, we live daily in the Spirit of Christ and we are the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19).

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Just as the fall of the Southern Kingdom of Judah to the Babylonians happened in three stages, so did the return to restore Jerusalem. This lesson covers only the first stage of the return that happened in 538 BC. As Cyrus decreed, the Jews from around the Persian (once Babylonian) Empire began the process of resettling Judah under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Sheshbazzar, and Jeshua the priest.

The second return happened under the leadership of Ezra in 467 BC; we will talk about that event in Lesson 8. If you read Ezra 2, you may have noticed the name Nehemiah in the list (Ezra 2:2). However, this is not the same Nehemiah you are probably familiar

with. The third phase of the return to Jerusalem under Nehemiah happened in 454 BC—84 years after Cyrus ordered the first return. These events are recorded in the book of Nehemiah, and we will study them in Lesson 9.

Just as Proverbs 21:1 (and many other passages) reminds us, all of these events happened under the guidance of our wise, loving, omnipotent Creator God. As we study His faithfulness to those in the past, let it stir us to be confident that He will be faithful to us in the future.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Oh, Lord, you are good! Your mercies endure forever. How my heart rejoiced when I read about the people of Judah completing the building of the Temple. I understand what it's like to long for something and wait on you for it to come to pass. I don't always see the answer to my prayers like the Jews did through these events. But, I still wait and hope, trusting you. I was encouraged and reminded how mighty you are and faithful to fulfill your promises. May my students rejoice together as they see this long-awaited prophecy fulfilled as Cyrus, moved by you, sent the Jews back to their homeland and helped them rebuild their center of worship. I pray my students will come to understand your sovereignty and faithfulness in a personal way as we study this lesson.

► Because of the age and ability of 1st and 2nd graders to read and comprehend, we encourage you to read the Scriptures to the students. However, if you have strong readers, by all means have them participate by reading God's Word.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will put the Memory Verse Cards in order and recite the verses together and/or to each other. They may work individually or in teams.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided this activity on the Resource DVD-ROM for you to use. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Restoring Worship Class Notes Booklet

MATERIALS

- Restoring Worship Class Notes Booklet cut, collated, and stapled for each student
- Restoring Worship Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils
- Poster putty or tape

INSTRUCTIONS

Print, cut out, collate, and staple the six pages of the Restoring Worship Class Notes Booklet for each student. Students will complete the sentences in the booklets as you teach the lesson and take the booklet home to color and share with family. Use the answer key as you teach the lesson.

You may want to write the answers in random order on the board. This will help with spelling as students fill in the booklet.

We will be completing these class notes booklets as we study the Bible passages. You will fill in the blanks during class and then take the booklets home to share with your family.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we study today and finish our booklets, we will see how God kept His promise to the captives in Babylon. He said He would bring them back to Judah after 70 years, and He did!



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Refer to Quarter 3, Lesson 12 Lesson Theme Poster. God's people had been in captivity for 70 years. Remember, the Bible told us that Jeremiah had prophesied at the beginning of their captivity that the people would be able to go home

► Use the History of Israel Poster included with your teacher kit to show your class where the biblical accounts you study chronologically fit into this timeline.

► Before class, write the six words your students will use to complete their booklets on the board. Mix them up and have them choose which word is right. This will help with spelling.

Ezra 1:1

Ezra 1:2-4

Ezra 1:5-6

► Re-read the verses as you ask these questions.

after 70 years. And now it was time to go home—just like God promised! King Cyrus was the king, and God moved his heart to let the people go back to Jerusalem. God was in control of all the things that happened to His people. And now a man named Zerubbabel would lead the people back to the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem. That’s what we are going to read about today.

Turn to the book of Ezra. *Help students find the book.* We are going to start by reading the very first verse, Ezra 1:1. *Read Ezra 1:1.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

? Who was the king during this time? *King Cyrus.*

? Who stirred King Cyrus to let the people go home? *The Lord.*

That’s right. The Lord worked in the king’s heart. He used the king according to His plans. Let’s move on. I’ll read Ezra 1:2-4. *Read Ezra 1:2-4 emphasizing the answers to the questions below.*

? What did the Lord command Cyrus to build? *Ezra 1:2. A house at Jerusalem.*

? And where is Jerusalem? *Ezra 1:2. In Judah.*

? Look at your class notes booklet. Who can read #1 for us? What word goes in the blank there? *Assign a reader. Home. Have students complete #1.*

? And who was this house for? *Re-read Ezra 1:2. The Lord.*

Right! God was taking care of His people. The people were going home. And the Lord had stirred King Cyrus to let the people go and rebuild the house of worship in Jerusalem.

There is more to this account. Listen as I read Ezra 1:5-6. *Read the verses.*

? The people were going to Jerusalem. What were they going to do? *Ezra 1:5. Build the House of the Lord.*

? Well, they needed money to build the House of the Lord. God took care of that. What did the people around them, their neighbors, give them? *Ezra 1:6. Silver, gold, goods, livestock, precious things.*

Yes! These treasures, or riches, would help the people to pay for the Temple in Jerusalem they were going to begin building.

? Now will someone read #2 from your booklet? How would you complete that sentence? *Assign a reader. Help. Have students complete #2.*

Discover the Truth

God’s people had been captive in a foreign land. And now, just like God said, they were going to go home—after 70 years! The Jewish leader

Zerubbabel led the people out of Persia and back to Jerusalem. *Refer to Zerubbabel on this week's Lesson Theme Poster.*

- ? Look at #3 on your class notes. Can someone read that for us? How will you complete the sentence? *Assign a reader. People. Have students complete #3.*

God was keeping His promise! Zerubbabel was ready to lead the people home. God stirred King Cyrus to let them go home! And God even moved in the hearts of people to give the Jews money and treasures so they could begin to rebuild God's Temple in Jerusalem. *Refer to Quarter 3, Lesson 11 Lesson Theme Poster.* Remember, the Temple had been destroyed by the Babylonian army long ago. But God was going to see that it was finally rebuilt.



READ THE WORD

Now you can imagine how excited the people were to be going home! They hadn't been there for 70 years. The older people in the group remembered their home and were anxious to get back. And the younger travelers had never lived there. They were born in Babylon while slaves. They had only heard stories about Judah and Jerusalem. Now they were going to see it for themselves!

The Bible tells us a little bit about the people who were going back with Zerubbabel. Listen as I read this. It is in Ezra 2:64–65. *Read Ezra 2:64–65 emphasizing the number of people.*

Ezra 2:64–65

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? That is a lot of people. Did you hear it? How many people went back to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel? *Ezra 2:64. 42,360.*
- ? And there were male and female servants who weren't included in that count. How many servants were there? *Ezra 2:65. 7,337.*
- ? That's right! And there were some singers with them. How many singers? *Ezra 2:65. 200.*

There were 49,897 people in all. That was a lot of people! God was very specific about the details of this return. It was an important historical event for God and the Jews. Work would soon begin on the rebuilding of God's Temple.

Once all the people returned, Zerubbabel took charge and got the people started on the project. They didn't waste any time. We are going to read about that and what happened. This is when they began to lay the foundation of the Temple. Listen as I read Ezra 3:10–11. *Read Ezra 3:10–11 emphasizing the answers to the questions below.*

► You may want to write these numbers on the board to give a better understanding of them.

Ezra 3:10–11

➤ Re-read the appropriate verses as you ask the questions so your students can hear the answers clearly through the Scriptures.

- ? Who came to lay the foundation of the Temple of the Lord? *Ezra 3:10. The builders.*
- ? What were the priests doing as they laid the foundation? *Ezra 3:10. They began to play their instruments and praise the Lord.*
- ? The Bible says they sang as they praised God. What words did they sing in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord? Listen again as I read **Ezra 3:11**. *Ezra 3:11. For He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel.*

And after all this the people did something. Listen as I read it again. I think the people were very excited and happy! *Re-read Ezra 3:11b.*

- ? What did all the people do? *Ezra 3:11b. They shouted with a great shout. They praised the Lord.*
- ? Why were the people so excited? What had been started? *Ezra 3:11b. The foundation of the House of the Lord was laid! The Temple was being built.*
- ? OK. Now look at #4 on your class notes. You should be able to tell me what goes in the blank. Who can read it for us? *Assign a reader. Laid. Have students complete #4.*

There was such joy and rejoicing, praising and singing in the hearts of the Jewish people who had now returned home and were beginning to rebuild the Temple to their holy God!

But their joy would not last very long. There were people in Jerusalem who did not want the Temple to be built. Listen as I read **Ezra 4:4–5** and tell me what these people were trying to do. *Read Ezra 4:4–5.*

- ? What does that verse say? What began to happen shortly after the people started to rebuild the Temple? *Allow discussion.*

The Bible tells us that some other people living in Jerusalem wanted to discourage the people who were building the Temple. They tried to stop them. And they were successful. The building stopped for many years.

But God wasn't finished! They couldn't stop God for good! He was still in control. And although it took 21 long years, the Temple was finally finished.

Listen carefully and tell me what the people did after the Temple was finished! I'm going to read **Ezra 6:15–17**. *Read the verses emphasizing the answers to the questions below.*

- ? What was finally finished? *Ezra 6:15. The Temple was finished.*
- ? Yes! And who came for the celebration? *Ezra 6:16. The children of Israel, the priests, the Levites, and the descendants of those who had been in captivity.*

God's people came together to worship and celebrate the completion of the Temple. It was a very happy time!

Ezra 4:4–5

Ezra 6:15–17

Look at #5 on your class notes. Who can read that for us? What is the right word? Assign a reader. Praised. Have students complete #5.

? What did the priests offer to God in the new Temple? Ezra 6:17. They offered sacrifices. Bulls, rams, lambs, goats.

Discover the Truth

The Jews had been captives for 70 years in Babylon. They returned to Jerusalem and began to build God's Temple. But, because certain people didn't want the Temple built, it took 21 years until the Temple was finished. When it was finished, there was a great celebration! The people gathered together with the priests, sacrifices were made, songs were sung, and prayers were offered. The people celebrated the rebuilt House of God with joy. God had once again proven that He is faithful!

? OK. Back to our class notes. Who can read #6? What word will finish that sentence? Assign a reader. God. Have students complete #6.



➤ After filling out each point on the class notes, have the students re-read the statement together or call on individual students to read it.



Restoring Worship Review

MATERIALS

- Restoring Worship Review Questions cut into strips
- Restoring Worship Review Questions Answer Key
- Small bag or container for questions
- Music player if appropriate

INSTRUCTIONS

Print and cut the questions into strips and place them in a bag or container. Have the students sit in a circle. This game is like hot potato but no one will be out. As you pass the bag around, you can play music, recite the memory verse, count to a certain number, say the books of the Bible, etc. Stop the passing by stopping the music, reaching the number you are counting to, shouting stop!, etc.

When you stop the passing, whoever has the bag will take a question out and answer it. If the student can't read, have him bring it to you. Read it, and give him an opportunity to answer. The students can use their class notes booklets and the Lesson Theme Poster to answer the questions.

If they do not know the answer you can have another student help them. Once a question has been asked, keep it out of the bag. Continue play until all of the questions are gone. If a student has already answered a question and the music is stopped on him, he can pass the bag to the student on his left or right. If time allows, repeat the questions.

We are going to play a review game to see what you remember from today's lesson. Explain how to play, then play the game.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

After the people returned to Judah they had to wait for 21 years for the Temple of God to be completed. They had times of rejoicing and times of discouragement. But through it all, God kept His promise just like He said He would. The people did return home after 70 years. That was fun! You did great!





Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

The Jews had been captive in Babylon for 70 years. God had promised they would return to their land of Judah. But who could know how God would do it? God used the king of Persia, King Cyrus, to send the captives back to Judah. Not only did King Cyrus let them go home, he had riches given to them so they could rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. Only God could change hearts and change history like that. What seems impossible to us is always possible for God.

After 21 years, the Temple was finished in 515 BC. When it was finished, there was a great celebration! The people gathered together with the priests, sacrifices were made, songs were sung, and prayers were offered. The people celebrated the building of the House of God with joy. God had once again proven that He is faithful!

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

God worked in the heart of King Cyrus to accomplish His will. But this should come as no surprise to us. We have seen it before, and God continues to do it. The memory verse we are working on makes this truth very clear. Let's recite our memory verse. *Proverbs 21:1. Say the verse together or read it from the poster.*

Proverbs 21:1

This verse tells us that God turns the hearts of kings. That means that God is in control of the leaders of nations. But it also means that God is in control of all men. Throughout the history of the world, we see God's hand working out ALL things to accomplish His will.

? When we talk about God being in control of all things, which attribute are we describing? *Sovereign.*

Yes. And we've seen this attribute displayed by God over and over. God said something through His prophets, and it happened. God moved kings to attack nations, and it happened. Sometimes God moved kings to take people away, and it happened. And in this lesson we saw how God moved a king to let the Jews go back home, and it happened! These are all things that happened because God wanted them to happen.

That was true during Bible history, and it is still true today. God is the same God! He is still in control. He is sovereign over every detail of our lives—just as He was in control throughout all of history.

When things in our lives seem out of control, we need to remember—they aren't! God is in control and works everything out well, according to His plan. We need to trust that very truth even when we don't "feel" like trusting it. Maybe we feel sad, or hurt, or lonely, or forgotten, or angry. It's OK to feel those things, but we need to learn to take them to God—because we have to trust God more than our feelings. And we have to trust that in the end, God is working things out exactly how He wants to.



SOVEREIGN

(Refer to Attributes Poster)

► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God He is always the same.
- Thank God because He is in control.
- Ask God to help us trust Him when we're sad and don't like the things that are going on around us.

