

## EZRA/NEHEMIAH MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 5

### INTRODUCTION

*The Eurovision Song Contest is normally screened around this time of year, it greatly divides people, some love it, and others can't stand it! I want to set the scene for our study this week which is based in Ezra ch7&8 by borrowing a line from an Irish winner of the Eurovision, Johnny Logan, who sang "What's another year?"*

*In our passage this week (pray that you are never asked in church to read these out loud) we are about 50/60 years after the initial exiles left to begin the rebuilding mission in Jerusalem. Almost all of the family names we meet and try to pronounce in ch.8 were already mentioned way back in chapter 2. Families and communities have been waiting such a long time to go home, to see each other again and now is their chance.*

*There may be a different King but the same generous provision of Almighty God is on display, more silver and gold for the Glory of God and worship in His House are provided and the second great journey begins. All the details can be found in the letter from King Artaxerxes to Ezra, a shortage of ministers is also addressed as Ezra prepares for this epic and dangerous journey. What will he find in Jerusalem? Well that's for another week. Ponder the following as we read the latest chapters in Ezra*

- 1) *What glimpses of Ezra the man and Ezra the believer are we given in these chapters? How do these speak into one of our big study themes – what is leadership in general and Christian leadership in particular?*
  
- 2) *Fasting is often present in the Bible, accompanying times of deliberate/serious prayer. Have you ever tried this? It might be worth while making a mini-study of fasting in the Bible and perhaps, as The Lord leads, adopt this spiritual tool into your own life of faith*
  
- 3) *Having been separated from loved ones and from God's House ourselves in these trying times and looking forward to the days of our returning to each other and to worship in God's House (remember in St. Patrick's we are facing a literal rebuilding project in the future). What might you appreciate more? What might you offer? Tithes/time/loyal regular attendance?*
  
- 4) *In ch.8 v.21-23 there is a description of trusting God. What is your unfiltered instant response to these verses? What might these responses reveal to us?*

*I know that at the time of getting these notes to print/display, our executive have made mention of churches being open for private prayer. I am waiting for guidance from the Diocese and our Bishop as to how we might proceed, please be patient and as soon as we have more information and a plan*

*you will be the first to know. Please take time with God and His Word and as always Emma and I delight in your feedback and comments.*

**Please feel free to respond via email to Mark ([revmarkmccconnell@gmail.com](mailto:revmarkmccconnell@gmail.com)) or Emma ([revemaycarson@gmail.com](mailto:revemaycarson@gmail.com)) with your thoughts and responses – we would love to hear from you.**

**Keep the faith and keep safe everyone**

**Mark**