

# The Floral Heights Informer

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(322 – 6374)**

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## **Our Deacons:**

**Joe Cronin**

**Jim Hall**

**David Witherspoon**

## **The Book of Ezra**

The book of Ezra picks up the history of God's people at the approximate point that Daniel chapters 9 and 10 leave off (see Daniel 9:1-2; 10:1). The people of God have been in Babylonian captivity for 70 years as was prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:8-11 / Dan. 9:2). Cyrus, the Persian military general, conquered Babylon in the years 539 – 538 BC. Cyrus handed the Babylonian Empire over to Darius the Mede (cf. Dan. 5:31). Darius reigned two years before being replaced by Cyrus at 536 BC. Ezra picks up the history of God's people in captivity at the point of Cyrus' kingship during the year 536 BC. (cf. Ezra 1:1). Approximately 200 years prior to this date, Isaiah the prophet had foretold of Cyrus by name (Isa. 44:28). Cyrus was a man who would be responsible, by divine decree, for allowing the Jews to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and its temple. No doubt Cyrus was familiar with this prophecy. According to the book of Ezra, Cyrus performed his duty faithfully. The book is comprised of an approximately 80-year time frame in which Ezra reveals that God has fulfilled His promise to cause the Jews to return to Jerusalem (cf. Jer. 29:8-10).

The book of Ezra is the historical record of God's people returning to Jerusalem after the long captivity to rebuild the city, walls, and temple. Zerubbabel returns to Jerusalem in 536 BC with 50,000 returnees to rebuild the temple under the authority of Cyrus, the Persian King. After a strong and zealous start, the returnees are discouraged from building the temple by the Samaritans. The construction of the temple is brought to a halt and remains that way for approximately 15 years (compare Ezra chapter 4:24 and 6:1ff). God sends the

## Local News:

**Welcome to all our visitors.** We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please come back at your every opportunity.

**Becky Littleton** continues to recover from her recent shoulder surgery. Please keep her in your prayers.

**Larry and Tammy Salmon:**  
106 W. 7<sup>th</sup> St.  
Knob Noster, Mo. 65336

Check out our **live chat line on Monday evenings at 8:00 PM!**  
<http://www.floralheightschurchofchrist.org/chat/>

Although the chat line is designed to preach to the lost members of the church are encouraged to log on and participate in Bible discussion too.

**Continue to pray for our shut-ins:**

**Stella Davidson**  
696-1030 (Home)

**Verlon Powell**  
Rolling Meadows Health Care  
Room 31

**Calvin York:**  
692-0489 (Home).

**Bessie Murphy**  
4600 Taft Blvd, Apt. 538

prophets Haggai and Zechariah to His people to motivate them to return to the work of building His temple (Ezra 5:1ff). The leaving off of building for fifteen years was sinful due to God having commanded that they build it (cf. Ezra 6:14). Twenty one years pass from Zerubbabel's first coming to Jerusalem with the children of captivity (compare Ezra 1:1; 3:8; and 6:15), and finally the temple is completed. Between chapters six and seven of Ezra, 57 years pass with no mention of that time. It is generally agreed that the events of Esther and the institution of the feast of Purim occur during these days.

The book takes its name from Ezra, a scribe and priest (cf. Ezra 7:11). Ezra is not mentioned until chapter seven. Ezra returns with about 7000 people and reforms Judah with the law of God. Ezra, by the providence of God, has the duty of *"inquiring concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which is in thy hand"* (Ezra 7:14). Ezra is a man ready for such a work (Ezra 7:6). This priestly scribe is a man who loves the laws of God (Ezra 7:10) and he knows that there are consequences to face when one sins (cf. Ezra 9:3). Ezra is a praying man (Ezra 9:5ff; 10:1), bold in the faith (Ezra 10:10), and diligent to accomplish the work God had providentially provided for him (Ezra 7:27; 9:1 – 10:44). The Lord's people had violated the Mosaic Law in that they married foreign women (compare Ezra 9:1-2 with Deut. 7:1-4). Ezra chapter 10:18-44 reveals 100 men to have married foreign women, and it only takes the priestly scribe three months to straighten the mess out (compare Ezra 10:9 to 10:17).

Ezra achieves his purpose of religious reform in a matter of one year (compare Ezra 7:9 with Ezra 10:17). From a time frame point of view, one would have to say that Ezra was successful. However, from a longevity point of view, his teachings and conviction did not remain with the people of God. Twenty to thirty years after this reform, Nehemiah finds the people in the same condition as Ezra had found them.

John C. Robertson

# Bible Conviction

## Intro:

Conviction is “the state of being convinced, strong belief” (AHD 320). We often ask why some seem to be more convicted than do others. Why is it that some young Christians seem to be more interested and involved in the work and worship of the church than others? Some may ask, “why is it that my child has fallen away from the church?” Again, another may ask, “Why is it that my child never obeyed the gospel?” The answer to all these questions can be traced back to individual conviction. Some are simply not convinced that God is. Some are convinced; however, lack the years of study that helps them make the right decisions in life. This lesson will examine the subject of Bible Conviction. What is it that will give our young men and women a greater sense of conviction today?

## I. What is causing our young men and women to lose their Faith?

- A. Simply put, they are not fully convinced in the truths of God’s word.
- B. Consider the story of the rich ruler (Lk. 18:18-30).
- C. Many young people are so caught up in worldliness that there is no immediate need in their mind of Christ.
  1. Many have a sole desire to be accepted by others.
  2. Some desire the goods of this world that they may be entertained and live life to its fullest.
- D. Kids today want cell phones, access to computers, automobiles, the ability to go out with friends and so forth. All of which is not wrong in itself yet each has the potential to do great harm.
- E. When I find myself more interested in the things of this world, desiring to be accepted by those of the world, speaking foul language, having impure thoughts and actions, and desiring the riches of this world then I can certainly trace my error back to a lack of Bible conviction.

## II. How can I regain my conviction?

- A. Learn to prioritize your activities.
- B. Learn and understand the love that God has for you.
- C. Look to Bible Examples of men and women of conviction (see Heb. 11:4-12):
- D. Study God’s word (compare Ezra 7:6, 10; II Tim. 3:15).
- E. Gain an understanding of the consequence of sinful living (cf. Rom. 1:18; 2:1-10).

## III. Attaining Conviction through Faith:

- A. Conviction will not come over night. One develops conviction by obtaining a true faith that God is (Heb. 11:6).
- B. The Bible tells us that there are two evidences that God is:
  1. Creation reveals the reality of God (Psalms 19:1ff; Rom. 1:20).
  2. Revelation reveals the reality of God (Isa. 46:9-10; I Cor. 2:6-13; Gal. 1:11-12).
  3. The man who lays his eyes on the orderly universe and proclaims, “*there is no God*” is truly foolish (Psalms 14:1).

## Conclusion:

What will cause me to hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt. 5:6)? What will cause me to desire spiritual food (Jn. 6:27, 33-35; I Pet. 2:4)? What will cause me to give some effort in growing spiritually (Phil. 3:13-14; II Tim. 2:15; Heb. 10:39)? The word of God tells us that we ought to be motivated by the fact that Christ is coming again, this world will be destroyed with fervent heat, the dead and living will be judged, and man will spend an eternity in heaven or hell (cf. II Pet. 1:8-11; 3:8-13). Where do you plan on spending eternity?