

*Today:*  
**November 30, 2014**

**Scripture Focus:**

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia—this fulfilled the Message of God preached by Jeremiah—God prodded Cyrus king of Persia to make an official announcement throughout his kingdom. He wrote it out as follows: From Cyrus king of Persia, a Proclamation: God, the God of the heavens, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has also assigned me to build him a Temple of worship in Jerusalem, Judah. Who among you belongs to his people? God be with you! Go to Jerusalem which is in Judah and build The Temple of God, the God of Israel, Jerusalem's God. Those who stay behind, wherever they happen to live, will support them with silver, gold, tools, and pack animals, along with Freewill-Offerings for The Temple of God in Jerusalem.

By the time the seventh month arrived, the People of Israel were settled in their towns. Then all the people gathered as one person in the town square in front of the Water Gate and asked the scholar Ezra to bring the Book of The Revelation of Moses that God had commanded for Israel....Nehemiah the governor, along with Ezra the priest and scholar and the Levites who were teaching the people, said to all the people, "This day is holy to God, your God. Don't weep and carry on." They said this because all the people were weeping as they heard the words of The Revelation. He continued, "Go home and prepare a feast, holiday food and drink; and share it with those who don't have anything: This day is holy to God. Don't feel bad. The joy of God is your strength!" The Levites calmed the people, "Quiet now. This is a holy day. Don't be upset." So the people went off to feast, eating and drinking and including the poor in a great celebration. Now they got it; they understood the reading that had been given to them.

*(Ezra 1:1-4; Nehemiah 8:1, 9-12, Message)*

**Notes from Worship:**

How did God catch your attention? To what is God calling you this week?

**Questions for Discussion:**

How faithful were God's people in returning to Jerusalem? How did they still fall short?

Have you ever felt God calling you to return home from an exile experience? Explain.

How might God be calling you to invite others to return to God?

# *This Week:* **December 1-6**

## Scripture Readings:

Monday 12/1	Tuesday 12/2	Wednesday 12/3	Thursday 12/4	Friday 12/5	Saturday 12/6
1 Samuel 1-3	1 Samuel 4-8	1 Samuel 9-12	1 Samuel 13-16	1 Samuel 17-20; Ps. 59	1 Samuel 21-24; Ps. 91

## Questions for Reflection:

These questions are meant to help get you thinking about the readings for each day. Feel free to also use this space to jot down other questions and insights gleaned from your reading.

### **Monday**

What strikes you about the birth and call of Samuel?

### **Tuesday**

What is so important about the ark being captured by the Philistines? (1 Samuel 4)  
How does God respond to the people asking for a human king? (1 Samuel 8)

### **Wednesday**

What catches your attention about Saul?

### **Thursday**

Why does God reject Saul as King? (1 Samuel 15)  
What is significant about Samuel anointing David? (1 Samuel 16)

### **Friday**

What do you make of David's relationships with Saul and with Jonathan?

### **Saturday**

Why does David spare Saul's life? (1 Samuel 24)

## Taking Scripture to Heart:

As we focus on the prophetic voice, our memory text is **Micah 6:6-8**. In only a few verses, this passage summarizes the heart of what many of the prophets teach to God's people during the time of the kings. That being said, there are many other powerful passages throughout the prophetic literature, which you could also take to heart.

## ***Next Sunday: December 7***

**Theme:** Intertestamental developments

**Scripture Focus:** Isaiah 55; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Malachi 4:4-6; 1 Maccabees 1-2