



**Worship Illustration: Storybook
King City Chronicles
Kings and Kingdoms part 2: Judges through Esther
Unit 9, Lesson 45**

Ezra Teaches God's People

Ezra 7:6, 9, 10, 23-26; 9:6, 9, 10; 10:1, 11-12

Kingdom Crusader opened the door and entered the secret lab. "There you are, Uncle Phil. Thanks for your invention last week. It really helped alot," she said, as she sat down at the table.

Philistine smiled. "Yes, the Heart Shield saved the day!"

"Well ... the shield did help, but it was actually God's Word that saved the day," Kingdom Crusader corrected.

Philistine looked confused. "Really?"

"Oh yes," Kingdom Crusader confirmed. "In fact, I'm learning more each day about how God's Word can turn people's lives around. I'll get out the Good News and show you right now." She opened a drawer under the control panel and removed the Bible. "Listen to this. This story is about a man of God named Ezra. God used Ezra to rebuild Jerusalem."

"Ezra? Was he a king?" Philistine asked.

Kingdom Crusader shook her head.

"Was he a warrior? A carpenter?" Philistine guessed.

Kingdom Crusader replied "no" to each one. "Actually, he was a teacher," she responded.

"God used a teacher to rebuild Jerusalem?" Philistine questioned.

"Not just any teacher; he was a Bible teacher!" Kingdom Crusader explained. "You see, the temple had just been rebuilt. Ezra didn't bring a hammer and nails; he just brought God's Word because he came to rebuild the hearts of people in Jerusalem. Ezra wasn't satisfied to just obey God on the outside. He loved God very much and kept God's Word deep down in his heart!"

Philistine stared into space. "Deep down in his heart...his heart?! That's it!"

"That's what?" Kingdom Crusader asked.

"Keep reading! I've got a plan!" Philistine yelled, as he raced out the door.

"Wait! I'm not finished ... there's so much more," Kingdom Crusader called after him. She shrugged and pondered out loud, "Well, I guess I can't tell him that King Artaxerxes was not a follower of God, but he respected Ezra as an expert on God's laws."

She read to herself, "For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the law of the Lord and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel."

She paused to think about the story and what it meant. "It was Ezra's heart for God's laws that impressed the king. He sent Ezra to go teach them to the people. The king wanted them to repent and follow God's laws so God would not be angry with him. When Ezra saw how the people were disobeying God, he tore his robes and cried. As he cried, he confessed the sins of the people to the Lord. Then, Ezra gathered all the people and told them to repent. That means to turn from evil ways and to turn toward God's ways. They agreed and even made a plan to change!"

She jumped up, nearly knocking over her chair. "Hey, that's it! That's how we can rebuild King City. The Obliterator may have damaged the heart of our fair city, but if we teach God's Word to everyone and they turn back to God, it will make King City even stronger!"

Suddenly, a voice behind her cackled, "Oh yes, and why don't you hand out T-shirts, put everyone on serve teams, and go help the community?"

"That's a great idea!" Kingdom Crusader exclaimed, whirling around. "Thanks, friend!" As she saw who spoke, her hand flew to her mouth. "Obliterator! It's you! You're mocking me!"

"Did you figure that out all by yourself?" Obliterator sneered.

"You may mock me but you cannot mock God!" Kingdom Crusader declared.

"You are too late with all your 'save the world' nonsense," Obliterator snarled. "After you sapped my mind power last week, I took the Wisdom Cube to the King City Library and soaked up enough wisdom to fill a college campus. So prepare to suffer, puny hero!" He pulled the cube from his pocket, pressed the Reverse Wisdom button and fired at Kingdom Crusader.

Kingdom Crusader ducked the ray and looked frantically for the Heart Shield. "Help!"

Scripture Guy burst into the room and jumped in front of her, a large, red, brightly glowing heart firmly secured over his heart. "Never fear, Kingdom Crusader! Your heart is safe from that evil Obliterator!"

"Scripture Guy! Why must you always show up when I'm having fun?" Obliterator growled.

"Your idea of fun may be fun for you, but it's no fun to fun around in a fun way that's not fun for others!" Scripture Guy replied.

"I didn't understand a word you said! You're making my brain hurt. Enough with the nursery rhymes! Prepare to be blasted!" Obliterator pressed the fire button over and over again.

"You'll never get past the Plutonium Heart!" Scripture Guy shouted.

"I'm too smart for your Plutonium Heart. I knew from the start that I could blast you apart!" Obliterator taunted, blasting still more rays, but they continued to bounce off the big heart. "Why can't I destroy that thing?" he raged. Frustrated, he shook the cube with all his might.

Scripture Guy patted the Plutonium Heart. "Because, we have a heart that's built for the King!"

"I am going to go away! I'll be back to fight another day!" Obliterator huffed and stomped out of the lab.

Kingdom Crusader let out a loud sigh. "We chased him off. Hip, hip hooray! Scripture Guy, where did you get that wonderful heart?"

Scripture Guy handed it to Kingdom Crusader. "It belongs to the Philistine. It's his new, improved Plutonium Heart! He wanted to give it to God."

"Wow, that is huge!" Kingdom Crusader exclaimed. "The Philistine wants to give his heart to God! I think he wants to repent, just like the people of Jerusalem did in the days of Ezra."

"Yes, I think he was really sorry," Scripture Guy agreed. "He had tears in his eyes. God is truly changing his heart."

Kingdom Crusader touched her hand to her forehead. "You know, I just remembered that when Ezra started to confess the sins of the people, he cried. A crowd of men, women, and children gathered around him and they were crying, too. They were sorry and ready to turn back to doing things God's way."

"I think this is a big step for our former enemy. Once God turns our hearts back to Him, He builds His kingdom through us!" Scripture Guy declared confidently.

Kingdom Crusader smiled with pride. "I can hardly wait for the day when the Philistine says our favorite phrase!"

Scripture Guy matched her smile. "And by that you mean..."

Together they shouted. "We give everything to honor our King!"