

Ezra - A Life Centered Around God

Background

Ezr 7:1-6 NIV After these things, **during the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia**, Ezra son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, (2) the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, (3) the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, (4) the son of Zerariah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, (5) the son of Abishua, ***the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest***— (6) this Ezra came up from Babylon.

- Book Ezra - during the reign of **3 pagan kings**...Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes - God moves men
- **59 years** after the temple was built...Ezra comes to Jerusalem - nearly 80 years from the time Cyrus first told them to go back and build till Ezra came
- **He was a descendant of Aaron**...which made him a priest, He was a scribe
- **17 generations** from Aaron to Ezra - quite a heritage of faith from generation to generation

He Honored the Word of God

(6b) **He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given.** ...

...(11) This is a copy of the letter King Artaxerxes had given to Ezra the priest, **a teacher of the Law**, a man **learned in matters concerning the commands and decrees of the LORD** for Israel:
(12) Artaxerxes, king of kings, To Ezra the priest, teacher of the Law of the God of heaven:

What Does It mean to be well-versed?... KJV “he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses KJV”

- Same word is used for a man diligent in his business - **Denotes one who was skillful in expounding the law**

How Does A Person Become Well Versed? [study, observe and teach] - **He knew it and taught it**
Ezra 7:10 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.

- 2Ti 2:15 KJV Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
- 2Ti 4:2 KJV Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

The Hand of God Was Upon Him

Ezra 7:6c **The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him.** (7) Some of the Israelites, including priests, Levites, musicians, gatekeepers and temple servants, also came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes

When we honor the LORD He honors us...Eli honoured his sons above the LORD

1Sa 2:30 NIV ... **Those who honor me I will honor**, but those who despise me will be disdained.

The Hand of God in the Book of EZRA

Hand = a hand (the open one (indicating power, means, direction, etc.)

Favor of the king ... Ezr_7:6 ...The king had granted him everything he asked, **for the hand of the LORD his God was on him.**

A Prosperous Journey ... Ezr_7:9 He had begun his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, **for the gracious hand of his God was on him.**

Personal Courage ... Ezr_7:28 **Because the hand of the LORD my God was on me**, I took courage and gathered leaders from Israel to go up with me.

He received help ... Ezr_8:18 **Because the gracious hand of our God was on us**, they brought us Sherebiah, a capable man,...

He acknowledged the hand of God at work in him, and in some way it worked faith ... Ezr_8:22 I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, "**The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him**, but his great anger is against all who forsake him."

Protection from the enemy ... Ezr_8:31 **The hand of our God was on us**, and he protected us from enemies and bandits along the way.

God Moved Artaxerxes To Help Him

(11) This is a copy of the letter King Artaxerxes had given to Ezra the priest, *a teacher of the Law*, a man *learned in matters concerning the commands and decrees of the LORD* for Israel: (12) Artaxerxes, king of kings, To Ezra the priest, teacher of the Law of the God of heaven: Greetings. (13) **Now I decree that any of the Israelites in my kingdom, including priests and Levites, who volunteer to go to Jerusalem with you, may go.** (14) You are sent by the king and his seven advisers to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem *with regard to the Law of your God*, which is in your hand. (15) **Moreover, you are to take with you the silver and gold that the king and his advisers have freely given to the God of Israel**, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, (16) together with all the silver and gold you may obtain from the province of Babylon, as well as the freewill offerings of the people and priests for the temple of their God in Jerusalem. (17) **With this money be sure to buy bulls, rams and male lambs, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and sacrifice them on the altar of the temple of your God in Jerusalem.**

- Once again they were blessed financially by the king

- see vs 20 also - ANYTHING ELSE NEEDED --- vs 20 **And anything else needed for the temple of your God that you are responsible to supply, you may provide from the royal treasury**

Encouraged to Make Decisions in Accordance to the Will of God

(18) **You and your fellow Israelites may then do whatever seems best with the rest of the silver and gold, *in accordance with the will of your God.*** (19) Deliver to the God of Jerusalem all the articles entrusted to you for worship in the temple of your God.

Have you ever asked the LORD what is His will for the REST?

- When we tithe, we give to the LORD what is His, But the 90% is also the LORD's - try an experiment - ask the LORD's will for the REST of your silver and gold

What if we desired the will of God for every decision

Encouraged to follow whatever the God of heaven has prescribed [commanded]

(20) **And anything else needed for the temple of your God that you are responsible to supply, you may provide from the royal treasury.** (21) Now I, King Artaxerxes, decree that all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates are to provide with diligence whatever Ezra the priest, the teacher of the Law of the God of heaven, may ask of you-- (22) up to a hundred talents of silver, a hundred cors of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, a hundred baths of olive oil, and salt without limit. (23) **Whatever the God of heaven has prescribed, let it be done with diligence for the temple of the God of heaven. Why should his wrath fall on the realm of the king and of his sons?**

- He was not calling the shots...the LORD was, and somehow he knew this

Encouraged to Live According to God's Wisdom

(24) You are also to know that you have no authority to impose taxes, tribute or duty on any of the priests, Levites, musicians, gatekeepers, temple servants or other workers at this house of God. (25) And you, **Ezra, in accordance with the wisdom of your God,** which you possess, appoint magistrates and judges to administer justice to all the people of Trans-Euphrates--all who know the laws of your God. **And you are to teach any who do not know them.** (26) Whoever does not obey the law of your God and the law of the king must surely be punished by death, banishment, confiscation of property, or imprisonment.

- Jas 1:5 NIV If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

He Recognized his Source as God

(27) Praise be to the LORD, **the God of our ancestors, who has put it into the king's heart to bring honor to the house of the LORD in Jerusalem in this way** (28) and who has extended his good favor to me before the king and his advisers and all the king's powerful officials. **Because the**

hand of the LORD my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leaders from Israel to go up with me.

- **God of our ancestors** - moved on the king's heart to honor the house of the LORD
- God extended his favor to Ezra before the king

His Source, or the Center of His life is GOD

Ezra 7:10 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.

- His heart was set - he DEVOTED himself
- God Honored it

May we honor the word of God

May we Make Decisions in Accordance to the Will of God

May we Follow whatever the God of heaven has prescribed

May we Live According to God's Wisdom

AND May His hand be upon us...