

Ezra – A Prepared Servant of God (Ezra 7:6-10)

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This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him.⁶ And there went up some of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.⁷ And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king.⁸ For upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him.⁹ For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.¹⁰ (Ezra 7:6-10).

The priest Ezra was a good and faithful servant of the most high God. He was a man concerned with the spiritual over the physical. He left Babylon for Jerusalem with a remnant of 2000 plus Jews. He was a leader of God's people who was a descendant of Aaron the High Priest. He was a man of his time who had influence with Artaxerxes the king of Persia. He believed in the providence of God in the work that had been placed into his hands (Ezra 7:6, 9 and 26). He was thankful to God for all that had been done in the Lord's name (Ezra 7:27-28). Ezra is truly a remarkable servant of God.

The events that led up to Ezra being a prepared servant of God:

- Israel is taken into captivity by Babylon and shortly thereafter falls to the Persian Medes Empire.
- In the first year of king Cyrus of Persia, he allows a remnant of God's people to go and build a house for God (II Chronicles 36:22-23 and Ezra 1).
- The work on the tabernacle began and was stopped (Ezra 4).
- The prophets Haggai and Zechariah would encourage God's people to continue to build and the temple would be completed.
- The book of Esther records the events of God's people in Persia prior to the arrival of Ezra in Jerusalem.
- Ezra arrives and then Nehemiah and the walls are restored.

These are the events that shape the life and work of Ezra the priest and scribe of the law of Moses.

I. First of all, Ezra was a ready scribe in the law of Moses (Ezra 7:6), i.e. he was skillful in the law of Moses. Thus, he serves as an example for us to be skillful in the word of God.

- II Timothy 2:15, *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
 - As Christians, we need to be skillful in God's word. Hence, it takes diligence and maturity to rightly divide *the word of truth*. Ezra was a student of God's word, likewise we must be a student of God's word.

- Hebrews 5:12-14, *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.¹² For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.¹³ But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.¹⁴*
- We need to become skillful or teachers of God's word. Like Ezra we need to know the difference between what is good and what is evil.
- Ezra 10:1-4, *Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore.¹ And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.² Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.³ Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it.⁴*
- In order for Ezra to encourage God's people to take the right action, he needed to know the law of God. Ezra was a faithful servant who knew the difference between right and wrong, between good and evil. He was *a ready scribe of the law of Moses* and not a novice in understanding truth.
- Church leaders need to be skilled in the word of God, to be able to stop the influence of gainsayers (Titus 1:9) and to lead God's people in the paths of righteousness (Psalm 23:3 and Micah 4:2).

As a ready scribe, Ezra is an excellent example for each and every Christian.

II. Secondly, Ezra prepared himself as a servant of God to carry out the commission and duty given to him (Ezra 7:10).

- II Kings 20:1, *In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.*
- Hezekiah was told by the prophet Isaiah to set his house in order, that is to prepare himself for death. Each Christian prepares his or her life for the great departure, that doorway of death. But, we must prepare our lives as a servant of God, much like Ezra prepared his life in for service to God.

- *Amos 4:12, Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.*
 - Israel needed to heed to warning to prepare. One important truth we learn from Ezra is preparation. Each and every Christian prepares themselves to meet God. Each and every Christian needs to prepare themselves to fulfill to work of God.
- *II Timothy 2:21-22, If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.21 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.22*
 - We purge ourselves from a vessel of dishonor and sanctify ourselves or prepare ourselves as a vessel of honor. We prepare our lives for service to God by fleeing youthful lusts and follow a path of righteousness which is found within Christ and His word (II Corinthians 5:21 and Romans 1:16-17). Thus, Ezra serves as a good and positive example for each and every Christian to emulate.
- *Joshua 24:15, And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*
 - In order for a man to serve as a elder, it takes the effort of his family. It takes preparation in his youth. Hence, Ecclesiastes 12:1 is so true, *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;*

Leadership takes preparation and Ezra prepared himself for the work of God.

III. Furthermore, Ezra was a man who sought the law or word of God.

- *Psalm 42:1-2, As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.1 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?2*
 - The psalmist desires the Lord in such way as the body would thirst for water. But, our soul must thirst for God as Ezra sought after the Lord.
- *Psalm 119:129-133, Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.129 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.130 I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.131 Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.132 Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.133*

- The 119th Psalm reveals that the servant of God longed for the commandments of the Lord. We must desire the Lord and seek after Christ.
- Matthew 5:6, *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*
 - The Christian needs to hunger and thirst for righteousness. The desire for God must be first in our lives. Our lives revolves around Jesus Christ, He is the center of our lives, nothing else matters.
 - Philippians 1:21, *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*
- I Peter 2:2, *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*
 - We desire the word, because we grow spiritually from the word.
- Romans 10:17, *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*
 - Our faith comes directly from the word of Christ. Hence, like Ezra we seek God's word in our lives.

The Christian must make an effort to diligently seek after God and His word. In doing so, we put God and kingdom first in this life (Matthew 6:33).

IV. In addition, Ezra did that which God commanded.

- James 1:22, *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*
 - When we do what God commands us to do, we please Him. When we fail or neglect to do what God requires of us to do, we displease Him. Ezra was pleasing to God. Thus, Ezra did what God commanded Him to do.
- I John 2:15-17, *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 15 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 16 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. 17*
 - If we do the will of God in our daily lives, we will avoid many sins that may tempt the individual Christian. But, if we are not vigilant we will fall to the temptation of sin and fall away from God. The lesson for us, do the work that God has given us to do – be evangelistic, be edifying and be benevolent.

- Matthew 7:21, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*
- Our eternal home depends upon us doing the will of God.
- Revelation 22:14, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*
- Ezra was blessed by our God, in turn, we can be blessed when we do what God commands us to do. Hence, be doers of God's truth. If we love the Lord we will do what He says (John 14:15).

Ezra is a wonderful example of a faithful man who did what God wanted him to do. Ezra is our example for us to do what God wants us to do and to do our Lord's commands in the way He said to do them.

V. Finally, Ezra taught his brethren the statutes and ordinances of God.

- 2 Peter 1:12-15, *Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.¹² Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;¹³ Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.¹⁴ Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.¹⁵*
- Peter, like Ezra put the brethren in remembrance of the teachings of God. Today, we must put our brethren in remembrance of the word of God.
- 1 Peter 4:11, *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God;...*
- 2 Timothy 4:1-4, *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;¹ Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.² For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;³ And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.⁴*
- God's people have a duty and responsibility to please the Lord via the preaching of the word. In our modern culture there is a desire to have preachers and leaders to be entertainers and appeal to a feel good audience. But the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments and this is done through preaching the word.

- Acts 20:26-27, *Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.*²⁶ *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*²⁷
 - God's people need to understand and realize that the preacher will teach things they may not agree with, but the whole truth must be taught. Ezra taught God's people truth concerning marriage and worked with them to overcome their unscriptural situation.
- I Corinthians 14:37-40, *If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.*³⁷ *But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.*³⁸ *Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.*³⁹ *Let all things be done decently and in order.*⁴⁰
 - Paul taught the church the statutes and ordinances of God, those things that make for things to be done decently and in order.

Christians today, like Ezra of old need to edify their brethren in the word of God. In doing so, we build up and edify the church of Christ.

Conclusion:

- In our lesson of the hour, we have learned several truths concerning **Ezra – a prepared servant of God**. Through the life of Ezra we are encouraged live our lives in manner that pleases God. First of all, as a ready scribe, Ezra is an excellent example for each and every Christian. Secondly, leadership takes preparation and Ezra prepared himself for the work of God. Furthermore, Ezra was a man who sought the law or word of God. The Christian must seek with diligence the word of God. In addition, Ezra did that which God commanded. We too must do what God commands. Finally, Ezra taught his brethren the statutes and ordinances of God. In the church, we must teach our brethren all that God has commanded.