

Promise Keeper

Ezra 7:1-28

- Between chapters six and seven there is an almost sixty year gap, Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Haggai, and Zechariah, King Cyrus, King Darius, King Xerxes from which we get the story Esther from, are gone, and enter his son King Artaxerxes, as well as Ezra. For the first time in the book, we see the name Ezra introduced into the story, as the men who led Judah to begin the work, persevere through the attacks, complete what God commanded them to do, which is rebuild the temple, are gone.

V1-28

- **V1-5** we see the genealogy of Ezra as he comes from a long line of priests beginning with Aaron the brother of Moses. At this time although the temple has been completed the Jewish remnant in Jerusalem are having a rough time, so God raises up Ezra to lead a second group of refugees from Babylon to Jerusalem to bring financial and spiritual support to help the people of Judah rebuild the city.
- Throughout the Bible we see that every person is important to God, and His work, He uses a multitude to bring glory unto Himself. But as we often see everything that rises and falls concerning the work depends on leadership. When God wanted to deliver Israel from Egypt He raised up Moses and Aaron, when Israel was divided and defeated He called Samuel to teach the Word and David to be its king.
- Also when God wants to judge a nation He sends them inferior leaders > **Is 3:4-7, Prov 29:2, Eccl 10:16-17**, and we see that with both the leadership in our country and the world today, its weak, as the majority of leaders are primarily concerned with their popularity vote, instead of are they leading people to do the right thing.
- **V6-10** Ezra were told was a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, meaning he knew the Word, that is where his boldness and authority came from. For in knowing the scriptures it made it impossible for him to stand around in comfort while the people of God and the work of God suffer, so he boldly asks the king can he lead a group of people across the desert on a dangerous four month journey back to Jerusalem.

- Notice it says “The Hand of The Lord His God was upon him” when God’s Hand is upon us that means He is The One guiding us, instead of us guiding ourselves amen! **V10** I love it, Ezra had prepared his heart to **seek the Word of The Lord**, not so that he can merely know it for knowledge sake, but in order to do it. God has not told any of us “**to try and do His will**, He calls us “**to go and do His will**”!
- It didn’t stop there, Ezra is also charged with teaching God’s word to God’s people, that is a charge to all believers not just pastors > **Math 28:19-20** the great commission, **Col 3:16**- everyone should be teaching and correcting one another, **Heb 5:12** says all believers should mature into teachers over time. But that takes making proper decisions for that to happen, the people you’re around, the church you attend, the amount of sacrifice your willing to make for the word to take root.
- Because the Good Hand of The Lord was upon him Ezra makes it to Jerusalem with other priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and the Nethinim, these were people assigned to do the menial work and basic chores in the temple, so the priests were freed up to do the more sacred duties. Many scholars believe these people descended from the Gibeonites of the book of Joshua who for fear of being killed surrendered themselves to be servants to Israel all the days of their lives > **Josh 9:27**
- **V11-17** Ezra was given a letter from the King, remember the first group left for Jerusalem because God moved upon the heart of Cyrus the king, here God moved upon Ezra the priest to touch the King. The people were given a choice to either go with Ezra to Jerusalem or don’t, this I believe is an example of how God gives man a free choice also of whether we will serve Him or not.
- In **Hagg 2:8** God told the struggling Jews that the silver was His and the Gold is His, and again He proves it by moving upon King Artaxerxes heart to open the royal treasury and give it to Ezra to buy sacrifices to offer in the temple.
- **V18-21 Prov 21:1** say the kings heart is in the Hands of The Lord and He turns it withersoever He desires, The Lord has given Ezra favor with the King so that he trust him to do the right thing with the finances that he gives him. Sadly most men cannot be trusted with God’s provisions, as he begins to look at them as his personal bank account, and its gotten many of them disqualified from ministry. Money, women, and power, Satan uses regularly to cause men of God to fall from being used by God.

- **V22-24** he puts a limit on how much they could take, but says they can have all the salt they wanted being near the dead sea, and just like his grandfather before him he asks that Ezra remember to pray for him. **V24** anything meant for the building of God's kingdom was to be left alone and not taxed, what if the IRS abided by this rule
- **V25-26** a testimony of Ezra's integrity the king leaves all civil and spiritual matters in his hands because he knows his character > **1.** Promote into leadership only those who know and follow God's Word, **2.** so they can teach those who don't, **3.** Remove those either by death, banishment, or prison those who rebel against God's Law.
- **V27-28** at the end of the chapter Ezra responds by giving credit where credit belongs, not to the king, or the people who returned with him, but to The Lord Who's Good Hand **showed mercy on him, gave counsel to him, encouraged him, strengthened him, and was upon him.**