

6-14-26

Welcome / Prayer

EZRA 7

Perspective:

- He wrote in the 3rd person thru Chronicles up to Ezra 7 likely quoting memoirs from Ez1-6, where he switches to 1st person mid chap7,
- Zerubbabel first returned in 538 B.C. (Ezra 1-6)
- followed by Ezra, who led the second return in 458 B.C. (Ezra 7-10 end)

This is the 'organization' chapter – ie "yes we're back and doing church but we have need of instruction on who God really is."

Fast forward about 70 years

A new ruler, Artaxerxes Longimanus, was on the throne of Persia.

Introduced to Ezra

Ez 7: 6 This Ezra went up from Babylon, and he was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all he requested because the hand of the LORD his God was upon him.

Got on great w/ the King, had his blessing

Ezra decided to travel back to Jerusalem with a company of exiles in the 7th year of Artaxerxes' reign.

wanted to teach God's statutes

:11-28 the letter sent w/ Ezra from the king

The letter included several decrees regarding the exiles and Jerusalem.

- It gave permission for any Israelite to return to the Promised Land.
- Artaxerxes decreed that silver and gold were to be given to Ezra's company to fund sacrifices at the Temple.
- The royal treasury was to supply Ezra and the Temple with whatever they needed up to the price of 100 talents of silver, 100 cors of wheat, 100 baths of wine, 100 baths of oil, and salt without measure.
- The priests, Levites, temple singers, doorkeepers, and temple servants were exempted from taxes.
- Artaxerxes decreed these things, in part, to win the favor of the God of Jerusalem (7:23).
- Ezra was charged with appointing judges and magistrates and teaching them the Law of God.
- Ezra was given legal authority to punish anyone who refused to keep God's commands.
- In the final 2 verses of the chapter, Ezra praised God for using the King of Persia in such a marvelous way. He then gathered up leading men of the Israelites and prepared to make the journey to Judah.

Why do you suppose God's hand was upon him?

(discuss)

Ezra's point: The Temple worship wasn't the only thing that mattered, God's Law was to permeate people's personal lives and change them, making them distinct from the nations around them, even when they were away from the Temple.

10 For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.

If God's law had really been in their hearts, would they have been in need of Nebuchadnezzar's judgment?

What happens to a churchgoer who has "Sunday" down to an art form, but lives for himself Mon-Sat?

What does this person look like?

- They look like a religious person.
- James 1 – not a doer / forget himself

- **Mt 5:19** Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.