

## Ezra 7-8

### The Good Hand of God

**Ezra 7:1-5** Now after this, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, son of Azariah, son of Hilkiah, 2 son of Shallum, son of Zadok, son of Ahitub, 3 son of Amariah, son of Azariah, son of Meraioth, 4 son of Zerahiah, son of Uzzi, son of Bukki, 5 son of Abishua, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the chief priest

586, Temple Destroyed	
538, Return of Zerrubabel & Jeshua	538-530, Reign of Cyrus
538-515, Ezra 1-6	
520, Temple Building Restarted	522-486, Reign of Darius
520, Ministry of Haggai & Zechariah	
516, Temple Finished	
482-473, Book of Esther	485-464, Reign of Ahasuerus
479, Esther Made Queen	
458, Ezra 7-10	464-423, Reign of Artaxerxes
445-444, Nehemiah 1-12	
432, Nehemiah 13	

#### 1. Our spiritual lineage is important.

**Ezra 7:6** this Ezra went up from Babylonia. He was a scribe skilled in the Law of Moses that the LORD, the God of Israel, had given, and the king granted him all that he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him.

#### 2. Live under the hand of the Lord.

**Ezra 7:7-10** And there went up also to Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king, some of the people of Israel, and some of the priests and Levites, the singers and gatekeepers, and the temple servants. 8 And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. 9 For on the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylonia, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, for the good hand of his God was on him. 10 For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.

#### 3. We have to prepare to study and learn God's Word.

**Ezra 7:11-20** This is a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest, the scribe, a man learned in matters of the commandments of the LORD and his statutes for Israel: 12 "Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven. Peace. And now 13 I make a decree that anyone of the people of Israel or their priests or Levites in my kingdom, who freely offers to go to Jerusalem, may go with you. 14 For you are sent by the king and his seven counselors to make inquiries about Judah and Jerusalem according to the Law of your God, which is in your hand, 15 and also to carry the silver and gold that the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, 16 with all the silver and gold that you shall find in the whole province of Babylonia, and with the freewill offerings of the people and the priests, vowed willingly for the house of their God that is in Jerusalem. 17 With this money, then, you shall with all diligence buy bulls, rams, and lambs, with their grain offerings and their drink offerings, and you shall offer them on the altar of the house of your God that is in Jerusalem. 18 Whatever seems good to you and your brothers to do with the rest of the silver and gold, you may do, according to the will of your God. 19 The vessels that have been given you for the service of the house of your God, you shall deliver before the God of Jerusalem. 20 And whatever else is required for the house of your God, which it falls to you to provide, you may provide it out of the king's treasury.

**Ezra 7:21-24** "And I, Artaxerxes the king, make a decree to all the treasurers in the province Beyond the River: Whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, requires of you, let it be done with all diligence, 22 up to 100 talents of silver, 100 cors of wheat, 100 baths of wine, 100 baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much. 23 Whatever is decreed by the God of heaven, let it be done in full for the house of the God of heaven, lest his wrath be against the realm of the king and his sons. 24 We also notify

you that it shall not be lawful to impose tribute, custom, or toll on anyone of the priests, the Levites, the singers, the doorkeepers, the temple servants, or other servants of this house of God.

**Ezra 7:25-26** “And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God that is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges who may judge all the people in the province Beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God. And those who do not know them, you shall teach. 26 Whoever will not obey the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be strictly executed on him, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of his goods or for imprisonment.”

#### **4. God's Word is our guiding wisdom in life.**

**Ezra 7:27-28** Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, who put such a thing as this into the heart of the king, to beautify the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem, 28 and who extended to me his steadfast love before the king and his counselors, and before all the king's mighty officers. I took courage, for the hand of the LORD my God was on me, and I gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me.

**Ezra 8:1** These are the heads of their fathers' houses, and this is the genealogy of those who went up with me from Babylonia, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king:

**Ezra 8:15-20** I gathered them to the river that runs to Ahava, and there we camped three days. As I reviewed the people and the priests, I found there none of the sons of Levi. 16 Then I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, leading men, and for Joiarib and Elnathan, who were men of insight, 17 and sent them to Iddo, the leading man at the place Casiphia, telling them what to say to Iddo and his brothers and the temple servants at the place Casiphia, namely, to send us ministers for the house of our God. 18 And by the good hand of our God on us, they brought us a man of discretion, of the sons of Mahli the son of Levi, son of Israel, namely Sherebiah with his sons and kinsmen, 18; 19 also Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiiah of the sons of Merari, with his kinsmen and their sons, 20; 20 besides 220 of the temple servants, whom David and his officials had set apart to attend the Levites. These were all mentioned by name.

**Ezra 8:21-23** Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. 22 For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, “The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him.” 23 So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

#### **5. Trust God with what we can't control.**

**Ezra 8:24-30** Then I set apart twelve of the leading priests: Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their kinsmen with them. 25 And I weighed out to them the silver and the gold and the vessels, the offering for the house of our God that the king and his counselors and his lords and all Israel there present had offered. 26 I weighed out into their hand 650 talents of silver, and silver vessels worth 200 talents, and 100 talents of gold, 27 20 bowls of gold worth 1,000 darics, and two vessels of fine bright bronze as precious as gold. 28 And I said to them, “You are holy to the LORD, and the vessels are holy, and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to the LORD, the God of your fathers. 29 Guard them and keep them until you weigh them before the chief priests and the Levites and the heads of fathers' houses in Israel at Jerusalem, within the chambers of the house of the LORD.” 30 So the priests and the Levites took over the weight of the silver and the gold and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem, to the house of our God.

**Ezra 8:31-36** Then we departed from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go to Jerusalem. The hand of our God was on us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambushes by the way. 32 We came to Jerusalem, and there we remained three days. 33 On the fourth day, within the house of our God, the silver and the gold and the vessels were weighed into the hands of Meremoth the priest, son of Uriah, and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas, and with them were the Levites, Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui. 34 The whole was counted and weighed, and the weight of everything was recorded. 35 At that time those who had come from captivity, the returned exiles, offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel, twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and as a sin offering twelve male goats. All this was a burnt offering to the LORD. 36 They also delivered the king's commissions to the king's satraps and to the governors of the province Beyond the River, and they aided the people and the house of God.

#### **6. Be faithful with what God gives you.**