

Ezra's Heart Condition

‘Some act first, think afterward,
and then repent forever’

- Esau, Heb.12:16-17
- Others think first, then act (Ezra)

Book of Ezra: two parts

- Ch.1-6: Cyrus freed Jews; some return to Jerusalem to rebuild Temple (536; 520-516 BC).
- Ch.7-10: fifty-eight years later (458 BC).

Ezra: direct descendant of Aaron

1000 years from Exodus to Ezra

- Left Babylon (home) to help Jews in Jerusalem
- Led exiles to Judah, 7:13

Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra 7)



Ezra: direct descendant of Aaron

1000 years from Exodus to Ezra

- Left Babylon (home) to help Jews in Jerusalem
- Led exiles to Judah, 7:13
- Enquired about Judah and Jerusalem, 7:14
- Carried various gifts for Temple, 7:15-20

I. Ezra Prepared His Heart

Prepare – 288 x

- To apply one's mind to do something, i.e., to purpose seriously.
 - 1 Chr.28:2, David's plan to build temple
- Ezra 9-10 – Ezra's preparation paid off

'The faith we draw on in pain, suffering, and tragedy is not faith that is born in the tragedy, but faith that is already in us, ready to withstand the storm.'

How do we prepare our heart?

Ezra 7:10

- Run from every evil influence. Ph.2:14-15
- Be fully devoted to 'good.' Ac.10:38; 20:35
- Pray fervently. Ezr.9-10
- Study. Ps.42:1-2
- Abandon every sin. Jer.6:26

I. Ezra Prepared His Heart

II. To Seek Law Of Lord

Seek

- Inquire, consult, find out, i.e., learn information not previously known.
- Includes reading, study, research, meditation.
 - **Law:** Word of God – narrow
 1. Water: H₂O
 2. Music (notes)
 3. Math
 4. Assumption
 5. Truth – 2 Jn.4, 8, 9-11

Seek

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- Includes reading, study, research, meditation.
 - Law: Word of God – narrow
- Ezr.8:22, **seek HIM** – (cf. Hb.11:6)
 - NOT curiosity, Jn.1:38
 - NOT carnality, Jn.6:26
 - BUT carefully, Is.66:2

I. Ezra Prepared His Heart

II. To Seek Law Of Lord

III. To Do It

Deut.30:12...

- Not impossible. Ro.10:5-8
 - 1500 years of chasing righteousness – ends sadly.
- No superhuman effort necessary
 - 6-7: Moses delivered law; it was near
 - 8: far away thing: difficult, impossible
 - 9: confessing Jesus as Lord (Mt.7:21)

I. Ezra Prepared His Heart

II. To Seek Law Of Lord

III. To Do It

IV. To Teach

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- **Skilled:** well-versed, i.e., having knowledge and skill in a subject. Ps.45:1
- **Scribe:** person dealing with written materials...
 - Special focus on teaching the meaning
 - They interpreted / copied Law; retained knowledge of old dialect, searched out its meaning, taught people. Neh.8:1, 13

NT scribes

- Education began at age 5
- Bar-mitzvah, age 13
- Admitted as teacher, age 30
 - Tablet and key given him (Mt.16:19)
- Some were dull (merely cited 'authorities')
- Some were dishonest, Mt.5:20; 7:29

- Order:
 1. Right attitude
 2. Hard work
 3. Personal obedience
 4. Teach others

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- Like others priests, Ezra had authority to teach. Lv.10:9-11
- Ex.24:12
 - One hearing not enough.
 - Explanation, repetition, practice.
 - Isa.2:3; Ac.2:42
- Ezr.7:25, corrective for ignorance
 - YOU are a scholar (scribe) to many

Ezr.7:28-29

- Who gets credit? . . . *hand of LORD...*
- 6, 9, 28, *hand of LORD...* a favorite expression in Ezra / Nehemiah
- God's hand...
 - Spread out the universe, Jer.23:17
 - Conquered Egypt, Ex.13:14
 - Empowered John, Lk.1:66
 - Enabled preachers, Ac.11:21

Ezr.7:28-29

- Guiding, sustaining help of God on Ezra –
 - Favor with king
 - Safety in long journey
 - Opportunity to teach Jews
 - Strength for adversity

Why would pagan king
send gifts to true God?

Israel was content with
material blessings (ch. 9-10)