

## A HEART READY TO SEEK GOD — 10/10/21

**TEXT-** Ezra 7:10-28

**INTRO** — Israel has been in Babylon for 70 years. Some of the people are now being released to go back to Palestine. The wealthier and the majority of Jews stayed in Babylon.

- Zerubbabel had gone back to rebuild the city and the Temple

When Zerubbabel led the first party of exiles back to Jerusalem around 538 BC, the first thing they rebuilt was the altar so that worship and sacrifice could begin again. They also managed to lay the foundations for a new temple. There were mixed feelings. Some sang for joy at this beginning, but the old men who had seen the former temple wept loudly.

- Nehemiah went back to rebuild the walls

A third wave returns with Nehemiah in 445 BC. They rebuild the city walls and gates but not many houses.

- Zachariah and Malachi were prophets who stirred up the people to finish the work.
- When Ezra went to Palestine 80 years after Zerubbabel he found no Levites ministering in the Temple. He organized a group of 200 to go minister in the rebuilt temple. The book of Ezra is all about restoration. A great revival resulted from his ministry. Building and restoring the temple site was of no value unless the people had a heart to serve the Lord.

**This was the challenge to Israel as they prepared to enter the land.**

**Deu 10:12** *And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,*

**The Lord reminded Joshua of the importance to have a heart for God.**

**Josh 24:23** *Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.*

**The same is true for every believer today!**

**Eph 6:6** *Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;*

**Israel spends 6 hours preaching the Word and confessing their sin**

**Neh 9:3** *And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God.*

**The book of Ezra is a continuation of the last two verses of 2 Chronicles**

**2 Ch 36:22-23** *Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a*

*proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.*

**2 Chronicles** has an abrupt ending and left open.

**Each generation faces the same. One leader passes off the scene but God raises another. The story doesn't end.**

**Each historian leaves, as it were, the loose ends of his work ready to be taken up and continued by his successors.**

**I. The hand of the Lord was upon him** - The use of this phrase is rare but is a favorite one with both Ezra and Nehemiah

### **A. It was a long and dangerous journey**

It took Ezra four months to make the journey of nearly a thousand miles from Babylon to Jerusalem. The good hand of God was upon him and he prospered;

### **B. The secret of Ezra's success, the good hand of God.**

- **That hand answers prayer, Ezra 7:6** *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.*
- **He is with us in the journey**
- **He strengthens us for service, Ezra 7:9** *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.*

## **II. Ezra Made God's Word His First Priority**

**Psa 119:70** *I delight in thy law.*

**Psa 119:72** *The law of thy mouth is better than gold and silver.*

**Psa 119:97** *O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.*

**Psa 119:113** *I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.*

**Psa 119:163** *I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love.*

**Psa 119:165** *Great peace have they which love thy law:*

**Ezra prepared his heart to seek the Lord before he tried to teach others.**

**He sought to: 1. Know it 2. Do it 3. Teach it**

### **WHAT THE LAW DOES**

- 1. Reveals the glory of God**
- 2. Reveals man's sinfulness**
- 3. Marks Israel as His chosen people**



4. Gave Israel a standard for living
5. Prepared Israel for the coming of Christ Gal 3:24
6. Illustrates in type the person of Christ Heb. 10:1

### III. Ezra Taught The People

#### **A. He believed in the power of God**

He believed God could use Cyrus, an Artaxerxes or a Darius

#### **B. He believed in the faithfulness of God**

- To bring back the exiles from captivity  
The Christian life is a series of new beginnings
- That God would honor those that honor Him

#### **C. He believed in the practicality of the scriptures**

**They should be lived out. They are for today.**

#### **D. He believed in prayer and fasting**

**Ezra 9:5-6** *And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God, And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.*

**We need to be known as a church of prayer. We can't change the old without prayer.**

#### **E. He believed in preaching**

**Neh 8:8** *So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.*

- **The hope of America is found in the church**
- **It's not license but law**
- **It's not freedom of expression but freedom in Christ**

### III. The Accomplishments of Ezra

#### **A. He uplifted the office of the priest**

#### **B. He cleansed the worship system**

#### **C. He challenged the people to be holy**

#### **D. He set a renewed standard for living**

#### **E. He preserved the nation for years to come**

**CONCL - These are the things we need in America today.**

**God uses  
what you have  
to fill a need which  
you never could have filled.**

**God uses  
where you are  
to take you where  
you never could have gone.**

**God uses  
what you can do  
to accomplish what  
you never could have done.**

**God uses  
who you are  
to let you become who  
you never could have been.**