

## The Hand of God Beautifying His People Ezra 7:11-28

This passage is one of the many illustrations of God's sovereign control over the hearts of men as taught in Proverbs 21:1, "*The king's heart is like a watercourse in the hand of the Lord.*" Artaxerxes sends a letter to Ezra giving him permission to rebuild with his blessing and His bounty. In this section we learn that God glorifies Himself in all things, whether they seem good or bad from our perspective... He causes "*all things to work together for good...*," and we see again how it always is and will be for the people of God, "*My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches and glory (Phil 4:19).*"

### I. Explanation and introduction of the letter, v11-12

### II. The Letter

#### The decree, v13-20

1. Volunteers were sent by the authorities, v13-14
2. Freewill offerings are given, v15-16
3. The king exhorts them to be diligent and speedy, v17
4. Purchase what is necessary for worship, v17-19
5. They are given freedom to use the money as the Lord leads them, v20

#### The provisions, v21-26

1. Enormous gifts are given, v21-22
2. Diligence toward God ordained worship is commanded by Artaxerxes, v23
3. No taxes from the priests, v24
4. The God given wisdom of Ezra is exalted, v25
5. Punishment will be experienced by those who oppose, v26

### III. Ezra's prayer of thanksgiving, v27-28

1. Praise for the longevity of the work of God – thankfulness for the past, v27a
2. Praise for the power of God to move kings hearts – thankfulness for the present, v27b
3. Praise for how God moves all things to beautify His house – thankfulness for the future, v27c
4. Praise for the mercy of God, v28a
5. Praise for the hand of God, v28b