

**BOOK OF EZRA**  
**THE HAND OF THE LORD**  
**EZRA 7:1-28**

**Introduction**

**Everything** in our service for the LORD is **dependent on the hand of the LORD being upon us!** If the LORD's hand of blessing is upon us, we will not lack anything as we depend on Him! Because the meeting of our need or needs is not dependent on our resources that we have in hand, but rather on the blessing of the LORD in our lives!

How much do we really prize the Lord's blessing in our lives? Do we really want and seek God's blessing in our personal life, in our family, and in our service for the Lord?

There are a number of men in Scripture who were especially blessed of God: Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and David are some prominent examples.

But we see here in Ezra 7 that Ezra was also a man whom God blessed, even though he may not be as well known to us. After studying 6 chapters in the Book of Ezra we finally are introduced to him here in chapter 7.

Understand that there is a 57-58 year gap between the events in chapters 6 and 7. The temple had been rebuilt under the ministries of Zerubbabel and Jeshua, aided by the preaching of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah.

Those who had returned to Israel during that first wave were either dead or very old by now. They had settled into the land and many of them had begun to just blend together with the pagans of the land.

The walls of Jerusalem still had not been rebuilt at this juncture, which left the city vulnerable to attack. So, God raised up Ezra and later we will see he raised up Nehemiah to bring spiritual reform to His people.

Both men were born in Babylon and had close connections with King Artaxerxes. No doubt they both enjoyed comfortable living conditions there.

But we will see that both Ezra and Nehemiah were burdened about the spiritual condition of the people that had returned to the land.

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We will see that both of them were willing to give up their comfortable situations in Babylon and endure hardships and problems to bring about change to God's people.

But when we look at the overwhelming nature of what these men set out to do, we might wonder how could they ever accomplish this?

The answer of course occurs in a phrase that first occurs three times in our chapter, and then five times in the rest of Ezra and Nehemiah: **it was by God's hand was on these men!** (*Ezra 7:6, 9, 28; 8:18, 22, 31; Nehemiah 2:8, 18*)

"*God's hand*" or "*God's good hand*" is another way of saying "*God's providential blessing.*" God blessed both of these men and blessed their labors for Him! There are some principles that we find here that can be beneficial to us if we want God's blessing or God's hand to rest on us!

**I. THE LORD'S HAND OF BLESSING CAME ON EZRA AS HE PREPARED HIS HEART!**

There are admonitions and examples in Scripture about **the need to prepare our hearts:**

One example can be found early in the ministry of the Prophet Samuel, when the ark of God had been taken by the Philistines because of Israel's sin and the sins of Eli and his sons.

The LORD plagued the Philistines and every place they took the ark, so they asked the men of Kirjathjearim (a city of the Gibeonites) to come up and get it...it stayed there for 20 long years. Scripture says that "*...all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD*"

*1 Samuel 7:3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, **and prepare your hearts unto the LORD**, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.*

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In 2 Chronicles 12:14 we see another example—a negative example—as we are told that Solomon’s son Rehoboam... “...*did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.*”

**But Ezra Prepared His Heart:**

**A. Ezra Prepared His Heart To Seek The Law Of The Lord!  
(Vs 10; Cf. Vs 6)**

To have God’s hand of blessing on us, we **MUST** seek God’s Word. (i.e. Study His Word!)

*Psalm 1:1-3 1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

*2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

**B. Ezra Prepared In Order To Obey God’s Word!**

*Matthew 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:*

*Matthew 7:26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:*

**C. Ezra Prepared In Order To Teach God’s Word To Others!**

To have God’s hand of blessing on us, we must prepare ourselves by first seeking and then obeying His Word, with a view to teaching others! **(1 Timothy 4:6, 11-16)**

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The connection between Ezra and God’s Word is repeated no less than eight times! **(7:6, 10, 11, 12, 14, 21, 25, and 26)**

There is a definite correlation between our commitment to know and obey God’s Word and His hand of blessing being upon us!

**II. SO HOW SHOULD WE APPLY THIS IN OUR OWN LIVES?**

**A. All Of Us Should Seek The LORD’s Blessing On Our Lives Above All Else!**

**1. Understand That The LORD’s Blessing Is The Only Blessing That Counts Both Now And In Eternity!**

God’s blessing doesn’t guarantee a trouble free life. But even in the midst of troubles and trials we can sense both God’s presence and help!

The world’s blessings promise happiness but deliver ultimate emptiness and pain.

Yet most people, and sadly, even many professing Christians, live for the world’s blessings.

If you gain and die with the world’s blessings, but lack God’s blessing, what do you have? You are poor indeed!

But, if you live and die with God’s blessings, even though you lack what the world calls “*blessing*,” you are truly blessed!

**2. Understand That The LORD’s Blessing Flows Through Family Lines.**

Verses 1-5 trace Ezra’s family lineage back through 16 forefathers to Aaron the chief priest, brother of Moses.

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The point of the genealogy is to show that Ezra was qualified as a priest to teach God's law.

You may be thinking: *"If God's blessing flows through family lines, that's not fair! What if I came from a godless family? What hope is there for me to experience God's blessing?"*

Listen, we should never ask God to be fair with us! We all need God's grace and mercy, not fairness.

But, understand that there is great hope for any of us, because we can be the start of a long heritage of God's blessing on our children and grandchildren.

We can't do anything about our relatives who came before us, but we can do some things that will positively affect those that come after us!

***Psalm 128:1-6***

No matter how bad of a family we had before us, if we will follow the LORD, we can have God's blessing and in our obedience to the LORD we can also be the source of great blessing to our children and grandchildren, perhaps for many generations.

This genealogy should also serve as a warning to us who have been blessed with godly parents.

Aaron had some sons who were consecrated as priests, but they did not obey the LORD and He struck them dead with fire from heaven! (Lev. 10:1-3)

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Aaron also had a grandson, Phinehas (Ezra 7:5), who took bold action for God so that a plague was stopped among the Israelites. Israel had fallen for the plot of Balaam, who counseled the Midianite king to seduce Israel into idolatry through intermarriage. An Israelite man brazenly had brought a Midianite woman into his tent in the sight of all Israel. Phinehas took a spear, went into the tent, and pierced them both through, while they were in the act of immorality!

As a result of Phinehas' bold action, the Lord told Moses that He was giving to Phinehas His covenant of peace, and then added, *Numbers 25:13 And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.*

So Phinehas' bold obedience resulted in blessing on his descendants for hundreds of years, right down to Ezra!

The lesson for us who have godly parents is, we can either disobey the Lord and deprive our descendants of God's blessing, or we can be bold in obeying the Lord and bring His blessing on our descendants.

But the point stands in Scripture, that God's blessing flows through family lines. We never obey or sin in isolation. That should motivate us to follow the Lord!

**3. Understand That The LORD's Blessing Refers To Him Doing Above And Beyond What Human Effort Can Produce Or Expect.**

Look at ***John 6:5-6*** for an example.

The disciples didn't have sufficient resources to even give the crowd just a little to eat.

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But we see that Jesus could do far beyond what human calculations and effort could ever hope to do.

The result is found in *John 6:11-13*.

God's hand of blessing on Ezra is seen in that this pagan king "*granted him all his request*" (7:6).

The king's grant is stated in the letter that he gave to Ezra (7:12-26, written in Aramaic).