

Trusting in God's Protection

Ezra 8:21-32

Ezra: The Leader

- Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.
- Ezra 7:6 this Ezra came up from Babylon. He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the Lord, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the Lord his God was on him.

Humility: Fasting & Praying

- Ezra 8:15 I assembled them at the canal that flows toward Ahava, and we camped there three days. When I checked among the people and the priests, I found no Levites there.
- Ezra 8:18-20 Because the gracious hand of our God was on us, they brought us Sherebiah, a capable man, from the descendants of Mahli son of Levi, the son of Israel, and Sherebiah's sons and brothers, 18 in all; ¹⁹ and Hashabiah, together with Jeshaiiah from the descendants of Merari, and his brothers and nephews, 20 in all. ²⁰ They also brought 220 of the temple servants—a body that David and the officials had established to assist the Levites. All were registered by name.

Humility: Fasting & Praying

Ezra 8:21-23 There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions. ²² I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, “The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him.” ²³ So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.

- Key Phrase: So that we might humble ourselves before our God
- Humility: Bedrock of prayer- leads to greater dependence upon God

Ezra 8:24-30

²⁴ Then I set apart twelve of the leading priests, namely, Sherebiah, Hashabiah and ten of their brothers, ²⁵ and I weighed out to them the offering of silver and gold and the articles that the king, his advisers, his officials and all Israel present there had donated for the house of our God. ²⁶ I weighed out to them 650 talents of silver, silver articles weighing 100 talents, 100 talents of gold, ²⁷ 20 bowls of gold valued at 1,000 darics, and two fine articles of polished bronze, as precious as gold. ²⁸ I said to them, “You as well as these articles are consecrated to the Lord. The silver and gold are a freewill offering to the Lord, the God of your ancestors. ²⁹ Guard them carefully until you weigh them out in the chambers of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem before the leading priests and the Levites and the family heads of Israel.”³⁰ Then the priests and Levites received the silver and gold and sacred articles that had been weighed out to be taken to the house of our God in Jerusalem.

The Journey: Ezra's Great Visual Aid

- Ezra 8:31-32 On the twelfth day of the first month we set out from the Ahava Canal to go to Jerusalem. The hand of our God was on us, and he protected us from enemies and bandits along the way. ³² So we arrived in Jerusalem, where we rested three days.
- Why such silence about this journey? Because there are lessons about prayer and obedience before the journey—which if they follow them—the journey becomes a mere formality—they are under God's mighty hand.
- Ezra had to demonstrate to those traveling companions and those already in Jerusalem that living under God's law works—the journey then is his great visual aid. If you obey God's word, His gracious hand is upon them. (Rico Tice)

The Gracious Hand Of God

- Grace: The fundamental disposition of God's heart toward his people
- How do we remind ourselves that we live under the gracious hand of God?
 1. Ensure you are located in the midst of God's people
 2. Notice God's protection in your life- Even in the small ways
 3. Spend time with the Lord (ex. Fasting, prayer, meditation, solitude, reading Scripture)