Ezra Prepared His Heart

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday December 31st, 2017

Text: Ezra 7:8-10

### Intro

1. II Tim. 2:20-21: We choose if we want to be used for good (honor) by God!
	1. We need to choose to be a “vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work!”
2. In the first year of Cyrus’ reign, he decreed the Jewish captives were free to return to their land and rebuild the temple! *(Ezra 1 – after their 70 years in exile from Jer. 29:10)*
	1. In (approx.) 538-536 B.C. the first exiles returned to Jerusalem.
3. Ezra did not return with the first exiles but about 80 or 78 years later in 458 B.C.
4. Ezra 7:8-10: Ezra’s heart was prepared for the work of the Lord!
5. Ezra may not have been one of the first of his people to return to Jerusalem but when he did his heart was well prepared!

# Ezra Prepared to *Seek* the Law of God

* 1. Ezra 7:10: “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord…” (NKJV)
	2. To “seek” is to “study” (NASB) the law for the purpose of knowing and understanding the will of God.
		1. God’s people were destroyed for lack of knowledge – Hos. 4:6
			1. They had rejected the law of God; no longer were “seeking” it.
		2. Before Jerusalem was destroyed God through Jeremiah said the people had forgotten Him – Jer. 2:32
		3. Ezra was determined to not repeat the mistakes of the past!
	3. Before one can serve the Lord, the heart must be prepared!
		1. *Eccl. 12:1:* Youths are reminded to remember God, their Creator.
		2. *Eph. 6:4:* Parents have a responsibility to train up their children knowing God.
		3. *II Tim. 1:5:* Timothy learned faith from his mother and grandmother!
		4. *Acts 10:32-33; 13:6-7:* Cornelius sent for Peter & Sergius Paulus sent for Paul!
	4. Christians today need to “prepare” our hearts to study the word of God!
		1. *II Pet. 3:18:* Child of God must “grow” in the knowledge of Christ.
		2. *Acts 17:11:* Be noble-minded as the Bereans who searched the Scriptures daily.
		3. *II Tim. 2:15:* Must study to know how to “rightly divide the word of God!”
		4. *Heb. 11:6:* God rewards those who diligently seek Him!
	5. Ezra was prepared to do what was necessary to know the will of God!

# Ezra Prepared to *Obey* the Law of God

* 1. Ezra 7:10: “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it…” (NKJV)
		1. Ezra was a priest and scribe and would have needed to know the law of God (Ezra 7:1-6, 12).
		2. Hearing and understanding the word of God is one thing, but quite another to actually obey it!
		3. It’s not enough to just know the law of God; Ezra was prepared to *do it!*
	2. There are those who hear it and are not prepared to do it (Obey it)!
		1. *Mt. 7:21-23:* Condemnation falls on those who do not obey the word of God!
		2. *Jn. 12:48:* Those who reject words of Jesus will be judged!
		3. Js. 1:22-25: Those who hear and do not obey are like those who forget what they see in the mirror!
	3. Christians today must be prepared to hear and obey the word of God!
		1. Js. 1:21-22: The child of God is one who both *hears* and *does* the will of God!
		2. Study of God’s word is not just memorization of facts and stories, but application to our hearts and lives.
		3. *Rom. 6:16-18:* We become slaves of righteousness when we obey from the heart!
		4. *Heb. 5:9:* Christ saves those who obey Him! *(Acts 10:47-48: Cornelius obeyed)*
		5. *Jn. 13:17:* After teaching His disciples to be servants Jesus said, “If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.”
	4. Ezra was prepared to obey what he had learned through study in God’s word!

# Ezra Prepared to *Teach* the Law of God

* 1. Ezra 7:10: “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.” (NKJV)
		1. Ezra recognized the need for others to know and obey the word of God.
	2. Ezra knew it (Ezra 7:11-12), was prepared to obey it, and was prepared to teach it to the people so that they would not be ignorant (Hos. 4:6).
		1. Ezra was involved in teaching (7:10) and was a “scribe skilled in the law of Moses.” (7:6)
		2. Ezra was “learned (NKJ: “expert”) in the words of the commandments of the LORD and His statutes to Israel.” (7:11)
		3. Ezra was given the charge to “appoint magistrates and judges that they may judge all the people” and teach the ignorant! (7:25)
		4. To serve God, one must be taught and ready to obey!
	3. Christians today need to be prepared to teach!
		1. *II Tim. 2:2:* Paul told Timothy he must be able to teach, and those he taught must also be ready to teach! (Perhaps first “chain-letter”: Keep it going!)
		2. *I Tim. 3:2:* Elders are to be “able to teach.”
		3. *II Tim. 2:24:* Saints (bond-servants) are to be “able to teach.”
		4. A faithful child of God will not be content to know and obey God’s word himself, but also see the need to teach others *(Mt. 28:19; II Tim. 2:24).*
		5. *Heb. 5:12-14: The Hebrews’ audience was unacceptable because they should have been teachers and were not!*
	4. Ezra was prepared to teach the law of God to those who would listen!

##### Conclusion

1. Before leaving for Jerusalem, Ezra had a prepared heart to:
	1. Study
	2. Obey
	3. Teach
2. He serves as an example for Christians today:
	1. We need to have a prepared heart for the work of the Lord in the same manner.
	2. II Tim. 2:21: We choose if we will be a useful vessel of honor, “prepared for every good work!”
	3. If our hearts are truly prepared we will live it! *(The law of the Lord will be in our hearts!)*
3. Ezra was prepared!
4. Are you?
5. Let us prepare our hearts to seek the law of the Lord and show the word of God to others!
6. If you are not a Christian, now is the time to obey the gospel. Repent & be baptized!
7. If a Christian not living as you should, make the needed corrections! Repent and be renewed.
8. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!