

# A RIGHT WAY FOR US AND OUR LITTLE ONES EZRA 8

Text: Ezra 8:21

## **Ezra 8:21**

<sup>21</sup> Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

Introduction:

The book of Ezra deals with the return of the remnant which returned to Jerusalem and Judah from their captivity in Babylon.

The number of those returning is found in Ezra 2:64-65.

## **Ezra 2:64-65**

<sup>64</sup> The whole congregation together *was* forty and two thousand three hundred *and* threescore, <sup>65</sup> Beside their servants and their maids, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and *there were* among them two hundred singing men and singing women.

Now the problem is that many of these people were comfortable in Babylon and were quiet satisfied to live and die there.

While there in captivity they had followed Jeremiah's counsel to be good citizens and live normal lives.

**Jeremiah 29:1**

<sup>1</sup> Now these *are* the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon;

**Jeremiah 29:4-7**

<sup>4</sup> Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon; <sup>5</sup> Build ye houses, and dwell *in them*; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; <sup>6</sup> Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. <sup>7</sup> And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.

Over the decades the old generation had died and a new generation had risen that had never seen Jerusalem or the Temple and probably had little interest in the welfare of their fellow people laboring there.

Ezra realized that if this trip was going to be successful that they must have the Hand of God upon them. And Ezra gathers them together to seek the Lord for their Families.

Notice what God did:

# **1. HE RAISED A GODLY LEADER (EZRA 7:1-6, 10)**

## **Ezra 7:1-6**

<sup>1</sup> Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, <sup>2</sup> The son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, <sup>3</sup> The son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, <sup>4</sup> The son of Zerariah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, <sup>5</sup> The son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest: <sup>6</sup> 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.

## **Ezra 7:10**

<sup>10</sup> For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

A. His ancestry (vs. 1-5)

B. His ability (vs. 10)

# **2. HE DIRECTED A PAGAN RULER (EZRA 7:11-28)**

God moved in heart of the king to permit His people to return to their land. After hearing Ezra's request the king took several steps in this undertaking.

## A. Authorization (7:11-12, 25-26)

### **Ezra 7:11-12**

<sup>11</sup> Now this *is* the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, *even* a scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel. <sup>12</sup> Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect *peace*, and at such a time.

### **Ezra 7:25-26**

<sup>25</sup> And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that *is* in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that *are* beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know *them* not. <sup>26</sup> And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether *it be* unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

## B. Liberation (7:13-14)

### **Ezra 7:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and *of* his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee. <sup>14</sup> Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counsellors, to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which *is* in thine hand;

## C. Compensation (7:15-26)

### **Ezra 7:15-26**

<sup>15</sup> And to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation *is* in Jerusalem, <sup>16</sup> And all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the freewill offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for

the house of their God which *is* in Jerusalem: <sup>17</sup> That thou mayest buy speedily with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which *is* in Jerusalem. <sup>18</sup> And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do after the will of your God. <sup>19</sup> The vessels also that are given thee for the service of the house of thy God, *those* deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem. <sup>20</sup> And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow *it* out of the king's treasure house. <sup>21</sup> And I, *even* I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which *are* beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily, <sup>22</sup> Unto an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing *how much*. <sup>23</sup> Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? <sup>24</sup> Also we certify you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them. <sup>25</sup> And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that *is* in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that *are* beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know *them* not. <sup>26</sup> And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether *it be* unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

### **3. HE GATHERED A WILLING REMNANT (8:1-30)**

#### **A. Recruiting (8:1-20)**

Ezra gathered the leaders of the families knowing that they could influence their relatives to return back to Jerusalem.

#### **B. Trusting (8:21-23)**

##### **Ezra 8:21-23**

<sup>21</sup> Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. <sup>22</sup> For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God *is* upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath *is* against all them that forsake him. <sup>23</sup> So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.

Ezra understood in order to be successful in returning back home that God's hand needed to be on them. So Ezra called for them to fast and pray for God to protect them and direct them in the right way.

He could have asked for an armed escort but he felt that would dishonor the Lord since he had already told the king that God's hand was upon him so how could he now ask for human help.

Close:

## Lessons

1. There are many today who have never seen the great work of God. They are content with the norm.
2. We must seek the Lord for a right direction for us and our little one and our substance.
3. We should be willing to give the Lord our substance for His Word as He leads us.
4. We should use the influence that God has given us to encourage others to follow the Lord.
5. God can direct even the pagan to assist in getting the job done.