

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Scripture text: **Ezra 7:6-10**. From Roy H. Enoch (adapted).

This Ezra went up from Babylon, and he was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all he requested because the hand of the LORD his God *was* upon him. [7] And some of the sons of Israel and some of the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. [8] And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. [9] For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his God *was* upon him. [10] For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice *it*, and to teach *His* statutes and ordinances in Israel.

B. Ezra was a priest and scribe who led a spiritual reformation in Jerusalem after the captivity.

1. He was the grandson of Hilkiah, the high priest of Josiah's day.
2. He was a SCRIBE, who was a student, interpreter, and teacher of the Law.
3. He was born and raised in Babylon, and held in high esteem by the Persian rulers.
4. He was a humble, devoted servant of God who was a powerful leader.
5. He is often ranked next to Moses as a sacred historian and religious leader:
 - a. Many Bible scholars credit Ezra with writing the books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and possibly Esther.
 - b. He is thought to be the originator of the Jewish Synagogue worship.
 - c. He is given credit for establishing the Sanhedrin court of Jerusalem.
 - d. The Jews also credit him with settling the canon of the OT Scriptures.
6. He established the grand plan for teaching all of Israel the Law described in Neh. 8:1-8.

C. In this lesson we focus on Ezra's dedication and preparation for the leadership and teaching of the nation (7:10).

For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice *it*, and to teach *His* statutes and ordinances in Israel.

D. As Xians, we are to prepare our hearts:

1. We are to have a pure heart (Mt. 5:8).
"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
2. Love not the things of the world (1Jn. 2:15).
Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
3. Your treasure will determine your heart (Mt. 6:21).
for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
4. Beware of a sinful, unbelieving heart (Heb. 3:12).
Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.

II. EZRA PREPARED HIS HEART TO SEEK THE LAW OF THE LORD.

A. We must realize that preparation must begin in the heart.

1. One may gain a knowledge of the facts, and memorize large amounts of Scripture without being qualified to teach.
2. If one does not have the love for God's will and a desire to please God, he is not ready to teach.

B. As Xians we are to love the word of God:

1. Good and honest hearts (Lk. 8:15).
"And the *seed* in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.
2. Receive the word with eagerness (Ac. 17:11).
Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, *to see* whether these things were so.

3. Is the word powerful or foolishness (1Cor. 1:18).
For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
4. Are we longing for the word? (1Pet. 2:2).
like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

III. EZRA PREPARED HIS HEART TO PRACTICE THE LAW OF THE LORD.

- A. Teaching begins with practice and application of what we study. If there is not the love for God to practice His will, there is not the love to teach it.
- B. As Xians we must be doers of the word:
 1. Not just hearer's only (Jas. 1:22,23).
But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. [23] For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;
 2. We dishonor the word by not obeying it (Ti. 2:5).
to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.
 3. Do all in the name (by the word) of God (Col. 3:17).
And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.
 4. Jesus will punish the disobedient (2Th. 1:7,8).
and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, [8] dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

IV. EZRA PREPARED HIS HEART TO BE AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER.

- A. One of the most important characteristics of a religious teacher is *a genuine deep sincerity for people and God's will.*
- B. The people of his day were fluent in Aramaic and the OT was written primarily in Hebrew, so Neh. 8:8.
And they read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.
- C. As Xians we are to be teachers of God's word:
 1. Teach so that others can teach too (2Tim. 2:2).
And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.
 2. As we mature, that growth should involve teaching (Heb. 5:12-14).
*For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. [13] For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. [14] But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.*
 3. Teach the lost and teach the saved (Mt. 28:19,20).
"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
 4. Teach righteous living (1Tim. 4:11,12).
*Prescribe and teach these things. [12] Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.*

V. CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Ezra was a good man because he had his heart in the right place.
- B. My question to you today is, "Where is your heart?"
- C. Is your heart right before God? Are you seeking the law, practicing the law, and teaching the law.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.