

Ezra Prepared His Heart

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*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.” – Ezra 7:10, NKJV*

Introduction: The Great Example of Ezra.

A. We find a great example of faith and commitment in the priest, scribe, and man of God named Ezra.

1. The period of the book of Ezra spans the years from 536 to 433 B.C., following the captivity of Judah by the people of Babylon (606-536 B.C.).
2. In Ezra 1-6, the first group of Jews was led back to their home land by Zerubbabel who also exercised leadership in the rebuilding of the temple.
3. Beginning in Ezra chapter 7 in 458 B.C., the second group of Jews was led home by Ezra and *a great spiritual renewal* occurred.

B. When we look to the example of Ezra, we discover a great man of God!

1. Ezra *wholly devoted* his heart and his life, to *not only* know the law of God, but to practice it himself and then teach others the law of God.
2. Ezra demonstrates to us what a genuine servant of God is and we would do well to imitate his example!

I. Ezra Had “Prepared His Heart” for God (Ezra 7:10).

A. Preparing your heart

1. “Prepared” [Hebrew - KUWN]: “to be prepared, to be firmly established, to set up, to be fixed or steadfast, to be securely determined” – Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon
2. When you prepare your heart, you firmly establish or determine within yourself that you are going to do something!
3. When one “prepares” his / her heart, that person has firmly made a decision and is determined to see that decision through.
4. For spiritual success and victory, preparing the heart is a must!
(**1 Sam. 7:3; 2 Chron. 12:13-14; 19:3**).

B. Ezra prepared his heart to serve the Lord! (**Ezra 7:10**).

1. To seek the Law of the Lord.
2. To do the Law of the Lord.
3. And to teach the Law of the Lord.

II. Ezra Had Prepared His Heart to Seek the Law of the Lord.

A. Seeking the Law of the Lord.

1. “Seek” [Hebrew - DARASH] “to seek with care, inquire, to investigate, to study, to seek with application.” – Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon
2. To seek God’s law is to study and examine His word with all diligence with the earnest desire to understand the will of the Lord.

B. Ezra studied the law of the Lord diligently!

1. He was a “skilled scribe” (**Ezra 7:6**) - an “expert in the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of His statutes to Israel” (**Ezra 7:11**).

2. King Artaxerxes declared he had "*God-given wisdom*" (**Ezra 7:25**).
3. We can have "God-given wisdom" when we *purpose* ourselves to the diligent study of God's word (**2 Tim. 2:15; Prov. 2:1-6; e.g., Acts 17:11**).

III. Ezra Had Prepared His Heart to Do the Law of the Lord.

- A. Ezra was a doer of God's will.
 1. He prepared his heart to not only seek the Law, but *to do it!* (**Ps. 40:8**).
 2. He used his knowledge of the Law and courageously requests to the king on behalf of God's people (**Ezra 7:6b**).
 3. Ezra, without delay, obeyed God's will by gathering the second group of Jews and leading them home (**Ezra 7:28b**).
 4. Ezra was a man who fasted and prayed, a man with humility who mourned over the sins of others (**Ezra 9:5-6; 10:1**).
- B. We also must act on God's word!
 1. Beyond Bible drills, memorization, and the obtaining of knowledge, we must take it a step further and *act* on God's word.
 2. Like Ezra, we must prepare our hearts "to do" the word of God (**James 1:22-25**).
 3. Once we have learned something from God's word it is our duty to do it! (e.g., confession, Bible study, evangelism, love, patience, encourage).
 4. Blessings come from God when we hear *and* obey God's word (**Luke 11:28; John 13:17**).

IV. Ezra Had Prepared His Heart to Teach the People God's word.

- A. Ezra taught the people the statutes and ordinances of God (**Ezra 7:10; e.g., Ezra 8:21-23**).
 1. Ezra taught the people a great lesson about the value of fasting and prayer as well as lessons in humility and trusting in God.
 2. Due to Ezra's good example and leadership, the people responded to his teachings (**Ezra 10:10-12**).
- B. We are to pass on to others what we know of God's will.
 1. We must be committed to teach one another- that is *our own brethren* the word of the Lord (e.g., **Acts 20:20, 27**).
 2. Like Ezra and Paul, we must not be timid, shrink back or hesitate to teach one another God's word (cf. **1 Thes. 5:14; 2 Tim. 2:24-26**).
 3. We must also "prepare our hearts" or focus our minds and determine to present the Gospel to a lost and dying world (**Mark 16:15**).

Conclusion: May Every Child of God Prepare His or Her Heart for the Lord!