

Ezra 7:1-10

We are well into the book of Ezra, but, as yet, there has been no mention of him. From this point onward, however, Ezra is a prominent figure both in this book and the book of Nehemiah.

Summary

In Ezra 7:1-10, almost sixty years after the second temple's dedication, Ezra and a group of priests, Levites, temple gatekeepers, singers, and servants return to Jerusalem.

1. Ezra's Entrance vv. 1-5; 7-10

Not all the exiled Jews returned either in the initial return or during the decades that followed when the temple was being rebuilt. Ezra and another company of priests and Levites and temple servants set out from Babylon on April 8, 458 BC, arriving in Jerusalem four months later on Aug 4, (**Ezra 7:1-5; 7-9**).

Ezra seemingly had a burden for his fellow Jews in Jerusalem. There may have been a temple in Jerusalem, but the Jews were in danger of repeating the sins of presumption, formality, and neglect of God's Word.

These fifth century Jews in Jerusalem were neglecting the Scriptures and needed a preacher, who would proclaim the Word of God.

For this urgent task, God raised up Ezra (**Ezra 7:10**). It is still an urgent need today.

2. Impressive Credentials vv. 1-6

The first thing we see about Ezra is that he was an important priest. The genealogy in **vv. 1-5**, provides Ezra with credentials as he was probably wholly unknown in Jerusalem. The genealogy is not complete but it traces Ezra through the important line of Zadok back to Aaron. Not since the preaching of Zechariah and Haggai had they heard such a preacher. Ezra had the authority of King Artaxerxes for his work (**Ezra 7:6**), placing him on a par with the leaders of the initial return, Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, who had the authority of King Cyrus (**cf. 1:8; 2:1**).

Preachers today have the commission and authority of Christ, the king of kings.

Ezra was also a skilled "scribe" or "teacher" (**Ezra 7:6; cf. Neh. 8:1, 4**). He was "skilled in the Law of Moses that the LORD, the God of Israel, had given" (**7:6**).

Ezra was also a man of courageous faith like Nehemiah (**Ezra 7:6; cf (Neh 2:1-8)**.

3. Model Reformer vv. 6, 9-10

Ezra was also a model reformer (**Ezra 7:6; 9**). **Verse 10** explains why God's hand was upon Ezra: "For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD." Ezra had a heart after God. His love was for God's Word and God's ways, not his own.

He had spent years in the study of the Scriptures and was now eager to teach what he had come to understand. His heart's desire, however, was both to "do it and to teach" (**c.f. James 1:23, 25; Acts 20:28; 2 Tim. 2:15**). Ezra is deeply affected by the teaching of Scripture as he encounters the ungodliness of the people of Jerusalem.

Ezra came to challenge and condemn religion that is mere formality. He came to call the people of God back to heart-religion, in which obedience to detail is not seen as something legalistic and irksome.

4. Paramount Advent

For all the impressive credentials of Ezra and all that the Lord would do through him, he could not himself accomplish the great work that only the promised Messiah could do in saving His people from their sins and conforming them to the image of the Son of God. Though these people witnessed Ezra enter the stage and benefited from his role in redemptive history, they still awaited the entrance of the most important character in God's drama (**Gal 4:4-5**).

Ezra was a great preacher and teacher, but he was not like Christ, who is the great prophet par excellence (**Matt. 7:28; Mark 1:14**)

Q. How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executes the office of prophet in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation (**John 1:18; 2 Pet. 1:10, 11, 12; John 15:15; and 20:31**).

Ezra was an important priest, but he was not the great High Priest, Jesus Christ (**Heb. 7:23-28**).

Q. How does Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executes the office of priest in his once offering up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice (**Heb. 9:14, 28**) and reconcile us to God (**Heb. 2:17**), and in making continual intercession for us (**Heb. 6:24, 25**).

Ezra was a great reformer but he was no king. Christ is the king of kings (**Rev. 1:4-5; Rev. 17:14**).

Q. How does Christ execute the office of king?

A. Christ executes the office of a king, in subduing us to himself (**Acts 15:14, 15, 16**), in ruling (**Isa. 33:22**), and defending us (**Isa. 32:1, 2**), and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies (**1 Cor. 15:25; Ps. 110**).