"Will You Be Like Ezra?: Ezra 7:1-28; 1 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4

Read Jas. 1:13-25 (1)

INTRO:

A. World's Attitude Toward Teachers:

1-"Them that can, DOES.
Them that thinks they can, preaches.
Them that can't.....TEACHES."

2-Contrary to Gdd's evaluation

3-Evaluation of history (H. A. Ironside,)

"Who that lived in those olden days would have supposed that in the course of the centuries the name and achievements of ARTAXERXES would be almost unknown by millions to whom EZRA's name and work would be as familiar as if he had lived but yesterday. There are many such contrasts in the Word of God. AHASUERUS is not even certainly identified today, but MORDECAI is known wherever the Word of God has been carried. The PHAROAH of the Exodus has been supposed to be one of a half dozen different monarchs, but no one makes a mistake as to MOSES. GAMALIEL is remembered only as the teacher of the devoted Apostle PAUL and because of his moderation in treating the despised Nazarenes. And so with many more.

"FAR BETTER is it to be a child of God and to walk with Him than to wear earth's proudest diadem or have the widest reputation among carnal men.

4-TEACHERS mold men.....who.....move the world!! Influential!!

Read Ezra 7:1-10

B. Case History Of Ezra The Man:

1-Lineage of a High Priest
--Traced back to Phinehas (Num. 25:1-13; Ps. 106:30-31)
--Traced back to Aaron, the first High Priest
-Ranking priest in Babylon among captive Jews

2-Testimony Of Ezra:
-BEFORE GOD ** "A ready scribe in the law of Moses"(7:6)
** 6 times said that the providential hand of God was upon him (7:6,9,28; 8:18,22,31)
-BEFORE KING
** Had the King's full trust
** FREE HAND given to Ezra
** Gained all he requested from the King;
** Trusted with the King's purse
** Trusted to lead a rebellious people
-BEFORE PEOPLE ** They freely followed him (7:13)
** They freely gave for the work God called them to do (7:15-16)
** They heard the Word thru Ezra (Neh.8)
** They responded to his prayer (Ez.9)
** They faced the challenge of separation thru him & did God's will (Ez. 10)

3-TIME of Ezra's service:
--Captivity in Babylon after the victory of the Medo-Persians over Babylonians
--Ezra 7:1 indicates 458 B.C.---58 years after Ezra 1-6 wherein Zerubbabel & Jeshua led the 1st party of return.

--Time of Spiritual declension
--Moral entanglements
--APOSTASY seen by fact that only SOME went out of Babylon with him in the return to Jerusalem 50,000 Total who returned to Jerus.

4-SCRIBE as well as PRIEST:
--Ezra 7:6, 11
--Wrote Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, Perhaps Esther & perhaps Psalm 119; A lasting legacy!!
--Compiler of the Canon of Scripture up to his time
5-Man of decisive measures---Ezra 7:10---KEY VERSE
6-PROP: Let us learn OF Ezra so we can learn FROM Ezra and follow the same priorities for ourselves

I.-PREPARATION---A MATTER OF THE HEART
"For Ezra had prepared his heart..." SALVATION:

A.-Recognition Of Need:
1-Born in the nation of Israel was NOT ENOUGH
2-Born in the tribe of Levi was NOT ENOUGH
3-Born in the family of AARON was NOT ENOUGH
4-Born the son of the High Priest was NOT ENOUGH
5-Must be "born again" ....for yourself - Personally
6-ILLUS--To be born in a garage doesn't make you a car
--To be born in an oven doesn't make you a bisquit
--To be born in a home of believing parents doesn't make you right with God
--You must be BORN AGAIN
** YOU, personally
** Tit. 2:14--"for us" "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity"
** Gal. 2:20--"For me" "Who loved me & gave Himself for me."
Relationship with God
7-Salvation was the FIRST ISSUE for Ezra
8-Until this is settled, don't worry about other issues
9-They could be settled & you'd still be lost;
They could be all settled & you'd not be one inch closer to heaven
10-ILLUS--The Bible did not come to us as a book of drama or as a treatise on science. It was not provided in order to supply us with an authentic record of the birth of nations. God gave this written revelation for one purpose only. This purpose is interwoven into all its drama, its science, its poetry, and its history.

This design is none other than the salvation of mankind from sin thru faith in the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the SCARLET THREAD that binds 66 volumes into one Book. Take it away and the Bible is without theme or purpose. Cut this crimson thread of redemption and its pages will fall apart. Look at the Bible from any angle and you will see CHRIST in it. Put its pages under the microscope of faith and you will see the watermark of Him Who came to save His people from their sin.

B.-Fulfillment Of Need:
1-Ezra had prepared his HEART
2-Head being touched is not enough/ Knowing facts is not the same as Receiving the SON.

3-Feelings or emotions stirred is not enough...Like a balloon that is blown up temporarily. When the hot air cools & escapes, there is NO CHANGE

3

4-HEART must be moved--To receive God's Son (Jn. 1:12)
--To accept God's Gift (Eph. 2:8-9)
--To believe w/ all your heart (Acts 8:37)
--To believe in your heart (Rm. 10:9-10)

5-Only pathway to fully pleasing God is through a BELIEVING HEART

6-Contra. Rehoboam--2 Chron. 12:1, 14

"And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the Kingdom, & had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him."

"And he did evil because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD."

C. Follow-Through After Salvation:

Growth in Grace; PROGRESS

1-Continual cleansing
2-Prayer without ceasing
3-Determined dedication
4-Separated life
5-DIVINE SIDE---------Phil. 1:6
6-HUMAN SIDE----------Phil. 2:12-13

II. DECISION-----A MATTER OF THE WILL "...to seek the law of the LORD..."--DEDICATION:

A. "Seeking" In The Scriptures:

1-Israel told to "seek the Lord while He may be found" Isa. 55:6
2-No Gentile seeks after God--Rom. 3:11
3-Son of Man came to seek & save THE LOST
--Jew and Gentile alike
--Luke 19:10
4-Privilege of a BELIEVER to seek God, His Word & His will--Ezra 7:10
--Ps. 27:8--"When Thou saidest, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek."
--Mt. 6:33 Command of Jesus
5-The seeking soul shall be SATISFIED

B. Seeking By A Believer Requires Definite Decisions:

1-We must "make a move"
--Not in outward appearance
--But in inward action of the WILL
--Have you done this??
--Must be a definite decision; an ACT OF THE WILL
--If you don't know you've done this, then probably you haven't done it

2-STEP ONE--Yielding of your BODY a living sacrifice unto God (Rom. 12:1) A ONE TIME ACT
--Vehicle of living is given over for Christ to live the Abundant life thru you

POS→

3-STEP TWO--Follows step 1; A follow-thru to "yielding"
--"STOP being conformed to this world"
--Don't take your pattern or mold from WORLD
--More than regularity in Church attendance
--That ought to Characterize every believer.

NEG→

4-STEP THREE--Mind renewed thru the Word so that your LIFE IS TRANSFORMED

(4)

POS.

** Ps. 27:4-5--"One thing have I desired of the LORD; that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock."

** Jer. 15:16-17--"Thy words were found & I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy & rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts. I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of Thy hand."

** 2 Tim. 2:15

** Jas. 1:21--"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness & superfluity of naughtiness, & receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."..PRECEEDS..1:22.."But be ye doers of the word, & not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

** Phs. 3:10

** Dan. 1:8--"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself

(1) YIELD BODY

(2) STOP BEING CONFORMED

(3) BE TRANSFORMED

5-DECISION to take these 3 steps is necessary to victory
--Let go....and Let God
--A matter of YIELDING our stubborn, wilful self
--Entering into fellowship, communion & study

6-Ezra SOUGHT the Law of the Lord
--To know its meaning
--To know its practical import
--To discern the Person & work of Christ
--To ascertain its application to life

DEDICATION + INFORMATION

A GOOD EXAMPLE!

--"GET THE FACTS, MAN"
--Where? ** Out of the B O O K!

"Git yerself a Bible and READ it!"

7-Whyte: "All other studies may prosper more or less independently of the state of the student's heart---languages, law, medicine, science, philosophy even,----but not divinity." (P. 214, III)

NB

III. ACTION------A MATTER OF MOVEMENT-------
"...and to do it:"---------APPLICATION:

A. Orthodoxy Vs. Orthopraxy:

Not just enough to KNOW the truth

2-Must also DO the truth

3-
--Jn. 15:14--"Ye are my friends, if ye DO whatsoever I command you."
--2 Jn.6--"And this is love, that we WALK after His commandments.

3-Knowledge alone is COLD; Action is WARM, appealing & compelling

4-Dr. M. R. De Haan: "You can be orthodox without being useful. You can be clear as ice, and just as cold."
5-Jas. 1:22 & 25 follow naturally after Jas. 1:21
6-Must be UP-----and AT IT!!
7-EZRA was!! A man who
8-Are you???---------Will you be from now on?

5 Practical!

B. Reason For "Doing It":

1-Prove your sincerity & truthfulness
2-Mt. 7:20-23 READ --------Proof of REALITY
3-Source of stability, power, & testimony
4-Live in the light of WHOM and WHAT you profess
5-TO SHOW others is better than only TO TELL them
6-2 Cor. 3:2-3--"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts known & read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."
7-ILLUS--Readers Digest some years ago carried this story:

"One morning I watched a couple of cowpuncers going out to bring in a wild steer from his range in the mountains. They took along one of those shaggy little grey donkeys---- A BURRO. Now a big 3 year old steer that's been running loose in the timber is a tough customer to handle, but those cowboys had a technique.

"They got a rope on the steer & then they tied him neck & neck, right up close, to the burro. When they let go that burro had a bad time. The steer threw him all over the place. He banged the burro against trees, rocks & into the bushes. Time after time they both went down, but there was ONE GREAT DIFFERENCE between the burro & the steer.

"That burro had an IDEA! He wanted to go home! No matter how often the steer threw him, every time the burro got to his feet, he took a step nearer the HOME CORRAL. This went on....and on....and on.

"After about a week the burro showed up at ranch headquarters. He had with him the tamest, sorriest looking steer you ever saw.

"If one were expected to point out the moral of this story he might observe that much "BEEF", brains, gifts, or education amount to very little unless there is some worthwhile goal & purpose in charge of the large resources. That burro--lacking much in size & weight----PUT ALL HE HAD into ONE DIRECTION and he kept going homeward.

"As surely as you live, some men & women who have been no bigger, figuratively speaking, than the burro have obtained the purpose of God in their lives because of what energy they had in life being BENT IN ONE DIRECTION....So...

So.....it is **not** so much **your SIZE**, but your eternally **DETERMINED DIRECTION** & steady action which really counts!!

IV. -REPRODUCTION--------MATTER OF CONCERN FOR OTHERS----
"...And to teach in Israel statutes & judgements (7:10d)
"...And teach ye them that know them not" (7:25d)
COMMUNICATION:

A. -W H Y Reproduce By Teaching?:
"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..."
1-**Command** of Christ--ought to be enough--Mt. 28:20
2-**Example** of Christ--Acts 1:1
3-Paul's **plea**--"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren..."
"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and to teach,"
4-**Paul's exhortation**
--2 Tim. 2:2--And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

B. -W H O M To Teach?:
1-The people of God----Israel in Ezra **7:10**---**IN**-reach
2-The ones that know not--Ezra **7:25**d--------**OUT**-reach
3-**BOTH**----and **simultaneously**

C. -P U R P O S E In Teaching?:
1-Others moved in heart to **PREPARE**----S A L V A T I O N
2-Others moved in will to **S E E K**-----DEDICATION
3-Others moved in action to **DO**--------A P P L I C A T I O N
4-Others moved in concern to **T E A C H**---**COMMUNICATION**

D. -What If We Fail To Teach?:
1-Results **in us:**
--Jer. 15:16--"Thy words were found, & I did eat them; & Thy word was unto me the **joy** & **rejoicing** of mine heart:"...becomes...Jer. 20:8-9: "For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence & spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, & a derision daily. Then I said, I **will not make mention** of Him, nor speak any more in His name, But His Word was in mine heart as a burning **fire** shut up in my bones, & I was weary with forbearing, & I could not stay."
"And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the King, let judgment be executed speedily upon him,"
2-**Unbelief** carries **a penalty:**
--Ezra 7:26
--Even an ancient **King understood** this !!
--Can't **Y O U** ??
--Can't **we**??
3-God **won't hold us guiltless** if we fail!
--Ezek. 3:18--"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely died and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at his hand."

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E. HOW To Teach:

1-With real **content**:

--L. S. Chafer--"Give them something to **BELIEVE**"

--ILLUS--An Indian attended services in a Church one Sunday morning. The sermon, without real spiritual food, had been very loud in spots. The Indian --a fine Christian man--was not impressed. When he was asked how he liked the sermon he said:

"**HIGH WIND**, **BIG THUNDER**, BUT, **NO RAIN**."

K.I.S.S.

2-With **simplicity too**

--**Deep** truth in Scripture

--But let our presentation be **understandable**!!

--ILLUS--Once a child accompanied her mother to a preaching service of Dr. **H. A. Ironside's** ministry. The little girl listened with rapt attention to the straight-forward, simple gospel presentation. Upon leaving the Church, the child said to her mother: "MOTHER, I THOUGHT YOU SAID DR. IRONSIDE WAS **A GREAT PREACHER**."

"Yes, darling, he is; but why do you ask?"

"Because I wonder, if he's so great, why is it **I understood everything** he said?"

3-**Scripturally**--2 Tim. 4:1-5

--**Sparing no "SPECIAL INTERESTS"**

--Avoiding dealing with no subjects of importance, but facing them

--Dealing with **eternal verities**

4-With a heart for people..CARING//COMPASSION

CONCLUSION:

A. Recapitulation:

1-Preparation of heart---------**SALVATION**

2-Decision of the will---------**D E D I C A T I O N**

3-Action to do----------**APPLICATION**

4-Concern to teach others------**C O M M U N I C A T I O N**

5-These **4** points summed up in Ezra 7:10

6-AND...**They lead to WORSHIP!!** *

--Ezra 7:27-28

*--**THANKS** rendered to the proper Person

--NOTICE

** Even **such a man** needs **helpers** to **HELP**

** Ezra 7:28

** 1 Sam. 10:26--"And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched."

"...and I gathered together out of Israel, chief men to go up with me."

IMPORTANT!

B. Questions:

1-Are you already a person like Ezra....as seen in 7:10??

2-Will you **BECOME** like Ezra from now on?

3-Will you be like one of those who "**GO UP WITH ME**" to

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stand with & help God's man in your midst?

Your Pastor stands much in need of that kind of a band of supporters for his ministry & Jesus Christ is looking to YOU!

WILL YOU BE ONE OF THEM ??

** 1 Cor. 10:11--"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come."

** Rom. 15:4--"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

APPEAL

5-What is YOUR Response??

--Will you be LIKE EZRA??

--Tell the Lord, as we just now bow our heads and our hearts....Meet HIM now in prayer.

--Prepare your heart now, and through this afternoon for a time of COMMUNION in tonight's service

** By yielding yourbody to Him just now

** By conscious decision of your will.

** JUST NOW !!

"I Have Decided To Follow Jesus" - #376

Westbrae--6/6/65; 8/16/70--#444--"He Lifted Me"
Chinese Camp Counsellors #421--"Hiding In Thee"
Calvary, Columbus 1/18/76 #436--"I Am Resolved"

Vacaville - 6/12/79
Sen Wong - 6/13/79
Aumsville Bethel Bapt. Ch. OR - 6/14/79

Druid Park Blvd. Bible Ch - Augusta, Ga
2nd Baptist - Ravenswood, WV 11/21/76
Mayking Bapt. Ch - 4/17/77
Berchtesgaden - 1977
Emmanuel Bapt, Fayetteville, WV - 6/26/77
Bell Creek Bapt. Ch., Dixie, WV 10/3/78
Mt. Hope Bible Ch. 10/8/78
GUM SPRINGS BAPT CH. 3/28/79
BOOMER BAPT. CH. 3/31/79
Pettus Bapt. Ch., WV. 3/25/79
A.B.C. Married Couples Fellowship 4/13/79
College Ave. Bapt Ch, Modesto 5/29/79
E. Bay Xn H.S. 5/30/79
Vallejo Servicemen + LMS 5/31 - 6/1/79
Grace Bapt. Ch, Paso Robles, CA, 6/6/79
Trinity Bapt., Sunnyvale 6/10/79

10/19/76 AM Lynnwood Bapt. Ch. 6/17/79
12/9/79 - Old Kanawha Bapt. Ch, Pratt, WV
8/5/84 - Grace Fellowship Ch, Ephrata, PA
8/12/84 - Calvary Bapt. Ch., Meadow Bridge, WV.

3/17/85 - Mill Creek Bible Ch., Luray, VA.
10/4/87 - O.K.B.C. - Pratt, WV.
10/21/88 - A.B.C. Chapel
8/20/89 - Lookout Baptist Cho - WV
10/1/89 - Hilltop Bapt. Ch, Crab Orchard, WV
10/30/91 - Limerick Chapel
11/17/91 - Grethel Bapt. Ch, Grethel, Ky
11/24/91 - Farrar Mem. Bapt. Ch, Rand, WV
10/1/95 - Grace Gospel Ch. Beaver, WV.
9/24/95 - Hurricane Bapt. Ch, VA.