

EZRA – FAITHFUL PRIEST AND SCRIBE

Introduction

- 1) **EZRA** is one of the great characters of the Old Testament and a member of the priestly family of Aaron
- 2) He lived and served among the remnant of Israel who had returned from captivity
- 3) His faithfulness and obedience provide an excellent example for God's people today

I) **Priest of God** (Ezra 7:1-6)

- A) Genealogy traced back through the priestly family of Aaron
 - 1) Descendant of Seraiah who was murdered by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs. 25:18-21)
- B) Skilled scribe in the Law of Moses
 - 1) Expert in the words of the commandments of the Lord (Ezra 7:11; a walking Torah!)
- C) Gained the respect and admiration of the Persian king, Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:12, 25)
 - 1) We should shine the light of God before those of the world (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:15)
 - 2) We are a holy priesthood of God's house today, the church (1 Pet. 2:5, 9)
 - a) Jesus is our High Priest whose priesthood is greater than Aaron's (Heb. 7:15-17)

II) **Spiritually Prepared His Heart** (Ezra 7:10)

- A) Ezra demonstrated three great principles of a spiritually prepared heart (7:10)
 - 1) *Seek the Law of the Lord* (study, learn)
 - 2) *Do the will of God* (obedience)
 - 3) *Teach statutes and ordinances* (impart knowledge to others)
- B) Compare Paul's instructions to Timothy (2 Tim. 2:15, 22; 4:2)
- C) Ezra demonstrated a humble heart that was submissive to God's will (Ezra 8:21)
- D) Was involved in teaching others the law of God (Neh. 8:1-6)
 - 1) Unashamed to publicly read, teach, and emphasize the word of God
 - 2) Ezra would not recognize much of what is called "preaching" today, where less and less Scripture is desired and used

III) **Greatly Troubled by Sin and Error** (Ezra 9)

- A) When informed that the people and leaders of Israel had intermarried among the pagan idolatrous peoples of the land, Ezra tore his garment and pulled out the hair of his head and beard (vv. 1-3)
 - 1) Did not ignore the problem or make excuses for violators
 - 2) God had warned against this (Deut. 7:3-4)
 - 3) Serious problems resulted (Neh. 13:23-27)
 - a) Children raised under the influence of evil will be affected
 - b) Homes should not provide a confused message about good and evil
- B) Led the people in confessing their sins and bringing fruits of repentance (Ezra 9-10)
 - 1) Confession (9:5-15 intercessory prayer)
 - 2) Fruits of repentance (10:1-4, 9-12)
 - a) Repentance is empty if it is not preceded by godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10) and followed by fruits worthy of repentance (Lk. 3:8)

Conclusion

Ezra was a strong and faithful priest and leader in Israel in the critical days of the remnant's return to Israel. His godly example, his knowledge and teaching of God's word, and dealing with sin and error continues to be important lessons for us today.