

becoming a trustworthy person. Be a genuine leader. Do right. Leaders lead by example. Use your money wisely. Become financially trustworthy. When given authority, use it wisely, don't abuse it.

The 3rd reason that God's hand was upon Ezra was that ...

3. Ezra was a Thankful Man (v.27-28)

a. He gave thanks to the LORD.

- 1) Blessings in life are not luck. "Lucky" is a word that Christians really should not use. Blessings come from God.
- 2) Praise the LORD! (Ps 68:19) "*Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.*"
- 3) Note what God said to Eli in (1Sam 2:30) "*... them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.*" God honours those who honour and praise Him.

b. He thanked God for putting these things in the kings' heart

- 1) He thanked God for giving him mercy.
- 2) He thanked God for strength to do the work.
 - a) Luke 17 records for us a time when 10 lepers came to Jesus for healing. As He sent them away healed, only one returned to express his thanks.
 - b) (Ps 100:1-5) "*Make a joyful noise unto the LORD ...*"
- 3) Many times God provides blessings and benefits for us and we forget completely to thank Him.

📖 *If you want God's hand upon your life, thank Him for all that He does for you. Honour Him. Love Him. Praise Him. Worship Him. Praise Him in the way you act and dress.*

Conclusion: We have discovered that God's hand was upon Ezra for at least three reasons. 1) He was a **faithful** man. 2) He was a **trustworthy** man. 3) He was a **thankful** man. These are all things that each of us can do. If you know that your life is lacking in one of these areas, confess it to the Lord and then with God's help, make the necessary changes in your life. Changing our character is not easy, but with God's help and determination we can do it.

Song: I Surrender All – 394

Is God's Hand upon You?

8 October 2017 PM – Ezra 7:1-28 – EzNe17 – Scott Childs

Introduction: William Carey is known as the father of modern missions. Leaving a thriving Baptist church in England, this young preacher spent the next 40 years of his life preaching the gospel in India. He was instrumental in translating large portions of the Bible into 34 languages. He had a burning desire to see lost souls come to Christ. How was he able to do this? He had God's hand upon his life.

Ezra also did great things for God because God's hand was upon him (v.6, 9, 28). In other words God's grace and favour was upon Him. He had the blessing and power of God on his life. **Isn't that exactly what you and I need today? Amen! It sure is!**

Transition: This evening I want us to discover why God's hand was upon Ezra so that we may learn how to get God's hand upon our lives.

The 1st reason that God's hand was upon Ezra was that ...

1. Ezra was a Faithful Man (v.1-6)

a. He was faithful to God

- 1) It had been 78 years since Zerubbabel had left Babylon and returned to Jerusalem, and 58 years since the Temple had been completed. Chapter 7 of Ezra now introduces us to the man Ezra. We are not told his age, but either he was a very old man or else he was born after Zerubbabel went back.
- 2) He was a **priest** (v.1-5). He showed that he was related to Aaron.
- 3) He was a **ready scribe** (v.6)
 - a) "Scribes fulfilled various roles before the exile. These included **military officer** (Judg. 5:14; 2 Kings 25:19), **messenger** of the king (2 Kings 18:18), **secretary** to the king (2 Sam. 8:17; 20:25), **clerk**, and **writer** (Jer. 36:26, 32). In the Gospels we have many references to scribes. In Jesus' day they were primarily students and **teachers** of the law. In Ezra's time this specialized function of the scribe was developing. Ezra himself as a scribe and priest was **able to teach the law** (cf. Lev.

10:11; Neh. 8:1-9, 13).” Constable

- b) He was a “*ready*” scribe, one that was quick, prompt, or skilled. He was a disciplined student of the Bible.
- c) His scribal interests were “*in the law of the LORD.*” He was a skilled speaker on the Bible. He was faithful to God.

☞ *Every Christian ought to be a ready scribe of the Bible. (2 Timothy 2:15) "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

b. He was faithful in his devotion to God (v.9-10)

- 1) He *prepared* his heart. What does that mean? The Hebrew word means to make ready, to direct toward.
- 2) This was no accident. He intentionally made his heart ready to serve God. It was a conscious, determined choice. If you follow your fleshly feelings, your heart will not be prepared. You must prepare your heart on your knees in prayer.
 - a) Begin by confessing all known sin. (Ps 139:23-24)
"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
 - b) Once sin is confessed we must prepare our hearts by fully surrendering to the Lord. (Jas 4:7) *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." When I was a boy, we raised calves. When we first got a baby calf and tied it in its stall, it pulled and jerked on the rope causing itself pain. Once it surrendered to the rope, the pain stopped.* You will find that when you surrender to God’s restrictions they will stop causing yourself pain.
- 3) Ezra prepared his heart for a purpose.
 - a) He made ready his heart to *seek* the law of the LORD. He enquired into and studied the Bible.
 - b) He made ready his heart to *do* God’s will.
 - c) He made ready his heart to *teach* God’s statutes (i.e., customs, duties) and judgments (i.e., penalties). We need to know what God wants us to do and also

what will happen if we do not obey.

☞ *God is looking for faithful men and women. Remember what we read recently in (2Chr 16:9) "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him ..." God places His hand upon faithful Christians.*

The 2nd reason that God’s hand was upon Ezra was that ...

2. Ezra was a Trustworthy Man (v.8-9, 11-26)

a. The king trusted him with leadership (v.11-14)

- 1) The king gave permission for Ezra to take anyone who wished back to Jerusalem with him (v.13). This reminds us that God does not force his will on anyone. However, wrong choices miss God’s blessing and often cause pain.
- 2) The king placed Ezra in charge of enquiring of the welfare of Jerusalem and Judah (v.14).
- 3) Ezra made the long journey as the king requested (v.8-9).

b. The king trusted him with valuables (v.15-24)

- 1) Ezra was charged to carry back valuables
- 2) Silver and gold from the king (v.15)
- 3) Offerings from the people (v.16)
- 4) To buy animals from sacrifice (v.17)
- 5) To spend the rest as desired (v.18)
- 6) Vessels for the Temple (v.19)
- 7) The king gave Ezra a generous grant (v.20-23)
 - a) Up to 100 talents of silver (about 4,300 kg)
 - b) Up to 100 measures of wheat (about 22,000 l)
 - c) Up to 100 baths of wine (about 4,000 l)
 - d) Up to 100 baths of oil (about 4,000 l)
 - e) Unlimited amount of salt

c. The king trusted him with authority (v.25-26)

- 1) He gave Ezra full legal authority (v.24-26)
- 2) No taxes were to be levied on ministers (v.24)
- 3) He was to appoint magistrates and judges (v.25)
 - a) He was to enforce both religious and civil law.
 - b) He could punish with death, banishment, confiscation of goods, or imprisonment.

☞ *If you want God’s hand upon your life, you need to work at*