

Ezra Was Embarrassed!

Ezra 8:21-30

Following the captivity, Zerubbabel led the first return to Jerusalem thanks to King Cyrus whose heart the Lord had stirred (*Ezra chapters 1-6*). About eighty years later the second return was led by Ezra, thanks to the gracious help and provision of King Artaxerxes (*Ezra chapters 8-9*). The journey for Ezra and his people was monumental. They had to travel about 900 miles, a trip that would last three or four months. The journey was extremely perilous. Travelers in Bible times would often meet with robbers, and Ezra's group carried with them large amounts of gold, silver and valuable vessels (*Ezra 8:25-30*).

Ezra realized how helpful it would be to have a royal escort of soldiers and horsemen to protect his vulnerable people on their arduous journey. No doubt, the kind King would have granted such a request, even as Nehemiah later enjoyed the benefits of a royal escort from this very same monarch (*Neh. 2:9*). And yet, Ezra was too ashamed and embarrassed to make such a request (*Ezra 8:22*).

Why the hesitancy? ***It was because God's Name was at stake.*** Ezra had already told the King that the hand of God was upon them and that God would take care of them (*Ezra 8:22*). To ask for help at this point might send a message to the King that they did not really believe that God could protect them. So instead of asking the King, Ezra proclaimed a fast and asked the King of kings to protect them (*Ezra 8:21,23*). God wonderfully answered: "The hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and of such as lay in wait by the way" (*Ezra 8:31*). They safely arrived in Jerusalem (*Ezra 8:32*).

Every believer needs to learn the lesson that, ultimately, ***our help must come from the LORD*** (*Psalms 121:2*).

~George Zeller: www.middletonbiblechurch.org



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