Lesson 7

The Good Hand of God

Ezra seven is a wonderful chapter to show the good that comes from godly character, influence and leadership. Ezra leads a group back to Jerusalem. Although the temple was completed, there seems to have been some distress financially in Jerusalem. God uses Ezra to provide funding for the temple. The "hand of God" or "Good hand of God" is found six times in chapters 7 & 8.

Time Line:

- The Temple was built in 516 B.C.
- This chapter takes place about 60 years later
  - during the reign of Artaxerxes (465-424 B.C.)
  - the 7th year of his reign (7:7) would be 458 B.C.

1. <u>The chapter is divided into three sections</u>

(a) Ezra telling the story in 3rd person (1-10)
(b) The decree of King Artaxerxes (11-26)
(c) Ezra's praise to God in first person (27-28)

A. The Good Hand of God

1. <u>Raising Up a Godly Leader</u>

- Noble _____ (1-5)

Ezra traces his lineage back 16 generations (this is rare, shows his connection to Aaron, and illustrates his knowledge and importance)

This covers more than 1,100 years (that would equivalent to us tracing our family ancestry to the 900s)



- Remarkable _____ (6)

He requested from the king

- Exceptional _____ (6,10,25)

James 1:22-25

2. <u>Directing a Pagan King</u>

- Gave Ezra A_____ (11-12)
  - Appoint _____ (25)
  - E_____ God's law, even to death (26)
- Liberation of people (13-14)
- Financial Consideration (15-26)
  - They were exempt from taxation (24)

Journey from Babylon to Jerusalem is 500 miles
It would take them four months (7:9)

Materials Sent With Ezra (7:22)

- 3 3/4 tons of silver
- 650 bushels of wheat
- 600 gallons of wine
- 600 gallons of oil

Enough to supply the temple for two years

Lessons

1. The Bible is not written as a daily diary. Large gaps of time often appear between chapters.
2. Artaxerxes recognized the presence of God
   - law of God (12,14, 26)
   - Commanded by God (23)
   - God of Israel who dwells in Jerusalem (15)
   - God of Heaven (21, 23)
   - Will of God (18)
   - House of God (16, 19, 20, 24)
3. The fourfold steps of a disciple (7:10)
   - <u>set his heart</u> (Dan 1:8; Col 3:2)
     - To _____ the law
     - To _____ the law
     - To _____ the law

