

THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS ON US (Ezra 7:28)

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**Because the hand of the LORD
my God was on me,
I took courage and gathered leading men
from Israel to go up with me. (Ezra 7:28)**

"THE HAND OF THE LORD MY GOD WAS UPON ME"

- 1. The Bible is filled with stories of people who lived their lives influenced by God.**
 - a. Through deep faith and willingness to serve, God used them to fulfill His purposes.**
 - b. Ezra is one such example of what can happen:**
 - i) When a person determines to seek God**
 - ii) And allows the Lord to use him**

"THE HAND OF THE LORD MY GOD WAS UPON ME"

2. In 457 B.C., Ezra led a group of Jews from Babylonian captivity back to Jerusalem...

a. This was about eighty years after a group to rebuild the temple was led by Zerubbabel

b. But the mission of Ezra's group was to restore the people of God

"THE HAND OF THE LORD MY GOD WAS UPON ME"

3. In the book of Ezra...

- a. The first six chapters describe the work of Zerubbabel.**
- b. The final four chapters relate Ezra's arrival and the great restoration he brought about.**

"THE HAND OF THE LORD MY GOD WAS UPON ME"

c. The theme of Ezra's life and work could be stated as:

"The Hand Of The Lord My God Was Upon Me"

d. Six times in two chapters he thus attributes his success. Let's first notice.....

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

A. IN RECEIVING REQUESTS FROM THE KING

1. Notice Ezra 7:6

this Ezra came up from Babylon. He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him.

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
A. IN RECEIVING REQUESTS FROM THE KING

**2. Because the hand of the Lord was upon Ezra,
Artaxerxes allowed him:**

a. To go to Jerusalem (7:12-13)

**12. Artaxerxes, king of kings...To Ezra the priest, a
teacher of the Law of the God of heaven: Greetings**

**13. Now I decree that any of the Israelites in my
kingdom, including priests and Levites, who wish to
go to Jerusalem with you, may go.**

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
A. IN RECEIVING REQUESTS FROM THE KING

b. To take silver and gold to buy animals for sacrifice (7:14-17)

14. You are sent by the king and his seven advisers to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem with regard to the Law of your God, which is in your hand.

15. Moreover, you are to take with you the silver and gold that the king and his advisers have freely given to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem,

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
A. IN RECEIVING REQUESTS FROM THE KING

16. together with all the silver and gold you may obtain from the province of Babylon, as well as the freewill offerings of the people and priests for the temple of their God in Jerusalem.

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
A. IN RECEIVING REQUESTS FROM THE KING

17. With this money be sure to buy bulls, rams and male lambs, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and sacrifice them on the altar of the temple of your God in Jerusalem.

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
A. IN RECEIVING REQUESTS FROM THE KING

c. To buy what is needed for the service of the house of God (7:18-23)

18. You and your brother Jews may then do whatever seems best with the rest of the silver and gold, in accordance with the will of your God.

19. Deliver to the God of Jerusalem all the articles entrusted to you for worship in the temple of your God. 20 And anything else needed for the temple of your God that you may have occasion to supply, you may provide from the royal treasury

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
A. IN RECEIVING REQUESTS FROM THE KING

20. And anything else needed for the temple of your God that you may have occasion to supply, you may provide from the royal treasury.

21. Now I, King Artaxerxes, order all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates to provide with diligence whatever Ezra the priest, a teacher of the Law of the God of heaven, may ask of you

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
A. IN RECEIVING REQUESTS FROM THE KING

22.... up to a hundred talents of silver, a hundred cors of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, a hundred baths of olive oil, and salt without limit.

23. Whatever the God of heaven has prescribed, let it be done with diligence for the temple of the God of heaven. Why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and of his sons?

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
A. IN RECEIVING REQUESTS FROM THE KING

d. To be free from taxation (7:24)

24. You are also to know that you have no authority to impose taxes, tribute or duty on any of the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, temple servants or other workers at this house of God.

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
A. IN RECEIVING REQUESTS FROM THE KING

e. To set up magistrates and judges (7:25-26)

25. And you, Ezra, in accordance with the wisdom of your God, which you possess, appoint magistrates and judges to administer justice to all the people of Trans-Euphrates—all who know the laws of your God. And you are to teach any who do not know them.

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
A. IN RECEIVING REQUESTS FROM THE KING

26. Whoever does not obey the law of your God and the law of the king must surely be punished by death, banishment, confiscation of property, or imprisonment.

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
A. IN RECEIVING REQUESTS FROM THE KING

Ezra recognized the hand of God was at work in his behalf! (7:27-28)

27. Praise be to the LORD, the God of our fathers, who has put it into the king's heart to bring honor to the house of the LORD in Jerusalem in this way

28. and who has extended his good favor to me before the king and his advisers and all the king's powerful officials. Because the hand of the LORD my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me.

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
B. IN FINDING SERVANTS FOR THE TEMPLE...

1. Prepared to leave, Ezra noted none of sons of Levites (8:15)

15. I assembled them at the canal that flows toward Ahava, and we camped there three days. When I checked among the people and the priests, I found no Levites there.

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
B. IN FINDING SERVANTS FOR THE TEMPLE...

**2. He sends men to find some who will go with them
(8:16-17)**

16. So I summoned Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah and Meshullam, who were leaders, and Joiarib and Elnathan, who were men of learning,

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
B. IN FINDING SERVANTS FOR THE TEMPLE...

17. and I sent them to Iddo, the leader in Casiphia. I told them what to say to Iddo and his kinsmen, the temple servants in Casiphia, so that they might bring attendants to us for the house of our God.

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
B. IN FINDING SERVANTS FOR THE TEMPLE...

**18. Because the gracious hand of our God was on us,
they brought us Sherebiah, a capable man, from the
descendants of Mahli son of Levi, the son of Israel, and
Sherebiah's sons and brothers,**

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
B. IN FINDING SERVANTS FOR THE TEMPLE...

19.... and Hashabiah, together with Jeshaiiah from the descendants of Merari, and his brothers and nephews, 20 men.

20. They also brought 220 of the temple servants—a body that David and the officials had established to assist the Levites. All were registered by name.

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
C. IN PROVIDING SAFE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

1. Ezra proclaimed a fast to seek from God the right way to travel. (8:21-23)

21. There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions.

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
C. IN PROVIDING SAFE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

22. I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, "The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to Him, but his great anger is against all who forsake Him."

23. So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and He answered our prayer.

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
C. IN PROVIDING SAFE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

**2. Having told the king that God's hand would be upon them, he was ashamed to ask for a military escort.
(8:22)**

22. I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, "The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him."

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
C. IN PROVIDING SAFE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

God's hand was upon them, and they safely arrived in Jerusalem! (8:31-32)

31. On the twelfth day of the first month we set out from the Ahava Canal to go to Jerusalem. The hand of our God was on us, and he protected us from enemies and bandits along the way.

I. HOW THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
C. IN PROVIDING SAFE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

32. So we arrived in Jerusalem, where we rested three days.

From beginning to end the hand of the Lord was upon Ezra.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

A. EZRA HAD PREPARED HIMSELF

1. In a summary passage, we learn why God was with him. (7:9-10)

9. He had begun his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, for the gracious hand of his God was on him.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

A. EZRA HAD PREPARED HIMSELF

10. For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

A. EZRA HAD PREPARED HIMSELF

- 2. God was with him "For (because) Ezra had prepared his heart"**
 - a. "to seek the Law of the Lord"**
(to learn what God wanted him to do)
 - b. "to do it" (to apply it to himself first)**
 - c. "to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel" (and then teach others)**
 - d. Ezra had first made himself "useful for the Master, prepared for every good work" –**

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

A. EZRA HAD PREPARED HIMSELF

If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. (II Timothy 2:21)

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

B. EZRA HAD SOUGHT THE LORD...

1. He believed that God would be with those who seek Him. (8:22)

22. I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, "The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to Him, but His great anger is against all who forsake Him."

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

B. EZRA HAD SOUGHT THE LORD...

2. Thus he entreated God's protection through fasting and prayer. (8:21-23)

21. There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask Him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

B. EZRA HAD SOUGHT THE LORD...

22. I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, "The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him."

23. So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

B. EZRA HAD SOUGHT THE LORD...

Ezra believed that God rewarded those who diligently seek Him; such faith undoubtedly pleased God

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

(Hebrews 11:6)

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

C. EZRA WAS WILLING TO STEP OUT IN FAITH...

1. Trusting the Lord would protect them, they began their perilous journey. (8:31-32)

31. On the twelfth day of the first month we set out from the Ahava Canal to go to Jerusalem. The hand of our God was on us, and he protected us from enemies and bandits along the way.

32. So we arrived in Jerusalem, where we rested three days.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

C. EZRA WAS WILLING TO STEP OUT IN FAITH...

2. It was not easy, for there were enemies and potential for ambush along the way! But Ezra illustrated that he had a living, working faith! –

In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. (James 2:17,26)

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

C. EZRA WAS WILLING TO STEP OUT IN FAITH...

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. (Galatians 5:6)

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

**1. Upon his arrival, Ezra found a difficult situation
- 9:1-2**

**a. Many of the Israelites had inter-married with
Gentile women**

**b. The rulers and leaders of Israel were the worst
violators**

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

1. After these things had been done, the leaders came to me and said, "The people of Israel, including the priests and the Levites, have not kept themselves separate from the neighboring peoples with their detestable practices, like those of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

2. They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, and have mingled the holy race with the peoples around them. And the leaders and officials have led the way in this unfaithfulness."

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

**2. He was moved to fasting and prayer
(9:3-15)**

a. Others joined him ("everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel")

3. When I heard this, I tore my tunic and cloak, pulled hair from my head and beard and sat down appalled.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

4. Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel gathered around me because of this unfaithfulness of the exiles. And I sat there appalled until the evening sacrifice

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

b. He offered prayer confessing the sins of Israel

5. Then, at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my self-abasement, with my tunic and cloak torn, and fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the LORD my God

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

6.and prayed: "O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to you, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

7. From the days of our forefathers until now, our guilt has been great. Because of our sins, we and our kings and our priests have been subjected to the sword and captivity, to pillage and humiliation at the hand of foreign kings, as it is today.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

8. But now, for a brief moment, the LORD our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

9. Though we are slaves, our God has not deserted us in our bondage. He has shown us kindness in the sight of the kings of Persia: He has granted us new life to rebuild the house of our God and repair its ruins, and he has given us a wall of protection in Judah and Jerusalem.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

**10. But now, O our God, what can we say after this?
For we have disregarded the commands**

**11. you gave through your servants the prophets
when you said: 'The land you are entering to possess
is a land polluted by the corruption of its peoples. By
their detestable practices they have filled it with their
impurity from one end to the other.**

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

12. “Therefore, do not give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters for your sons. Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them at any time that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it to your children as an everlasting inheritance.”

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

13. "What has happened to us is a result of our evil deeds and our great guilt, and yet, our God, you have punished us less than our sins have deserved and have given us a remnant like this."

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

14. “Shall we again break your commands and intermarry with the peoples who commit such detestable practices? Would you not be angry enough with us to destroy us, leaving us no remnant or survivor?”

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

15. “O LORD, God of Israel, you are righteous! We are left this day as a remnant. Here we are before you in our guilt, though because of it not one of us can stand in your presence.”

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

- 3. He accepted the responsibility that was his - 10:1-8**
 - 1. While Ezra was praying and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a large crowd of Israelites—men, women and children—gathered around him. They too wept bitterly.**

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

2. Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, one of the descendants of Elam, said to Ezra, "We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women from the peoples around us. But in spite of this, there is still hope for Israel.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

3. Now let us make a covenant before our God to send away all these women and their children, in accordance with the counsel of my lord and of those who fear the commands of our God. Let it be done according to the Law.

4. Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage and do it."

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

a. Encouraged by those willing to repent leading the people to a great restoration

5. So Ezra rose up and put the leading priests and Levites and all Israel under oath to do what had been suggested. And they took the oath.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

6. Then Ezra withdrew from before the house of God and went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. While he was there, he ate no food and drank no water, because he continued to mourn over the unfaithfulness of the exiles.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA
D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

7. A proclamation was then issued throughout Judah and Jerusalem for all the exiles to assemble in Jerusalem.

8. Anyone who failed to appear within three days would forfeit all his property, in accordance with the decision of the officials and elders, and would himself be expelled from the assembly of the exiles.

II. WHY THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON EZRA

D. EZRA WAS WILLING TO FACE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS...

It would have been so easy to rationalize away any need for the people to change; but Ezra did not let the emotionally charged issue deter him from doing God's will!

"THE HAND OF THE LORD MY GOD WAS UPON ME" (Conclusion)

Because the hand of the LORD my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me.

(Ezra 7:28)

- 1. The hand of the Lord was upon Ezra because he..**
 - a. Had prepared himself**
 - b. Sought the Lord**
 - c. Was willing to step out in faith**
 - d. Was willing to face difficult situations**

"THE HAND OF THE LORD MY GOD WAS UPON ME"

- 2. Ezra was not the only person who experienced the hand of the Lord upon him...**
 - a. The Lord was also with a contemporary, Nehemiah – I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work. (Nehemiah 2:18)**

"THE HAND OF THE LORD MY GOD WAS UPON ME" (Conclusion)

b. Sometimes the hand of the Lord was for the purpose of judgment –

The LORD's hand was heavy upon the people of Ashdod and its vicinity; he brought devastation upon them and afflicted them with tumors. (I Sam 5:6)

c. But here we have considered the working of God for good in the life of his servant

"THE HAND OF THE LORD MY GOD WAS UPON ME" (Conclusion)

- 3. How will the hand of the Lord be for us? For our good, if we emulate Ezra by...**
 - a. Preparing ourselves to be useful to the Master!**
 - b. Seeking the Lord with diligence and faith!**
 - c. Stepping out in faith against the odds**
 - d. Facing difficult issues and situations head on**

**"THE HAND OF THE LORD MY GOD WAS UPON
ME" (Conclusion)**

**Let the example of Ezra encourage us to so live
in Christ, that one day we can look back at the
events in our lives and say:**

"The Hand Of The Lord My God Was Upon Me!"

LET'S PRAY:

"THE HAND OF THE LORD MY GOD WAS UPON ME"

MEMORY VERSE:

Because the hand of the LORD my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me. (Ezra 7:28)