

The Good Hands of a Great God

Proclamation Bible Study; Week of Sunday, December 1, 2019; Steve Thiel

Theme: God demonstrates His sovereign care for His people by providing instruction through Ezra, who is sent back to teach God's people. This sovereign care culminates in God sending His Son, who willingly lays down His life for His people and promises protection for all eternity.

I. God's Provision of Instruction – Read Ezra 7:1-28

- A. As you read through Ezra 7-8, you hear the repeated idea that the good hand of God was on Ezra. How does that phrase help you understand all that's taking place in these two chapters?
- B. Ezra 7:10 says that Ezra set his heart to study, do, and teach the Law of the Lord. Have you seen someone who knows the Bible but fails to live the Bible? How has that affected your response to their teaching? As you evaluate yourself, how consistent is your knowledge of the Bible and your living out of the Bible?
- C. What stands out to you about the decree of King Artaxerxes and all that he commands in Ezra 7:11-26? Do you believe that God can still influence rulers today in this same way? Why or why not?
- D. In Ezra 7:28, Ezra mentions God's "favor" or steadfast love. What do you think it is specifically in this passage that causes him to recognize God's goodness and God's grace? As you think about your own life, what specific events cause you to be overwhelmed by God's goodness and grace?

II. God's Provision of Protection – Read Ezra 8:1-36

- A. If you had been in Ezra's shoes when none of the Levites joined the party of the returnees (Ezra 8:15), how do you think you would have responded? Similar to Ezra? Or very different than Ezra?
- B. As you think about the distance from Babylon to Jerusalem, the amount of gold and silver, and the danger of robbers, are you surprised that Ezra didn't ask Artaxerxes for protection? How do you think you would have handled that situation? As you think about verses 21-23, what do you think it looks like to seek God?
- C. How would you like to grow in seeking the Lord, fasting and prayer, and trusting His provision?

III. God's Provision of Salvation – Read John 10:22-30

- A. What observations do you make when you compare and contrast John 3:16-18 with Ezra 8:21-23?
- B. According to John 10:22-30, what do you think it looks like to hear the Good Shepherd's voice and follow Him? What is most encouraging to you when you think about being in God's good hands with regard to your salvation?
- C. What is most encouraging to you when you think about being in God's good hands with regard to your on-going protection as a believer? How does His glorious promise that no one will be able to snatch you out of his hand bring clarity, conviction and courage to your life?