

## Ezra Prepared His Heart By Trey Sullins

If there was one sentence that described the follower of God, what would that sentence be? The book of Ezra contains on such sentence. Ezra 7:10 says, "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel." Here in this one verse Ezra's walk and path to serving God is found. This verse also shows the pattern that every single Christian should follow to walk according to the ways of God.

Ezra sought the law of the Lord. In Nehemiah 8:9, the Bible reveals that Ezra was a scribe and a priest. As such he had special and easy access to the written word of God. With this access he continued to grow and learn the word of God. Even after years of training and learning to be a scribe and priest, Ezra was preparing his heart to seek the law of God even more! This becomes even more powerful when you consider the situation of God's people at this point. Judah had been destroyed, gone into captivity, and had finally been brought back to Jerusalem to rebuild their land. Ezra, like so many others before him, could have chosen to blame or even reject God. Instead of this He only sought to be closer to God and His word.

Ezra sought to do the law of the Lord. Ezra knew that it was not enough to only learn God's will. Ezra proves this in Ezra 7:6 where he does great work to fulfill God's commands. The prophecy from God before Ezra's time was that God's people would return to Jerusalem from their captivity. Ezra got to work in order to get this process moving. In Ezra 7:6 the Bible says, "his Ezra came up from Babylon...The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him." The books of Nehemiah and Ezra also show us Ezra constantly worked to return people to Jerusalem and rebuild physically and religiously. In Ezra 9 and 10, he is working to remove the sins of the people who had once again intermarried with the Canaanite people. Ezra was always busy making sure that he and his brethren followed the law of God.

Ezra sought to teach the law of the Lord. Ezra did not stop with his own understanding, he made great efforts to ensure that God's people learned the word of God as well. Nehemiah 8:2 presents Ezra standing before the people back in Jerusalem and reading the word of God to them. In verse 8 of the same passage the text says, "they...helped them to understand the reading." As a faithful worker of God, he knew that it was also his duty to teach others. God does not simply desire mindless obedience to Him, but He wants a people who serve Him because they know Him and His commands.

Christians today must be like Ezra! This one passage in Ezra 7:10 outlines a complete pattern for the lifestyle of the righteous. Like Ezra, Christians must have fruitful knowledge of the law of God (2 Peter 2:8-10), be obedient to the law (Matthew 7:24), and teach world about the will of God (Mark 16:15). When people do these things, then they will be accomplishing the tasks which God has given for them in life. Furthermore, with the great example of Ezra, who lived in a very trying time, Christians can be motivated to follow in his steps.