

# Ezra 7

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Amen. Okay, good evening, guys. It is good to see you this evening, and trust that everyone is doing well.

! We will be in the book of Ezra, Ezra chapter 7 tonight, Ezra chapter 7. As we just continue to make our way through Scripture, and we have come to this point in the Bible in Ezra chapter 7.

Ezra chapter 7. We'll get right into it with one another. We'll look at the entire chapter. We'll set it in context in just a moment, but let's pray. Father, we thank you so much for the night you've given us.

Thankful for the opportunity we have of gathering together and the encouragement and the refreshment that comes from being able to fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ. We thank you for providing the opportunity for providing this place.

We praise you for each one that's here. We pray for the children, workers in the back, for the youth and leaders there. We pray your blessings even over the shoeboxes that are about to be assembled, and Lord, we ask that you would use them for the spread of the gospel.

[ 1 : 16 ]     We ask your leading as we come together tonight, and we praise you for the opportunity of reading the word and studying the word of God with one another. We thank you. What a great opportunity it is.

May we never take for granted every chance we have of opening up the pages of Scripture, and we pray that you speak to our heart and to our mind. We pray that the truths that we hear would lead to a life transformed for the glory of Christ.

We pray that we lead in all things, and we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Ezra chapter 7. Ezra chapter 7 is really one of those outstanding times in the history of God's people in which things are going to look different after the events of that 7th chapter take place, and really it is the coming of Ezra into Jerusalem.

We see in a little bit more in the chapters following a little bit more details, the actual travel and the things that take place, but it is here in the 7th chapter that we find that Ezra finally begins to make his way into Jerusalem.

A lot changes there. Much of what takes place in Nehemiah as it pertains to the spiritual reforms take place because of Ezra's presence. Historically, we praise God for Ezra's work and labor because it is that labor that more than likely led to the establishment of the Scrabble schools that existed all throughout the old Babylonian Empire and ended up becoming the Greek world, and eventually led to the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which we refer to as the Septuagint.

[ 2 : 51 ]     The Septuagint means 70. So if you know anything about your Bible history, the Greek Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, and we rely upon it heavily because it is from there.

The Septuagint translation was the next step to get to the English translation. There was a lot of steps in between there, but it is there that we reconcile some passages.

No one has a complete Hebrew Bible. We do have rather Septuagint translations or Greek translations, and then the Dead Sea Scrolls that were found were reconciled to that, and we have now at least an affirmation of the reliability of Scripture before us.

But anyway, a lot of that to say. Ezra started the Scrabble schools that were dispersed among the Greek world, and there were, at least historically speaking, 70 different scribal schools that set to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek language, and when they came together, almost what they recall as being one of the miraculous works of the Lord God Almighty is that all 70 of them were identical, and then, therefore, they named it the Septuagint, for it was just a perfect harmony in all 70 translations.

And it is the Septuagint that is quoted quite often in the New Testament when we read where Christ or his disciples or even Paul refers to an Old Testament passage, and if you, as a Bible student, do your due diligence, and you cross-reference that back to the Old Testament, and you say, well, the wording seems to be a little bit different, it's because they were quoting the Septuagint, the Greek translation, not the original Hebrew.

[ 4 : 37 ] We have, there's a lot that goes into Bible translations, but we praise God for Ezra. Ezra is a very important person historically, not just to the nation of Israel, but to us as well.

We know that when Ezra comes, they change a lot of things that happen in Jerusalem. Ezra's the first man to ever stand on a platform and preach. It's pretty cool, at least pastors think so.

He's the first one to ever build a platform for. He stood up there, and he did not stand up there alone, for beside him were all the scribes, and he would stand with a multitude of people, and he would preach and teach for half a day, and then the scribes would go down and give the cents.

So they had their Sunday school, so to say, afterwards. But it is Ezra that is used mildly of the Lord. Ezra, as we'll see in just a moment, does a lot of wonderful things, but he is really a man of encouraging presence.

So I want you to see what it looks like to be a man or an individual of encouraging presence. Ezra is used of the Lord to encourage the people of God at a really important time historically.

[ 5 : 48 ] By the time Ezra arises, and it sets it up for us in the first verse, the temple is complete, but the walls are still in disrepair and really in ruin.

They're the way that Nehemiah hears of them. The gates are burned, the walls are in shambles, but the temple is rebuilt. Economically, the returning remnant are not doing too well.

Spiritually, they're not doing well at all. We'll see why in just a moment. And God uses Ezra on the spiritual side and the economic side, and he uses Nehemiah on the physical side.

So between the two of them, we find God really restoring not temples and walls, but people. And he is using them to push forward or to bring forward his purposes and his plans.

So what does it look like to be a person of encouraging presence? I want you to see it from Ezra chapter 7. The word of God says, Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, there went up Ezra, son of Saraiah, son of Azariah, son of Hilkiah, son of Shalom, son of Zadok, son of Ahitub, son of Amariah, son of Azariah, son of Marioth, son of Zerahiah, son of Uziah, son of Bukhi, son of Abishuah, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aram, the high priest.

[ 7 : 10 ] This Ezra went up to Babylon, and he was a scribe, skilled in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given. And the king granted him all he requested, because the hand of the Lord his God was upon him.

Some of the sons of Israel, and some of the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants, went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. He came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king, for on the first of the first month, he began to go up from Babylon, and on the first of the fifth month, he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his God was upon him.

Verse 10 is a very important verse. I ask every pastor ever meet to underline it. For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach his statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Now this is the copy of the decree which King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest, the scribe, learned in the words of the commandments of the Lord and his statutes in Israel. Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace.

And now I have issued a decree that any of the people of Israel and their priests and the Levites in my kingdom who are willing to go to Jerusalem may go with you. For as much as you are sent by the king and his seven counselors to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of your God which is in your hand, and to bring the silver and the gold which the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel whose dwelling is in Jerusalem with all the silver and gold which you find in the whole province of Babylon along with the freewill offerings of the people and of the priests who offered willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem.

[ 8 : 51 ] With this money, therefore, you shall diligently buy bulls, rams, and lambs with their grain offerings and their drink offerings and offer them on the altar of the house or of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem.

Whatever seems good to you and to your brothers to do with the rest of the silver and gold you may do according to the will of your God. Also the utensils which are given to you for the service of the house of your God delivering full before the God of Jerusalem.

The rest of the needs for the house of your God which you may have occasion to provide provide for it from the royal treasury. I, even I, King Artaxerxes issue a decree to all the treasurers who are in the province beyond the river that whatever Ezra the priest the scribe of the law of the God of heaven may require of you it shall be done diligently even up to 100 talents of silver 100 cores of wheat 100 baths of wine 100 baths of oil and salt as needed whatever is commanded by the God of heaven let it be done with zeal for the house of the God of heaven so that there will not be wrath against the kingdom of the king and his sons.

We also inform you that it is not allowed to impose tax, tribute, or toll on any of the priests, Levite, singers, doorkeepers, nethanim, or servants of this house of God.

You, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God which is in your hand appoint magistrates and judges that may judge all the people who are in the province beyond the river even all those who know the laws of your God and you may teach anyone who is ignorant of them.

[ 10 : 29 ] Whoever will not observe the law of your God and the law of the king let judgment be executed upon him strictly whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of goods or for imprisonment.

Blessed be the Lord the God of our fathers who has put such a thing as this in the king's heart to adorn the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem and has extended loving kindness to me before the king and his counselors and before all the king's mighty princes.

Thus I was strengthened according to the hand of the Lord my God upon me and I gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me. Ezra chapter 7.

You need to know that starting in verse 11 of that chapter down to verse 26 verses 11 through 26 are written in the Persian dialect while the rest of it in the original was written in Hebrew.

So what we have from verses 11 to 26 is an exact copy of the actual decree that King Artaxerxes gave into the hand of Ezra. It is understood by most that Ezra wrote the entirety of this book.

[ 11 : 37 ] Now he wrote the first six chapters looking back. He was looking at the past events that had led up to his going into Jerusalem and he would have had access to the royal archives and therefore he had a good standing to write from.

And he also has a decree of King Artaxerxes in his hand which when he writes the seventh chapter he actually copies it verbatim in that language. It is in the dialect of that kingdom and the rest is considered to be in Hebrew or is in Hebrew in the original.

And what we have here is a man of encouraging presence. The tone is set for us in the first verse that says now after these things King Artaxerxes is the king that you find within the pages of scripture in the book of Esther.

Before Ezra returns Esther and Mordecai's work has already been done. She has been put in the palace for such a time as this. So it should not surprise us the favor that is displayed towards the house of God in Jerusalem because God had worked before Ezra.

God always has his people if you remember. And God had used Esther and Mordecai and even the plotting and scheming of Haman and even all the events connected with that.

[ 13 : 03 ] God had used these matters to bring the realization of who the true God was and even a recognition of the people of Israel. Fifty-eight years had transpired from the completion of the temple until the coming of Ezra.

Fifty-eight years. The temple had been completed. The walls were in ruin. We know that because we even know the exact date we know it's the seventh year of King Artaxerxes and we can go back and date it from the issuing of the decree and we can see the dating of everything historically for us and fifty-eight years had transpired from the time that the temple was completed until the time that Ezra had returned.

By the time he gets there economically things are not going that well. Politically they're not going well at all. There are still people in the land that are not happy that they are present but God is going to use this man to change a lot along with Nehemiah.

But even before Ezra was called God had already prepared the way and he had done it in an astounding manner really with the rise and fall of kings and he has the king's hearts in his hand and he has his people.

The dispersion of his people throughout the Babylonian region was not accidental. Mordecai and Esther's presence there in the capital city was not accidental. The reality that God had put people in place and used them to fulfill his plans looking for and forward to his promises of the coming Messiah.

[ 14 : 31 ] When we read the Old Testament what we realize are we are heading somewhere. We're heading directly to the gospels to the appearance of Christ. That Christ was to appear at a certain time at a certain place among a certain people group and that if it had not been the omnipotent hand of God in preserving that people and even in preserving that place then the word of God would not have been fulfilled.

It is the prophecies that reign all the way back in the book of Genesis and even before this time that speak of the coming Messiah and coming Savior which the Lord God is working towards as he brings his plans about and he uses these individuals which we read of.

The first thing that we notice about Ezra and how he is such an encouragement to the people is that Ezra is a man of identifiable heritage.

He has an identifiable heritage. Now that's important. It's important because if you remember when that small remnant of 42,000 and some change came back and they rebuilt the temple that there were a number of people among them who could not prove their ancestry.

They had no valid proof. They had no written document and therefore some of these even among the Levites were excluded from temple service and temple worship until someone could show up with Urim and Thummim.

[ 15 : 57 ] It tells us in the earlier pages of the book of Ezra. We never read historically of a priest showing up with Urim and Thummim and! casting lots. We don't know. Possibly the reason we don't read of someone showing up doing that is because God uses Ezra to show up and fill that void.

But there are a number of people who came. We would call them the mixed multitudes which by the way when you read scripture you find this reality that everywhere God's people go somebody else tags along.

And it is the mixed multitudes that are always nearby. They're not necessarily a blessing to the people. Sometimes they're a hindrance. There were people who left with the Israelites when they left Egypt because every god of Egypt had been defeated with the ten plagues so it would be foolish to stay behind especially since the Israelites had just plundered them.

And that mixed multitudes were the first one to gripe and complain and to get all upset. There were multitudes that followed Christ and disciples. I mean we know of 5,000 men and women and children that were there at some point.

And don't lose sight of the reality that when Christ fed the upwards of 15 to 20,000 people that mixed multitude that it was that same multitude the very next day that were complaining and left him.

[ 17 : 11 ] Everywhere God's people go there seemed to be a multitude of tagalongs that go as well because people are attracted to the wondrous work of the Lord God Almighty but an attraction does not necessarily mean devotion.

But it is not so with Ezra. Ezra is a man that can validate not only who his fathers and grandfathers were Ezra is a man who has an identifiable heritage.

As a matter of fact when we are told he is the son of the son of the son of the heritage of Ezra who is a scribe and a priest goes all the way back to Aaron the chief priest the first priest.

He is of Aaronic descent but he is not just a descendant of Aaron which is pretty amazing and pretty astounding because he has a right to live and to operate as a priest and therefore it validates to us we are like okay well we have a priest according to the order of Mechizedek who is Christ right.

Praise be the Lord God we don't have to depend upon priests to offer sacrifices and instructions but at that time God needed to preserve according to the standard of the law the priesthood and all of its purity and things needed to be maintained and here is Ezra a man who is living in Babylon who is privy to the courts of the kingdom who is in the upper realm of the political world of the Babylonian empire and the Persian empire but yet his ancestry can be traced all the way back to Aaron and he happens to be a priest of the highest order and not only is he an ancestor of Aaron because we know that Aaron had a number of children if we go to Aaron's grandson we know that he is also a descendant of Phinehas which is important by the way we know that he is a descendant of Phinehas because it tells us so in this text but if you go back to the book of Numbers it's cool when you read the story of Phinehas if you remember Phinehas he is the man that was there when the Moabites were kind of messing with the Israelites and they started doing all these things and after the prophecy in

[19:17] Numbers 24 by Balaam saying that you can never outdo these people these people are going to prosper the Moabites come up with this good plan said I know what we'll do since we'll never overpower them let's tempt them and they began to kind of tempt them with their women and there were all these things going on and all these people died it was Phinehas who stopped the curse of that you remember how he did it that's not something we like to talk about a lot but a man and a woman come in together and Phinehas runs and goes into the tent and takes a spear and sticks it through both of them and pins them to the ground now that's a priest for you right but when he does that out of righteous indignation for the holiness of God's people God makes a promise God's promise is that a descendant of Phinehas will be a priest eternally as long as that order of priesthood is established until the law is fulfilled and Christ is the fulfillment of the law there will be a priest according to the lineage of Phinehas and now we meet one of those individuals who is Ezra he has a recognizable and even an identifiable heritage that's a good way to say he's the right man at the right time for the right job when God is trying to restore and renew a people he's not just gathering a few remnants of whoever wants to come back he's also putting the right people to establish this nation to undergird them and they have the opportunity to learn and to hear the truth he encourages them by his presence because he knows who he is and so do they it brings order and establishment we don't have to wait on someone to show up here is the one that God had in waiting all along it is an identifiable heritage we see also in our passage that

Ezra made an intentional choice and it is that choice found in the 10th verse I do not underline in this Bible this is the my preaching Bible on Sundays and Wednesdays I don't make any markings in this one this is the only Bible I have that I don't make any markings in because I have a little bit of something that make my eyes get kind of distracted by things I see in my peripheral I don't know what they call that but you can label it if you want to I just call it being a guy so I don't write in this one I write in all my other ones but in every Bible I have this is underlined and it's a good one to underline because Ezra made a choice and this choice he made determines everything else it was an intentionality that is going to be lived out and everything else look at what it says Ezra set his heart first of all he set his heart he didn't make an intellectual choice he didn't give an intellectual acknowledgement he made it his heart's desire to do something in Hebrew and Israel belief the heart is the seat of emotions and the seat of the will the mind was really kind of just there but the heart was where the emotions and the will in all of the desire it's kind of referred to in scripture sometimes as your bowels it is the heart is the seat of every one of those decisions and so when something is going to be established and when something is going to be intentionally done it is not something that is determined by the mind but rather it's determined by the heart the real part of the individual it says

Ezra set his heart to look at this three things he's decided to be intentional about to study the law that would be the word of God all they had were the law the Pentateuch he set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to practice it and to teach his statutes and ordinances in Israel here are the intentional choices that Ezra made I'm going to study the law I'm going to practice the law and I'm going to teach the law everything else he does are dependent upon upon those choices that one choice all the other outworking all the the scribal schools of Ezra they make sense because he made a decision at some point in history this is what I'm going to do his motivation for leaving the courtroom of Babylon and going to the destroyed city in ruins of Jerusalem was based upon this decision his decision as we'll read later about not asking for help from the king but rather trusting in the

Lord God to protect him as he traveled with all this silver and gold which was a lot by the way across a desolate wilderness region in which it was known that robbers would inhabit the land was because of this decision the construction of the platform and having the people stand for half the day while he read the word of God and then he would send the Levites and scribes among them for the other half of the day to give the sense was because of this decision everything we know about Ezra is because he made this intentional choice I will study the law I will practice the law and I will teach the law and he lived with that intentionality we become a blessing and an encouragement to others when we live with intentionality it is easy to drift it is a reality that each one of us think about in our own lives it is easy to drift and it is easy to kind of go with the flow so to say but it is intentional choices that we make the things in which we set our heart upon that leads us to be an encouragement to others one of the reasons and I've shared this with you before my conviction about preaching the way I do why I preach through scripture and why it has taken me let's see February would be 10 years why it has taken us almost 10 years to get here is because I made an intentional choice even before I became the pastor here I made an intentional choice years ago that this is what I'm going to do I'm going to preach Genesis and go as far as the Lord allows me to tarry and I'm going to stick to it and there I'll just be honest with you there are some times I mean some of you have endured a lot but there are times in 2nd Chronicles I was like Lord I don't know about that choice or there's some other passages and I'm looking ahead and I'm like there's some there's some tough stuff out there right but it was an intentional choice because it pushed me to study pushed me to know

I knew that if I was just to be carried along by my wants and wishes then I there were certain passages of scripture that I would avoid but if all of scripture is profitable and good and good for instruction and teaching and reproof then I needed to be in all of scripture all of scripture means all of scripture and we live with that intentionality right that is why the very first meeting I had with the pastor search committee I told them this is what I do on Sunday nights I preach through I think the very first time I preach here I said this is what I do I needed to set the course early Ezra does that he made an intentional choice and then he allowed his life to be dictated by what his heart was set up on friend whether we are verbally doing it or not whatever our heart is set upon is what we are doing and we see this reality in the life of Ezra third we see that Ezra is a man of encouraging presence because of his influence upon others everything he did was influential but look at his influence upon those around him it it says in verse six this Ezra went up from Babylon and he was a scribe skilling the law of Moses which the

[ 27:16 ] Lord God of Israel had given and the king granted him all he requested because the hand of the Lord his God was upon him but look at this some of the sons of Israel some of the priests the Levites the singers the gatekeepers the temple servants went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes so this Ezra made a choice he's going to Jerusalem this Ezra gets permission from the king and this Ezra also takes with him Levites priests gatekeepers singers everything that's going to be needed but that's not it because if we go to the last verse there we'll see in this chapter he says there in verse 28 as he's praising but the last sentence says thus I was strengthening according to the hand of the Lord my God upon me and I gathered look at this leading men from Israel to go up with me he didn't go alone and he didn't just take some workers in the temple because the temple definitely needed workers it says he also took leading men to go with him God used him to influence Adrian Rogers used to say he used to say it to pastors he say influence the influencers right find out who the influencers are and you influence them and then let them influence others well that's exactly what Ezra was doing he took leading men he took leading workers this is why when we get to the book of Nehemiah and we see that Ezra he may preach for four hours but the bulk of the work in a small group so to say are with the people he brought with him he is influencing them and he's going to use them to influence the people around him because one of the instructions and the permissions he's given by the king is that if someone doesn't know the law of

God then Ezra has the right to teach them the law of God now they are not an independent people so they can't make the decisions all the decisions they want to here they are still within the realm of King Artaxerxes even when they get into that land so he's not free just to do whatever he wants to but did you notice in the decree I know we're not going to read the decree again but you can go back and look at it and the decree it tells us that if you get there and people don't know the law then teach them the law so now he has permission he has legal permissive permission to instruct people which was the very thing he wanted to do which praise be to the Lord God Almighty that he grants those favors right and it's the very thing he has equipped himself to do with the people around him and when he gets there Nehemiah is doing the work and Nehemiah realizes these people don't know anything about the law well guess what God's got an Ezra there and Ezra's got some Levites with him and now all of a sudden there's permission not only just to rebuild the wall but to rebuild the people and God is using the right people to influence those around one of the most amazing things that we find in the book of Nehemiah and I said you can't look at one without considering the other is when we get to that chapter that seems to be such a bore in the book of Nehemiah and you just find the listing of the people that are working on the wall there's this people are working they're working here and they're working here and they're working here and they're working here and the reason it's so interesting to me is because when Nehemiah gets there these people were living in a city that's in disrepair and no one cares and Nehemiah gets there and he has all these things it says he ponders them in his heart and he rides around the city walls on the outskirts of the city walls at night and no one knew what

God was calling him to do and then Nehemiah begins to speak to the people around him and to tell them what the Lord God had put in his heart and all of a sudden people begin to buy in and when we read this list what we find are priests you know laborers workers ladies everyone is working side by side on the portion of wall that's in front of their house Nehemiah was influencing those around him Ezra was influencing and leading others to be around them and they becoming encouragement to those people that they come into contact with friend one of the realities we find in Christ is he has called us to be influencers of those around us to be those who gather other people and say okay let's go do this and even to lead them to do things they were not considering prior to our arrival we see the encouragement he brings by the influence he gives fourth and finally we see that Ezra is a man of encouragement and this is probably the most telling of them all because of his interpretation of events and by that I mean how he perceives that which is going on around him he's probably the most encouragement or offers the most encouragement to those around him because of how he interprets what is taking place most people believe that Ezra wrote the seventh chapter and everything that follows after in firsthand account as it was taking place very early in the chapter Ezra declares in that sixth verse that he went up because the good hand the hand of the Lord God of Israel was upon him now Ezra is a man of royal position within the realm of the Persian Empire when we read the decree of King Artaxerxes don't miss this



Artaxerxes is not what we would call a believer he's always got to be a believer look he's funding the sacrificial system he's giving them silver he even says no taxes which he said don't even he even made it possible for the laborers and the workers to work free of concern they couldn't tax the Levites the gatekeepers the singers they couldn't tax anybody working in the temple he gives a limit to the treasury that Ezra can pull out of on the other side surely he's a believer we looked at this before what Artaxerxes is doing is what every king of the Persian later part of the Persian latter part of the Persian Empire was doing is kind of what we refer to as the Pax Romana in the kingdom of Rome and I've said this before is they were trying to ensure their favor among all the people so that these people would pray to their God for them so that maybe one of them would stick because notice he says give them everything they need for their sacrifice and do it speedily or with due diligence so that they may pray for the kingdom and the king and his sons he is endearing himself to the Jewish people so that prayers to the Jewish God would be offered on his behalf now that's okay as the people of the Lord we don't have a problem with that you know the reason we don't have a problem with that because Paul commands us to pray for those who rule over us we shouldn't be offended by that reality we ought to be doing it anyway

Artaxerxes doesn't necessarily have to endear himself and to give them all the money that's something they should have been doing anyway but this is what he has a politically motivated reason for doing what he's doing and that's okay because we also don't want to just kind of wag our fingers and say oh well that's that's kind of you know conniving and scheming no because we need to interpret the things and the matters that happen the way Ezra did and Ezra gives his interpretation immediately following his writing of the decree blessed be the Lord the God of our fathers look at this who has put such a thing as this in the king's heart he said I'm not coming because the king has given me permission I'm not coming with the gold and the silver because the king gave it to me I'm not coming with a decree that I can glean from the royal treasuries on this side because Artaxerxes has commanded it all those commands came because the Lord

[ 35 : 14 ] God of our fathers put it in the king's heart he knew the sovereignty of God's power even over the heart of the king and he saw this as a favorable time offered to him because of the activity of the Lord God Almighty not because the political leaders just happen to be married you know to a pretty lady whose kinfolk was Mordecai not because Esther was there not because Mordecai had been rode around on the back of the king's horse but because God had put it into his heart to do that which God had determined to do and was turning the heart of the king in the palm of his hand much like we're told in scripture and Ezra rightly interprets the events around him as being divinely ordained by the Lord God not being permitted by the king now that makes a big difference because how we interpret what is going on around us will determine what our greater loyalty is given to one of the greatest dangers that happened in church history and in the church world is when the church began to be recognized by the powers in the political realm in the political world and there was this connectivity between church and state if there was such a thing or church and power and slowly but really methodically the church began to perceive their favor originating from the throne of the world rather than the throne room of heaven and when the favor that they were given seemed to be more connected to the king on the throne then their allegiance began to be a little bit more geared towards the king on the throne rather than it being geared towards the king in heaven and how we interpret what happens to us as being all what is because this political world over here or this side over here is doing it rather than seeing it where the lord god has given us this time in this season with this favor and he has determined that now is the time for us to act it is not dismissing those who may be leading and ruling over any particular land but we realize that any effective door that is ever opened is opened because god himself has opened it not because any leader of this world has opened it even if he utilizes and uses those leaders now i say that understanding that we we live positionally in a time in history in which a lot of people are saying well this is the time for the church to grow because we have so many people that are favorable to christianity and so many people that are favorable to the profession of this and that and and this opportunity well we ought to rejoice not because the people are in favor but because god is allowing us to live in such a season of favor and we interpret the events around us accurately because if we're not careful our allegiance would be divided but we like ezra need to ensure that we are praising the lord the god of our fathers because he has put such a thing as this in the king's heart to adorn the house of the lord which is in jerusalem and has extended loving kindness to me before the king and his counselors and before all the king's mighty princes thus i was strengthened according to the hand of the lord my god upon me that is the one that would encourage them with his presence because he knows he's not there because king artaxerxes said he could be there but rather he's there because the lord god has ordained that he be there

it's a big difference depending upon the lens we see it in and we see that found for us in ezra chapter 7 thank you brother you