

INTRODUCTION

This short book of ten chapters may seem to emerge out of a time of harsh moralists who lived by the letter of the law. It is when one understands the way in which Ezra's heart was melted and his faith encouraged by friends and inspired by grace and the righteousness of the LORD that one looks at the book a second time for its blueprint for the overhaul of dissipating religion.

There are two considerable Chaldee sections in the script. I have found the translation of these sections tedious but equally I found that the rescript of Artaxerxes I reflects the sincere heart of the great king. He is astute and deeply appreciative of Ezra whom he elected to establish as his Trans Euphrates viceroy.

I have added two separate files on "a time of opportunity" and "the good hand of God". In these you will see the Old Testament equivalent of the gospel and appreciate Ezra's awareness of the "sovereignty of God" in his and his nation's life.

There is a third file on the significance of Ezra for our Old Testament canon of scripture and with this I have given the lucid comments of Alexander Whyte on this outstanding scribe of the Second Temple.

Ezra was perhaps the greatest consecutive scripture teacher between Moses and Christ. His significance cannot be over-estimated. From his time "the book" and "preaching" took on lasting importance first for the Jews and then through other great scribes like Paul and Matthew and all the good scribes of the gospel accounts for the church. Ezra has been a huge "help" to posterity by the work he undertook but chiefly by "Preparing his heart **to seek** the law of the LORD, **to do it** and **to teach it**". (Ezra 7.10)

I do trust you will find the nectar in this fine book and go on to enjoy its companion volume Nehemiah.

This Westgate Commentary No.15 completed Mid October 2010 speaks of "grace" and of "a nail in a holy place" and of the "light of God" and of "reviving". All of these we need in these last days. We need much grace; we look for the coming Saviour who is our sovereign and eternal hope; we praise God for the completeness of scripture and the fullness of the Spirit and we still long that the LORD would revive His work in us and in His worldwide church.

I commend the volume of divine truth and my simple comments to the reader.

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