

Ezra 7:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do after the will of your God.

Analysis

And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do after the will of your God. Artaxerxes grants remarkable discretion regarding surplus funds. The phrase **seem good** translates Aramaic *yitav* (יִתָּבֵחַ), indicating wise judgment and discretionary authority. The king trusted Ezra and the priestly leaders to determine appropriate use of remaining resources.

The crucial qualification—**after the will of your God**—establishes divine law as governing principle. Financial discretion wasn't unlimited autonomy but freedom to obey God's will. The Aramaic *re'ut* (רְעֵת, 'will/pleasure') indicates God's revealed preference in Torah. This meant surplus funds should advance worship, not personal enrichment.

Theologically, this demonstrates proper stewardship: resources belong to God, leaders exercise judgment within boundaries of revealed will, and accountability remains to divine Owner. The inclusion of 'thy brethren' (fellow priests) shows collaborative decision-making, preventing individual autocracy. Godly financial management requires wisdom, discretion, and submission to Scripture.

Historical Context

Persian kings provided substantial resources for subject peoples' religious institutions, viewing this as securing divine favor and political stability. Archaeological evidence shows similar grants to other ethnic groups. Artaxerxes' trust in Ezra's discretion reflects the priest's reputation for wisdom and integrity.

The letter's specific provisions (earlier verses) covered sacrificial animals, grain offerings, drink offerings, and temple vessels. This clause addressed unexpected surplus or situations not specifically enumerated. It granted flexibility within boundaries of Torah requirements for temple worship.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What principles of Christian financial stewardship emerge from the balance between discretion and submission to God's will?
2. How does collaborative decision-making ('thee and thy brethren') model healthy church financial governance?
3. What does Artaxerxes' trust in Ezra teach about building credible Christian witness in secular contexts?

Interlinear Text

וְאַתָּה
And whatsoever H1768 H5921 to thee and to H5922 thy brethren H252 shall seem good H3191

בְּשָׂא רָא
with the rest of the silver H7606 H3702 and the gold H1722 that do H5648 after the will H7470 of your God H426

תַּעֲשֵׂה:
that do H5648

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