

Ezra 7:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem:

Analysis

Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem: Ezra's doxology attributes Artaxerxes' generous decree entirely to divine action. The phrase 'which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart' uses the verb *natan* (נָתַן, 'put' or 'placed'), indicating God's direct causation of royal policy. This doesn't eliminate the king's agency but affirms that God sovereignly influences rulers' decisions to accomplish His purposes.

The purpose—'to beautify the house of the LORD'—shows God's concern for His worship to be conducted worthily. The verb *pa'ar* (פָּאֵר) means to glorify, beautify, or adorn, indicating that God desired not merely functional temple service but beautiful, honoring worship. This validates aesthetic and material investment in worship spaces, though always subordinate to spiritual reality. External beauty should reflect internal spiritual devotion, not substitute for it.

Theologically, this verse teaches that all good gifts, including political favor, derive from God. Ezra didn't credit his own diplomacy or skill but recognized divine providence. This models humble gratitude that attributes success to God rather than human achievement. The blessing formula 'Blessed be the LORD' directs praise upward, preventing the pride that claims credit for what God has accomplished.

Historical Context

Artaxerxes' decree (Ezra 7:11-26) provided extensive financial support and legal authority for Ezra's mission. The king authorized temple funding from imperial treasury, exempted religious personnel from taxation, and granted Ezra judicial authority to enforce Jewish law. This extraordinary support exceeded anything required and demonstrated remarkable divine favor working through a pagan monarch.

The reference to 'beautifying' the temple indicates that while structurally complete since 515 BC, the building lacked full furnishings and ornamentation. Solomon's original temple had been extraordinarily beautiful (1 Kings 6-7), while the rebuilt temple was modest. Ezra's mission included enhancing worship aesthetics, showing that God values beauty as well as function in worship settings.

Ezra's doxology reflects a theology of divine providence working through political powers. Post-exilic Judaism developed sophisticated understanding of how God accomplishes purposes through foreign empires. This theology enabled faithful living under various regimes, recognizing that even pagan rulers ultimately serve the LORD's purposes, whether knowingly or unknowingly.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does attributing royal favor to God's action shape believers' attitude toward political success or institutional support?
2. What does God's concern to 'beautify' His house teach about the role of aesthetics and beauty in Christian worship?
3. How can churches cultivate humble gratitude that attributes success to God rather than human effort?

Interlinear Text

בְּרַ וְיָ	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֵי י	אֲבוֹתֵינוּ	אֲשֶׁר	נָתַן	כָּזָאת
Blessed	be the LORD	God	of our fathers	H834	which hath put	H2063
H1288	H3068	H430	H1		H5414	
בְּלִב	הֵמָּה לְךָ	לְפָאֵר	אֶת	בֵּית	יְהוָה	
heart	such a thing as this in the king's	to beautify	H853	the house	be the LORD	
H3820	H4428	H6286		H1004	H3068	
אֲשֶׁר	בִּירוּשָׁלַם:					
H834	which is in Jerusalem					
	H3389					

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 6:22 (Kingdom): And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

Isaiah 60:13 (Parallel theme): The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

Revelation 17:17 (Kingdom): For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

Hebrews 10:16 (References Lord): This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

Hebrews 8:10 (References God): For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Nehemiah 2:12 (References God): And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.

Nehemiah 2:8 (Kingdom): And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

2 Corinthians 8:16 (References God): But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

James 1:17 (Parallel theme): Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.