

Ezra 7:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him.

Analysis

This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. This verse introduces Ezra, whose name means 'help' (Ezra, עֶזְרָא), foreshadowing his role in helping restore covenant faithfulness. The description 'ready scribe' (sofer mahir, סֹפֵר מְהִיר) means 'skillful scribe' or 'expert scribe,' indicating not merely literacy but deep mastery of Torah. This expertise qualified Ezra to teach and implement God's law, combining scholarship with spiritual authority.

The phrase 'in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given' grounds Ezra's authority in divine revelation, not human wisdom. The law's source was the LORD, not Moses's invention, establishing objective divine standard for community life. Ezra's expertise was in God's word, making him prophet-like figure even without explicit prophetic office. His authority derived from Scripture, not institutional position or personal charisma.

The remarkable statement that 'the king granted him all his request' demonstrates God's providence. The phrase 'according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him' attributes the king's favor explicitly to divine intervention. God's 'hand' symbolizes power and guidance, showing that favorable circumstances resulted from divine sovereignty over royal hearts, not Ezra's diplomacy or political skill.

Historical Context

Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in 458 BC (seventh year of Artaxerxes), thirteen years before Nehemiah. His journey from Babylon took four months (Ezra 7:9), covering approximately 900 miles. The community he found had completed the temple but struggled with compromised living, particularly intermarriage with pagans. Ezra's mission focused on spiritual and moral reformation, complementing earlier temple reconstruction.

The description of Ezra as 'scribe' indicates professional expertise. Scribes were educated specialists who copied, interpreted, and taught Scripture. By the post-exilic period, scribes had become increasingly important religious authorities, a trend continuing into New Testament times. Ezra represents the transition from prophetic leadership (Haggai, Zechariah) to scribal-rabbinic leadership characteristic of Second Temple Judaism.

Artaxerxes' remarkable generosity toward Ezra (Ezra 7:11-26) contrasts with his earlier prohibition against building (Ezra 4:21). This apparent contradiction reflects either policy change or distinction between temple worship (which Artaxerxes supported) and walls (which he initially opposed). God providentially used the same king for both opposition and support, demonstrating sovereignty over political changes.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

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unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.

Ezra 8:31 (References God): Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way.

Nehemiah 2:18 (Kingdom): Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.

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.

Matthew 28:20 (Parallel theme): Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Ezra 7:9 (References God): For upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him.

Ezra 7:21 (Kingdom): And I, even I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which are beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily,

Ezra 8:18 (References God): And by the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and Sherebiah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen;