

# Ezra 8:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken 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.

## Analysis

**For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy**—בוֹשְׁתִי (boshti, I was ashamed) reveals Ezra's ethical dilemma. Requesting חֵיִל וּפָרָשִׁים (chayil u'farashim, force and horsemen—military escort) would have been diplomatically appropriate and prudent, but Ezra felt it would contradict his testimony. The בּוֹשׁ (shame) isn't embarrassment but moral inconsistency—how could he request human protection after declaring divine protection sufficient?

**Because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him**—כִּי־אָמַרְנוּ לַמֶּלֶךְ (ki-amarnu lamelekh, for we had said to the king) references Ezra's earlier testimony to Artaxerxes (7:27-28). The יַד־אֱלֹהֵינוּ (yad-Eloheinu, hand of our God) on מְבַקְּשָׁיו (mevaqshav, those seeking Him) promises protection. **But his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him**—עֶזְבָּו וְאַפּוֹ (uzzo v'appo, His power and His anger) threatens לְעֶזְבָּו (l'ozevav, those forsaking Him). Ezra had made God's faithfulness a testimony to the pagan king; now he must live consistently with that witness, however risky. Faith's public confession creates accountability to trust God in crisis.

## Historical Context

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Artaxerxes' decree (7:11-26) authorized Ezra's journey and provided lavish funding but didn't mandate military escort—that was Ezra's decision to refuse. Ancient Near Eastern roads were dangerous; Persian royal roads had guard posts, but caravan attacks were common. Ezra's theological conviction that requesting military escort would dishonor his testimony to the king put him in extraordinary position: he'd publicly staked God's reputation on protecting them, then had to trust that claim with 1,500+ lives and vast treasure.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does Ezra's refusal of military escort challenge modern Christian pragmatism that neglects faith-risk for security?
2. In what ways does public testimony about God's faithfulness create accountability to trust Him when crisis tests that claim?
3. What is the difference between wise stewardship (planning) and faithless self-reliance (refusing to trust God's provision)?

## Interlinear Text

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כִּי	בִּשְׁתִּי	לִשְׂאֹל	מִן	לְמַלְכִּי	חַיִּל
H3588	For I was ashamed	to require	H4480	of the king	a band of soldiers
	H954	H7592		H4428	H2428
וּפָרָשִׁים	לְעֶזְרִי	מֵאֹיֵב	בְּדַרְכִּי	כִּי	
and horsemen	to help	us against the enemy	in the way	H3588	
H6571	H5826	H341	H1870		
לְאִמְרֵנוּ	לְמַלְכִּי	לְאִמְרֵנוּ	יָד	אֶלֶּה יְהוָה	
because we had spoken	of the king	because we had spoken	The hand	of our God	
H559	H4428	H559	H3027	H430	
עַל	כָּל	מְבַקְשָׁיו	לְטוֹבָה	וְעַזָּתוֹ	וְאַפּוֹ
H5921	H3605	that seek	is upon all them for good	him but his power	and his wrath
		H1245	H2896	H5797	H639
עַל	כָּל	עֲזָבוֹ:			
H5921	H3605	is against all them that forsake			
		H5800			

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Peter 3:12** (Parallel theme): For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

**2 Chronicles 16:9** (Parallel theme): For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

**Lamentations 3:25** (Good): The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.

**2 Chronicles 15:2** (Parallel theme): And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye

be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.

**Psalms 34:22** (Parallel theme): The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

**Romans 8:28** (Good): And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

**1 Chronicles 28:9** (References God): And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

**Hebrews 10:38** (Parallel theme): Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

**Ezra 7:6** (Kingdom): 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.

**Ezra 7:28** (Kingdom): And hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened as the hand of the LORD my God was upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me.