

Ezra 8:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.

Analysis

So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us— וְנִצְעַמָּה וְנִבְקַשָּׁה (vanatzumah vanvaqeshah, so we fasted and we sought) are consecutive imperfects indicating completed actions: they did fast, they did seek. The prefix מֵאֱלֹהֵינוּ (me-Eloheinu, from our God) shows covenant appeal—they approached as His people with legitimate claim on His covenant faithfulness. **And he was intreated of us—** וַיַּעֲתַר לָנוּ (vayye'ater lanu, and He was entreated by us) is remarkable: God's response to humble petition. The verb עָתַר (atar) means 'to pray, make supplication,' but in niphal (as here) means 'to be entreated, be responsive to prayer.'

This terse statement carries profound theological weight: the sovereign God who needs nothing allowed Himself to be moved by His people's prayer. Their fast wasn't manipulative ritual but genuine self-humbling that God chose to honor. The verse's brevity makes it more powerful—no lengthy description of answered prayer, just simple affirmation: we prayed, He answered. This testimony would later embolden the remnant community when facing opposition (Nehemiah 4:4-5, 9).

Historical Context

Answered prayer became crucial testimony in post-exilic Judaism, when prophetic revelation had largely ceased and God's presence felt less immediate than in temple/monarchy periods. Ezra's narrative provided concrete example of divine

intervention in response to corporate prayer, shaping Jewish piety toward intense petitionary prayer and fasting during crisis. The pattern established here—corporate fast, earnest petition, divine response—became model for later Jewish practice in times of national danger.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does God's being 'entreated' reveal about His character—sovereign yet responsive to humble prayer?
2. How should Ezra's simple testimony ('we prayed, He answered') shape our expectations in prayer?
3. In what ways does corporate fasting strengthen community faith more than individual prayer alone?

Interlinear Text

וְאַתָּה עַל מְאֹלָה יָנוּ תִּבְקַשׁ הַעֲצָמָה	רִשְׁתְּ רִשְׁתְּ
So we fasted and besought our God	for this and he was intreated
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Additional Cross-References

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.

1 Chronicles 5:20 (References God): And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that were with them: for they cried to God in the battle, and he was intreated of them; because they put their trust in him.

Deuteronomy 4:29 (References God): But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

Esther 4:16 (Parallel theme): Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

Daniel 9:3 (References God): And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: