

# **EZRA & NEHEMIAH**

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*A THEOLOGICAL VITALITY SERIES*

# THE HAND OF GOD

<sup>15</sup> I assembled them at the canal that flows toward Ahava, and we camped there three days. When I checked among the people and the priests, I found no Levites there. <sup>16</sup> So I summoned Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah

**EZRA 8:15-32**

and Meshullam, who were leaders, and Joiarib and Elnathan, who were men of learning, <sup>17</sup> and I ordered them to go to Iddo, the leader in Kasiphia. I told them what to say to Iddo and his fellow Levites, the temple servants in Kasiphia, so that they might bring attendants to us

**EZRA 8:15-32**

for the house of our God. <sup>18</sup> Because the gracious hand of our God was on us, they brought us Sherebiah, a capable man, from the descendants of Mahli son of Levi, the son of Israel, and Sherebiah's sons and brothers, 18 in all; <sup>19</sup> and Hashabiah, together with Jeshaiiah

**EZRA 8:15-32**

from the descendants of Merari, and his brothers and nephews, 20 in all.  
<sup>20</sup> They also brought 220 of the temple servants—a body that David and the officials had established to assist the Levites. All were registered by name.  
<sup>21</sup> There, by the Ahava Canal,

**EZRA 8:15-32**

I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions. <sup>22</sup> I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king,

**EZRA 8:15-32**

“The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him.”

<sup>23</sup> So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.

<sup>24</sup> Then I set apart twelve of the leading priests, namely, Sherebiah, Hashabiah

**EZRA 8:15-32**

and ten of their brothers, <sup>25</sup> and I weighed out to them the offering of silver and gold and the articles that the king, his advisers, his officials and all Israel present there had donated for the house of our God. <sup>26</sup> I weighed out to them 650 talents of silver,

**EZRA 8:15-32**

silver articles weighing 100 talents,  
100 talents of gold, <sup>27</sup> 20 bowls of gold  
valued at 1,000 darics, and two fine  
articles of polished bronze, as precious  
as gold. <sup>28</sup> I said to them, “You as well  
as these articles are consecrated to  
the LORD.

**EZRA 8:15-32**

The silver and gold are a freewill offering to the LORD, the God of your ancestors. <sup>29</sup>

Guard them carefully until you weigh them out in the chambers of the house of the LORD in Jerusalem before the leading priests and the Levites and the family heads of Israel.”

**EZRA 8:15-32**

<sup>30</sup> Then the priests and Levites received the silver and gold and sacred articles that had been weighed out to be taken to the house of our God in Jerusalem.

<sup>31</sup> On the twelfth day of the first month we set out from the Ahava Canal to go to Jerusalem.

**EZRA 8:15-32**

The hand of our God was on us, and he protected us from enemies and bandits along the way. <sup>32</sup> So we arrived in Jerusalem, where we rested three days.

**EZRA 8:15-32**

<sup>39</sup> Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

**MATTHEW 26:39**

<sup>18</sup> And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

**EPHESIANS 6:18**

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray continually,  
<sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for  
this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18**

**GREATER  
ACCOUNTABILITY**

<sup>15</sup> I assembled them at the canal that flows toward Ahava, and we camped there three days. When I checked among the people and the priests, I found no Levites there. <sup>16</sup> So I summoned Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah

**EZRA 8:15-20**

and Meshullam, who were leaders, and Joiarib and Elnathan, who were men of learning, <sup>17</sup> and I ordered them to go to Iddo, the leader in Kasiphia. I told them what to say to Iddo and his fellow Levites, the temple servants in Kasiphia, so that they might bring attendants to us

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for the house of our God. <sup>18</sup> Because the gracious hand of our God was on us, they brought us Sherebiah, a capable man, from the descendants of Mahli son of Levi, the son of Israel, and Sherebiah's sons and brothers, 18 in all; <sup>19</sup> and Hashabiah, together with Jeshaiiah

**EZRA 8:15-20**

from the descendants of Merari, and his brothers and nephews, 20 in all.  
<sup>20</sup> They also brought 220 of the temple servants—a body that David and the officials had established to assist the Levites. All were registered by name.

**EZRA 8:15-20**

Ezra was accountable for the people. When the hand of the Lord is upon you, you see people who you might have missed.

The hand of the Lord  
“handpicked” 38 Levites and in  
addition, 220 temple servants.

Ezra was accountable for the temple articles that were generously given and freewill offerings that were collected.

<sup>26</sup> I weighed out to them 650 talents of silver, silver articles weighing 100 talents, 100 talents of gold, <sup>27</sup> 20 bowls of gold valued at 1,000 darics, and two fine articles of polished bronze, as precious as gold.

**EZRA 8:26-27**

Do you want the hand of God to be upon you? If so, expect the level of accountability in your life and leadership to increase.

**ENSURED SAFETY**

<sup>21</sup> There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions.

<sup>22</sup> I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us

**EZRA 8:21-23**

from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, “The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him.”<sup>23</sup> So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.

**EZRA 8:21-23**

Fasting is not only for the individual, but it is often for the collective. Fasting is a sign of humility before God. Fasting is a time set apart for prayer.

<sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord,  
and he will lift you up.

**JAMES 4:10**

<sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves, therefore, under  
God's mighty hand, that he may lift  
you up in due time.

**1 PETER 5:6**

<sup>7</sup> The LORD will keep you from all  
harm—he will watch over your life;  
<sup>8</sup> the LORD will watch over your coming  
and going both now and forevermore.

**PSALM 121:7-8**

The question is whether we will live out that which we say we believe Our faith needs to move from talking to walking.

**BROUGHT THEM  
HOME**

<sup>31</sup> On the twelfth day of the first month we set out from the Ahava Canal to go to Jerusalem. The hand of our God was on us, and he protected us from enemies and bandits along the way. <sup>32</sup> So we arrived in Jerusalem, where we rested three days.

**EZRA 8:31-32**

What past tense words can use  
you to describe the finished  
work of God on your behalf?

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. <sup>2</sup> Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits— <sup>3</sup> who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

**PSALM 103:1-5**

<sup>4</sup> who redeems your life from the pit  
and crowns you with love and  
compassion, <sup>5</sup> who satisfies your  
desires with good things.

**PSALM 103:1-5**

“And all my life You have been faithful,  
And all my life You have been so, so  
good. With every breath that I am able.  
Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God.”

**- Goodness of God -**

Brian & Jenn Johnson

How we can we travel so far  
and yet fail to give Him the  
thanksgiving He deserves?  
If it had not been for the  
hand of God, where would  
you be today?

<sup>55</sup> But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

**ACTS 7:55**

After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

**HEBREWS 1:3**

[Jesus]<sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

**1 PETER 3:22**

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