

People of the Book
Pastor John Carmichael

[Ezr 7:9-10 NASB95] 9 For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his God [was] upon him. 10 For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice [it,] and to teach [His] statutes and ordinances in Israel.

- The pressure of the great falling away is happening. (Kevin Max (DC Talk), The Universal Christ.)
- Ezra stamped God's People as the people of the Book.
- [Psa 112:1 NASB95] 1 Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments. (Not a question, but a statement of fact.)

What does it take to become people of the Book?

Here are five things we can learn from Ezra about becoming people of the Book.

- I. Set his heart.
 - a. Decision without regard to feelings.
 - b. Full impact of seeking God through His Word comes to those who have set their heart to God's Word.
 - c. [Pro 4:20-22 NASB95] 20 My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. 21 Do not let them depart from your sight; Keep them in the midst of your heart. 22 For they are life to those who find them And health to all their body.
 - d. Countless times we are called to become people of the Book.
- II. To study the law of the LORD.
 - a. Deep investigation. Comparing and contrasting. What God said. What God means. What God wants us to do with it.
 - b. [Ezr 7:6 NASB95] 6 This Ezra went up from Babylon, and he was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all he requested because the hand of the LORD his God [was] upon him.
 - c. Ezra was an expert in the law of Moses – highly trained.
 - d. Everyone is called to learn, do, and teach the Word of God. [Deu 6:7 NASB95] 7 "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.
 - e. Ezra was a distant grandson from Aaron. The study of the Word affected the next generations in the family. This still happens.
 - f. We need the Holy Spirit to learn the Word. [1Co 2:9-14 NASB95] 9 but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND [which] HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM." 10 For to us God revealed [them] through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the [thoughts] of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the [thoughts] of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual [thoughts] with spiritual [words.] 14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.
- III. To practice it.

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- a. We must walk in alignment to accurately help others walk in alignment with it. We can only lead people where we are going.
- b. Pouring concrete illustration. (Doing it, in addition to studying, completed the learning.)
- c. [Jas 1:22 NASB95] 22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.
- d. Truth must be lived.

IV. To teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.

- a. Desire to teach what he learned and obeyed. Others need to learn and obey the things he is learning and obeying.
- b. [Mat 28:18-20 NASB95] 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
- c. Lessen the knowledge gap. We are called to preach God's Word to people.

V. The good hand of his God was upon him.

- a. V10 starts with a conjunction. In the LXX it is "hoti" which is "because" or "for". It has a connection to the previous verse.
- b. K&D Commentary – "The hand of his God graciously arranged for him, for he had prepared his heart to seek and to do the law of Jahve, i.e. to make the law of God His rule of action,"
- c. The end of v9 is caused by v10. God's hand was upon him because he had prepared his heart to study, obey, and teach the Word.
- d. God assisted Ezra to learn, obey, and teach. Just as He does us.
- e. God rewards those who do learn, obey, and teach.
- f. [1Pe 5:1-4 NASB95] 1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as [your] fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to [the will of] God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

- God has called His people to know Him through becoming people of the Book by setting their heart to study, practice, and teach His Word through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit so they can receive and experience His blessing.
- How To Properly Study The Word of God (very basic)
 - Pray in the Spirit.
 - Read several good translations of the Bible. Every translation has a different purpose.
 - If it is a study Bible read the notes. Keep in mind, the notes are thoughts of humans.
 - Commentaries are good. Understand that commentaries are written from a theological bias. They are very useful, but they are not the final word.
 - Good resources. (www.blueletterbible.org; Fire Bible, Accordance or Logos software, The New Spirit-filled Life Bible, Life in the Spirit Commentary, www.netbible.org)