

Safe Passage

Ezra 7:21-25

Zerubbabel was called by God to lead the exiles back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of God that Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed. Xerxes, who had replaced Darius as king, was replaced by Artaxerxes. Ezra the priest and more of the exiles were going home to furnish the temple that had been rebuilt. They were to fill it with worship, items of worship, and people needed to worship God.

They had been under oppression for 70 years, but God delivered them from that oppression. As he sends the people back home, he tells them to diligently give. Whatever Ezra asks for supply it - wine, oil, wheat silver, and salt. He tells Ezra to take silver and gold from the temple treasury, the province of Babylon, and the people. He was to buy bulls, lambs, grain and drink offering to sacrifice. He was to do whatever was best with the rest of the silver and gold.

This was a six month long journey through the Trans-Euphrates to the temple with everything they needed to honor God. No one was to impose taxes or tariffs on any of the priests, Levites, musicians, gatekeepers, temple servants or other workers at the house of God as they traveled through the land. This was a sacred journey and God made sure they were protected.

The king instructed Ezra to appoint leaders with wisdom who knew God's word. They were to administer justice to all the people and teach those who did not know the law. Imagine a heathen king wanting to rule his kingdom the way God rules his

kingdom. He wanted Ezra to teach them how to live God's way, how to love their neighbor as they loved themselves.

The object is to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus, live a Christ-like life, and know that the Lord has an ever-watchful eye on you. Be steadfast in him, serve him with gladness, and watch him bless your life.