

Know God. Know the Bible.

Ezra, the scribe, is first introduced into Israel's post-exilic history in Ezra 7. Leading up to his arrival in Jerusalem, the primary characters, Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest, were responsible for rebuilding the temple. With Ezra's arrival the rebuilding of the nation now became the primary focus. Attention shifted from temple reconstruction to heart reconstruction and "a scribe skilled in the Law of Moses ... [and] learned in matters of the commandments of the Lord and his statutes" (vv. 6, 12) was exactly what was needed for this effort. As one who thoroughly learned the Torah and effectively put it into practice, Ezra was competently able to teach it to others (v. 10).

The theologian Charles C. Ryrie put it this way:

The Bible is the greatest of all books; to study it is the noblest of all pursuits; to understand it, the highest of all goals.

What Ryrie pointedly brings to our attention is the Bible's superiority over all other written works. However, it is its divine character - its inspiration - that makes its message one that brings about radical change. The Bible has the power to make an unbeliever "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" and make a believer mature, "equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:15-17). Author and pastor, A.W. Tozer chimes in, saying that "The Word of God well understood and religiously obeyed is the shortest route to spiritual perfection. And we must not select a few favorite passages to the exclusion of others. Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian."

It was evident to Artaxerxes, a pagan king, that Ezra was a man who knew God and knew His Word. If our desire is to be known as a person who knows the Lord of hosts, we need to know the Bible - not simply academically, but experientially. The difference will be evident even to those outside of God's family, because they will see our trust in God (Ps 9:10), our obedience to Him (John 17:17), our walk with Him (John 14:23), our love for Him (1 John 2:5), and our desire to know him even more deeply (1 John 4:19).

Ezra 7:6, 10 (ESV) - "Ezra went up from Babylonia. He was a scribe skilled in the Law of Moses that the Lord, the God of Israel, had given, and the king granted him all that he asked, for the hand of the Lord his God was on him... for Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel."