

25 February 2018: Preached by Preacher Clement Chew

**Topic: A Study of Ezra: A Strengthened Servant**

Scripture text: Ezra 7:11-28

1. Ezra was strengthened by king Artaxerxes' decree to allow him and the Israelites to return to Jerusalem. God moved Artaxerxes' heart (v. 27) to give Ezra the authority to restore the public teaching of God's Word. Enemies would not be able to challenge Ezra's authority. God strengthened Ezra by providing fellow co-laborers (v. 11-13).

2. Ezra was a strengthened servant because God supplied all his needs. God used Artaxerxes to provide a generous amount of gold, silver and animals for the restoration of Temple worship. The provision was akin to one-third of the annual tribute. No one was able to hinder Ezra because he was tasked to do it speedily (v. 14-22). When we seek and do God's will, we must trust in the Lord's provision.

3. Ezra was a strengthened servant because God worked His will through world events. Ezra had the power to establish civil laws and teach those who were ignorant of God's laws. Having quelled the rebellion in Egypt earlier, king Artaxerxes wanted peace in the region of Judaea. Hence, those who rebelled against God's law were dealt with harshly (v. 23-26).

4. Ezra acknowledged that God alone strengthened him and he gave Him all the glory. The Temple was beautiful only because God's Word was proclaimed and obeyed. It was not attributed to the decoration or furniture. Likewise, the Church is only beautiful when God is worshipped in the beauty of holiness (v. 27-28).