

was almost universally weighed instead of being counted.

**27. A thousand darics**—The Persian daric of this period was worth about \$5 in our money.



PERSIAN DARIC, SLIGHTLY ENLARGED.

**Fine bright brass, precious as gold**—The word here translated *brass* occurs nowhere

## The Lesson Exposition

### EZRA THE TEACHER

We should pause long enough, before taking up the lesson proper, to see at least something of the man who was the author of the lesson. He was the second of the three men who had chiefly to do with the restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem from their captivity in Babylon, and in the elements of enduring influence he was the greatest of the three. The first was Zerubbabel, who was the leader of the first company who returned by authority of the decree of King Cyrus. The reader will observe that the account of the movement which he led closes with the sixth chapter of Ezra. The seventh chapter opens with the words, "Now after these things." Now between these two chapters lies a period of sixty years. Of those years we have no record. At the end of that period Ezra, under authority of King Artaxerxes, led another company of exiles back from Babylon. Following Ezra, and not long after, came Nehemiah, of whom the next lesson will tell us. These were the three men who laid again the foundations of the new national life of the Jews in Palestine. They were extraordinary men. Great historical movements always have, because they require, extraordinary men for leadership. God does things through men, and he requires for great things the agency of great men. These three men were men of distinct qualities. Zerubbabel was essentially a pioneer. He had the inspirational power to stir enthusiasm in the hearts of others and lead them on a hard adventure. If he had lived in this country in its early history he would have been among those who pushed westward over the mountains and through forests to plant the seeds of civilization in the wilderness. But he

else in the Bible. Copper and bronze were in more common use, and it is uncertain whether brass, the alloy of zinc and copper, as we know it, was known to the Persian. As bronze vessels were known and used, it is probable that we should substitute the word *bronze* for the word *brass*, since the real meaning of the word to be translated is not known.

**28. Holy**—Consecrated in the sense of being sacredly set apart unto Jehovah.

**29. Princes of the fathers' houses of Israel**—The elders, heads of families and of groups of families, to whom the family and tribal division of the nation gave rank and authority in public affairs.

**31. The enemy and the lier-in-wait**—The enemy in this case may refer to the more formidable foes, possibly the Samaritans and other peoples. The lier-in-wait is the treacherous, stealthy highwayman and bandit.

was not a man of culture and he was not an organizer. Nehemiah, who came after Ezra, was a statesman and a ruler. He came to organize society and bring it into civic order. But Ezra was not a commander of men nor a statesman. He was preëminently a teacher. The characteristics of the three men fit into each other. Ezra could have done nothing if the way had not been pioneered by Zerubbabel; and Nehemiah could have done nothing without the religious teachings of Ezra. "Nehemiah caught the spirit of Ezra's ideas; and Ezra, whose work came to a standstill while he was left to his own resources, was afterward able to carry through his great religious reformation on the basis of the younger man's military and political renovation of Jerusalem."

### INNER STRENGTHENING TO MEET DANGER

It was an enterprise full of danger for which Ezra had gathered his company. The journey purposed was a long one and beset with many perils. There was apparently some particular enemy whom Ezra had reason to fear might attack them on their way, for when the journey was at last safely completed he gave thanks for deliverance from "the hand of the enemy" (8. 31). This enemy may well have been some leader of the hostile people who had harassed those who, under Zerubbabel, began to rebuild the temple. In any case, Ezra was clearly aware of the danger. He could have asked for and obtained an escort of soldiers from the king ample for protection. Under ordinary circumstances that would have been the wise thing to do. But the circumstances at that time were not ordinary. It was distinctly a religious movement which he led. The ability of their

God, of w king, to ca trust in th strengthen they shoul unless they of God. S fasting and the trying about to er always been impotence of heart th The men w identical ad tling with C to withstan vance move the highest find a praye earnestness sought and by prayer d

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Ezra took and other ty lem. It is es five million pretty sum f if it had fal not, in view can only be who was "e protected th anxiety in t as that was habited regie explains the of the treasure priests. The chiefly by th though some Jewish people ure which Ez of credit to t ditional sums And all of th purposes, for God of heav church requir would have needed must would require sors made n money in the They did not cause it is reit on for money highest reason If an enterpr to be most ea with our gift