

Ezra's Journey to Jerusalem

by C.I. Scofield

The sermon emphasizes the importance of consistency in faith, the unchangeable nature of God, and the unchanged nature of the world, while highlighting the Church's role in testifying to the world.

Scripture: John 1:12, Romans 12:2, Hebrews 13:8, James 1:17, 1 John 2:15

Topics: "Faith Consistency", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

C.I. Scofield preaches on the importance of consistency in faith, drawing from the example of Ezra who refused worldly aid despite testifying to the power of God. He emphasizes that while opinions and circumstances may change, God and His truth remain constant, and faith establishes unchanging relationships with God. Scofield highlights the distinction between the world and the family of God, noting that the world's customs may evolve but its fundamental rebellion against God remains unchanged.

Transcript

(Ezra viii:21-32.)

I. The Analysis.

1. The right beginning (verses 21, 23). 2. The resolve of faith (verse 22). 3. Care about holy things (verses 24-30). 4. The care of God.

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

Surely the heart of this lesson is not far to seek. Ezra had bravely borne a clear testimony to the power and righteousness of the God of Israel, and now he was not minded to stultify that testimony by seeking the aid of the world in a matter which concerned God. In other words, he was determined to be consistent. Having testified to the power of God, he felt bound to rest his case on that power. Doubtless many, possibly the king himself, who had heard Ezra's clear testimony, sneered: "We shall soon see this servant of so great a God asking for a military escort."

There is a true consistency, and a foolish consistency, as we have often remarked in these papers. The latter is illustrated by the laws of the Medes and Persians "which change not." Times change, circumstances change, laws must change. So must opinions, convictions even. To all growing natures there comes a larger vision, a new sense of the relations of things, new knowledge, deeper receptivity, and with these change is inevitable. In this sense is Johnson's famous dictum, "Consistency is the virtue of

fools," to be taken.

But there are unchangeable things. God never changes. Jesus Christ is "the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever." And the truth of God never changes. It is as immutable as God Himself. The revealed will of God never changes: "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John x:35).

It follows that faith establishes certain relationships with God which do not change. Our apprehension of the wonder and privilege of our position as sons of God may grow broader and deeper, but we are never any more really sons of God than in the moment when we first believed in Christ, nor can we ever be any less than sons of God.

In the same way it is true that the world of unsaved human beings does not change. Individuals out of the world believe and pass into the family of God by the new birth. When they do that, they change, but the world of unsaved humanity is left unchanged.

The customs and manners of the world change. The world for nineteen hundred years has been growing more cultured, agreeable and law abiding. It is a far pleasanter place to live in than formerly. The modern city is vile enough, but one would rather live in New York than in the Rome of the first century, or the Paris or London of the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. The ethic of Christ, the presence in the world of Christianity, have made the change.

And this change is very misleading. Because the world is gentler in its normal states than formerly, we say it is more Christian. But the world is just the sum of the individuals at any one time on the earth, and an individual is not a Christian so long as he does not, by a definite act of faith, receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. He may take on some ways customary among Christians, as church going and contribution giving, but that no more makes him a Christian than a stage crown makes an actor a king, or burnt cork makes a white man a negro.

So of the world. It is the unchanged enemy of Jesus Christ, the unrepentant rebel against God. The greed of its "captains of industry" is precisely the greed of the brutal robber barons of five hundred years ago. Its essential cruelty in condemning to painful deaths 10,000 industrious railway employees every year to save the expenditure of a few millions in preventive devices, is precisely the cruelty of Roman nobles witnessing the deaths of the arena. The only fundamental difference is that the railway barons do not like to see the mangled victims of their dividend producing greed. Now the application of Ezra's counsel of consistency is evident. The Church testifies to the world that belief in Jesus Christ brings one into the family of the God of all the universe, the owner of the cattle on a thousand hills, of all the treasures of earth, that this Father has left His children in the world to bring the world to His riches. And the church stands a mendicant at every rich man's door!

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