

TRUSTING GOD ALONE

“21 There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast , so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask Him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions. 22 I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen and to protect us from our enemies on the road, because we had told the king, ‘The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to Him, but His great anger is against all who forsake Him.’ 23 So we fasted and petitioned our God about this and He answered our prayer.” (Ezra 8:21-23)

Does God care for me? Will He listen to my prayer? Is God really concerned about me? Can I rely on Him? Will He do it for me? These are endless questions that time after time are asked not only by non-Christians but sometimes even Christians themselves. The book of Ezra speaks about the people of God who were enslaved in the foreign land and afterwards were given the freedom to return to their own land. The king of Persia had given them the right to return to their own land with all their belongings and gifts freely given to them. The journey towards their homeland was long and hazardous, with bandits and enemies along their way. Ezra was tempted to ask protection from king for their children and possessions, but with honour and courage he chose to earnestly seek God and trust His words: *“The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to Him, but His great anger is against all who forsake Him.”*

The journey of Ezra and God’s people to their land is compared to our journey as Christians. All of us were once enslaved to the power of darkness and sin but the Lord Jesus has freed us, and can take us safely to the promised land of eternal life. In fear for our possessions and positions, we are sometimes tempted to seek refuge on kings, soldiers and chariots. However, with or without possessions the fears, dangers, troubles and needs are always around us and will tempt us to trust man and doubt God. But Ezra, an expert on the Law of God, has all the wisdom and favour from God.

One thing relevant is this: If we know our God and understand full well His words, we will undoubtedly put our trust on Him, apply His words in our life, and our Lord shall be pleased. Nevertheless, our God is a jealous God. *“For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.” (Deuteronomy 5:9)* In the New Testament He gave His son, Jesus, who died on the cross and by His blood we are saved from eternal punishment. Thus, He has the right to be jealous if you trust other gods or kings.

1) To ask the king: This phrase represents any figure that we place beside our true and living God. Sometimes we put our hope on our boss, our colleagues, our spouse, our leaders, our national heroes, wealthy people, other social and public figures, the governors, rulers or

kings. We ask help and rely on them. As we trust on those figures, ultimately they become our idols or Gods that we will serve or pay back. Shall we ignite God’s anger?

2) Soldiers And horsemen: This represents human power and authority. We may put our hope on human achievements, degrees, establishments, money, treasures, etc. and we may think it will be a benefit for us while facing the enemies. God does not want us to rely on material things or to any power other than Him. But rather, He wants us to be strong and to rely on the Holy Spirit to face the life’s troubles and challenges.

Ezra when he led the people of God from exile to the promised land, he faced great challenge, the long journey with bandits and dangers along. Consequently, he would ask the king of Persia for soldiers and horsemen or he would rely on God for the task. At the division of two roads, Ezra remembered who God is and he remembered what he had told the king of Persia before about Him. *“The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to Him, but his great anger against all who forsake Him.”* If Ezra would ask help and put hope on the Persian king, he would have insulted God. Hence, Ezra and the people of God with him go and knock the door of the Lord by prayer and fasting.

“So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and He answered our prayer.” Fasting is an act of humbling before the Lord. We get rid of relying on food and material things for strength. Instead, we depend on the Holy Spirit of God to sustain us. To kneel in front of God is an act of sincerity asking favour or petition from Him. We must come boldly at the feet of Jesus, at his Cross, and ask Him our needs. Pray without ceasing; knock only His door and don’t go to other doors; wait for Him to open for us. We ought to show boldness, integrity and consistency in these acts while we sit along with our Lord. Every session of prayer will achieve victory. God will remove threats from our lives; He will remove fears from our hearts. Dangers and bandits will be around us but through prayers God will surely spare us. The enemy may be near us but through prayer and fasting they could not touch us. Our burden will be lifted up? And we will reach our destiny safely. Then we will testify as Ezra testified, *“The hand of our God was on us, and He protected us from enemies and bandits, along the way.” (Ezra 8: 31)*

My beloved readers: We spoke about the true and jealous God. Everyone of us can go to Him through Jesus who love us and gave His life for us dying on the cross for our sins to give us eternal life. We must trust Him and rely on Him alone. We have to teach ourselves not to ring the bells of other doors, for He is a loving and faithful Father. Will you be His child? Jesus loves you! As you agree to pray.

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord builds my faith and my trust in you that I will not be shaking when I face trials but to rely fully on you and your promises to me. Lord uphold me with your grace and mercy, this is my prayer in Jesus name Amen.*