

EZRA: A MODEL PRIEST FOR THE CONTEMPORARY PASTORS OF
THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION

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ABSTRACT

The writer sets out to examine the life of Ezra in order to point out the exemplary qualities in his life, which would serve as an impetus for encouraging and motivating the contemporary pastors of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

The work was carried out through library research by considering the historical background and ministry of Ezra. Further research was done on the exemplary qualities of his life and the challenges, which these have for the Convention pastors.

The writer found out that moral laxity, prayerlessness, ignorance about a pastor's call and lack of commitment to the study of the Word of God brings failure in life and ministry. However, with the qualities discovered in the life of Ezra it is argued that the subsequent emulation of such for the contemporary pastors would lead to growth and fulfillment in ministry.

It is then recommended that further studies be done on other biblical characters that have exemplary qualities to be emulated and to broaden the scope of theological education in Nigeria to enable a person to specialize on leadership development.

5.2 Conclusion

Having considered the way Ezra stood in the place of his calling as a scribe/priest and diligently focused on what he has been assigned to do by God and the King of Persia, it behooves all ministers to also stay in their place of calling and do the work of the ministry faithfully.

It is pertinent to note that ministers should embrace a philosophy for their ministry in which the writer is suggesting "faithfulness and fruitfulness."

With this behind the mind of the ministers they would strive more to make their "calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10).

It is with the words of G.B.F. Hallock that the writer wishes to admonish contemporary pastors that they must have...

The strength of an ox;
 The tenacity of a bulldog;
 The daring of a lion;
 The patient of a donkey;
 The industry of a beaver;
 The versatility of a chameleon;
 The vision of an eagle;
 The meekness of a lamb
 The hide of a rhinoceros;
 The disposition of an angel;
 The resignation of an incurable;
 The loyalty of an apostle;
 The heroism of a martyr;
 The faithfulness of a prophet;
 The tenderness of a shepherd;
 The fervency of an evangelist;
 And, the devotion of a mother (242).

With the above words, the writer wishes to conclude that when a minister does embrace these virtues, he would be of help both to himself and the people God has assigned him to nurture and bring to the saving knowledge of the Lord.

5.3 Recommendations

It is with the hindsight of what have been discovered that the following recommendations are made:

1. Pastors of the Nigerian Baptist Convention should have a forum where they come together to iron out issues of importance to their

lives and ministry irrespective of which Baptist theological institution they graduated from.

2. The Convention pastors should make efforts to regularly release communiqué, which would address the moral decadence observed in the community from time to time.
3. The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso and her sister school within the convention should endeavor to create a programme for specialization in leadership, most especially as it relate to the pastors
4. The Baptist Pastors' should endeavour to do thorough studies on biblical characters which would help to enable them know how to become a model too for up-coming believers and young ministers.