

20.14 Vocabulary.*Verbs*

אָחַז	to seize, grasp, take (63)
טָמֵא	to be(come) unclean (162)
יָצַר	to form, fashion, shape, create (63)
נוּס	to flee, escape (160)
נָגַע	to touch, strike, reach (150)
סָבַב	to turn, go around, march around, surround (163)
סָפַר	to count (107)
שָׂמַח	to rejoice, be joyful, be glad (156)
שָׁבַר	to break (up), break in pieces, smash, shatter (148)

Nouns

יַחְדָּו	together, at the same time (96); יַחְדָּו together, along with (46)
יַיִן	wine (141)
עֲבֹדָה	work, labor, service, worship (145); also spelled עֲבוּדָה
עֵדָה	congregation, assembly (171)

Other

בְּלִתִּי	not, except (112); usually appears as לְבִלְתִּי with the Infinitive Construct
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20.15 A Life Centered on Torah. The priest/scribe Ezra was a man whose life provided a model of godly leadership to a people in desperate need of hearing God’s Word and seeing God’s will lived out in practical ways.

You have learned that the Infinitive Construct with the preposition לְ often complements the main verb by expressing the purpose, goal, or result to which the main verb points. In Ezra 7:10, there are three Infinitive Construct forms that are used in this way in a verse that highlights Ezra’s personal commitments.

The narrator has already introduced Ezra as a minister with the right pedigree (7:1-5) and the right professional abilities: he was a סֹפֵר, a “scribe,” “skilled in the Torah of Moses” (7:6; cf. 7:11). Ezra’s every

request was granted him by the Persian king and his ministry flourished “because the (good) hand of Yahweh his God was on him” (7:6, 9). Ezra 7:10 then provides the reason for this divine favor.

כִּי עֲזָרָא הֵכִין לְבָבוֹ לְדַרוֹשׁ אֶת־תּוֹרַת יְהוָה
וּלְעֲשׂוֹת וּלְלַמֵּד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל חֻק וּמִשְׁפָּט

For Ezra set his heart *to study* the Torah of Yahweh,
and *to practice* (it), and *to teach* (its) statutes
and ordinances in Israel.

Here we find the main verb הֵכִין (to set, establish)¹³ followed by three Infinitive Construct verbs with the preposition לְ (לְדַרוֹשׁ, לְעֲשׂוֹת, לְלַמֵּד)¹⁴, each of which clarifies the purpose to which Ezra committed himself: study → practice → teach. This progression of action, grounded in God’s Word, characterized Ezra’s life and ministry and we are perhaps wise to follow his example. Sound study of the Scriptures must give rise to personal practice. Only then can we have a basis for effective teaching. But as Daniel I. Block emphasizes, far too often preachers and teachers either lose the centrality of the Word in their ministry or confuse the order of Ezra’s resolve. Some focus on teaching technique at the expense of quality time in the Word, thus substituting the shape of the message for its essence. Others are quick to proclaim God’s truth but are slow to apply it to their own lives, resulting in hypocritical leaders who have forgotten that only the pure in heart will see God (Matt 5:8; cf. Ps 24:3-5; Heb 12:13). Still others apply before having studied, allowing their own definitions of right and wrong to guide conduct rather than the revealed divine will in the Scriptures.¹⁵

Ezra was serious about understanding God’s Word, applying it, and proclaiming it - in that order! This personal commitment generated a ministry blessed by God. We would do well to follow the pattern of Ezra today. “The hand of our God works for good on all who seek him, but his powerful wrath is against all who forsake him” (Ezra 8:22).

Jason S. DeRouchie

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¹³ Hiphil Perfect 3ms of כָּוַן

¹⁴ Piel Infinitive Construct of לָמַד with לְ preposition

¹⁵ Daniel I. Block, “Training Scribes and Pastors in the Tradition of Ezra,” *Southern Seminary Magazine* (June, 1999) 6.