

THE DAY OF PREPARATION

TEXT: (Proverbs 22:29, NIV)

²⁹ Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings; they will not serve before officials of low rank.

I. WHAT IS THAT IN THINE HAND

1. "And the LORD said unto him, What *is* that in thine hand? And he said, A rod" (Exodus 4:2, KJV).

A. Preparation Is Essential

1. "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11, NIV).
2. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15, KJV).

B. God Honors Those Who Search the Scriptures

1. "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us" (II Corinthians 5:20, NIV).

C. What Does It Mean to Be an Ambassador?

1. An Ambassador is the highest-ranking official outside the boundary of his own country.
 - a. "When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick" Luke 9:1-2, NIV).
 - b. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NIV).
2. An ambassador represents his own country.
 - a. "Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place'" (John 18:36, NIV).
 - b. "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20, NIV).
3. Knowledge is communicated to the host country concerning the ambassador's home country by the ambassador.
 - a. "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27, NIV).
4. The ambassador is not a tourist.
 - a. "I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body" (Philippians 1:23-24, NIV).
5. The ambassador always seeks opportunities to show the glories of his home country.
 - a. "Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you" (I Thessalonians 3:1, NIV).
6. When the ambassador speaks it is the voice of his country.
 - a. "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19, NIV).

- b. “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17, NIV).
- 7. The ambassador has diplomatic immunity and freedom in the host country.
 - a. “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you’ (Hebrews 13:5, NIV).

II. GOD’S PURPOSE IS ACHIEVED THROUGH PREPARATION

A. God Had a Plan

- 1. “Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom” (Daniel 6:3, NIV).
- 2. "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men" (Proverbs 18:16, KJV).

B. God's Plan Can Be Achieved Regardless of Current Circumstances

- 1. “At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs” (Daniel 6:4, NIV).
- 2. “Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before” (Daniel 6:10, NIV).
- 3. This was not the first day he prayed; prayer was his daily preparation.

III. LET HIM FINISH HIS WORK IN YOU

A. Work Hard

- 1. “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Colossians 3:23-24, NIV).

B. Don’t Quit

- 1. “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (II Timothy 4:7, NIV).
- 2. “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1, KJV).
- 3. “Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly” (I Corinthians 9:25-26, NIV).
- 4. “I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us” (Philippians 3:14, NLT).
- 5. “I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize” (I Corinthians 9:27, NIV).

C. Prepare

- 1. “During the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia...Ezra came up from Babylon. He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him” (Ezra 7:1, 6, NIV).
- 2. “For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel” (Ezra 7:10, NIV).

CONCLUSION

1. “A man’s gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men” (Proverbs 18:16, KJV).
2. “The LORD has chosen Bezalel.... And he has given both him and Oholiab ... the ability to teach others. He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—all of them skilled workers and designers” (Exodus 35:30, 34-35, NIV).
3. “Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom” Daniel 6:3, NIV).
4. “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Colossians 3:23-24, NIV).