# Ezra

Ezra is an historical account of the return of the Jews to JeruSalem after Babylon was defeated by the Persians.

It covers the period from the 1st year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia over Babylon, to the reestablishment and cleansing of the Priesthood.

It was written by the Jewish Scribe and Priest Ezra.

**One of two versions**

This version of Ezra is not the version preferred by the Early Christians.

There were originally two versions of Ezra: Alpha and Beta. Today, most Bible translations use the Beta version, and that’s the version accepted by most Christian and Jewish denominations.

The Alpha version (also known as 1 Esdras) is longer and contains extra information. The early (Greek-speaking) Christians seemed to prefer this version, since they quoted from it far more than the Beta version.

Since the Beta version is almost exactly like the Hebrew version accepted by the Jews, the Catholic Church rejected the Alpha version (through Jerome). However, should we go along with their decision?

Well, the extra material in the Alpha text uses a literary device called an ‘inclusio,’ where the narration forms a certain pattern. The Beta version, however, only includes part of the material, which rips the heart out of the *inclusio* pattern, ruining it. This is compelling evidence for the the Alpha text being the original, with the Beta text being a later work copied from it.

Why, though, would anyone create a second, shorter Ezra? Well, a few parts in the missing material stand out as being difficult for Rabbinical thought of the time, such as it calling women powerful and wise.

However, it also says that truth from God is supreme – not the teachings of Rabbis. In the 1st century, Rabbinical teachings were supposed to override Biblical ones. They did not believe that God is the source of truth, but that *they were*.

Further, these words about truth were regarded by early Christians *as a Messianic prophecy,* since Jesus also talked about truth. So it’s easy to see why the Rabbinical schools may have wished to produce a shorter version of Ezra – even if it meant destroying the inclusio pattern.

Unfortunately, when we first began this translation, we didn’t understand these issues with Ezra, so we’ve only translated the Beta text.

In the future, we’ll also translate the Alpha text. In the meantime, you can read it at the NETS project.

### Ezra

## Chapter 1

1In the 1st year of King Cyrus of Persia, the Word of Jehovah came through the mouth of [the Prophet] JeremiAh to awaken the spirit of King Cyrus.

2So, [Cyrus] sent a written proclamation throughout his kingdom that said:

 ‘This is what Cyrus the king of Persia has decreed:

 *‘All the kingdoms of the earth have been given to me by Jehovah, the God of the heavens, and He told me to build a Temple to Him in JeruSalem of Judah.* 3*So, who of you are His people? His God Jehovah is now with him!*

 *‘Therefore, let him [return to JeruSalem] and build a Temple for the God of IsraEl who is The God in JeruSalem.*

 4*‘Therefore, all the Judeans should leave the places where they’ve been staying and take up a collection of silver and gold, as well as of things from among their belongings and their cattle, [to rebuild] the Temple of God in JeruSalem.’*

5And thereafter, the family heads of Judah and BenJamin, as well as the Priests and Levites – everyone whose spirit God had awakened to go and build a Temple of Jehovah in JeruSalem – got up and left, 6[carrying along] silver, gold, cattle, and gifts, in addition to their own offerings and personal belongings.

7King Cyrus also brought out the things [that had been taken] from the Temple of Jehovah, which NebuChadNezzar had removed from JeruSalem and put into the temple of his god, 8and [Cyrus] sent them by the hand of his Royal Treasurer MithraDates, who counted everything and gave it all to SasaBasar, the [man who’d been appointed as] the ruler of Judah.

9This is what he sent:

 • 30 wine-chillers of gold
 • 30 wine-chillers of silver
 • 29 sacrificial knives
 • 30 gold washbasins
 • 410 double-silver items
 • 1,000 other items, plus 5,400 smaller things of silver and gold.

SasaBasar had it all carried from Babylon to JeruSalem during the resettlement.

### Ezra

## Chapter 2

1These are the ones who returned from Babylon to resettle Judah and JeruSalem [whose families] had been relocated by NebuChadNezzar (the king of Babylon)… Each person returned to his own city.

2Those who returned with ZerubBabel were:

 • JoShua,
 • NehemiAh,
 • SeraiJah,
 • ReElaiJah,
 • MardecAi,
 • BilShan,
 • MizPar,
 • BigVai,
 • Rehum, and
 • BaAna.

In numbers, the people of IsraEl included:

 3• 2,172 from ParOsh;
 4• 372 from ShephatiJah;
 5• 775 from Arah;
 6• 2,812 from Pahath MoAb (descendants of JoShua and JoAb);
 7• 1,254 from ElAm;
 8• 945 from ZatTu;
 9• 760 from ZacKai;
 10• 642 from Bani;
 11• 623 from BaeAi;
 12• 1,220 from AzGad;
 13• 666 from AdoniKam;
 14• 2,056 from BigVai;
 15• 454 from Adin;
 16• 98 from Ater (descendants of HezekiAh);
 17• 323 from BezAi;
 18• 112 from JoRah;
 19• 223 from Hashum;
 20• 95 from GibBar;
 21• 123 from BethLehem;
 22• 56 from NetoPhah;
 23• 128 from AnathOth;
 24• 43 from AzMaveth;
 25• 743 from KiriAth JaiRim, ChaPhira, and BeerOth;
 26• 621 from Rama and GabaA;
 27• 122 men of MichMash;
 28• 223 men of BethEl;
 29• 52 from Nebo;
 30• 156 from MagBish;
 31• 1,254 from ElAm;
 32• 320 from Harim;
 33• 725 from Lod, Hadid, and Ono;
 34• 345 from JeriCho;
 35• 3,630 from SenaAh;
 36• 973 Priests of the house of JoShua from JedaiJah;
 37• 1,052 from ImMer;
 38• 1,247 from PashUr;
 39• 1,007 from Harim.

40There were also the following:

 • 74 Levites who were descendants of JoShua and KadmiEl from HoDaviJah;
 • 41128 singers from the family of Asaph;
 • 42139 gatekeepers from ShalLum, Ater, TelMon, AkKub, HatiTa, and ShobAi.
 • 43The Nethinim from SiHa, HaSupha, TabaOth, 44Keros, SiaHa, Padon, 45LebanAh, HagAbah, AkKub, 46HagAb, ShalmAi, Hanan, 47GidDel, Gahar, ReaJah and 48Rezin, and
 • 12 from NekoDa and GazZam.

49As well as [ones] from:

 • UzZa,
 • PaseAh,
 • BesAi,
 • 50AsNah,
 • Mehunim,
 • Nephousim,
 • 51BakBuk,
 • HakUpha,
 • HarHur,
 • 52BazLuth,
 • MehiDa,
 • HarSha,
 • 53Barkos,
 • SiSera,
 • ThamAh,
 • 54NeziJah,
 • HatiPha, and
 • 55Descendants of the servants of Solomon from SotAi.

From SopherEth there were:

 • Peruda 56of JaAlah,
 • DarKon,
 • GidDel,
 • 57ShephatiJah,
 • HatTil,
 • PocherEth,
 • Zebaim, and
 • Ami.

58Altogether, there were 392 Nethinim and descendants of the servants of Solomon.

59Those who came from TelMelah, TelHarsa, Cherub, AdDan, and ImMer were unable to report on their houses and children, because [it was questionable] whether they were actually IsraElites.

60In addition, there were 652 from TobiJah and NekoDa.

61Although the records of the priests from HabaiJah, Koz, and BarZilLai who married women from BarZilLai (in GileAd) had once existed, 62they couldn’t be found when they went looking for their genealogy, so they were suspended from the priesthood.

63AtherSastha told them this:

 ‘You may not eat from the Holy of Holies until a Priest returns [with] the Lights and Perfections [possibly meaning the *Urim and Thumim*, or the *Revelation and Truth*] to [tell us what we should do].

64Altogether, there were 42,360 who returned, 65plus 7,337 male and female servants and 200 male and female singers.

66They brought back:

 • 736 horses,
 • 245 mules,
 • 67435 camels, and
 • 6,720 burros.

68The family heads who went to the Temple of Jehovah in JeruSalem who were willing and able to contribute to its reconstruction, 69contributed 61,000 gold coins and 5,000 silver coins, plus 100 outfits for the Priests, which was all then put into the treasury.

70However, the Priests, Levites, [dedicated] people, singers, gatekeepers, and Nethinim went and lived in their own cities, as did all the rest of IsraEl.

### Ezra

## Chapter 3

1Well, by the 7th month, all the sons of IsraEl had returned and were settled in their cities.

And thereafter, all the people gathered in JeruSalem as one man, 2and JoShua (son of JoZadak), his brothers the Priests, and ZerubBabel (son of ShealtiEl) and his brothers all got up and built an Altar to the God of IsraEl upon which they could offer whole burnt offerings, as it was written in the Law of Moses, the man of God.

3They prepared the Altar in a [hidden] place, because they were afraid of the people in the land... However, they kept bringing the whole burnt offerings to Jehovah from morning until evening.

4Thereafter, they celebrated the Festival of Temporary Dwellings, following the written instructions, and they offered whole burnt offerings each day for the number of days that they understood were required.

5And from then on, they continued to sacrifice whole burnt offerings on the New Moons and on all the holy celebrations of Jehovah, in addition to the free-will offerings that they brought to the Lord.

6It was on the 1st day of the 7th month that they started sacrificing the whole burnt offerings to Jehovah, but the foundation for His Temple hadn’t been laid yet.

7So, they then hired quarry workers and laborers, and they offered food, drink, and olive oil to the Sidonians and the people of Tyre to get them to transport cedar boards from Lebanon across the sea to JopPa, as it had been decreed by Cyrus, the king of Persia.

8Then when they assembled at the Temple of Jehovah God in JeruSalem, which was in the 2nd year and the 2nd month, ZerubBabel (son of ShealtiEl), JoShua (son of JoZadek), and the rest of their brothers among the Priests and Levites (as well as everyone else who had left captivity and returned to JeruSalem) assigned all the Levites who were 20-years and older to ensure the success of the ones who were doing the work on the Temple of Jehovah.

9So, JoShua and his sons, as well as his brother KadmiEl and his sons (who were all Judeans) were put in charge over those who were doing the work at the Temple of God, along with the sons of HenAdad and their brothers the Levites.

10Well, when they started laying the foundation for the Temple of Jehovah, the Priests donned their robes and got their trumpets, and the Levites (the descendants of Asaph) picked up their cymbals to praise Jehovah with [the songs] of David, the king of IsraEl.

11Then, before Jehovah, they praised and acknowledged that He’s good and that His mercy would remain upon IsraEl throughout the ages.

Meanwhile, all the people were shouting and praising Jehovah together as the groundwork for the Temple of Jehovah was being prepared.

12There was so much noise, because many of the Priests, Levites, family heads, and elders that were standing there watching the groundwork for the preparation of the Temple started weeping, while many others were shouting in joy (which made the sounds even louder).

13So, it soon became difficult to distinguish the difference between the sounds of people shouting in joy and the sounds of the weeping... For the sounds of the cheering and weeping could be heard for [miles]!

### Ezra

## Chapter 4

1Well, when the people who opposed Judah and BenJamin heard that those who had returned were building a Temple to Jehovah the God of IsraEl, 2they approached ZerubBabel and the family heads and said to them:

 ‘You should allow us to build the Temple with you, so we can also ask [for things] from your God...

 ‘For we’ve been offering sacrifices to Him since the time of EsarHaddon the king of Assyria, who brought us here.’

3But ZerubBabel, JoShua, and the rest of the family heads of IsraEl replied:

 ‘It isn’t up to us to decide whether you can help us to build a Temple to Jehovah the God of IsraEl, for we were told to do this by Cyrus, the king of Persia.’

4But thereafter, the people of the land did whatever they could to weaken the people of Judah and to impede the construction project. 5They even hired advisors to strongly oppose their plans during all the days of King Cyrus of Persia, right up until the kingdom of Darius of Persia.

6Then, at the beginning of the reign of AhaSuerus, they wrote a letter against the people who were living in Judah and JeruSalem. 7And in the days of ArthaSastha, MithraDates, TabeEl, and his fellow servants wrote to ArthaSastha (the king of Persia) about them.

And because they wrote it in Syrian, [the king’s] tax collector had to translate it for him.

8It was Lord Rehum that wrote the letter against JeruSalem to King ArthaSastha through his scribe ShimShai, which said:

 9*‘This is what our lord, Judge Rehum, as well as the scribe ShimShai, the rest of our fellow servants, the Dinaites, ApharSathchites, Tarpelites, Apharsites, Archevites, Babylonians, Sousanchites, Dehavites, Elamites, 10and all the other nations that were resettled in the cities of Samaria and across the river by the great and esteemed Asnapper [AshurBanipal] have to say’…*

11This is what they wrote to King ArthaSastha:

 *‘From your servants on the other side of the river;*

 12*‘We wish to inform the king that the Judeans whom you sent among us have come to JeruSalem (an apostate and wicked city), where they’ve raised a foundation and they’re getting ready to rebuild its walls.*

 13*‘So, we want the king to know that if the city should be rebuilt and its walls re-erected, they’ll stop paying their tolls and taxes, and they’ll treat the king wickedly!*

 14*‘It’s because we don’t wish to see such indecent treatment of the king that we’re sending [this letter], and we want to let the king know what’s really happening.*

 15*‘If you’ll examine the records of your ancestors, you’ll see that [JeruSalem] is an apostate city that treats their kings badly, and that they’ve been escaping and rebelling throughout the ages…*

 *‘This is why their city was destroyed!*

 16*‘Therefore, we’re informing the king that the city should not be rebuilt and that they should not be preparing its walls.*

 17*‘From us on the other side of the river, to the king.*

 *‘From Lord Rehum, ShimShai the scribe, and from the rest of their fellow servants that live in Samaria and across the river.*

 *‘We wish you Peace.’*

18[Then the king replied]:

 *‘I just called the tax collector before me whom you sent, 19and as a result, I’ve issued a decree.*

 *‘For after examining [the records], this is what I found:*

 *‘That city has for a fact rebelled against the kings throughout the ages, and all sorts of uprisings and defections have happened there... 20For they once had [their own] mighty kings who ruled from JeruSalem all the way to the other side of the river, and that used to collect their own taxes and tolls.*

 21*‘So now, [I have] passed a decree that those men should stop their work and that their city must never be rebuilt again!*

 22*‘I appreciate the ways that you’ve followed my decrees, and for your concern that the power of the king may never be lost to evil deeds.’*

23[Then upon his return], King ArthaSastha’s tax collector read [the letter] in the presence of Lord Rehum and the scribe ShimShai and their fellow servants, and they quickly traveled to JeruSalem [and throughout] Judah with their army and cavalry to force them to stop doing their work.

24As a result, construction on the Temple of God in JeruSalem came to a halt, and it remained on hold until the 2nd year of the reign of Darius, the king of Persia.

### Ezra

## Chapter 5

1It was then that the Prophets HagGai and ZechariAh (son of IdDo) [each] spoke prophecies about the Jews in Judah and JeruSalem in the Name of the God of IsraEl.

2So, ZerubBabel (son of ShealtiEl) and JoShua (son of JoZadek) got up and started rebuilding the Temple of God in JeruSalem once again, along with the Prophets of God who came to help them.

3Then TatNai (the vassal king on the other side of the river) and ShetharBozNai and their fellow servants came to them and asked:

 ‘By whose decree are you rebuilding this Temple?

 ‘Where did you get the money? 4And what are the names of the men who have started rebuilding this city?’

5Well, the eyes of God had been watching over the captivity of Judah and He didn’t make them stop working on the Temple during the time that a report was being carried to Darius by his tax collector, and while they were thereafter awaiting his reply.

6This is what the letter that was sent to King Darius by TatNai (the vassal king from the other side of the river), ShetharBozNai, and their fellow servants (who were ApharSachaeans that lived on the other side of the river) said:

 7*‘To Darius the king,*

 *‘May you have peace in everything.*

 8*‘Let it be known to the king that we went into Judea to the Temple of the great God, and found it being rebuilt with the best of stone and with timbers being inserted into the walls. We also found that the workmanship was well done and proceeding very well under them.*

 9*‘So, we asked the elders there by whose decree this Temple was being rebuilt, who was providing the money for the construction, 10and what their names were, so we could send [this information] to you.*

 11*‘And this was their reply:*

 ‘We are servants of the God of the lands and the skies, and we’re rebuilding the Temple that was built here many years ago by a great king of IsraEl, who prepared it for [His people].

 12‘But when our ancestors made the God of of the heavens angry, He handed them over to NebuChadNezzar, the Chaldean king of Babylon.

 ‘So, this Temple was allowed to rest and the people were resettled in Babylon.

 13‘However, in the 1st year of Cyrus (the king [that conquered] the Babylonians), he issued a decree to rebuild this Temple of God, 14and to return the items of gold and silver to the Temple of God which NebuChadNezzar had taken from the Temple in JeruSalem and carried to his own temple in Babylon.

 15‘Then King Cyrus had these things taken from the temple in Babylon and he gave them to SheshBazzar (his royal treasurer), telling him to go and return it all to the Temple of God in JeruSalem, so that it could be rebuilt in the place where it once stood.

 16‘So, SheshBazzar went to JeruSalem and laid the Temple foundation… Which has been under construction since that time, but it hasn’t been finished yet.’

 17*‘Now, if the king approves... Please send someone to the treasury in the king’s temple in Babylon to see if King Cyrus really did issue such a decree to rebuild the Temple of God in JeruSalem.*

 *‘And when the king finds out, may he send a reply to us.’*

### Ezra

## Chapter 6

1Well, after examining the library at the treasury in Babylon, King Darius thereafter issued a decree. 2For in the city of AchMetha, in the palace of the Medes, he found a scroll with a record that was written in the 1st year of King Cyrus, where he rendered a decree concerning the Temple of God in JeruSalem.

3It said:

 *‘Allow a Temple to be built where they’ll offer sacrifices!*

 *‘Let them set in place the foundations.*

 *‘[The building] must be 100 feet (30.5m) high and 100 feet (30.5) wide.*

 4*‘It should be made with three layers of durable stones and a layer of durable timbers.*

 *‘It’s decreed that the expense [of this construction] will be paid for by the palace of the king. Also, the items of gold and silver that were confiscated from the Temple of God by NebuChadNezzar should be removed from his temple and returned to the one in JeruSalem… It should be taken from Babylon and transported to the Holy Place in JeruSalem, the Temple of God.’*

6So [the king] told King TatNai, ShetharBozNai, and his fellow servants (the ApharSachites from the other side of the river) to leave that place and to allow the work on the Temple of God [to be completed]… 7[not to bother] the elders and those who were directing the work of the Judeans, so they could rebuild [the Temple] where it once was.

8[He said]:

 *‘My decree through the elders of those Judeans is for them to build the Temple of God using tax money from the [vassal] kings on the other side of the river. The expenses must be carefully calculated and then paid to those men, so the work doesn’t stop.*

 9*‘Also, where they’re lacking enough male calves, rams, and lambs for their whole burnt offerings to the God of heaven, or wheat, salt, wine, or olive oil… Whatever the Priests in JeruSalem need, must be given to them each day.*

 *‘There must be no arguing... Whatever they ask for 10should be provided, so a pleasant aroma may be offered to the God of heaven, and so that prayers may be offered on behalf of the king and his sons.*

 11*‘This decree has come from me, and any man who challenges what I’ve said will have his house demolished and its boards placed upright! Thereafter, he will be impaled on top of them, and everything in his house will be looted.*

 12*‘May the God who camps and puts His Name there wipe out any people and their kings who raise a hand against, or change, or hide the Temple of God in JeruSalem.*

 *‘For I, Darius, have rendered this decree after thoughtful consideration…*

 *‘May it be so!’*

13Then TatNai (the vassal king) from the other side of the river (as well as ShetharBozNai and his fellow servants) did exactly as they were told, because of what King Darius had decreed.

14So, the Judean elders kept on building… And they were blest, just as the Prophets HagGai and ZechariAh (son of IdDo) foretold. They got everything ready and did the rebuilding, following the instructions of the God of IsraEl by the decrees of Cyrus, Darius, and ArthaSastha, the kings of the Persians.

15Well, the Temple was completed by the 3rd day of the month of Adar in the 6th year of the reign of King Darius.

16So, the sons of IsraEl, the Priests, the Levites, and all the rest that had returned in the resettlement joyfully declared a holiday of rededication of the Temple of God.

17And this is what they offered for the rededication:

 • 100 calves,
 • 100 rams,
 • 200 lambs, and
 • 400 winter-yearling goats as sin offerings for all IsraEl.

And they repeated this 12 times (for the number of the tribes of IsraEl).

18They also reestablished the divisions of the Priests and they distributed the duties at the Temple of God in JeruSalem among the Levites, just as it was written in the book of Moses.

19Thereafter, those who had returned went on to observe the Passover on the 14th day of the 1st month. 20For by then, all the Priests had been purified and all the Levites were clean.

So they slaughtered the Passover for those who had returned and for their brothers the Priests. 21Then, all the sons of IsraEl (those who had returned and separated themselves from the uncleanness of the gentiles so they could ask for things from Jehovah the God of IsraEl) ate the Passover, 22and they joyfully observed the holiday of Fermentation-free Bread for seven days, because Jehovah had filled them with joy.

Thereafter, even the king of Assyria assisted them by providing [workers] for the Temple of the God of IsraEl.

### Ezra

## Chapter 7

1It was during the reign of ArthaSastha the king of Persia, that Ezra returned from Babylon.

[Ezra was:]

 • The son of SeraiJah,
 • The son of AzariJah,
 • The son of HilkiJah,
 • 2The son of ShalLum,
 • The son of ZaDok,
 • The son of AhiTob,
 • 3The son of AmariJah,
 • The son of AzariJah,
 • The son of MeraiOth,
 • 4The son of ZerahiJah,
 • The son of UzZi,
 • The son of BukKi,
 • 5The son of AbiShua,
 • The son of PhneHas,
 • The son EliEzer,
 • The son of Aaron, The first Priest.

6He was a scribe who was well-versed in the Law that Jehovah the God of IsraEl had given to Moses. And because the hand of his God Jehovah was with him, the king gave him everything that he requested.

7Then the sons of IsraEl, the Priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, 8and the Nethinim returned to JeruSalem in the 5th month of the 7th year of the reign of King ArthaSastha.

9It was on the 1st day of the 1st month that he arranged for their return from Babylon, and it was on the 1st day of the 5th month that [Ezra] came to JeruSalem, because the good hand of his God was upon him.

10Now, Ezra had prepared his heart to search the Law of Jehovah and then to practice and teach all its regulations and decisions to IsraEl.

11King ArthaSastha also gave a copy of the following edict to the Priest Ezra (who was the scribe of the scroll of the words of the Commandments of Jehovah), which contained his orders concerning IsraEl.

[The decree said]:

 12*‘ArthaSastha (the king of kings) to the Priest Ezra, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven:*

 13*‘May my reply to this matter now be initiated, for I’ve sent a decree that tells all those in my kingdom among the people of IsraEl, including their Priests and Levites who wish to return to JeruSalem with you, that they may go there.*

 14*‘And here, before the king and his 7 advisors, I’m sending you to oversee Judah and JeruSalem according to the Law of your God! 15You are to carry all the silver and gold to the Temple of Jehovah that the king and his counselors are willing to donate to the God of IsraEl who camps in JeruSalem, 16as well as all the silver and gold that you can find in Babylon, as an offering.*

 *‘This is in addition to whatever your people may wish to offer to the Temple of your God in JeruSalem.*

 17*‘Now, for everyone who’s willing to go, you must (by this edict) arrange for them to bring along calves, rams, lambs, sacrifices, and drink offerings for presentation at the Altar of your God in JeruSalem.*

 18*‘Also, carry along anything that you and your brothers see that you [will need], in addition to the silver and gold.*

 *‘Do whatever pleases your God!*

 19*‘Carry with you the items that were given to you for the services at the Temple of God, and present them before your God in JeruSalem. 20Also, carry along anything else that you see will be needed for your God from the treasury in the king’s palace.*

 21*‘I, King ArthaSastha, have also sent a decree regarding the treasuries that are on the other side of the river, that whatever Ezra the Priest and scribe of the Law of the God of heaven asks of [those people] must be readily obeyed.*

 22*‘They must give you:*

 *• 3 tons (2,700kg) of silver,*
 *• 600 bushels of wheat,*
 *• 600 gallons (2,200l) of wine,*
 *• 600 gallons (2,200l) of olive oil, and*
 *• salt* (no amount was specified).

 23*‘They must supply whatever the God of heaven has decreed for the Temple of the God of heaven!*

 *‘They must be very careful to do this, for any attempt against the Temple of the God of heaven at any time will bring [my] rage upon the king of that kingdom and upon his sons.*

 24*‘And let it be made known that in regard to all the Priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, Nethinim, and officials at the Temple of God... No one is authorized to impose any sort of tax or toll upon them!*

 25*‘As for you, O Ezra:*

 *‘Use the wisdom of God that’s been placed in your hands to appoint scribes, as well as judges who know the Laws of your God, so as to judge all the people on the other side of the river and to teach them to anyone who doesn’t already know them!*

 26*‘Then you must decide whether any person who doesn’t diligently obey the Laws of God and the laws of the king must be killed, exiled, taught, fined, or locked in prison.’*

27O praise Jehovah the God of our ancestors who put it into the heart of the king to glorify the Temple of Jehovah in JeruSalem this great way, 28and for causing the eyes of the king, his advisors, and his leading men to look so mercifully upon me!

[And praise] the good hand of my God Jehovah that has strengthened me, so that I could gather all the leaders of IsraEl and bring them back with me!

### Ezra

## Chapter 8

1Now, these are the heads of families and the genealogies of those who came with me from the kingdom of ArthaSastha, the king of Babylon:

2From the descendants of PhiNehas there was:

 GerSom.

From the descendants of IthaMar there was:

 DaniEl.

From the descendants of David there was:

 HatTush.

3From the descendants of ShechaniJah and the sons of PharOsh there was:

 ZechariAh, and with him were 150 that could trace their genealogies.

4From the descendants of PahathMoab there was:

 EliHoEnai (son of ZereHijah) and 200 males with him.

5From the descendants of ShechaniJah there was:

 AziEl and 300 males that came with him.

6From the descendants of Adin there was:

 Ebed (son of JoNathan) and 50 males that came with him;

7From the descendants of ElAm there was:

 IsaiJah (son of AthaliAh) and 70 males that came with him;

8From the descendants of ShephatiJah there was:

 ZebadiJah (son of MichaEl) and 80 males that came with him;

9From the descendants of JoAb there was:

 ObadiJah (son of JehiEl) and 218 males that came with him;

10From the descendants of ShelomIth there was:

 JoSephiJah and 160 males that came with him;

11From the descendants of BebAi there was:

 ZechariAh (son of BebAi) and 28 males that came with him;

12From the descendants of AzGad there was:

 JoHanan (son of HacKatan) and 110 males that came with him;

13From the descendants of AdoniKam (the latter) there was:

 EliPhelet, JeiEl, and ShemaiJah, and 60 males that came with them;

14From the descendants of BigVai there was:

 UthAi and ZaboUd, and 70 males that came with them.

15I gathered them by the river that flows past Evi, where we camped for three days.

But then I noticed that there were no Priests or Levites to be found among the people, 16so I sent [a message] to:

 • EliEzer,
 • AriEl,
 • ShemaiJah,
 • ElNathan,
 • JaRib ElNatham,
 • Nathan,
 • ZechariAh, and
 • MeshulLam (who were their leaders)

...as well as to JoiArib and ElNathan (their supervisors), 17and told them to go see IdDo, the ruler of the area of CasiPhiJa.

I told them to tell IdDo and their brothers the Nethinim (who were the treasurers of CasiPhiJa) to send us officials and singers for the Temple of our God... 18And because the hand of our God was good to us, a very wise man from among the sons of MahLi (a descendant of Levi, son of IsraEl) was sent to us, along with SherEbiJah and his sons and family (18 people).

19Also, HashAbiJah and JeShaiJah from the family line of MeraRi and their families and sons (some 20 people) came with them. 20And from the Nethinim whom David had appointed to be in charge of the services for the Levites, there were 220 more that were all [chosen by] name.

21Then I called for a fast there at the Ahava River to humble ourselves before our God and to ask Him to straighten the way for ourselves, our children, and our possessions, 22because I was ashamed to ask the king for troops and cavalry to protect us from our enemies along the way, since I’d told the king that the hand of our God would be with all those who search for good things from Him, and that His might and rage would come upon all those who abandon Him.

23So, we fasted and [put our trust] in our God about this matter, and He listened to us.

24Then I selected 12 of the leaders from among the Priests and 10 from among the brothers of SherEbiJah and HashAbiJa, 25and I assigned them [to watch over] the silver, gold, and the items of the first-fruits that were dedicated to the Temple of our God by the king, his counselors, his governors, and by all the people of IsraEl.

26I handed over to their charge:

 • Some 25 tons (22,700kg) of silver,
 • 4 tons (3,600kg) of items made of silver,
 • 3 tons (2,700kg) of gold, and
 • 271,000 gold bowls weighing 20 pounds (9kg) each,
 • Plus many items of shiny high-quality brass that was as good as gold.

28And I said to them:

 ‘Now, you are holy to Jehovah God, and these items of silver and gold are also holy, for they’re voluntary offerings to Jehovah the God of our ancestors.

 29‘So, stay alert and watch over these things until we can hand them over to the Chief Priests, the Levites, and the heads of the families in JeruSalem for the place of worship in the Temple of Jehovah!’

30Therefore, the Priests and Levites weighed all the silver, gold, and other items before they were to carry them to JeruSalem and to the Temple of our God.

31Then we got up and left the Ahava River on the 12th day of the 1st month, as we started our journey towards JeruSalem, and the hand of our God was upon us, for He protected us from our enemies and everyone else along the way.

32Well, when we finally arrived in JeruSalem, we [rested up] for three days... 33Then on the 4th day, we took all the silver, gold, and other items for the Temple of our God, and handed it over to:

 • MeremOth (son of UriJah) the High Priest,
 • EliEzer (son of PhiNehas),
 • JoZabad (son of JoShua), and
 • NoAdiJah (son of BinNai the Levite).

34[And these men] weighed and recorded everything once again.

35Then all those who had traveled with us in our return from captivity brought whole burnt offerings to the God of IsraEl, which consisted of:

 • 12 calves (one for each of the tribes of IsraEl),
 • 96 rams,
 • 77 lambs, and
 • 12 winter-yearling goats for the sin offering.

It was all to be sacrificed as whole burnt offerings to Jehovah.

36And thereafter (following the mandate that was given by the king and his administrators), the vassal kings on the other side of the river [provided the rest of the things that] the people needed for the Temple of God.

### Ezra

## Chapter 9

1Well after that, the leaders came to me and pointed out that we hadn’t yet separated the people of IsraEl (or even the Priests and Levites) from the peoples of the land and the disgusting things of the CanaAnites, Hittites, Pherezites, Jebusites, AmMonites, MoAbites, Moserites, and Amorites.

2For [many] had taken these people’s daughters [as wives] for themselves and for their sons! So, the offspring of what is holy had become mixed with the peoples of the land… And even the governors and generals had become involved in this breach-of-contract.

3Well when I heard about this, I ripped my clothes and underwear, and I was so furious that I ripped hair from my head and beard!

Then I had to sit down to calm myself.

4And all those who had gathered around me started trembling because of what the God of IsraEl had said about a breach-of-contract in the resettlement [of our people].

So I just sat there calming myself until [it came time for] the evening sacrifice... 5Then I got up and I felt ashamed over ripping my clothes and underwear.

So, I fell to my knees and spread my arms towards my God Jehovah, 6and I said:

 ‘Lord, I’m so ashamed… I’m too ashamed to stand up and face You, O my God, because we’re in over our heads with lawbreaking, and our errors are so bad that they’ve reached into the heavens!

 7‘For from the time of our ancestors down to this day, we’ve been guilty of great sins. And it’s because of our lawbreaking that our kings, our Priests, and [our people] were handed over to the kings of the nations to be killed with swords and carried off into captivity…

 ‘Yes we were seized, and our faces have been shamed to this day.

 8‘Now, O Jehovah our God,

 ‘You’ve been patient with us and You’ve allowed us to return [to our land] so that we could be taught to rely on Your Holy Place, to open our eyes, and to put a little life into our service [to You].

 9‘And because we’re Your servants and we haven’t abandoned our service to our God, the kings of Persia have been merciful to us and given life to us, so that we could return to our deserted [homes] and rebuild the Temple of our God, and to fence Judah and JeruSalem off [from the surrounding nations].

 10‘So, what can we say to our God after this?

 ‘For we’ve abandoned the Commandments 11that You gave to us through the hands of Your servants the Prophets when You said:

 *‘The land that you’re returning to as its heirs is a land in motion... For the people who once inhabited that land have been removed from it because of the disgusting things and the filth that spilled from their mouths.*

 12*‘Therefore, you must not give your daughters to them or take their daughters for your sons… Nor should you expect peace with them throughout the ages!*

 *‘So now, to grow stronger, you must eat the good [produce] from this land, which you’ll share with your sons throughout the ages!’*

 13‘Then after all of these things that happened to us because of our own wickedness and great errors, and after You (our God) [forgave] us for our lawless actions and delivered us, 14we still turned around and disregarded Your commandments by creating alliances with the people of these lands through marriages.

 ‘But, please don’t become angry with us and destroy us, so that none of us remain!

 15‘O Jehovah, the God of IsraEl,

 ‘You are righteous, for you’ve preserved us down to this day.

 ‘And look:

 ‘Here we stand before You in our errors… And we know that no one can stand before You in such a condition.’

### Ezra

## Chapter 10

1Then Ezra prayed, confessed, and cried as he fell [to his face] before the Temple of The God, along with a vast gathering of men, women, and young people from IsraEl that joined him, weeping bitterly.

2Then one of them (ShechaniJah, son of JehiEl, a descendant of ElAm) said to Ezra:

 ‘We’ have broken our contract with our God by [taking] women from among the people of this land... So because of this, there’s no hope of IsraEl ever having a contract with our God!

 3‘But, what if we agree (before our God) to lead away all the women and all those who were born to us, so that we can then start following the counsel of Jehovah, and so that those of us that are trembling before our God today can start following His commandments?

 ‘If [He will accept this], we can make it happen!

 4‘So, you must now arise [and be strong], because this matter also affects you! Since we’re all with you, you must have the strength to do whatever must be done!’

5Well at that, Ezra stood up and he made the leaders, Priests, Levites, and all IsraEl swear to do the thing that [ShechaniJah] had proposed.

6And thereafter, he left from that place in front of the Temple of God, and he went to the treasury of JoHanan (son of EliAshib) and he started living there. But he refused to eat any food or drink any water as he mourned over the breach-of-contract by those who had returned to resettle [the land].

7Well, this was soon reported throughout Judah, JeruSalem, and wherever the people had resettled, and everyone was then called to assemble in JeruSalem.
8In fact, the governors and elders [had decreed] that all those who didn’t come in [the next] three days would have everything they owned destroyed, and they’d be cut off from the gathering of those who’d returned in the resettlement!

9So, all the men of Judah and BenJamin gathered in JeruSalem over the next three days. It was in the 9th month and on the 20th day of the month that all the people had finally arrived.

Then they sat down in the square before the Temple of God… And they were all shaking, because of the seriousness of this matter.

10Then Ezra (the Priest) stood up and said to them:

 ‘You have added to the sins of IsraEl and broken our contract [with God] by settling here with foreign women!

 11‘Now, praise Jehovah the God of our ancestors and do whatever is pleasing before Him… Separate yourselves from the people of this land and from your foreign women!’

12Then the entire assembly shouted loudly:

 ‘We’ll do just as you said!’

13But the crowd was huge and it was wintertime; one couldn’t even stand outside [for too long]... So, the job couldn’t be done in just a day or two, for that would’ve made all the wrongs even worse!

14[Therefore, it was agreed that] the governors would call an assembly in each of the cities, and that all who’d taken foreign women were to come there at a prearranged time to meet with the city elders and judges, so that God’s anger and rage over this matter could be removed from them.

15Now, with the help of JoNathan (the son AsahEl) and JahaziJah (son of TikVah) and their assistants MeshulLam and the Levite ShabBethAi, everyone who had returned in the resettlement did as they were told.

16So the Priest Ezra and each of the heads of the family lines started their inquiry on the 1st day of the 10th month, 17and the process of questioning all the men who had settled in with foreign women lasted until the 1st day of the 1st month.

18As a result, it was found that among the Priests, those who had taken foreign women were:

 • The sons of JoShua (son of JoZadek).

And those of his brothers:

 • MaAseiJah,
 • EliEzer,
 • JaRib, and
 • GedaliJah.

19So they each gave their hand in a pledge to bring in their women, along with a sin offering of a ram from among their sheep, to cover their errors.

20From among the sons of ImMer there was:

 • HanaNi and
 • ZebadiJah.

21From the sons of Harim there was:

 • MaAseiJah,
 • EliJah,
 • ShemaiJah,
 • JehiEl, and
 • UzZiJah.

22From the sons of Phasur there was:

 • EliWenai,
 • MaAseiJah,
 • IshMaEl,
 • NathaniEl,
 • JoZabad, and
 • ElAsah.

23Among the Levites, there was:

 • JoZabad,
 • Shemei,
 • KelaiJah (also known as Kelita),
 • PethAhiJah,
 • Judah, and
 • EliEzer.

24Among the singers, there was:

 • EliAshib.

And from among the gatekeepers, there was:

 • ShalLum,
 • TelEm, and
 • Uri.

25From IsraEl there were:

 • The sons of ParOsh,
 • RamiJah,
 • JeziJah,
 • MalchiJah,
 • MiAmin,
 • EliEzer,
 • MalchiJah, and
 • BenaiJah.

26From the sons of ElAm there was:

 • MattaniJah,
 • ZechariAh,
 • JehiEl,
 • AbDi,
 • JeremOth, and
 • EliJah.

27From the sons of ZatTu there was:

 • EliWenai,
 • EliAshib,
 • MatTaniJah,
 • JeremOth,
 • Zabad, and
 • AziZa.

28From the sons of BebAi there was:

 • JehoHanan,
 • HaNaniJah,
 • ZabBai, and
 • AthLai.

29From the sons of Bani there was:

 • MeshulLam,
 • MalLuch,
 • AdaiJah,
 • JaShub,
 • SheAl, and
 • RamOth.

30From the sons of PahathMoab there was:

 • Adna,
 • ChelAl,
 • BenaiJah,
 • MaAseiJah,
 • MatthaniJah,
 • BezaleEl,
 • BinNui, and
 • ManasSeh.

31From the sons of Harim there was:

 • EliEzer,
 • IshiJah,
 • MalchiJah,
 • ShemaiJah, and
 • ShimeOn.

32From BenJamin there was:

 • MalLuch and
 • ShemariJah.

33From the sons of Hashum there was:

 • MatTenai,
 • MatTathAh,
 • Zabad,
 • EliPhelet,
 • JeremAi,
 • ManasSeh, and
 • ShiMei.

34From the sons of Bani were:

 • MaAdai,
 • AmRam,
 • Wel,
 • 35BenaiJah,
 • BedeiJah,
 • ChelLah,
 • 36VaniJah,
 • MeremOth,
 • EliAshib,
 • 37MattaniJah, and
 • MattenAi.

38There were also the sons of Bani:

 • ShiMei,
 • 39ShelemiJah,
 • Nathan,
 • AdaiJah,
 • 40MachNadebAi,
 • SharAi,
 • ShashAi,
 • 41AzareEl,
 • ShelemiJah,
 • ShemariJah,
 • 42ShalLum,
 • AmariJah, and
 • JoSeph.

43From the sons of Nebo there was:

 • JeiEl,
 • MatithiJah,
 • Zabad,
 • Zebina,
 • JaDau,
 • JoEl, and
 • BenaiJah.

44They had all taken foreign women for themselves that had each given birth to sons.