**The Book of Ezra**

**Ezra Chapter 1**

The Decree of Cyrus

1Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of Yahweh *spoken* by the mouth of Jeremiah, Yahweh stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,

2“This is what Cyrus king of Persia says, ‘Yahweh, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has commanded me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Yahweh, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem. 4And let each one who has survived, in whatever place he may live, be assisted by the men of his place with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with animals, besides the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.’”

Return from Exile

5Then the heads of fathers’ *houses* of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, even all whose spirit God had stirred to go up, rose up to build the house of Yahweh that is in Jerusalem. 6All those who were around them strengthened their hands with articles of silver, with gold, with goods, and with animals, and with valuable things, besides everything that was willingly offered. 7Also Cyrus the king brought out the articles of the house of Yahweh that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and had put in the house of his gods. 8Cyrus king of Persia brought those out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbazzar, the governor of Judah. 9This is the number of them:

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|  | 30 platters of gold, 1,000 platters of silver, 29 knives,1030 bowls of gold, 410 silver bowls of a second kind, and 1,000 other articles. |

11All the articles of gold and of silver totaled 5,400. Sheshbazzar brought all these up when those who had been in exile were brought up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

**Ezra Chapter 2**

The Exiles Who Returned

1Now these are the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those who had been in exile, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away to Babylon and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone *returning* to his city, 2who came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua,[[1]](#footnote-22015) Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, *and* Baanah.

The number of the men of the people of Israel:

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| 3 | The sons of Parosh, 2,172. |
| 4 | The sons of Shephatiah, 372. |
| 5 | The sons of Arah, 775. |
| 6 | The sons of Pahathmoab,  of the sons of Jeshua and Joab, 2,812. |
| 7 | The sons of Elam, 1,254. |
| 8 | The sons of Zattu, 945. |
| 9 | The sons of Zaccai, 760. |
| 10 | The sons of Bani, 642. |
| 11 | The sons of Bebai, 623. |
| 12 | The sons of Azgad, 1,222. |
| 13 | The sons of Adonikam, 666. |
| 14 | The sons of Bigvai, 2,056. |
| 15 | The sons of Adin, 454. |
| 16 | The sons of Ater, of Hezekiah, 98. |
| 17 | The sons of Bezai, 323. |
| 18 | The sons of Jorah, 112. |
| 19 | The sons of Hashum, 223. |
| 20 | The sons of Gibbar, 95. |
| 21 | The sons of Bethlehem, 123. |
| 22 | The men of Netophah, 56. |
| 23 | The men of Anathoth, 128. |
| 24 | The sons of Azmaveth, 42. |
| 25 | The sons of Kiriath-arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, 743. |
| 26 | The sons of Ramah and Geba, 621. |
| 27 | The men of Michmas, 122. |
| 28 | The men of Bethel and Ai, 223. |
| 29 | The sons of Nebo, 52. |
| 30 | The sons of Magbish, 156. |
| 31 | The sons of the other Elam, 1,254. |
| 32 | The sons of Harim, 320. |
| 33 | The sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, 725. |
| 34 | The sons of Jericho, 345. |
| 35 | The sons of Senaah, 3,630. |
| 36 | The priests:  the sons of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, 973. |
| 37 | The sons of Immer, 1,052. |
| 38 | The sons of Pashhur, 1,247. |
| 39 | The sons of Harim, 1,017. |
| 40 | The Levites:  the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel,  of the sons of Hodaviah, 74. |
| 41 | The singers:  the sons of Asaph, 128. |
| 42 | The sons of the gatekeepers:  the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater,  the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub,  the sons of Hatita, the sons of Shobai,  in all 139. |
| 43 | The Temple servants: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth,44the sons of Keros, the sons of Siaha, the sons of Padon, |
| 45 | the sons of Lebanah, the sons of Hagabah, the sons of Akkub,46the sons of Hagab, the sons of Shamlai, the sons of Hanan, |
| 47 | the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, the sons of Reaiah,48the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda, the sons of Gazzam, |
| 49 | the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah, the sons of Besai,50the sons of Asnah, the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephisim, |
| 51 | the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur,52the sons of Bazluth, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha, |
| 53 | the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Temah,54the sons of Neziah, the sons of Hatipha. |
| 55 | The sons of Solomon’s servants: the sons of Sotai, the sons of Hassophereth, the sons of Peruda,56the sons of Jaalah, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel, |
| 57 | the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth Hazzebaim, the sons of Ami. |
| 58 | All the Temple servants and the sons of Solomon’s servants were 392. |
| 59 | These were those who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addan, and Immer; but they could not prove their fathers’ houses or their descent, whether they were of Israel: |
| 60 | the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, the sons of Nekoda, 652. |
| 61 | Of the sons of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai (who took a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and he was called by their name).62These sought their place among those who were registered by genealogy, but they were not found there so they were considered unclean and excluded from the priesthood.63The governor said to them that they could not eat of the most holy things until a priest stood up with the Urim and Thummim. |
| 64 | The whole assembly together was 42,360, |
| 65 | besides their male slaves and their female slaves, of whom there were 7,337; and they had 200 singing men and singing women. |
| 66 | Their horses were 736, their mules, 245, |
| 67 | their camels, 435, their donkeys, 6,720. |

Gifts for the Work

68Some of the heads of fathers’ households, when they came to the house of Yahweh that is in Jerusalem, offered willingly for God’s house to set it up on its site. 69According to their ability they gave into the treasury for the work, 61,000 darics of gold and 5,000 minas of silver, and 100 priests’ garments. 70Now the priests, and the Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the gatekeepers, and the Temple servants, lived in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

**Ezra Chapter 3**

Sacrifice Restored

1When the seventh month had come and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. 2Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak stood up with his brothers the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brothers, and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it as it is written in the Law of Moses, the man of God. 3In spite of their fear because of the people of the surrounding lands, they set the altar on its base and offered burnt offerings on it to Yahweh, even burnt offerings morning and evening. 4They kept the Feast of Booths, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number according to the ordinance, as the duty of every day required; 5and after that the regular burnt offerings, the offerings at the new moons, of all the appointed feasts of Yahweh that were holy, and of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to Yahweh.

6From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to Yahweh, but the foundation of the Temple of Yahweh had not yet been laid. 7They also gave money to the masons and to the carpenters. They also gave food and drink and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre for bringing cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea, *and on* to Joppa, according to the grant that they had from Cyrus King of Persia.

Rebuilding the Temple

8Now in the second month of the second year after their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the rest of their brothers the priests and the Levites, and all those who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem began the work, and they appointed the Levites from 20 years old and upward to have the oversight of the work of the house of Yahweh. 9Then Jeshua, with his sons and his brothers, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, *and* the sons of Henadad with their sons and their brothers the Levites, joined together to supervise the workmen in the house of God.

Temple Foundation Completed

10When the builders laid the foundation of the Temple of Yahweh, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals to praise Yahweh according to the directions of David king of Israel. 11They sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to Yahweh, “For he is good, for his covenant faithfulness toward Israel endures forever.” All the people shouted with a great shout when they praised Yahweh, because the foundation of the house of Yahweh had been laid.

12But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers’ households, the old men who had seen the first house when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice. Many also shouted aloud for joy, 13so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout and the noise was heard far away.

**Ezra Chapter 4**

Opposition to Rebuilding the Temple

1Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles *who had returned* were building a temple to Yahweh the God of Israel, 2then they drew near to Zerubbabel and to the heads of fathers’ households, and said to them, “Let us build with you, because we seek your God just as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him since the days of Esar-haddon, king of Assyria, who brought us up here.”

3But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of fathers’ households of Israel said to them, “You have nothing in common with us in building a house to our God; but we ourselves will together build to Yahweh the God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, has commanded us.” 4Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah and made them afraid to build, 5and they bribed officials against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Opposition to Rebuilding the City

6In the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. 7In the days of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of his companions, wrote to Artaxerxes, and the writing of the letter was written in Aramaic and translated from the Aramaic language.

8Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king as follows:

9From Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe and the rest of their companions, the judges and the governors, the officials, the Persians, the men of Erech, the Babylonians, the men of Susa, that is, the Elamites, 10and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnappar brought over and set in the city of Samaria, and in the rest of the country beyond the River, and so forth, wrote.

11This is a copy of the letter that they sent:

“To Artaxerxes the king. *From* your servants, the men beyond the River.

12“Now let it be known to the king that the Jews who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding the rebellious and evil city, and are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations. 13Let it now be known to the king that if this city is built and the walls finished, they will not pay tribute, custom, or toll, and the royal revenue will suffer. 14Now because we eat the salt of the *king’s* palace and it is not fitting for us to see the king’s dishonor, that is why we have sent and informed the king, 15in order that a search may be made in the book of the records of your fathers. And you will find in the book of the records and discover that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful to kings and provinces, and that they have incited revolt within it in past days. That was why the city was laid waste. 16We inform the king that, if this city is rebuilt and the walls finished, because of that you will then have no possession beyond the River.”

Artaxerxes’ Reply

17Then the king sent an answer to Rehum the chancellor and to Shimshai the scribe, and to the rest of their companions who live in Samaria and in the rest of the country beyond the River:

“Peace.

18“The letter that you sent to us has been translated and read before me. 19And I made a decree, and a search has been made. And it was found that from old time this city has had uprisings against kings and that rebellion and revolts have been made in it. 20Also, there have been mighty kings over Jerusalem who have ruled over all the country beyond the River; and tribute, custom, and toll was paid to them. 21So now, make a decree that these men stop *building*, and that this city may not be rebuilt until a *further* decree is made by me. 22And take care not to be slack in this matter. Why should damage increase to the hurt of the kings?”

23Then, when the copy of King Artaxerxes’ letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe and their companions, they went in haste to Jerusalem to the Jews and made them stop by force and power.

Rebuilding of the Temple Resumed

24Then the work on the house of God that is at Jerusalem stopped, and it stopped until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

**Ezra Chapter 5**

1Now the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, which was upon them. 2Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God that is in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them, helping them.

3At that same time Tattenai, the governor beyond the River, and Shethar-bozenai and their companions, went to them and said this to them: “Who gave you a decree to build this house and to finish this structure?” 4They also asked them, “What are the names of the men who were building this building?” 5But the eye of their God was on the elders of the Jews, and they did not make them cease until the matter could come to Darius, and then an answer could be returned by letter about it.

The Letter to Darius

6*This is* a copy of the letter that Tattenai, the governor beyond the River, and Shethar-bozenai and his companions the governors, who were beyond the River, sent to Darius the king; 7they sent a letter to him in which was written as follows:

“To Darius the king, all peace.

8“Be it known to the king that we went into the province of Judah, to the house of the great God. It is being built with great stones, and beams are being laid in the walls; and this work is going on with diligence and is prospering in their hands. 9Then we asked those elders and said to them thus, ‘Who gave you a decree to build this house and to finish this structure?’ 10We asked them their names also, to inform you and so that we could write the names of the men who were their leaders.

11And this was their reply to us.

‘We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and are building the house that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and finished. 12But because our fathers had provoked the God of heaven to wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house and carried the people away to Babylon. 13But in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, Cyrus the king made a decree to rebuild this house of God. 14And the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the Temple that was in Jerusalem and brought into the temple at Babylon, Cyrus the king took those out of the temple at Babylon and they were delivered to one whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor; 15and he said to him, “Take these articles, go, put them in the Temple that is in Jerusalem and let the house of God be rebuilt on its site.” 16So this same Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the house of God that is in Jerusalem, and from that time even until now it has been under construction, and it is not yet finished.

17Now therefore, if it seems good to the king, let a search be made in the house of the treasures of the king that is there at Babylon to see whether a decree was issued by Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem. And *then* let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.’”

**Ezra Chapter 6**

Darius’s Search

1Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the archives where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. 2There was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of Media, a scroll, and in it was thus written for a record:

3“In the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king made a decree: Concerning God’s house at Jerusalem, ‘Let the house be built, the place where they offer sacrifices, and let its foundations be strongly laid: its height 60 cubits[[2]](#footnote-17043) and its width 60 cubits, 4with three courses of great stones and a course of new timber, and let the expenses be given out of the king’s house. 5Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the Temple that is at Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, are to be be restored and brought back to the Temple that is at Jerusalem, everything to its place, and you are to put them in the house of God.’

Darius’s Decree

6“Now therefore, Tattenai, governor beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai, and your companions the Apharsachites who are beyond the River, you must stay far from there. 7Leave the work of this house of God alone. Let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in its place.

8“Moreover I issue a decree concerning what you are to do for these elders of the Jews for the building of this house of God:

“That from the king’s goods, even from the tribute beyond the River, expenses are to be given with all diligence to these men, so that they are not hindered. 9Whatever they have need of, both young bulls, and rams, and lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven; wheat, salt, wine, and oil according to the word of the priests who are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day after day without fail, 10so that they can offer sacrifices of pleasing aroma to the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and of his sons.

11“Also I have made a decree that whoever alters this edict, a beam is to be pulled out from his house and he is to be raised up and impaled on it, and let his house be made a dunghill for this, 12and may the God who has caused his name to dwell there overthrow all kings and peoples who will put forth their hand to alter this, or to destroy this house of God that is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with all diligence.”

13Then Tattenai, the governor beyond the River, *and* Shethar-bozenai, and their companions did accordingly with all diligence because Darius the king had sent a decree. 14The elders of the Jews built and prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. They built and finished it according to the commandment of the God of Israel and according to the decree of Cyrus and Darius, even Artaxerxes king of Persia. 15This house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

Temple Dedication and the Passover

16The children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the children of the captivity kept the dedication of this house of God with joy. 17At the dedication of this house of God they offered 100 bulls, 200 rams, 400 lambs, and for a sin offering for all Israel, 12 male goats according to the number of the tribes of Israel. 18They set the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their courses for the service of God that is at Jerusalem, as it is written in the book of Moses.

19The exiles *who had returned* kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, 20because the priests and the Levites had purified themselves together; all of them were *ceremonially* clean. And they slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the exiles, and for their brothers the priests, and for themselves. 21And the children of Israel who had returned from exile, and all those who had separated themselves from the uncleanness of the Gentiles in the land in order to seek Yahweh, the God of Israel, ate *the Passover* 22and kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for Yahweh had made them joyful and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, to strengthen their hands in the work of God’s house, the God of Israel.

**Ezra Chapter 7**

Ezra’s Arrival

1Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra—

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|  | the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah,2the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, |
| 3 | the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth,4the son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, |
| 5 | the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest— |

6this Ezra went up from Babylon, and he was a scribe skilled in the Law of Moses that Yahweh, the God of Israel, had given. And the king had granted him all that he asked because the hand of Yahweh his God was on him. 7Some of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the gatekeepers, and the Temple servants, also went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.

8And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, during the seventh year of the king. 9For on the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month he arrived at Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God on him. 10For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Yahweh and to do it, and to teach its statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Letter from Artaxerxes

11Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest, the scribe; the scribe of the matters pertaining to the commandments of Yahweh and his statutes to Israel:

12“Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect *peace*. And now 13I make a decree that all those of the people of Israel and their priests and the Levites in my realm who freely choose to go to Jerusalem may go with you. 14For you are being sent by the king and his seven counselors to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of your God, which is in your hand, 15and to carry the silver and gold that the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem, 16and all the silver and gold that you receive throughout the whole province of Babylon, and with the freewill offering of the people and of the priests, who offer willingly for the house of their God that is in Jerusalem. 17Therefore with all diligence, with this money you are to buy bulls, rams, *and* lambs, with their grain offerings and their drink offerings, and you are to offer them on the altar of the house of your God that is in Jerusalem. 18And whatever seems good to you and to your brothers to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, do that according to the will of your God. 19The items that are given to you for the service of the house of your God, deliver before the God of Jerusalem. 20Whatever more will be needful for the house of your God that you may have occasion to provide, provide it out of the king’s treasure house.

21“I, even I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers who are beyond the River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, requires of you, that it be done with all diligence, 22up to 100 talents of silver, and to 100 kors of wheat, and to 100 baths of wine, and to 100 baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much. 23Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done exactly for the house of the God of heaven; for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? 24Also we inform you that when it comes to any of the priests and Levites, the singers, gatekeepers, Temple servants, or other servants of this house of God, it is not lawful to impose tribute, custom or toll on them. 25And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God that you have, appoint magistrates and judges to judge all the people who are beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God; and teach anyone who does not know *them*. 26Whoever will not keep the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed on him with all diligence, whether it is to death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.”

27Blessed be Yahweh the God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as this into the king’s heart, to beautify the house of Yahweh that is in Jerusalem, 28and has extended covenant faithfulness to me before the king and his counselors and before all the king’s mighty officials. So I was strengthened according to the hand of Yahweh my God on me, and I gathered together leading men from Israel to go up with me.

**Ezra Chapter 8**

Those Returning with Ezra

1Now these are the heads of their fathers’ houses, and this is the genealogy of those who went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king:

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| 2 | Of the sons of Phinehas, Gershom.  Of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel.  Of the sons of David, Hattush. |
| 3 | Of the sons of Shecaniah  of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah;  and with him were reckoned by genealogy of the males 150. |
| 4 | Of the sons of Pahathmoab,  Eliehoenai the son of Zerahiah;  and with him 200 males. |
| 5 | Of the sons of Shecaniah,  the son of Jahaziel;  and with him 300 males. |
| 6 | Of the sons of Adin,  Ebed the son of Jonathan;  and with him 50 males. |
| 7 | Of the sons of Elam,  Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah;  and with him 70 males. |
| 8 | Of the sons of Shephatiah,  Zebadiah the son of Michael;  and with him 80 males. |
| 9 | Of the sons of Joab,  Obadiah the son of Jehiel;  and with him 218 males. |
| 10 | Of the sons of Shelomith,  the son of Josiphiah;  and with him 160 males. |
| 11 | Of the sons of Bebai,  Zechariah the son of Bebai;  and with him 28 males. |
| 12 | Of the sons of Azgad,  Johanan the son of Hakkatan;  and with him 110 males. |
| 13 | Of the sons of Adonikam who were the last,  and these are their names:  Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah;  and with them 60 males. |
| 14 | Of the sons of Bigvai,  Uthai and Zabbud;  and with them 70 males. |

15I gathered them together to the river that runs to Ahava, and we encamped there for three days. And I surveyed the people, and the priests, but found none of the sons of Levi there. 16Then sent I for Eliezer, for Ariel, for Shemaiah and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and for Elnathan, and for Nathan, and for Zechariah, and for Meshullam, leading men; also for Joiarib and for Elnathan, who were teachers. 17I sent them to Iddo, the leading man at the place Casiphia, and I told them what they should tell Iddo and his brothers, the Temple servants at the place Casiphia, *which was* that they should bring ministers to us for the house of our God. 18According to the good hand of our God on us they brought us a man of discretion, of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and Sherebiah, with his sons and his brothers, 18 *men*; 19and Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, his brothers and their sons, 20; 20and of the Temple servants who David and the officials had established for the service of the Levites, 220 Temple servants; all of them were mentioned by name.

Preparing to Return

21Then I proclaimed a fast there at the Ahava Canal, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a straight way for us and for our little ones and for all our substance. 22For I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemies along the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, “The hand of our God is for good upon all those who seek him, but his power and his wrath is against all those who forsake him.” 23So we fasted and sought our God about this, and he responded to our prayers.

24Then I selected 12 of the leaders of the priests, even Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brothers with them, 25and weighed out to them the silver and the gold and the *other* articles, the offering for the house of our God that the king and his counselors and his officials and all Israel who were present there had offered. 26I weighed into their hand 650 talents of silver, and articles of silver *weighing* 100 talents; *and* 100 talents of gold; 27and 20 bowls of gold *valued at* 1,000 darics, and two vessels of fine bright bronze *as* desirable as gold. 28Then I said to them, “You are holy to Yahweh, and the articles are holy, and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to Yahweh the God of your fathers. 29Watch and keep them until you weigh them out in the chambers of the house of Yahweh in front of the leaders of the priests and the Levites and the leaders of the fathers’ households of Israel at Jerusalem.” 30So the priests and the Levites received the silver and the gold and the articles that had been weighed out, to bring them to Jerusalem to the house of our God.

Arrival in Jerusalem

31Then we departed from the Ahava Canal on the twelfth day of the first month, to go to Jerusalem. And the hand of our God was on us and he delivered us from the hand of the enemies and the ambushes along the road. 32So we arrived at Jerusalem and rested there for three days. 33On the fourth day, the silver and the gold and the articles were weighed out in the house of our God into the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest, and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them was Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui, the Levite. 34The whole *was verified* by number and by weight, and all the weight was written down at that time.

35The children of the captivity, those who had come out of exile, offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel, 12 bulls for all Israel, 96 rams, 77 lambs, and 12 male goats for a sin offering. All this was a burnt offering to Yahweh. 36They also delivered the king’s commissions to the king’s satraps and to the governors beyond the River, who gave assistance to the people and the house of God.

**Ezra Chapter 9**

Israel’s Intermarriage with Pagans

1Now after these things had been done, the officials drew near to me, saying, “The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, *but act* according to their abominations, even those of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians and the Amorites. 2Indeed, they have taken some of their daughters *as wives* for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy seed has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands. And in this unfaithfulness the hands of the officials and rulers have been foremost.” 3And when I heard about this matter, I tore my garment and my cloak and pulled out *some of* the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down appalled.

Ezra’s Confession

4Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel because of the unfaithfulness of the exiles *who had returned* gathered around me. And I sat there appalled until the evening sacrifice. 5At the evening sacrifice I arose up from my humiliation *and fasting*, even with my garment and my cloak torn, and I fell on my knees, and spread out my hands to Yahweh my God, 6and I said,

“O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to you, my God; for our iniquities have increased over our head, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens. 7Since the days of our fathers to this day our guilt has been great; and because of our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to shame of face, as it is this day. 8But now, for a very little moment, grace has been shown from Yahweh our God, to leave us a remnant to escape and to give us a peg in his holy place, that our God may brighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our slavery. 9For we are slaves. Yet our God has not forsaken us in our slavery, but has extended his covenant faithfulness to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to grant us a reviving to set up the house of our God and to repair its ruins and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.

10“And now, O our God, what can we say after this? For we have forsaken your commandments 11that you have commanded by your servants the prophets, saying, ‘The land that you are entering to take possession of it is an unclean land, *defiled* through the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, through their abominations that have filled it from end to end with their filthiness. 12So now do not give your daughters to their sons, nor take their daughters *as wives* for your sons, nor ever seek their peace or their prosperity, so that you will be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever.’ 13And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, since you, our God, have punished us less than our iniquities deserve and have given us a remnant that has escaped, such as this, 14should we again break your commandments and intermarry with the peoples that commit these abominations? Would you not be angry with us until you had consumed us, so that there would be no remnant nor any to escape? 15O Yahweh, the God of Israel, you are righteous; for we are left as a remnant that has escaped, as it is this day. Behold, we are before you in our guilt, though because of it no one can stand in your presence.”

**Ezra Chapter 10**

Sending Away Foreign Wives

1Now while Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men and women and children out of Israel gathered together to him, and the people wept with a bitter weeping. 2And Shecaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said to Ezra, “We have acted unfaithfully toward our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land. Yet now there is hope for Israel in spite of this. 3So now let’s cut a covenant with our God to divorce all the wives and *remove* those *children* who have been born by them, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God. Let it be done according to the law. 4Arise, for the matter is your responsibility, and we are with you. Be strong and act.”

5Then Ezra arose and made the leading priests, the Levites, and all Israel, take an oath that they would do according to this word. So they took the oath. 6Then Ezra rose up from in front of the house of God and went into the room of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib. While he was there he did not eat bread or drink water, for he mourned because of the unfaithfulness of those *who had returned* from exile.

7And they made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the *returned* exiles, that they were to gather at Jerusalem, 8and that whoever did not come within three days, according to the counsel of the leaders and the elders, all his possessions would be forfeited and he himself *would be* excluded from the congregation of the *returned* exiles.

9Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together to Jerusalem within the three days; it was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month, and all the people sat in the wide place before God’s house, trembling because of this matter and because of the great rain. 10Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, “You have been unfaithful and have married foreign women, increasing the guilt of Israel. 11Now therefore, make confession to Yahweh the God of your fathers and do his will, and separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign women.”

12Then all the assembly answered and said with a loud voice, “You are right! We must do as you have said. 13But the people are many and it is a time of much rain and we are not able to stand outside. Nor is this a work of one day or two, for many of us have transgressed in this matter. 14Let now our leaders represent the whole assembly, and let all those who are in our cities who have married foreign women come at appointed times, together with the elders and judges of every city, until the burning anger of our God on account of this matter is turned from us.” 15Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahzeiah the son of Tikvah opposed this, and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite supported them.

16The *returned* exiles did so. Ezra the priest selected certain men—heads of fathers’ houses according to their fathers’ houses, and all of them by name—and they sat down on the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter. 17And they were finished with all the men who had married foreign women by the first day of the first month.

Those Married to Foreign Wives

18And of the sons of the priests who had married foreign women there was found:

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|  | Of the sons of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and his brothers: Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah. |

19They gave their hand *in pledge* that they would divorce their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their guilt.

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| 20 | Of the sons of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah. |
| 21 | Of the sons of Harim: Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uzziah. |
| 22 | Of the sons of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah. |
| 23 | Of the Levites: Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah (the same is Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer. |
| 24 | Of the singers: Eliashib.  Of the gatekeepers: Shallum, and Telem, and Uri. |
| 25 | Of Israel: Of the sons of Parosh: Ramiah, and Izziah, and Malchijah, and Mijamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Benaiah. |
| 26 | Of the sons of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jeremoth, and Elijah. |
| 27 | Of the sons of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aziza. |
| 28 | Of the sons of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, Athlai. |
| 29 | Of the sons of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch, and Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal, Jeremoth. |
| 30 | Of the sons of Pahathmoab: Adna, and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, and Binnui, and Manasseh. |
| 31 | Of the sons of Harim: Eliezer, Isshijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, |
| 32 | Benjamin, Malluch, Shemariah. |
| 33 | Of the sons of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, Shimei. |
| 34 | Of the sons of Bani: Maadai, Amram, and Uel,35Benaiah, Bedeiah, Cheluhi,36Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,37Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasu,38and Bani, and Binnui, Shimei,39and Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah,40Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,41Azarel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah,42Shallum, Amariah, Joseph. |
| 43 | Of the sons of Nebo: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Iddo, and Joel, Benaiah. |

44All these had taken foreign wives; and some of them had wives by whom they had children.

1. The High Priest; spelled “Joshua” in Zech. 3:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-22015)
2. 90 feet (27.4 meters) [↑](#footnote-ref-17043)