

11/3/19

Ezra 7-8

If we are looking at the chronological order, the book of Esther fits between chapter 6 and 7 of Ezra.

1. Zerubbabel returned in 536 B.C.
2. The temple was finished in 516 B.C.
3. Esther becomes Queen in 479 B.C.
4. The Jews were delivered from Haman in 473 B.C.
5. Ezra returned to Jerusalem in 457 B.C.
6. It has been 80 years since the return of Zerubbabel and 60 years since the completion of the temple.
7. Malachi fits in this period, 430 B.C.
8. Written around 450-455 B.C. by someone who had first-hand knowledge and access to the chronicles of Persia, most likely Ezra.
9. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem 12 years later, in 444-5 B.C.

The return to Jerusalem under Ezra. Ezra 7-10

1. The mission of Ezra and initial preparations to lead the people back to join the restoration at Jerusalem. Ezra 7
2. The final preparation to depart and arrive at Jerusalem. Ezra 8

7:1-28 The mission and commission of Ezra the scribe.

7:1-10 The scribe Ezra and the people.

7:1-6 The lineage and commission of Ezra.

- 1) The historical time of Ezra, “Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia.” vs. 1a-b
 - a) This is 457 B.C. 60 years since the temple was finished in four years, March 3, 516 B.C. Ezra 6:15
 - b) Darius I (Hystaspis) 522-486 B.C. , decreed the re building of the temple. Ezra 4:24; 5:6, 6:1, 3; Hag. 1:1
 - c) Then came Xerxes I 486-465 B.C. is Ahasuerus of Esther. Esther 1:1
 - d) Next came Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) indicated in our text, 465-424 B.C. Ezra 7:1; Neh. 2:1; 5:14
- 2) The priestly geneology line of Ezra. vs. 1c-5
 - a) “Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah”, was the chief priest taken captive in 586 B.C. in 2Kings 25:18. vs. 1c-d
 - b) “the son of Hilkipah, the son of Shallum”, Hilkipah was a high priest under Josiah in 2Kings 22:4. vs. 1e
 - c) “the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub”, Zakok was put as high priest by Solomon in 1Kings 2:35. vs. 2a-b
 - d) All the way back to Aaron, “the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, the son of Zeraiiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of

Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest.” vs. 2c-5

- 1)) Phinehas was the grandson of Aron.
 - 2)) There are 16 generations of priests listed, 17 with Ezra.
- 3) The priestly commission of Ezra. vs. 6
- a) The place of birth, “this Ezra came up from Babylon.” vs. 6a
 - b) The profession and qualification of Ezra, “and he was a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses.” vs. 6b
 - 1)) The word skilled “mahiyr”, means quick and swift, ready, prompt, well prepared.
 - 2)) Scribe “caphar”, means to count, recount or write down, a secretary in the sense that he studied, interpreted, taught and copied the word of God.
 - 3)) To Ezra is attributed the organization of the Great-Synagogue and compiling of the canon.
 - c) The source of the Law of Moses is stated, “which the LORD God of Israel had given.” vs. 6c
 - 1)) God gave to Moses on Mount Sianai the Ten Commandments, literally the ten-words and all the civil and religious laws, precepts, statutes and judgments. Ex. 19-24
 - 2)) The Law of Moses often indicated the Pentateuch, the first five books.

- d) The vested authority of Ezra, “The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him.” vs. 6d-e
 - 1)) Artaxerxes I Longimanus, 457 B.C.
 - 2)) The covenant God Yahweh directed Artaxerxes to be part of His prophecy fulfillment and will, like Cyrus.
 - 3)) The hand of the LORD is a key phrase. vs. 6, 8, 28; 8:18, 22, 31

7:7-10 The people returning with Ezra.

- 1) The particular groups of people accompanying Ezra. vs. 7
 - a) Their national identity, “Some of the children of Israel.” vs. 7a

* Forty times the word “Israel” is found in Ezra, all twelve tribes.
 - b) The religious men, “the priests, the Levites.” vs. 7b-c
 - c) The men to lead worship, “the singers.” vs. 7d
 - d) The porters, “the gatekeepers.” vs. 7e
 - e) The , and the Nethinim came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes.” vs. 7f
 - 1)) Nethinim “Nathiyn” the temple slaves assigned to the Levites and priest for service in the sanctuary like the Gibeonites that carried water and cut wood for the sanctuary.

- 2)) They became an establish group and order for the care of the temple and associated with the children of Solomon's servants. Josh. 9; Ezra 2:43-58; Neh. 10:28, Deut. 29:11-13
- 2) The arrival date to Jerusalem, "And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king." vs. 8
* The long and perilous journey came to an end on August 1, 457 B.C. vs. 9
- 3) The date Ezra left for his journey from Babylon, "On the first day of the first month he began his journey from Babylon." vs. 9a
- a) The month is April, the first day would be adjusted the the Jewish religious calendar, four 30 day months to the day.
- b) 120 days, minus 12 days is 108, divided into 900 miles equals 8.3 miles a day. Ezra 8:15, 31
- 4) The arrival date to Jerusalem is repeated, "and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him." vs. 9
- a) He arrived to Jerusalem on the first day of August. the 4th 457 B.C. in the Jewish religious calendar.
- b) The credit and glory is given to Yahweh for His caring protective hand.
- 5) The mission of Ezra was to teach the people of God, the word of God. vs. 10

- a) The long training, "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD." vs. 10a
- b) The dedication to live out the word, "and to do it." vs, 10b
- c) The commitment to the people, "and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel." vs. 10c

7:11-28 The letter of decree by Artaxerxes to Ezra.

7:11-14 The vested authority of Artexexes I for the mission of Ezra is stated.

- 1) The super scription of the letter. vs. 11
- a) The letter was not the original one, "This is a copy of the letter. vs. 11a
- b) The letter was from the king to Ezra, "that King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest." vs. 11a
- c) The profession of Ezra, "the priest, the scribe, expert in the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of His statutes to Israel." vs. 11b-d
- 1)) The priest was a mediator for God and man.
- 2)) The word scribe expert "caphar" means to count, recount or relate, proficient as an interpreter and teacher of the commands of God's word and the civil judgments.

- 2) The introduction and greeting come first, “Artaxerxes, king of kings, To Ezra the priest, a scribe of the Law of the God of heaven: Perfect *peace*, and so forth.” vs. 12
 * The writing in Aramaic from this verse to verse 26.
- a) The title “king of kings” was used by the Babylonians also. Dan. 2:37; Ezk. 26:7
 - b) The king Artaxerxes ascribed the highest authority to, “the God of heaven” vs. 12a
 - c) The greeting of blessing perfect peace “g@mar”, means complete, implying well being in every way towards Ezra in the present and future. vs. 12b
- 3) The intent and purpose of the letter to Ezra. vs. 13
- a) The proclamation of intent, “I issue a decree that all those of the people of Israel and the priests and Levites in my realm, who volunteer to go up to Jerusalem, may go with you.” vs. 13
 - 1)) Note “Israel”, all 12 tribes united.
 - 2)) The decree permitted anyone to go, but did not compel them to do so, it was of one’s own free-will!
 - b) The provisional authority for his commission was given to Ezra, “And whereas you are being sent by the king and his seven counselors.” vs. 14a

- 1)) The Greek historian Herodotus attests to the seven counselors that advised Artaxerxes.
- 2)) God not only dealt with Artaxerxes, but also the influential advisers.
- c) The specific commission, “to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, with regard to the Law of your God which is in your hand.” vs. 14a-b
 - a) Jerusalem is found 43 times in Ezra.
 - b) This is the focal point of God, His city where the temple is to be built.

7:15-20 The provisions from Babylon and instructions and regulations for the journey.

- 1) The offering of the king and counselors, “and whereas you are to carry the silver and gold which the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem.” vs. 15
 - a) Artaxerxes declared the inseparableness of the God of Israel and Jerusalem.
 - b) For emphasis he declared God’s dwelling is in Jerusalem.
- 2) The offerings from those in Babylon and Jews and their priests. vs. 16
 - a) Ezra had the permission to collect all, “and whereas all the silver and gold that you may find in all the province of Babylon.” vs. 16a

- b) Ezra did not compel anyone by force, but rather receive as they gave of their own will, “along with the freewill offering of the people and the priests, are to be freely offered for the house of their God in Jerusalem.” vs. 16b-c
- 3) The detailed instructions. vs. 17-20
- a) The offerings, “now therefore, be careful to buy with this money bulls, rams, and lambs, with their grain offerings and their drink offerings.” vs. 17a-e
- b) The worship, “and offer them on the altar of the house of your God in Jerusalem.” vs 17f
- c) The personal discretion to spend surplus money, “And whatever seems good to you and your brethren to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, do it according to the will of your God.” vs. 18
* The heart of the king had complete confidence in Ezra, the money was not even a consideration.
- d) The prompt and safe delivery of the temple articles, “Also the articles that are given to you for the service of the house of your God, deliver in full before the God of Jerusalem.” vs. 19
- e) The benevolent open account from the king, “And whatever more may be needed for the house of your God, which

you may have occasion to provide, pay for it from the king’s treasury.” vs. 20

7:21-24 The provisions from the trans-Euphrates for the temple were to come from taxes.

- 1) The decree to all the regional treasurers west of the Euphrates. vs. 21
- a) The authority is royalty, “And I, even I, Artaxerxes the king, issue a decree.” vs. 21a-d
- b) The ones under the mandate, “to all the treasurers who are in the region beyond the River.” vs. 21d
- c) The absolute word of Ezra is to be unquestioned, “that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, may require of you, let it be done diligently.” vs. 21e-g
- 2) The allowed amounts stipulated. vs. 22
- a) Silver, “up to one hundred talents of silver” 3 ¾ tons.” vs. 22a
- b) Wheat, “one hundred kors of wheat”, 600 bushels. vs. 22b
- c) Wine, “one hundred baths of wine”, 600 gallons. vs. 22c
- d) Oil, “one hundred baths of oil”, 600 gallons. vs. 22d
- e) Salt, “and salt without prescribed limit.” vs. 22e
- 3) The submission of the king to the will of Yahweh. vs. 23

- a) There is no limit, “Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven.” vs. 23a
- b) There was to be unhesitating obedience to his orders, “let it diligently be done for the house of the God of heaven.” vs. 23b
- c) The motive and reason was for self-preservation and protection, “For why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?” vs. 23c
* Egypt revolted against the Persian in 460 B.C. , later the Greeks.
- 4) The provision to be exempt from taxes for the returnees, “The adendum, “Also we inform you that it shall not be lawful to impose tax, tribute, or custom on any of the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, Nethinim, or servants of this house of God.” vs. 24

7:25-28 The provisions of administration and judicial authority.

- 1) The king had complete trust in Ezra’s ability through God, “And you, Ezra, according to your God-given wisdom.” vs. 25a-c
* God’s wisdom, even as Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged it of Daniel.
- 2) To set up provisional governors and judges, “set magistrates and judges who may judge all the people who are in the region beyond the River.” vs. 25d

- a) Royal judges had lifetenure, but were put to death for misconduct.
- b) Jewish governors to implement the laws and judges to try those breaking the law.
- 3) The qualifications, “all such as know the laws of your God.” vs. 25e
* The righteous standard of God for man for the order and benefit of society.
- 4) The general civil duty, “and teach those who do not know them.” vs. 25f
* This would normalize society to be safe!
- 5) The absolute power and authority behind the magistrates and judges. vs. 26
 - a) The warning to disobedient, “Whoever will not observe the law of your God and the law of the king.” vs. 26a
 - b) The consequences, “let judgment be executed speedily on him.” vs. 26b
 - c) The degrees of punishment, “whether it be death, or banishment, or confiscation of goods, or imprisonment.” vs. 26c-f
- 6) The commendation of God by Ezra for doing all this, “Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as this in the king’s heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem.” vs. 27
* The Aramaic ends and goes back to Hebrew. vs. 12-26
 - a) The words return to Hebrew at this verse.

- b) Haggai prophesied that the glory of this house would exceed the glory of the former. Hag. 2:9
- c) The first had the Shekinah glory, but the second would have the Son of God walk in to the temple. Jn. 1:14
- 7) The gratefulness of Ezra to God, “and has extended mercy to me before the king and his counselors, and before all the king’s mighty princes.” vs. 28a-b
 - a) Mercy “cjeced” is literally lovingkindness.
 - b) It is a covenant word of the Jews.
- 8) The confident strength of Ezra, “So I was encouraged, as the hand of the LORD my God was upon me.” vs. 28c-d
 - a) The word encouraged “chazaq”, means to strengthen by and through “the hand of the LORD”, the same for Pharaoh when God strengthened his rebellious attitude and heart against God continually. Ex. 7:3
 - b) The personal relationship is the key “my God”.
- 9) The resolve of Ezra, “and I gathered leading men of Israel to go up with me.” vs. 28e
 - a) God always picks a man for His glory.
 - b) God then gathers other men to come alongside to be part of the work God wants to do!

8:1-36 The genealogical list and plans to journey to Jerusalem.

8:1-14 The register of returnees.

1) The priests and kings sons. vs. 1-3

- a) The names of the priests, “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 King Artaxerxes: of the sons of Phinehas, Gershom; of the sons of Ithamar. vs. 1-2c

1)) The heads of family are found six times in Ezra to guide and protect the new society of Israel at Jerusalem!

2)) Ithamar and Phinehas are the priestly family.

3)) Gershom, the first-born of Moses in Midian and means stranger. Ex. 2:22

4)) There is a total of 1524, plus women and children.

- b) The names of the kings sons, “Daniel; of the sons of David, Hattush; of the sons of Shecaniah, of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah; and registered with him were one hundred and fifty males. vs. 2d-3

c) The remaining families. vs. 4-14

-of the sons of Pahath-Moab, Eliehoenai the son of Zerachiah, and with him two hundred males; vs. 4

- of the sons of Shechaniah, Ben-Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males; vs. 5
- of the sons of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males; vs. 6
- of the sons of Elam, Jeshaiiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males; vs. 7
- of the sons of Shephatiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him eighty males; vs. 8
- of the sons of Joab, Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males; vs. 9
- of the sons of Shelomith, Ben-Josiphiah, and with him one hundred and sixty males; vs. 10
- of the sons of Bebai, Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty-eight males; vs. 11
- of the sons of Azgad, Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him one hundred and ten males; vs. 12
- of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names are these--Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah--and with them sixty males; vs. 13
- also of the sons of Bigvai, Uthai and Zabbud, and with them seventy males. vs. 14

8:15-30 The final preparations for the journey.

8:15-20 The searching out of Levites.

- 1) The observation of Ezra at the staging sight, “Now I gathered them by the river that flows to Ahava, and we **camped there three days**. And I looked among the people and the priests, and found none of the sons of Levi there.” vs. 15
 - a) The town Ahava “Ahava” means “I shall subsist”, a man made canal flowing into the Euphrates. Ezk. 1:1
 - b) The three day were from the 9th to the 12th that they camped before departing.
 - c) There were no Levites to go to Jerusalem.
 - * In the first return 74 had gone up with Zerubbabel. Ezra 2:40
- 2) The course of action by Ezra, “Then I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, leaders; also for Joiarib and Elnathan, men of understanding.” vs. 16
 - a) He requested 12 leaders of the Levites to come to him.
 - b) These men were of understanding “biyn”, to percieve and discern with insight.
- 3) The message of Ezra to these 12 Levites of understanding vs. 17
 - a) They were to speak to Iddo, “And I gave them a command for Iddo the chief man at the place Casiphia.’ vs. 17a

- b)** The message was they needed some servant to go, “and I told them what they should say to Iddo and his brethren the Nethinim at the place Casiphia--that they should bring us servants for the house of our God.” vs. 17b
- 1))** Casiphia “Kaciphya”, means silvery, a location close to Ahava because they went back and forth in two days.
 - 2))** “Nathiyn” the temple slaves assigned to the Levites and priest for service in the sanctuary.
 - 3))** They became an establish group and order for the care of the temple instead of God’s people. Josh. 9; Ezra 2:43-58; Neh. 10:28; Deut. 29:11-13
 - 4))** The word servants “Sharath”, means those who desire and know to serve God is a privilege and used for Moses and Joshua.
- 4)** The recruited Levites reported to Ezra. vs. 18-20
- a)** The first group were eightenn Levites, “Then, by the good hand of our God upon us, they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli the son of Levi, the son of Israel, namely Sherebiah, with his sons and brothers, eighteen men.” vs. 18

* The word understanding “sekel”, means prudence, insight and good sense.

- b)** The second group were twenty Levites, “and Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiiah of the sons of Merari, his brothers and their sons, twenty men.” vs. 19
- c)** The third group were 220 men, “also of the Nethinim, whom David and the leaders had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinim. All of them were designated by name.” vs. 20

* The Nethinims were the sons of Solomon’s servants. Ezra 2:43-58

8:21-23 The people fasted and prayed.

- 1)** The purpose of Ezra was to seek the will of God. vs. 21
 - a)** Ezra did this at the camp, “Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava.” vs. 21a
 - 1))** Fasting is to seek the mind and will of God, not to get things from God!
 - 2))** Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for they fasted to be seen of men. Matt. 7:17-18
 - b)** Ezra wanted to all of them to reveal their humility before God, “that we might humble ourselves before our God.” vs. 21b

- c) Ezra wanted God to direct them safely on the journey, “to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions.” vs. 21c
- 2) The explanation of Ezra was that could not ask the king for an escort. vs. 22
 - a) Erza had boasted in God’s protection, “For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, “The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him.” vs. 22a-c
 - b) Ezra had boasted in God’s righteous justice, “but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him.” vs. 22d
 - c) The faithfulness of God to His people, “So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.” vs. 23

8:24-30 The distribution of the temple articles of silver and gold to be transported.

- 1) The priests responsible for the articles, “And I separated twelve of the leaders of the priests--Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them.” vs. 24
 - a) The men of great responsibility.
 - b) The constant representation of the 12 tribes is evident.

- 2) The weight was distributed to the 12 priests, “and weighed out to them the silver, the gold, and the articles, the offering for the house of our God which the king and his counselors and his princes, and all Israel who were present, had offered.” vs. 25
 - a) This was incredible wealth God provided.
 - b) Through Cyrus, Darius, Artexerxes, etc.
- 3) The weight was indicated for accountability, “I weighed into their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, silver articles weighing one hundred talents, one hundred talents of gold, twenty gold basins worth a thousand drachmas, and two vessels of fine polished bronze, precious as gold.” vs. 26-27
 - a) 650 talent of silver is equal to 49,000 pound, close to 25 tons.
 - b) 100 talents of gold equals 7,500 pounds of silver articles.
- 4) The reminder that they and the vessels were sanctified to Yahweh and the precious metals a gift to God, “And I said to them, “You are holy to the LORD; the articles are holy also; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to the LORD God of your fathers.” vs. 28
- 5) The priest were responsible to guard everything entrusted to them till their arrival to Jerusalem. vs. 29
 - a) The journey would be long with dangers, “Watch and keep them until you weigh

them before the leaders of the priests and the Levites and heads of the fathers' houses of Israel in Jerusalem.' vs. 29a

- 1)) The word watch "shaqad" means to be wakeful over, alert.
- 2)) The word keep "shamar", means to guard and protect having a charge.
- b) The final resting place of the vessels, "in the chambers of the house of the LORD." vs. 29b
 - * The various rooms within the temple.
- 6) The accepted commitment of the priests, "So the priests and the Levites received the silver and the gold and the articles by weight, to bring them to Jerusalem to the house of our God." vs. 30

8:31-36 The departure from Babylon and arrival to Jerusalem.

- 1) The encampment at Aava lasted nine days, "Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the **twelfth day** of the first month, to go to Jerusalem. And the hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambush along the road." vs. 31
 - a) The date Ezra began his journey from Babylon, "On the first day of the first month he began his journey from Babylon." vs. 9a

- b) The month is April, the first day would be adjusted the the Jewish religious calendar, the month of Passover, and departed on the 12th day, 457 B.C.
- d) Ezra had gathered them by the river that flows to Ahava, and we camped there three days. vs. 15
 - * A total of 12 days to the departure, 9 days without doubt checking and making sure they had everything.
- 2) The recuperation at the arrival at Jerusalem, "So we came to Jerusalem, and stayed there **three days.**" vs. 32
 - * The journey had been long, slow and filled with perils, but God's hand was on them.
- 3) The delivery and account of the transported precious metals and vessels. vs. 33-34
 - a) After resting three days they accounted for their responsible allotment, "Now on the fourth day the silver and the gold and the articles were weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest, and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas; with them were the Levites, Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui, with the number and weight of everything." vs. 33-34a
 - b) The allotted measure was accurate, "All the weight was written down at that time." vs. 34b

- 4) The celebration over the safe and prosperous journey. vs. 35
 - a) The newly arrived in the second return dedicated themselves to God, “The children of those who had been carried away captive, who had come from the captivity, offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel.” vs. 35a-c
 - b) The number of sacrifices are stipulated, “twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and twelve male goats as a sin offering. All this was a burnt offering to the LORD.” vs. 35d-h
- 5) The proclamation of the delegated authority of Darius to govern and judge, “And they delivered the king’s orders to the king’s satraps and the governors in the region beyond the River. So they gave support to the people and the house of God.” vs. 36