

Ezra 8

The Journey Timeline

Ezra 7:7 *Began journey on the 1st day of the 1st month*

Ezra 8:15-30 Camped for 3 days by the river of Ahava

- Calling of the Levites & Nethinim (v15-20)
- Fasted and prayed (v21-23)
- Assigned priests and Levites tasks of carrying the gold and silver (v24-30)

Ezra 8:31 Left the river of Ahava on the 12th day of the 1st month

Ezra 7:8 *Arrived at Jerusalem on the 1st day of the 5th month*

Ezra 8:32 Camped 3 days at Jerusalem

Ezra 8:33-36 On the 4th day after arriving at Jerusalem

- Delivered the gold and silver to Temple
- Made offerings for the returnees
- Delivered the king's decree to the local authorities

Why camp for three days?

Using the online concordance at www.blueletterbible.org, search for the phrase "three days" and "third day" to see where else these phrases are used in scripture.

- What do three days and the third day signify in the Law?
- What additional understanding do the prophets give us concerning the third day?
- Ezra is following a pattern that he sees in the Law. Why would Ezra camp for three days at the beginning of the journey? (hint: v28)
- Why does Ezra camp three more days when they get to Jerusalem?

Why are Ezra and the people fasting and praying?

- If Ezra goes to the king to ask for protection, what does that say about Ezra's God?

Boasting

- Is boasting a good or bad thing?

What Hebrew words are translated as “boast” and what do they mean? Look up in www.blueletterbible.org using the Lexicon search.

- Halel - _____
- Pa’ar - _____

Boasting can be good when it brings glory to _____.

Boasting is wrong when we are taking the glory for _____.

Boasting is a way of building _____.

- Is building the Lord’s reputation before a sinful world part of building the House of God?

Paul often boasts of believers who demonstrate godly living. Boasting is a testimony to a godly conscience and a life of grace (2 Cor. 1:12)

What things should we not boast about?

- Do not boast in _____ (Ps 49:6)
- Do not boast in _____ (2 Cor 5:12)
- Do not boast in _____ or _____ of men (Isa 10:15, 1 Cor 3:21)
- Do not boast in strength of _____ (Ps 97:7)
- Do not boast about _____ (Pro 27:1, Jam 4:13-16)
- Do not boast in _____ or keeping the Law (Rom 2:23, Rom 4:2, Gal 6:13, Eph 2:9)
- No flesh should glorify itself in God’s presence (1 Cor 1:29)

Accountability

- Who does Ezra make accountable for the treasures?
- How long must they remain accountable?
- To whom are they accountable?
- Why is accountability needed for Ezra’s priests and for us as believers on our journey?

Word study: Three Days and Third Day

Separation associate with new creation (Gen. 1:4-13)

Days 1-3 mark a three-day space of time.

The first two days describe two acts of separation: light from darkness, and waters from waters. The act of separation on the third day involves the earth being drawn out of the sea of waters. That passage through water marks the beginning of new life.

Jewish scholars interpret the third day figuratively as Israel (earth) being drawn out of the nations (sea).

“And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together [bath, Hebrew: mikveh] of the waters He called Seas...” - Genesis 1:10a

Also a picture of God’s people being drawn out of a bath of waters as an expression of becoming a new creation. This developed into the early Jewish practice of *mikveh* or water immersion (baptism).

Three days: A space of time or distance for separation or sanctification

- After a three-days’ journey, Abraham and Isaac came to Mount Moriah (Gen 22:4)
 - Isaac’s fate is weighed in the three-day journey
 - Ends in an act of faith on Abraham’s part
 - Ends in the sacrifice of the ram in place of Isaac – restoration of Isaac to his father
- Laban took his flocks three days’ journey from Jacob’s flock so that there would be no interbreeding. (Gen 30:36)
- Jacob is given a three-day head-start when he flees from Laban, his father-in-law. On the third day, Laban is told that Jacob had left his camp (Gen 31:22)
- “...Please, let us go three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.” (Exo 3:18, 5:3, 8:27)
- So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.” (Ex 10:22-23) *Israel was hidden from the Egyptians for three days.*
- Three days into the wilderness, the children of Israel find rest at Marah – the Lord provided water for them there (Exo 15:22-26)
- The children of Israel are to be sanctified for two days to prepare them to meet the Lord on the third day on Mount Sinai. Men must keep themselves from women in order to be considered sanctified. (Ex. 19:10-11, 15; cf 1 Sam 21:5)

- When they departed from Mount Sinai, the first leg of that journey took three days as the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them to search out a resting place. (Num 10:33)
- The flesh of the peace offering that was not consumed within 2 days must be burned completely on the third day (Lev 7:17-18; 19:6-7) *a completion of sanctification*
- The act of cleansing a person after touching the dead – the waters of separation must be sprinkled on him on the third day if he is to be purified. (Num 19:12, 19; 31:19) *an act of sanctification and separation*

The third day: a day of verdict and decision that brings about a turning point or a change of life direction

- On the third day, Simeon and Levi render judgment on Shechem for the rape of their sister, Dinah (Gen 34:25) – *vindication of Dinah, but also leads to judgment on Simeon and Levi when Jacob is blessing his sons.*
- On the third day, the verdict was pronounced upon Pharaoh's baker and butler according to the prophecy of Joseph (Gen 40:20) – *the restoration of the butler and death of the baker*
- Joseph holds his brothers captive for three days in judgment, and on the third day announces his decision concerning them and reveals his identity to them (Gen 42:17-18) – *leads to the revival of Israel (Jacob)*
- On the third day, the people with whom Joshua made a covenant of peace were found to be Canaanites and sworn enemies (Jos 9:15-16) – *a turning point in Israel's history, for they did not turn the Canaanites out of the land, but made them slaves (their descendants would be the Nethinim & Solomon's servants).*
- Esther and the Jews fasted and prayed for three days, and on the third day Esther presented herself before the king – *as a result, the Jewish people were saved from Haman's plot.* (Esther 4:16)

A day of repentance, reconciliation and restoration

- Hezekiah is granted healing, an extended life, and deliverance from the Assyrians, and is restored to the presence of the Lord on the third day (2 Kings 20)
- Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights (Jon 1:17, Mat 12:40) – *a time of soul searching and repentance, followed by restoration.*
- "Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight." (Hos 6:1-2)
- "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'" (John 2:19-20, ref. Mat 26:6,27:40; Mark 14:58)