



EZRA

▶▶ THE RETURN

EZRA | THE RETURN

Ezra 8: “Spiritual Leadership”

6th Grade Church Planting Team → **When are we ready for spiritual leadership?** → **Ezra 8:1-36**

1-20 → Willingness. → No Levite volunteered... why not? Insecurity? Comfort? Ignorance? Busy? Unavailable...?

- Ezra sent for leaders, men of discernment (16)... → The gracious hand of God gave Ezra success.
- God calls us to places that need us!: Church Shopping “I want my needs met.” vs. “What needs can I meet here?”
- By God’s grace, ministry is a privilege!: IT IS NOT A RESPONSIBILITY, IT IS A PRIVILEGE! → **Jonah?**
- **The roles of Priests/Levites.** → **Priests TODAY: 1 Peter 2:9 → Men & women “showing the goodness of God!”**
- Mesa Launch Team! → 100 Individuals to relaunch our church in the Fall. → 50 need to be men.
 - Stats: 61% / 39% → GROWING: 50/50, AVG: 39/61, DYING: 30/70 → Men’s Breakfast → MESA = 57 / 43% Men
 - But... there are so many good churches... the tide is slipping away... California is CRITICAL.
 - The Man in the Arena Quote - Teddy Roosevelt
- **Jesus was the kind of leader that was marred by dust, sweat, & blood.** → Dina Francis → SHOW UP!

21-23 → Dependence. → Fasting was/is an object lesson of powerlessness in the presence of all powerful God.

- Ministry REQUIRES God’s strength! → **Ezra needed protection... so he prayed & fasted.**
- We rely on God... when we ARE WEAK! → Our prayer lives are the healthiest when we are desperate!
- Fasting feeds our faith by starving our flesh. → “I’m gonna give up pot.” → Our flesh is what makes us weak...
- **Jesus fasted!** → Mesa Launch Team! → Fasting, prayer, & evangelism.
- When we express dependence on God strength, we’ll be more dependable to each other.

24-36 → Character. → The leaders were charged to carry HOLY treasures to the Temple (28-29). → Owner?

- Godly character commits to “carrying” His treasures! → We carry GOD’S treasures! We are STEWARDS!!
- Where am I exercising spiritual leadership: My life, family, business, neighborhood, & my church. → Baby Sugar/Flour
- Promise Keepers: Some of us may need to realign our commitments this morning...
 1. A *Promise Keeper* is committed to honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and obedience to God’s Word through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 2. A *Promise Keeper* is committed to pursuing vital relationships with several other believers, understanding that they need mature Christian brothers and sisters to help them keep their promises. It’s part of God’s plan for accountability.
 3. A *Promise Keeper* is committed to practicing spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity, thus bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their daily walk. (Gal. 5:16-21)
 4. A *Promise Keeper* is committed to building strong marriages and families through love, protection, encouragement, and Biblical values.
 5. A *Promise Keeper* is committed to supporting the mission of his church by honoring and praying for their pastoral leadership and mentors, and by actively giving of their time, energy, and resources to the Lord’s service.
 6. A *Promise Keeper* is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of Biblical unity.

7. A *Promise Keeper* is committed to influencing their world toward Christ, being obedient to the Great Commandment (Mark 12:30-31) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

- When we fail, God will be faithful to forgive us. → His forgiveness will forge His character in you. → **1 John 1:9**
- **"Everything was accounted for by number and WEIGHT!" (34) → FAITHFULNESS is a fruit of the Spirit.**
- God will hold us accountable! → **2 Corinthians 5:10** → So...lets hold each other accountable.

→ **Spiritual leaders step up by depending on God to carry our their commitments to God.**

→ **PRAYER: "Father, give me a desire, dependance, & dependability to lead spiritually!"**

TALK ABOUT IT - Questions to GROW through with family, friends, & myself.

1. Who were my spiritual leaders growing up? What qualities did they possess?
2. What are the prerequisites for spiritual leadership? How will I know I'm ready?
3. Which characteristic am I struggling with the most right now in ministry?
4. Who is depending our spiritual leadership?
5. **PRAYER:** "Father, help me me the desire, dependance, & dependability to lead spiritually."

LINKS / RESOURCES:

Bible Project Ezra Video: <https://youtu.be/MkETkRv9tG8>

QUOTES / SONGS:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat." - Teddy Roosevelt

SCRIPTURES: New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.

Ezra 8:1-36

8 Here is a list of the family leaders and the genealogies of those who came with me from Babylon during the reign of King Artaxerxes:

2 From the family of Phinehas: Gershom.

From the family of Ithamar: Daniel.

From the family of David: Hattush, 3 a descendant of Shecaniah.

From the family of Parosh: Zechariah and 150 other men were registered.

4 From the family of Pahath-moab: Eliehoenai son of Zerahiah and 200 other men.

5 From the family of Zattu: Shecaniah son of Jahaziel and 300 other men.

6 From the family of Adin: Ebed son of Jonathan and 50 other men.

7 From the family of Elam: Jeshaiiah son of Athaliah and 70 other men.

8 From the family of Shephatiah: Zebadiah son of Michael and 80 other men.

9 From the family of Joab: Obadiah son of Jehiel and 218 other men.

10 From the family of Bani: Shelomith son of Josiphiah and 160 other men.

11 From the family of Bebai: Zechariah son of Bebai and 28 other men.

12 From the family of Azgad: Johanan son of Hakkatan and 110 other men.

13 From the family of Adonikam, who came later: Eliphelet, Jeuel, Shemaiah, and 60 other men.

14 From the family of Bigvai: Uthai, Zaccur, and 70 other men.

*15 I assembled the exiles at the Ahava Canal, and we camped there for three days while I went over the lists of the people and the priests who had arrived. **I found that not one Levite had volunteered to come along.** 16 So I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, who were leaders of the people. I also sent for Joiarib and Elnathan, who were men of discernment. 17 I sent them to Iddo, the leader of the Levites at Casiphia, to ask him and his relatives and the Temple servants to send us ministers for the Temple of God at Jerusalem.*

18 Since the gracious hand of our God was on us, they sent us a man named Sherebiah, along with eighteen of his sons and brothers. He was a very astute man and a descendant of Mahli, who was a descendant of Levi son of Israel. 19 They also sent Hashabiah, together with Jeshaiiah from the descendants of Merari, and twenty of his sons and brothers, 20 and 220 Temple servants. The Temple servants were assistants to the Levites—a group of Temple workers first instituted by King David and his officials. They were all listed by name.

21 And there by the Ahava Canal, I gave orders for all of us to fast and humble ourselves before our God. We prayed that he would give us a safe journey and protect us, our children, and our goods as we traveled. 22 For I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to accompany us and protect us from enemies along the way. After all, we had told the king, “Our God’s hand of protection is on all who worship him, but his fierce anger rages against those who abandon him.”

23 So we fasted and earnestly prayed that our God would take care of us, and he heard our prayer.

24 I appointed twelve leaders of the priests—Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten other priests— 25 to be in charge of transporting the silver, the gold, the gold bowls, and the other items that the king, his council, his officials, and all the people of Israel had presented for the Temple of God. 26 I weighed the treasure as I gave it to them and found the totals to be as follows: 24 tons of silver, 7,500 pounds of silver articles, 7,500 pounds of gold, 27 - 20 gold bowls, equal in value to 1,000 gold coins, 2 fine articles of polished bronze, as precious as gold.

28 And I said to these priests, “You and these treasures have been set apart as holy to the Lord. This silver and gold is a voluntary offering to the Lord, the God of our ancestors. 29 Guard these treasures well until you present them to the leading priests, the Levites, and the leaders of Israel, who will weigh them at the storerooms of the Lord’s Temple in Jerusalem.” 30 So the priests and the Levites accepted the task of transporting these treasures of silver and gold to the Temple of our God in Jerusalem.

31 We broke camp at the Ahava Canal on April 19 and started off to Jerusalem. **And the gracious hand of our God protected us and saved us from enemies and bandits along the way. 32 So we arrived safely in Jerusalem, where we rested for three days.**

33 On the fourth day after our arrival, the silver, gold, and other valuables were weighed at the Temple of our God and entrusted to Meremoth son of Uriah the priest and to Eleazar son of Phinehas, along with Jozabad son of Jeshua and Noadiah son of Binnui—both of whom were Levites. 34 Everything was accounted for by number and weight, and the total weight was officially recorded.

35 Then the exiles who had come out of captivity sacrificed burnt offerings to the God of Israel. They presented twelve bulls for all the people of Israel, as well as ninety-six rams and seventy-seven male lambs. They also offered twelve male goats as a sin offering. All this was given as a burnt offering to the Lord. 36 The king’s decrees were delivered to his highest officers and the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River, who then cooperated by supporting the people and the Temple of God.

1 Peter 2: 9 But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

1 John 1: 9 But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

2 Corinthians 5: 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.