

Ezra Nehemiah Lesson 3 Lecture

Ezra 7 - 8

So that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this Isaiah 41:20

- Ezra 6 ends with the completion of the Temple in 516/515 BC during the reign of King Darius of Persia.
- Ezra 7 begins with the 7th year of King Artaxerxes, which is 458 BC.
- This is a time lapse of about 57 years, of which we know nothing of what was happening to the Jews in Judah.
- As we will see from Nehemiah, the city wall in Jerusalem was still in ruins and few buildings had been constructed within the city.
- The Jews faced continued hostility from their neighbors and daily life was difficult.
- Ezra 7 opens with the genealogy of Ezra. Like many genealogies in the Bible, generations are missing.
 - Case in point, Ezra 7:1 states that Ezra was the son of Seraiah. 2 Kings 25:18-21 tells us that Seraiah was the last high priest of Judah and he was executed by Nebuchadnezzar in Riblah, Syria circa 586 BC. This suggests that there were one or more generations between Ezra and Seraiah which are not recorded in Ezra 7.
- The point of the genealogy is that Ezra can trace his lineage back to Aaron and thus, he has the right to serve as a Jewish priest.
- Ezra 7:6 describes Ezra as a scribe or a teacher of the Law of Moses. In the Aramaic, the description used is “secretary.”
- In his Ezra and Nehemiah commentary, Charles Fensham suggests that the term secretary has a double meaning.
 - In Persia, the term would have been a civil office. Fensham says, “Ezra was appointed by Artaxerxes for the specific task of acting as secretary in Judah on behalf of the religious institutions.”

- Ezra's role was in keeping with the Persian policy of religious tolerance for the foreigners within Persia and those elsewhere who were subjugated by Persia.
- The second meaning is that of a scribe or "skilled secretary", according to Fensham.
- Ezra's skill in the Law of Moses was important. It formed the basis for his work among the former exiles in Judah. The exiles could not argue about Ezra's Torah knowledge when he called them to task for failing to follow God's Laws and commandments. Ezra knew the Law and he practiced it.
- Ezra 7:9-10 records, "for the good hand of his God was on him. ¹⁰ For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel."
- Ezra cemented the form of Judaism which exists today, which is focused on the Torah, not in the Temple, but in synagogues. Synagogues as places of worship and education had their beginnings during the Babylonian exile and were established in Judah by the returning exiles.
- In Ezra 7:6, we have these words, "and the king granted him all that he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him. "
 - Here we have another scriptural example of God using his power to move the minds and hearts of earthly kings in support of God's people.
- Moving on to Ezra 7:11-26, scholars have debated the authenticity of this letter given its clearly Jewish bent. While God had moved the heart of Artaxerxes to send Ezra to Judah, the Jewish language and terminology used in this letter would not be ones used by the king. One possible answer to the debate is that Ezra drafted the letter for Artaxerxes' approval and signature.
- If Ezra did indeed draft this letter, then the following verse, Ezra 7:14, takes on more importance:
 - "For you are sent by the king and his seven counselors to make inquiries about Judah and Jerusalem according to the Law of your God, which is in your hand."
 - Had Ezra heard about problems among the exiles in Judah? If we fast forward to Ezra 9, we can see the issue of Jewish intermarriages with non-Jews which Ezra encountered upon his arrival. This was clearly in violation of God's commands and may have been something Ezra knew about in advance of his trip to Judah.

- Remember also that the return of the Jews to Judah was predicated on the text of the Edict of Cyrus and their re-establishment of Temple worship. If the exiles were not about their religious work, the possibility of a revolt among the Jews of Judah, influenced by their Gentile neighbors, was a distinct possibility. This was not something Persia wanted to see. They were dealing with a revolt in Egypt at the time Ezra went to Judah.
- 2 other points about Artaxerxes' letter are worth mentioning:
 - Ezra 7:24 says, "We also notify you that it shall not be lawful to impose tribute, custom, or toll on anyone of the priests, the Levites, the singers, the doorkeepers, the temple servants, or other servants of this house of God. "
 - Given the importance of taxation within the Persian empire, this decree was significant.
 - There was precedence for this under the reign of Darius, who exempted the priests of Apollo from taxation also.
 - Ezra 7:25 states, "And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God that is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges who may judge all the people in the province Beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God. "
 - "Beyond the River" (ESV) or "of Trans-Euphrates" was a reference to all Jews who lived outside the traditional Persian realm of Babylon. Trans-Euphrates was one of the Persian satraps and covered a large territory. On some maps, the satrapy is called Assyria.
 - These Jews were now subject to Ezra's teaching as well.
 - There is a distinction between magistrates and judges. One dealt with religious law, and one dealt with state/civil law. So, there would be Jewish courts to ensure adherence to Jewish Law and there would be civil courts to ensure adherence to Persian law.
- Beginning with Ezra 8:15, we notice that Ezra notices that there are no Levites at the gathering place on the Ahava River, prior to departure from Babylon to Judah.
 - There was no Temple in Babylon or Persia during the exile. Thus, there was little to no need for Levites, whose primary priestly duties were in support of the Temple and its treasury.
 - Ezra sends messengers to Iddo, likely a priest or community leader in Casiphia.

- Iddo provides Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and Jeshaiah, along with their sons and kinsmen; a total of 38 people.
- Sherebiah is later mentioned in Ezra 8:24 in the list of Levites; in Nehemiah 8:7 as one who helped the people understand the law; among those who led the corporate confession of sin in Nehemiah 9:4-5; a signer of the covenant in Nehemiah 10:12; and among those in charge of songs of thanksgiving in Nehemiah 12:8.
- In Ezra 8:24-34, Ezra set apart 12 leading priests and 12 Levites to supervise the security of the gold, silver, and bronze offerings for the Temple.
 - (Note: the construction of Ezra 8:24 has not been well translated. The verse should read, “Then I set apart twelve of the leading priests; as well as Sherebiah, Hashabiah and ten of their brothers.”)
 - The priests were instructed to supervise the valuables until they were weighed out in front of the chief priests, the Levites, and the clan heads upon arrival in Jerusalem. Thereafter, it would be the responsibility of the Levites to secure this treasury.
- What is surprising about the valuables was that their total amounted to 3 ³/₄ tons (7500 pounds) of gold and 24 ¹/₂ (49,000 pounds) tons of silver.
 - Some scholars have scoffed at the list of Ezra 8: 26-27, stating that the list must be inauthentic or inaccurate.
 - We should be careful here not to underestimate the generosity of the very wealthy Persian kings nor the Jews of Babylon; the latter group would have wanted to outfit the new Temple with as lavish decorations as Solomon’s Temple had.
 - Pack horses can carry about 260 pounds per horse. 236 pack horses would have been needed to haul these valuables alone to Jerusalem.
- The trip to Judah lasted 4 months. The length of the trip was likely due to 3 reasons:
 - The large volume of the gold and silver would have slowed the journey they were taking.
 - They most likely took the caravan route through Syria, which would have been safer.

- Artaxerxes was undertaking a military campaign in Egypt at the time. If Persian troops were headed to Egypt, the exiles may have chosen to travel with the troops for additional safety.
- Ezra 8 ends with the all the exiles who had returned from captivity offering both burnt offerings and a sin offering.
 - Note the quantity for each offering:
 - For the burnt offering, 12 bulls, 96 rams, and 77 male lambs.
 - Generally, a single burnt offering was just 1 animal. However, on special occasions (and we would all agree that the arrival of Ezra and his fellow travelers along with 28 tons of wealth would qualify), the burnt offerings could be quite large.
 - Consider the passage from 1 Kings 8:63 which describes the dedication of Solomon's Temple:
 - Solomon offered a sacrifice of fellowship offerings to the LORD: twenty-two thousand cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep and goats. So the king and all the Israelites dedicated the temple of the LORD.
 - For the sin offering, the exiles offered 12 male goats.
 - Again, a typical sin offering was only 1 animal.
 - We might ask what sins the exiles, those already present as well as those just arriving, had committed. No doubt there were both sins of commission and omission! As we will see from Ezra 9, there was a big sin among the restored community in Judah.

Ezra Nehemiah Lesson 3

Ezra 7 - 8

So that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this Isaiah 41:20

1. Read Ezra 7:1-10.
 - a. Where did Ezra live?
Babylon
 - b. What do you learn about Ezra?
 - Lived during the reign of King Artaxerxes of Persia
 - He can trace his lineage back to Aaron, Moses' brother.
 - A teacher well versed in the Law of Moses
 - c. What was the purpose of including his genealogy in these verses?
 - The genealogy establishes his bona-fides as a priest, a Levite, and a scribe.
 - His established bona-fides would limit any arguments about what he might say to the Jews or what he might do in Judah.
 - d. What was his relationship with the Persian king Artaxerxes?
The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him. Ezra 7:6
 - e. When did Ezra go to Jerusalem and who accompanied him?
 - In the 7th year of King Artaxerxes
 - Israelites, priests, Levites, musicians, gatekeepers, and Temple servants accompanied Ezra.
 - f. How long was his journey?
 - He had begun his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month Ezra 7:9
 - 4 months

2. Read Ezra 7:11-28.

a. What did King Artaxerxes give Ezra?

A letter

b. Do you think this king worshipped God (Yahweh)? Why or why not?

No. In Ezra 7:14, Artaxerxes uses the term “the Law of your God.” In Ezra 7:17, Artaxerxes uses the term “your God in Jerusalem.”

c. How does the king describe God (Yahweh)?

- The God of Heaven
- God of Israel
- Your God in Jerusalem
- Your God

d. What was Ezra’s mission?

You are sent by the king and his seven advisers to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem with regard to the Law of your God, which is in your hand. Ezra 7:14

e. What else did the king give Ezra and what was he to do with it?

Moreover, you are to take with you **the silver and gold that the king and his advisers have freely given to the God of Israel**, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, ¹⁶ together with **all the silver and gold you may obtain from the province of Babylon, as well as the freewill offerings of the people and priests for the temple of their God in Jerusalem.** ¹⁷ With this money be sure to **buy bulls, rams and male lambs, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and sacrifice them on the altar of the temple of your God in Jerusalem.**

¹⁸ You and your fellow Israelites may then **do whatever seems best with the rest of the silver and gold, in accordance with the will of your God.** ¹⁹ **Deliver to the God of Jerusalem all the articles entrusted to you for worship in the temple of your God.** ²⁰ **And anything else needed for the temple of your God that you are responsible to supply, you may provide from the royal treasury.**
Ezra 7:15-20

- f. What instructions were given to the king's treasurers in the Trans-Euphrates?
Now I, King Artaxerxes, decree that all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates are to provide with diligence whatever Ezra the priest, the teacher of the Law of the God of heaven, may ask of you—²² up to a hundred talents of silver, a hundred cors of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, a hundred baths of olive oil, and salt without limit.²³ Whatever the God of heaven has prescribed, let it be done with diligence for the temple of the God of heaven. Ezra 7:21-23
- g. What does 7:23 tell you about the king's motives?
Artaxerxes does not want to offend God, so that God's wrath will not fall on the king and his sons.
- h. What is important about 7:24?
You are also to know that you have **no authority to impose taxes, tribute or duty on any of the priests, Levites, musicians, gatekeepers, temple servants or other workers at this house of God.** Ezra 7:24
- i. What is Ezra instructed to do in 7:25?
And you, Ezra, in accordance with the wisdom of your God, which you possess, **appoint magistrates and judges to administer justice to all the people of Trans-Euphrates—all who know the laws of your God. And you are to teach any who do not know them.** Ezra 7:25
- j. Which specific people group is this?
Jews and Jewish proselytes
- k. What laws are mentioned in 7:26 and what are the consequences of not obeying these laws?
- The laws of Moses
 - The laws of Persia
 - Whoever does not obey the law of your God and the law of the king must surely be punished by death, banishment, confiscation of property, or imprisonment. Ezra 7:26
- l. What does Ezra give thanks for in verses 27-28?
- God put it into the king's heart to bring honor to the Temple.
 - God extended his favor to Ezra before the King, his advisors, and officials.

3. Read Ezra 8:1-4. Approximately how many men accompanied Ezra on his journey?
Over 1500 men

4. Read Ezra 8:15-20.
 - a. When Ezra assembled the people who would accompany him, who was missing?
Levites
 - b. Why would Ezra have been concerned about this group not being represented among the company of men going to Jerusalem?
Levites were important to the functions of the Temple, its surroundings, and its contents.
 - c. How did Ezra solve this problem?
Ezra summoned Jewish leaders and men of learning. He instructed them to go to Iddo, the leader in Kasiphia, and asked him to provide Levites to go to Jerusalem.
 - d. What other group of people were added to the assembly?
Temple servants
 - e. What is significant about the phrase “all were registered by name” in verse 20?
All these people could provide their Jewish lineages.

5. Read Ezra 8:21-23. What did Ezra do next and why?
 - There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions. Ezra 8:21
 - I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, “The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him.”²³ So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer. Ezra 8:22-23

6. Read Ezra 8:24-30.
 - a. What did Ezra do next?
Then I set apart twelve of the leading priests, namely, Sherebiah, Hashabiah and ten of their brothers,²⁵ and I weighed out to them the offering of silver and gold and the articles that the king, his advisers, his officials and all Israel present there had donated for the house of our God. Ezra 8:24-25

- b. What was the weight of the gold and silver?
I weighed out to them 650 talents of silver, silver articles weighing 100 talents, 100 talents of gold, ²⁷ 20 bowls of gold valued at 1,000 darics, and two fine articles of polished bronze, as precious as gold. Ezra 8:26-27
- c. What were the gold, silver, and items of gold, silver, and bronze to be used for?
The articles were consecrated to the Lord to be used in the Temple.

7. Read Ezra 8:31-36.

- a. When did the people leave Babylon?
On the twelfth day of the first month we set out from the Ahava Canal to go to Jerusalem. Ezra 8:31
- b. How was their journey and why?
The hand of our God was on us, and he protected us from enemies and bandits along the way. Ezra 8:31
- c. When they arrived in Jerusalem, what did they do first?
They rested for 3 days.
- d. What did they do with the gold, silver, and items of gold, silver, and bronze?
On the fourth day, in the house of our God, we weighed out the silver and gold and the sacred articles into the hands of Meremoth son of Uriah, the priest. Eleazar son of Phinehas was with him, and so were the Levites Jozabad son of Jeshua and Noadiah son of Binnui. Ezra 8:33
- e. What is the purpose of verse 34?
- Everything was accounted for by number and weight, and the entire weight was recorded at that time. Ezra 8:34
 - To prove that nothing had been lost, stolen, or spent along the way
- f. What did Ezra and the people with him do next?
Then the exiles who had returned from captivity sacrificed burnt offerings to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven male lambs and, as a sin offering, twelve male goats. All this was a burnt offering to the LORD. Ezra 8:35

- g. What is important about verse 36? (Hint; refer to Ezra 7: 11-26.)
- They also delivered the king's orders to the royal satraps and to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, who then gave assistance to the people and to the house of God. Ezra 8:36
 - So that the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates would **provide whatever Ezra asked of them, that everything needed would be done with diligence, that Ezra's authority to appoint magistrates and judges would not be impeded, and that no taxes would be assessed to anyone who supported the Temple.**

Ezra 7 - 8

Ezra 7

- Ezra 6 Ends With the Completion of the Temple in 515/516 BC During the Reign of King Darius of Persia
- Ezra 7 Begins With the 7th Year of King Artaxerxes, Which is 458 BC
- A Time Lapse of 57 Years, Of Which We Know Nothing of What Was Happening in Judah
- The City Wall in Jerusalem Was Still in Ruins and Few Buildings Had Been Constructed Within the City
- The Jews Faced Hostility From Their Neighbors
- Daily Life Was Difficult

Artaxerxes I; copyright: Wikipedia; Artaxerxes I's Tomb in Naqsh-e Rostam, Iran



Ezra, The Scribe

- Ezra 7 Opens With His Genealogy; Like Many Biblical Genealogies, Generations are Missing
- Contrast Ezra 7:1 vs. 2 Kings 25:18-21
- The Point of the Genealogy: Ezra Can Trace His Lineage Back to Aaron and Has the Right to Serve as a Priest
- Ezra 7:6 Describes Ezra As a Scribe or a Teacher of the Law of Moses
- In Aramaic, the Description Used Is “Secretary”

Ezra, The Scribe

- Charles Fensham Suggests the Term “Secretary” Has a Double Meaning
- In Persia, the Term Would Have Been a Civil Office
- Fensham: “Ezra Was Appointed by Artaxerxes for the Specific Task of Acting as Secretary in Judah on Behalf of the Religious Institutions.”
- This Was in Keeping With Persian Policy of Religious Tolerance for the Foreigners Within Persian And Those Elsewhere Subjugated by Persia

Ezra, The Scribe

- The Second Meaning Is That of a Scribe, or “Skilled Secretary”, According to Fensham
- Ezra’s Skill in the Law of Moses Was Important
- It Formed the Basis for His Work in Judah
- The Exiles Could Not Argue About Ezra’s Torah Knowledge When He Called Them to Task For Their Sins
- Ezra 7:9-10
- Ezra Cemented the Form of Judaism Which Exists Today; Focused on the Torah, Not in the Temple, But in Synagogues, Which Had Their Beginnings During the Babylonian Exile

Ezra and Artaxerxes

- Ezra 7:6; Another Example of God Using His Power to Move the Minds and Hearts of Earthly Kings in Support of God's People
- Scholars Have Debated the Authenticity of the Letter in Ezra 7:11-26, Due to the Jewish Language and Terminology
- One Possible Answer: Ezra Drafted the Letter for Artaxerxes' Approval and Signature

Ezra and Artaxerxes

- If Ezra Drafted This Letter, Then Ezra 7:14 Takes on More Importance
- Had Ezra Heard About Problems Among the Exiles in Judah?
- Fast Forward to Ezra 9: the Issue of Jewish Intermarriages with Non-Jews
- A Clear Violation of God's Commands and Perhaps Something Ezra Knew in Advance of His Trip to Judah
- Remember That the Return of the Jews to Judah Was Predicated on the Edict of Cyrus and Re-establishment of Temple Worship
- If the Jews Were Not About Their Religious Work, the Possibility of a Jewish Revolt, Influenced by Their Gentile Neighbors, Was a Distinct Possibility
- Persia Did Not Want to See This; Already Dealing with a Revolt in Egypt

Artaxerxes' Letter

- Ezra 7:24
- Given the Importance of Taxation Within the Persian Empire, This Decree Was Significant
- There Was Precedence for This Under the Reign of Darius, Who Exempted the Priests of Apollo From Taxation Also
- Ezra 7:25
- “Beyond the River” or “of Trans-Euphrates” Referred to All the Jews Who Lived Outside of Persian Babylon; Trans-Euphrates Was a Persian Satrap With a Large Territory; Satrapy Also Called Assyria on Maps
- The Jews Were Now Subject to Ezra’s Teaching
- Magistrates and Judges: Religious Law and State/Civil Law
- Jewish Courts for Jewish Law; Civile Courts for Persian Law

Map of Satrapies of Persia, 490 BC;
copyright: Stack Exchange



Achaemenid inscriptions and Greek sources leave an incomplete and sometimes seemingly contradictory picture of the administrative make-up of the Achaemenid Empire. The evidence has been reconcepted by Bruno Jacobs, as reflecting a three-tier organization of seven "Great Satrapies," each subdivided into "Main Satrapies," most of these subdivided into "Minor Satrapies." The map reflects the reconstruction by B. Jacobs, *Die Satrapienverwaltung im Perserreich zur Zeit Darius' III.*, Wiesbaden 1994, and "Achaemenid Satrapies," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (2006). Since the Greek sources cover the details most thoroughly, the nomenclature is given in Greek forms. For the full listing of administrative divisions and subdivisions (not all labeled on the map), see the Key below (including Persian names, where known). "Great Satrapies" are bounded by thick borders; "Minor Satrapies" by thin borders; "Main Satrapies" are indicated through the color scheme.

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|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| 1. Persis (<i>Pársra</i>) 1.1. Persis (<i>Pársra</i>) 1.1.1. Persis (<i>Pársra</i>) 1.1.2. Karmánia (<i>Karmána</i>) 1.2. Sousiané (<i>Úja</i>) 1.2.1. Sousiané (<i>Úja</i>) 1.2.2. Elymais | 2. Média (<i>Máda</i>) 2.1. Média (<i>Máda</i>) 2.1.1. Média (<i>Máda</i>) 2.1.2. Lesser Média 2.1.3. Paraitakéné 2.2. Armenia (<i>Armina</i>) 2.2.1. East Armenia 2.2.2. West Armenia 2.2.3. Kolkhis 2.3. Parthia (<i>Partava</i>) 2.3.1. Parthia (<i>Partava</i>) 2.3.2. Kappadokia (<i>Karpatauka</i>) 2.4. Khorassmia (<i>Uvársantii</i>) | 3. Lydia (<i>Sparta</i>) 3.1. Lydia (<i>Sparta</i>) 3.1.1. Lydia (<i>Sparta</i>) 3.1.2. Hellespontine Phrygia 3.1.3. Karia (<i>Karká</i>) 3.1.4. Greater Phrygia 3.1.5. Thraké (<i>Skudra</i>) 3.1.a. Ionia (<i>Yáunai</i>) 3.1.b. Lykia 3.1.c. Mysos 3.1.d. Makedonia 3.2. Kappadokia (<i>Karpatauka</i>) 3.2.1. Pontic Kappadokia 3.2.2. Tauric Kappadokia 3.2.3. Paphlagonia | 4. Babylónia (<i>Bábirva</i>) 4.1. Babylónia (<i>Bábirva</i>) 4.1.1. Lydia (<i>Sparta</i>) 4.1.2. Sittakéné 4.1.3. Arbélitis =? Sagartia (<i>Asagarta</i>) 4.2. Assyria (<i>Atura</i>) 4.2.1. Assyria (<i>Atura</i>) 4.2.2. Syria (<i>Ebir-nárra</i>) 4.2.3. Kilikia (<i>Hilakta</i>) 4.2.a. Kypros (<i>Yádnáta</i>) | 5. Aigýptos (<i>Mudríva</i>) 5.1. Aigýptos (<i>Mudríva</i>) 5.1.1. Aigýptos (<i>Mudríva</i>) 5.1.2. Upper Aigýptos 5.2. Libyé (<i>Patávi</i>) 5.3. Aithiopia (<i>Kútiya</i>) 5.4. Arabia (<i>Arakháya</i>) | 6. Arakhósia (<i>Harauantii</i>) 6.1. Arakhósia (<i>Harauantii</i>) 6.2. Drangiana (<i>Zranka</i>) 6.3. Gedrósia (<i>Maka</i>) 6.3.1. Gedrósia (<i>Maka</i>) 6.3.2. Oreitai 6.3.3. Ariaspai 6.4. Sattagydia (<i>Tatagai</i>) 6.4.1. (Kingdom of Taxilés) 6.4.2. (Kingdom of Absarés) 6.4.3. (Kingdom of Poros) 6.5. India (<i>Hindui</i>) 6.5.1. (Kingdom of Sambos) 6.5.2. (Kingdom of Mousikanos) 6.5.3. (Kingdom of Portikanos) | 7. Baktriané (<i>Bástris</i>) 7.1. Baktriané (<i>Bástris</i>) 7.1.1. Baktriané (<i>Bástris</i>) 7.1.2. Margiana (<i>Margui</i>) 7.2. Sogdia (<i>Suguda</i>) 7.2.1. Sogdia (<i>Suguda</i>) 7.2.2. Dyrbaioi 7.3. Gandara (<i>Gandára</i>) 7.3.1. Gandara (<i>Gandára</i>) 7.3.2. Paropamisos (<i>Paraupárisaina</i>) 7.4. Areia (<i>Haravata</i>) 7.5. Daoi (<i>Daba</i> , <i>Saká paradraya</i>) 7.6. Massagetai (<i>Saká tigrasatada</i>) 7.7. Amyrgioi (<i>Saká haunavargá</i>) |
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NOTE: some sub-satrapial districts or communities are listed with letters, e.g.: 3.1.b. Lykia) or 3.1.c. Mysos).

Ezra Gathers the Exiles

- From Ezra 8:15, Ezra Notes That No Levites Were Present
- With No Temple in Babylon, There Was Little Need for Levites, Whose Primary Priestly Duties Were in Support of the Temple and Its Treasury
- Iddo, Likely a Priest or Community Leader, Provided Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and Jeshaiiah, Along With Their Sons and Kinsmen; 38 People
- Sherebiah Mentioned in Ezra 8:24; Nehemiah 8:7, Nehemiah 9:4-5; Nehemiah 10:12; Nehemiah 12:8

Security For the Valuables

- Ezra 8:24-34: Ezra Sets Apart 12 Leading Priests and 12 Levites to Supervise the Security of the Gold, Silver, and Bronze Offerings for the Temple
- Ezra 8:24 Not Well Translated; Should Read, “Then I Set Apart Twelve of the Leading Priests; as Well as Sherebiah, Hashabiah and Ten of Their Brothers.”
- The Priests Supervised the Valuables Until They Were Weighed Out in Front of the Chief Priests, the Levites, and the Clan Heads in Jerusalem
- Thereafter, the Levites Would Secure This Treasury

The Amount of the Valuables

- 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ Tons (7500 Pounds) of Gold; 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ Tons (49,000 Pounds) of Silver
- Some Scholars Have Scoffed at the List in Ezra 8:26-27 As Inauthentic or Inaccurate
- We Should Be Careful Not to Underestimate the Generosity of the Very Wealthy Persian Kings Nor the Jews in Babylon; the Jews Would Have Wanted to Outfit the New Temple With as Lavish Decorations as Solomon's Temple Had
- 236 Pack Horses Would Have Been Needed to Haul the Valuables to Jerusalem

The Trip to Judah

- Lasted 4 Months
- The Large Volume of Gold and Silver Would Have Slowed the Journey
- They Most Likely Took the Caravan Route Through Syria, Which Would Have Been Safer
- Artaxerxes Was Undertaking a Military Campaign in Egypt at the Time; If Persian Troops Were Headed to Egypt, the Exiles Might Have Traveled With Them

Ezra 8: The Offerings

- Burnt Offerings: 12 Bulls, 96 Rams, 77 Male Lambs
- Burnt Offering Was Usually Just 1 Animal, Except on Special Occasions, Which This Most Certainly Was
- Consider 1 Kings 8:63: the Dedication of Solomon's Temple
- Sin Offering: 12 Male Goats
- A Typical Sin Offering Was Only 1 Animal
- What Sins Had Been Committed?
- Sins of Commission and Omission; Ezra 9!