

Ezra 8:1-36

1. In Ezra 7:6-8 Ezra leaves Babylon on the first day of the first month. In chapter 8 more details of the departure are given. This information is from the personal memoirs of Ezra.
2. Leave Babylon to travel 9 days to Ahava Canal (100-130 miles). Camp at Ahava Canal for 3 days to fast and prepare for the journey.

Ezra 8:1-14 – The Jews returning with Ezra in 458 BC

1 - **These are the heads of their fathers' houses, and this is the genealogy of those who went up with me from Babylonia, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king:**

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, who was of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah, with whom were registered 150 men.**

4 - **Of the sons of Pahath-moab, Eliehoenai the son of Zerariah, and with him 200 men.**

5 - **Of the sons of Zattu, Shecaniah the son of Jahaziel, and with him 300 men.**

6 - **Of the sons of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him 50 men.**

7 - **Of the sons of Elam, Jeshaiiah the son of Athaliah, and with him 70 men.**

8 - **Of the sons of Shephatiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him 80 men.**

9 - **Of the sons of Joab, Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him 218 men.**

10 - **Of the sons of Bani, Shelomith the son of Josiphiah, and with him 160 men.**

11 - **Of the sons of Bebai, Zechariah, the son of Bebai, and with him 28 men.**

12 - **Of the sons of Azgad, Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him 110 men.**

13 - **Of the sons of Adonikam, those who came later, their names being Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah, and with them 60 men.**

14 - **Of the sons of Bigvai, Uthai and Zaccur, and with them 70 men.**

1. Most of the families listed here are related to the families who had returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel in 537 BC (537-458=79 years)
2. Notice in verse 2 from the sons from the line of David is Hattush, four generations after Zerubbabel the descendent of Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) born in captivity.
 - a. In 1 Chronicles 3:17 the genealogy is listed as:
Jehoiachin- Pedaiah-Zerubbabel-Hananiah-Shecaniah-Shemaiah-Hattush
*“The sons of Jeconiah, the captive: Shealtiel his son, 18 Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama and Nedabiah;
19 and the sons of Pedaiah: **Zerubbabel** and Shimei;
and the sons of Zerubbabel: Meshullam and **Hananiah**, and Shelomith was their sister;
20 and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-hesed, five.
21 The sons of Hananiah: Pelatiah and Jeshaiiah, his son Rephaiah, his son Arnan, his son Obadiah, his son **Shecaniah**.
22 The son of Shecaniah: **Shemaiah**.
And the sons of Shemaiah: **Hattush**, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat, six.*
 - b. If Zerubbabel was born around 560 BC and returned to Jerusalem in 537 BC, then Hananiah born 25 years later (after 560 BC) in 535 BC
Shecaniah born 25 years later in 510 BC
Shemaiah born 25 years later in 485 BC
Hattush would be born 25 years later in 460 and be

3. Total number of men returning was 1,514 + 258 Levites = 1,772 men
 - a. 18 of these were called “heads of families”
 - b. Plus, 1,496 other men
 - c. Eventually 258 Levites will join them
 - d. Add the women and children this group would be 4,000-5,000 people
 - e. The return in 537 BC totaled almost 50,000 according to Ezra 2:64:
“The whole assembly together was 42,360, 65 besides their male and female servants, of whom there were 7,337, and they had 200 male and female singers.” – Ezra 2:64

Ezra 8:15-20 – Ezra sends for some Levites to return to Jerusalem

15 – I gathered them to the river that runs to Ahava, and there we camped three days. As I reviewed the people and the priests, I found there none of the sons of Levi.

16 – Then I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, leading men, and for Joiarib and Elnathan, who were men of insight,

17 – and sent them to Iddo, the leading man at the place Casiphia, telling them what to say to Iddo and his brothers and the temple servants at the place Casiphia, namely, to send us ministers for the house of our God.

18 – And by the good hand of our God on us, they brought us a man of discretion, of the sons of Mahli the son of Levi, son of Israel, namely Sherebiah with his sons and kinsmen, 18;

19 – also Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiiah of the sons of Merari, with his kinsmen and their sons, 20;

20 – besides 220 of the temple servants, whom David and his officials had set apart to attend the Levites. These were all mentioned by name.

1. River Ahava or the Ahava Canal would be north of Babylon on the Euphrates River.
 - a. The travelers camped three days at the Ahava Canal to get organized for the journey



2. Levites were need for temple services to function. Ezra was doing things in order to properly restore worship and lifestyle according to the Law of Moses. Ezra would need to bring some Levites.
 - a. Levites were to be the teachers in Israel (Lev. 10:11; Deut. 33:10)
 - b. These Levites in Babylon may have had a comfortable setting and did not want to leave.
 - c. Things under Ezra were going to be very disciplined and would require much work.

- d. Even Zerubbabel had very low number of Levites in the 537 BC return. Only 733 Levites returned (Ezra 2:40-58) which is less than 1.5% of the number of people who returned.
- e. Jerusalem was in need of Levites.

3. "Casiphia"

- a. "Casiphia" is related to a word for "silver" – *kas-pa*
- b. "the place" is the word *hammaqom* which occurs after "Casiphia" 2x. This is the word used for "the place" YHWH will choose for his dwelling place, or the Temple, in Deuteronomy 12:5:

EZRA 8:17:

4725 [e] ham·mā·qō·wm; הַמָּקוֹם the place Art N-ms	3703 [e] bē·kā·sīp·ya בְּקַסְפִּיָּא at Casiphia Prep-b N-proper-fs	7218 [e] hā·rōš, הָרֹאשׁ the chief man Art N-ms	112 [e] 5921 [e] 'id·dōw 'al- אִדּוֹ עַל- Iddo for N-proper-ms Prep	853 [e] 'ō·w·tām אוֹתָם them DirObjM 3mp	3318 [e] wā'ā·šaw·weh (וָאֲצִוֵּהוּ) I gave a command Conj-w V-Piel-Consecimperf-1cs	wa'ō·w·šī'ah [וְאֹצְאָה] 17 And Conj-w V-Hifil-Consecimperf-1cs 3fs
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Casiphia the place

han·nē·tū·nīm [הַנְּתוּנִים] - [and] his brothers Art V-Qal-QalPassPrtcpI-mp	251 [e] 'a·hīw אָחִיו N-msc 3ms	112 [e] 413 [e] 'id·dōw 'el- אִדּוֹ אֶל- Iddo to N-proper-ms Prep	1696 [e] 1697 [e] lē·ḡab·bēr de·bā·rīm לְגַבְבֵּר דְּבָרִים they should say what Prep-1 V-Piel-Inf N-mp	6310 [e] bē·pī·hem בְּפִיהֶם them Prep-b N-msc 3mp	7760 [e] wā'ā·šī·mah וְאֹשִׁימָהּ and I told Conj-w V-Qal-Consecimperf-1cs 3fs
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430 [e] 'ē·lō·hē·nū. אֱלֹהֵינוּ: N-mpc 1cp	1004 [e] lē·bēt לְבֵית for the house Prep-1 N-msc	8334 [e] mā·šā·re·tīm מַשְׂרֵתִים servants V-Piel-PrtcpI-mp	lā·nū לָנוּ us Prep 1cp	935 [e] 4725 [e] lē·hā·bī·ham·mā·qō·wm, לְהַבִּיאַתְּ הַמָּקוֹם the place Art N-ms	3703 [e] bē·kā·sīp·ya בְּקַסְפִּיָּא at Casiphia Prep-b N-proper-fs	5411 [e] han·nē·tī·nīm הַנְּתִינִים) the Nethinim Art N-mp
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DEUTERONOMY 12:5:

8034 [e] 853 [e] šē·mow 'et- שְׁמוֹ אֶת- His Name - N-msc 3ms DirObjM	7760 [e] 7626 [e] lā·šum šīb·tē·kēm, לְשׂוּם שְׂבִטְכֶם to establish your tribes Prep-1 V-Qal-Inf N-mpc 2mp	3605 [e] 430 [e] mik·kal 'ē·lō·hē·kēm מִכָּל-אֱלֹהֵיכֶם out of all your God Prep-m N-msc N-mpc 2mp	3068 [e] Yah·weh יְהוָה Yahweh N-proper-ms	977 [e] 834 [e] yib·har 'ā·šer- יַבְחַר אֲשֶׁר- chooses where V-Qal-Imperf-3ms Pro-r	4725 [e] ham·mā·qō·wm הַמָּקוֹם the place Art N-ms	413 [e] 518 [e] 3588 [e] 'el- 'im- kī אֶל- אִם- כִּי unto but For Prep Conj Conj
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**Deuteronomy 12:5
"The Place"**

8033 [e] šām·mah. שָׁמָּה there Adv 3fs	935 [e] ū·bā·tā וּבָאתָ and you shall go Conj-w V-Qal-ConjPerf-2ms	1875 [e] tīd·re·šū תִּדְרְשׁוּ you shall seek V-Qal-Imperf-2mp	7933 [e] lē·šik·nōw לְשִׁכְנוֹ as His dwelling place Prep-1 V-Qal-Inf 3ms	8033 [e] šām; שָׁם there Adv
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- c. Just like the temple or sanctuary to worship YHWH was built by the Jewish community that ended up settling in Elephantine, Egypt it appears that the Jewish community of the Babylonian exile had also built a type of temple or a sanctuary to continue to worship.

- i. In Yeb (Elephantine) was the sanctuary of Yahu

4. The Jewish exiles had settled in lower Mesopotamia:

- a. Tel Abib, "the mound destroyed by a flood" in Ezekiel 3:15
- b. Tel Melah, "the mound of salt" in Ezra 2:59
- c. Tel Harsa, "the mound covered with potsherds in Ezra 2:59

5. The exiled Jews had both stayed together as communities and had prospered during their time in exile since they had possessions, servants and animals in Babylon that they could bring along to Jerusalem, plus treasures to contribute to the Jerusalem temple.

6. Ezra sent 9 leaders and 2 men of learning to Iddo at Casiphia to convince some Levites to return with him

- a. The men Ezra sent were given the words or message to say. Literally it says, "I placed in their mouths the words to say."
- b. 38 Levites joined. And, they brought their paperwork showing which family they were from.
 - i. 20 from the family of Sherebiah
 - ii. 18 from the family of Jeshaiiah
- c. 220 temple servants were a caste of mixed people assembled by David to assist the Levites. They were not Levites.

Ezra 8:21-23 – Fasting at the River Ahava before the journey

21 – Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods.

22 – For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, "The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him."

23 – So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

1. "Safe journey" is literally "a straight way"
2. Ezra had told of the need to restore the worship of the great YHWH, so he did not want to minimize his God by asking Artaxerxes for a military escort.
 - a. Nehemiah would use one 13 years later, but Nehemiah was an official of Artaxerxes

Ezra 8:24-30 – Weighing out the Treasure for Jerusalem to 24 men

24 Then I set apart twelve of the leading priests: Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their kinsmen with them.

25 And I weighed out to them the silver and the gold and the vessels, the offering for the house of our God that the king and his counselors and his lords and all Israel there present had offered.

26 I weighed out into their hand 650 talents of silver, and silver vessels worth 200 talents, and 100 talents of gold,

27 20 bowls of gold worth 1,000 darics, and two vessels of fine bright bronze as precious as gold.

28 And I said to them, "You are holy to the Lord, and the vessels are holy, and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to the Lord, the God of your fathers.

29 Guard them and keep them until you weigh them before the chief priests and the Levites and the heads of fathers' houses in Israel at Jerusalem, within the chambers of the house of the Lord."

30 So the priests and the Levites took over the weight of the silver and the gold and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem, to the house of our God.

1. There are 12 priests and 12 Levites selected to carry the treasure
2. Note Haggai 2:6-10 spoken October 17, 520 BC (62 years before), the Lord had said, "*For thus says the Lord of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord of hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of host."*

3. Both the people and the treasure is declared “holy” or dedicated, “consecrated” (*qodes*) to the Lord (8:28)
4. Each man was to guard his deposit or the treasure entrusted to him to carry to Jerusalem.

Ezra 8:31-34 – Journey from River Ahava to Jerusalem

31 - Then we departed from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go to Jerusalem. The hand of our God was on us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambushes by the way.

32 - We came to Jerusalem, and there we remained three days.

33 - On the fourth day, within the house of our God, the silver and the gold and the vessels were weighed into the hands of Meremoth the priest, son of Uriah, and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas, and with them were the Levites, Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui.

34 - The whole was counted and weighed, and the weight of everything was recorded.

1. “We departed” or “We set out” is literally “to pull up stakes” as in pull up the stakes of the tents.
2. After 3 days of camping and 8 days gathering the Levites the caravan departed on the 12th day.
3. The journey takes four months

Ezra 8:35 – Ezra’s returning exiles worship

35 - At that time those who had come from captivity, the returned exiles, offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel, twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and as a sin offering twelve male goats. All this was a burnt offering to the Lord.

Ezra 8:36 – Artaxerxes’s Officials notified with documentation

36 - They also delivered the king's commissions to the king's satraps and to the governors of the province Beyond the River, and they aided the people and the house of God.

1. Documentation of Artaxerxes orders were distributed to the Persian leaders.
2. The Persian leadership in Trans Euphrates assisted the glorification of the temple and Ezra’s work in establishing the Law of God and the Law of Persia.