

Thursday, Aug 8

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Ezra 7:1 - 8:20

7 **1** Many years later, during the reign of King Artaxerxes of Persia, there was a man named Ezra. He was the son of Seraiah, son of Azariah, son of Hilkiah, **2** son of Shallum, son of Zadok, son of Ahitub, **3** son of Amariah, son of Azariah, son of Meraioth, **4** son of Zerahiah, son of Uzzi, son of Bukki, **5** son of Abishua, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the high priest. **6** This Ezra was a scribe who was well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given to the people of Israel. He came up to Jerusalem from Babylon, and the king gave him everything he asked for, because the gracious hand of the LORD his God was on him. **7** Some of the people of Israel, as well as some of the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and Temple servants, traveled up to Jerusalem with him in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes' reign. **8** Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in August of that year. **9** He had arranged to leave Babylon on April 8, the first day of the new year, and he arrived at Jerusalem on August 4, for the gracious hand of his God was on him. **10** This was because Ezra had determined to study and obey the Law of the LORD and to teach those decrees and regulations to the people of Israel. **11** King Artaxerxes had given a copy of the following letter to Ezra, the priest and scribe who studied and taught the commands and decrees of the LORD to Israel: **12** "From Artaxerxes, the king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the teacher of the law of the God of heaven. Greetings. **13** "I decree that any of the people of Israel in my kingdom, including the priests and Levites, may volunteer to return to Jerusalem with you. **14** I and my council of seven hereby instruct you to conduct an inquiry into the situation in Judah and Jerusalem, based on your God's law, which is in your hand. **15** We also commission you to take with you silver and gold, which we are freely presenting as an offering to the God of Israel who lives in Jerusalem. **16**"Furthermore, you are to take any silver and gold that you may obtain from the province of Babylon, as well as the voluntary offerings of the people and the priests that are presented for the Temple of their God in Jerusalem. **17**These donations are to be used specifically for the purchase of bulls, rams, male lambs, and the appropriate grain offerings and liquid offerings, all of which will be offered on the altar of the Temple of your God in Jerusalem. **18** Any silver and gold that is left over may be used in whatever way you and your colleagues feel is the will of your God. **19** "But as for the cups we are entrusting to you for the service of the Temple of your God, deliver them all to the God of Jerusalem. **20** If you need anything else for your God's Temple or for any similar needs, you may take it from the royal treasury. **21**"I,

Artaxerxes the king, hereby send this decree to all the treasurers in the province west of the Euphrates River : 'You are to give Ezra, the priest and teacher of the law of the God of heaven, whatever he requests of you. **22**You are to give him up to 7,500 pounds of silver, 500 bushels of wheat, 550 gallons of wine, 550 gallons of olive oil, and an unlimited supply of salt.**23** Be careful to provide whatever the God of heaven demands for his Temple, for why should we risk bringing God's anger against the realm of the king and his sons? **24** I also decree that no priest, Levite, singer, gatekeeper, Temple servant, or other worker in this Temple of God will be required to pay tribute, customs, or tolls of any kind.' **25** "And you, Ezra, are to use the wisdom your God has given you to appoint magistrates and judges who know your God's laws to govern all the people in the province west of the Euphrates River. Teach the law to anyone who does not know it. **26** Anyone who refuses to obey the law of your God and the law of the king will be punished immediately, either by death, banishment, confiscation of goods, or imprisonment." **27** Praise the LORD, the God of our ancestors, who made the king want to beautify the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem! **28** And praise him for demonstrating such unfailing love to me by honoring me before the king, his council, and all his mighty nobles! I felt encouraged because the gracious hand of the LORD my God was on me. And I gathered some of the leaders of Israel to return with me to Jerusalem.

8 1 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 Zeremiah 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.

1 Corinthians 4:1 - 21

4 1 So look at Apollos and me as mere servants of Christ who have been put in charge of explaining God's mysteries. **2** Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager must be faithful. **3** As for me, it matters very little how I might be evaluated by you or by any human authority. I don't even trust my own judgment on this point. **4** My conscience is clear, but that doesn't prove I'm right. It is the Lord himself who will examine me and decide. **5** So don't make judgments about anyone ahead of time—before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due. **6** Dear brothers and sisters, I have used Apollos and myself to illustrate what I've been saying. If you pay attention to what I have quoted from the Scriptures, you won't be proud of one of your leaders at the expense of another. **7** For what gives you the right to make such a judgment? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if everything you have is from God, why boast as though it were not a gift? **8** You think you already have everything you need. You think you are already rich. You have begun to reign in God's kingdom without us! I wish you really were reigning already, for then we would be reigning with you. **9** Instead, I sometimes think God has put us apostles on display, like prisoners of war at the end of a victor's parade, condemned to die. We have become a spectacle to the entire world—to people and angels alike. **10** Our dedication to Christ makes us look like fools, but you claim to be so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are so powerful! You are honored, but we are ridiculed. **11** Even now we go hungry and thirsty, and we don't have enough clothes to keep warm. We are often beaten and have no home. **12** We work wearily with our own hands to earn our living. We bless those who curse us. We are patient with those who abuse us. **13** We appeal gently when evil things are said about us. Yet we are treated like the world's garbage, like everybody's trash—right up to the present moment. **14** I am not writing these things to shame you, but to warn you as my beloved children. **15** For even if you had ten thousand others to teach you about Christ, you

have only one spiritual father. For I became your father in Christ Jesus when I preached the Good News to you. **16** So I urge you to imitate me. **17** That's why I have sent Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you of how I follow Christ Jesus, just as I teach in all the churches wherever I go. **18** Some of you have become arrogant, thinking I will not visit you again. **19** But I will come—and soon—if the Lord lets me, and then I'll find out whether these arrogant people just give pretentious speeches or whether they really have God's power. **20** For the Kingdom of God is not just a lot of talk; it is living by God's power. **21** Which do you choose? Should I come with a rod to punish you, or should I come with love and a gentle spirit?

Psalm 30:1 - 12

30 1 I will exalt you, LORD, for you rescued me. You refused to let my enemies triumph over me. **2** O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you restored my health. **3** You brought me up from the grave, O LORD . You kept me from falling into the pit of death. **4** Sing to the LORD, all you godly ones! Praise his holy name. **5** For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime! Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning. **6** When I was prosperous, I said, "Nothing can stop me now!" **7** Your favor, O LORD, made me as secure as a mountain. Then you turned away from me, and I was shattered. **8** I cried out to you, O LORD . I begged the Lord for mercy, saying, **9** "What will you gain if I die, if I sink into the grave? Can my dust praise you? Can it tell of your faithfulness?" **10** Hear me, LORD, and have mercy on me. Help me, O LORD ." **11** You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy, **12** that I might sing praises to you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever!

Proverbs 20:28 - 30

20 28 Unfailing love and faithfulness protect the king; his throne is made secure through love. **29** The glory of the young is their strength; the gray hair of experience is the splendor of the old. **30** Physical punishment cleanses away evil; such discipline purifies the heart.