

## THE ARRIVAL OF EZRA. EZRA 7. 07/21/24. #10.

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\*this Ezra came up from Babylon; and he *was* a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given. The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. <sup>7</sup> *Some* of the children of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. <sup>8</sup> And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which *was* in the seventh year of the king. <sup>9</sup> On the first *day* of the first month he began *his* journey from Babylon, and on the first *day* of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. <sup>10</sup> For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.  
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### 1. Ezra arrives on the scene

- a. There is app. 60 years between ch. 6 & ch. 7
  - a1. Ezra gave a background history in ch. 1-6
  - a2. He recorded the circumstances surrounding the return of the Jews to Jerusalem
  - a3. A 20 year struggle to rebuild the temple
  - a4. God's hand was upon the Jews
- b. Ezra was a priest in Babylon who God moved to go to Jerusalem
  - a1. We are not told how God Ezra to go to the temple
  - a2. There was already a high priest in Jerusalem
  - a3. Ezra's journey takes 4 months from 01 Jan.-01 Apr. 458 BC (119 days to cover 900 miles along the Euphrates R.)
- c. 7:1-5 gives a 16 generation genealogy of Ezra going back to Aaron (includes Zadok, appointed by Solomon to replace Abiathar; Zadokites held the priesthood until 117 BC)
  - a1. Longest genealogy of an individual in OT, covering 1,000 years of history
  - a2. Ezra is said to be skilled (lit., quick) in the law
- d. Ezra seems to have been appointed to go by the governor
  - a1. There was doctrinal chaos in Jerusalem
  - a2. The king's letter makes it clear that he wants the sacrifices in the temple to be in accordance with the wisdom of the God of Heaven in the Law
    - b1. Improper sacrifice would not be effectual
    - b2. The king did not want to offend any god

### 2. The king's letter

- a. Apparently, word had gotten back to the king, that there was confusion in the worship in Jerusalem
  - a1. Ezra was sent to set the worship right
  - a2. Ezra had both the priestly credentials & the education in the law to instruct the Jews how to properly worship
- b. The Persian kings wanted all local laws, customs, & religions to operate according to custom
  - a1. This produces the least confusion & resistance
  - a2. They did not impose Persian laws & deities on locals
- c. Period of time of "wrath against the king" where Persia was kicked out of Egypt (459 BC), so he wanted support of people

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<sup>11</sup> This *is* a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest, the scribe, expert in the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of His statutes to Israel: <sup>12</sup> Artaxerxes, king of kings, To Ezra the priest, a scribe of the Law of the God of heaven: Perfect *peace*, and so forth. <sup>13</sup> I issue a decree that all those of the people of Israel and the priests and Levites in my realm, who volunteer to go up to Jerusalem, may go with you. <sup>14</sup> And whereas you are being sent by the king and his seven counselors to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, with regard to the Law of your God which *is* in your hand; <sup>15</sup> and *whereas you are* to carry the silver and gold which the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose dwelling *is* in Jerusalem; <sup>16</sup> and *whereas* all the silver and gold that you may find in all the province of Babylon, along with the freewill offering of the people and the priests, *are* to be freely offered for the <sup>17</sup> house of their God in Jerusalem— <sup>17</sup> now therefore, be careful to buy with this money bulls, rams, and lambs, with their grain offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them on the altar of the house of your God in Jerusalem. <sup>18</sup> And whatever seems good to you and your brethren to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, do it according to the will of your God. <sup>19</sup> Also the articles that are given to you for the service of the house of your God, deliver in full before the God of Jerusalem. <sup>20</sup> And whatever more may be needed for the house of your God, which you may have occasion to provide, pay *for it* from the king's treasury. <sup>21</sup> And I, *even* I, Artaxerxes the king, issue a decree to all the treasurers who *are in the region* beyond the River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, may require of you, let it be done diligently, <sup>22</sup> up to one hundred talents of silver, one hundred kors of wheat, one hundred baths of wine, one hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribed limit. <sup>23</sup> Whatever <sup>23</sup> is commanded by the God of heaven, let it diligently be done for the house of the God of heaven. For why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? <sup>24</sup> Also we inform you that it shall not be lawful to impose tax, tribute, or custom on any of the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, Nethinim, or servants of this house of God. <sup>25</sup> And you, Ezra, according to your God-given wisdom, set magistrates and judges who may judge all the people who *are in the region* beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God; and teach those who do not know *them*. <sup>26</sup> Whoever will not observe the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily on him, whether *it be* death, or banishment, or confiscation of goods, or imprisonment. <sup>27</sup> Blessed <sup>27</sup> be the LORD God of our fathers, who has put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem, <sup>28</sup> and has extended mercy to me before the king and his counselors, and before all the king's mighty princes. So I was encouraged, as the hand of the LORD my God *was* upon me; and I gathered leading men of Israel to go up with me.  
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### d. Artaxerxes I gave Ezra wide latitude of authority to act

- a1. He authorized provisions from the king's treasury for offerings and other needs
- a2. He repeats Haggai's assertion that all the gold & silver in Babylon belonged to the Lord (the king may have had a Jewish scribe dictate the letter)

e. Art. stated that he wanted the goodwill of the God of Heaven to look favorably upon the king & his household (vs. 23)

f. Art. commands that the Jews must worship according to the "wisdom of the God of Heaven"

- a1. The king recognized that if God were not worshiped the way he prescribed, he would be upset with the Jews
- a2. If God were upset with the Jews, their prayers for him & his kingdom would be ineffective & cause him trouble

g. The king used "Israel" (letter written in Aramaic) instead of "Judah" as the covenant name of the Jewish people

### 3. Pagans know what we should be

- a. A pagan king= more concerned about proper worship than Jews
- b. The world knows what we claim to be & holds us to that standard
- c. Many unbelievers take comfort that there are true believers