

## PERILOUS JOURNEY. EZRA 8. 07/26/24. #11.

.....  
**8** These *are* the heads of their fathers' houses, and *this is* the genealogy of those who went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of King Artaxerxes: <sup>2</sup>of the sons of Phinehas, Gershom; of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel; of the sons of David, Hattush; <sup>3</sup>of the sons of Shecaniah, of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah; and registered with him *were* one hundred and fifty males; ...  
.....

### 1. The entourage

- a. Ezra was very meticulous
  - a1. Here he lists family heads & the numbers they brought with them (by recruiting family heads, others followed)
  - a2. As is 1 Chrn. 1-9 Ezra lists whole genealogies
- b. The list of names here is nearly identical (except Joab) to the list of names in ch. 2 from 80 years previous to this
  - a1. Only part of the group came back initially
  - a2. Now Ezra recruits more of the Jews from the same families that came originally (including priests)
- c. The fact that the initial response was lukewarm speaks to the spiritual state of Israel at this time

.....  
**15** Now I gathered them by the river that flows to Ahava, and we camped there three days. And I looked among the people and the priests, and found none of the sons of Levi there. **16** Then I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, leaders; also for Joiarib and Elnathan, men of understanding. **17** And I gave them a command for Iddo the chief man at the place Casiphia, and I told them what they should say to Iddo *and* his brethren the Nethinim at the place Casiphia—that they should bring us servants for the house of our God. **18** Then, by the good hand of our God upon us, they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli the son of Levi, the son of Israel, namely Sherebiah, with his sons and brothers, eighteen men; **19** and Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiiah of the sons of Merari, his brothers and their sons, twenty men; **20** also of the Nethinim, whom David and the leaders had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinim. All of them were designated by name.  
.....

### 2. Recruitment at Ahava

- a. The group pauses at the Ahava Canal to take stock of personnel
  - a1. Ezra discovers that there are no Levites in the group
  - a2. The Levites = not enthusiastic to go the Jerusalem
- b. Apparently, the Levites in Jer. were inadequate for task
- c. Ezra had to recruit & encourage Levites to join him
- d. Ezra's recruitment was successful, netting many gifted Levites & the Nethinim (servants that provided the labor)
- e. If leaders have to beg us to serve the Lord, then our hearts are not fully dedicated to the Lord (the Lord calls all of us to serve)

.....  
**21** Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions. **22** For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the

king, saying, "The hand of our God *is* upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath *are* against all those who forsake Him." **23** So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.  
.....

### 3. Trust in the Lord

- a. Apparently Ezra had boasted to the governor that the Lord would protect & prosper the journey
  - a1. Now he was embarrassed to ask for troops as escorts
  - a2. Ezra pleaded with God to protect them & He did
- b. Nehemiah (2:7-9) was not embarrassed to ask for an escort
  - a1. There is a difference between faith & presumption
  - a2. If God led Ezra to rely on him alone, then it was well
- c. Ezra's prayer for protection indicates God had not led him to forgo protection, but God honored the prayer
- d. It is not an exercise in faith to forego help God has already provided, unless he directs otherwise (Gideon vs. Solomon/Hiram)

.....  
**24** And I separated twelve of the leaders of the priests—Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them—**25** and weighed out to them the silver, the gold, and the articles, the offering for the house of our God which the king and his counselors and his princes, and all Israel *who were* present, had offered...  
.....

### 4. Tangible support

- a. King Artaxerxes gave tangible support to the expedition & encourage the Jews staying behind to add to the collection
- b. The resultant sum of \$ was substantial, making the group a prime target for bandits along the way (thus the concern for safety in Ezra's prayer)

.....  
**31** Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth *day* of the first month, to go to Jerusalem. And the hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambush along the road. **32** So we came to Jerusalem, and stayed there three days...  
.....

### 5. Arrival in Jerusalem

- a. The journey to Jerusalem is not narrated
  - a1. Whatever the hazards faced, the group arrived safely without being molested or threatened
  - a2. Ezra praises God for their protection
- b. Upon arriving in Jerusalem Ezra offers both homage (dedication) sacrifices & sin sacrifices for all of Israel
- c. Along the way every official accepted the king's credentials presented by Ezra, so they let them pass & then provided for them
- d. Ezra was now prepared to minister before the Lord for the people but soon discovers that there is sin in the camp that needed to be dealt with (like Nehemiah)
- e. Delivering 25 tons of silver, 3 ¼ tons of gold, & over 1,400 workers for the temple was easy compared to leading the Jews to honor the Lord (tasking is easier than spiritual commitment)