

EZRA

Conversational Version

Cyrus Lets the Exiles Return

1¹In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, to fulfill his message through Jeremiah, the LORD stirred up Cyrus. He sent a written proclamation everywhere in his kingdom:

***2**“Cyrus, king of Persia, says, ‘The LORD God of heaven has given me the kingdoms of the world and appointed me to build him a temple in Jerusalem, in Judah. **3**Whoever is from his people, your God be with you! Go up and rebuild the Temple of the LORD God of Israel, the God in Jerusalem. **4**Wherever there’s a survivor, support him with silver and gold, supplies and livestock, plus freewill offerings.’”*

Ezra 1:1-4

5God stirred up the leaders of the tribes from Judah and Benjamin along with the priests and Levites to go to Jerusalem to rebuild his Temple. **6**Their neighbors encouraged them with silver and gold items, with goods, livestock, and valuables, plus freewill offerings. **7**Cyrus brought out the items from the LORD’s Temple that Nebuchadnezzar had carried to the temple of his gods. **8**He had Mithredath the treasurer bring them out and count them out to Sheshbazzar, ruler of Judah: **9**30 gold basins, 1,000 silver basins, 29 censers, **10**30 gold bowls, 410 silver bowls, 1,000 other articles—**11**5,400 gold and silver items in all. Sheshbazzar took them up with the exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem.

Ezra 1:5-11

2¹The People in the Province Who Went Up from the Exiles That Nebuchadnezzar Took Away

They went to Jerusalem and their towns in Judah **2**with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah: from the

3 family of Parosh	2,172	4 family of Shephatiah	372
5 family of Arah	775	6 family of Pahath-moab (descended from Jeshua and Joab)	2,812
7 family of Elam	1,254	8 family of Zattu	945
9 family of Zaccai	760	10 family of Bani	642
11 family of Benai	623	12 family of Azgad	1,222
13 family of Adonikam	666	14 family of Bigvai	2,056
15 family of Adin	454	16 family of Ater	98
17 family of Bezai	323	18 family of Jorah	112

¹⁹ family of Hashum	223	²⁰ family of Gibbar	95
²¹ people from Bethlehem	123	²² people from Netophah	56
²³ people from Anathoth	128	²⁴ people from Azmaveth	42
²⁵ people from Kiriath-arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth	743	²⁶ people from Ramah and Geba	621
²⁷ people from Michmas	122	²⁸ people from Bethel and Ai	22
²⁹ people from Nebo	52	³⁰ people from Magbish	156
³¹ people from the other Elam	1,254	³² people from Harim	320
³³ people from Lod, Hadid, and Ono	725	³⁴ people from Jericho,	345
³⁵ people from Senaah	3,630		
³⁶ <u>the priests</u> : descendants of Jedaiah through Jeshua's family	973	³⁷ family of Immer	1,052
³⁸ family of Pashur	1,247	³⁹ family of Harim	1,017
⁴⁰ <u>the Levites</u> : descendants of Jeshua, Kadmiel, and Hodaviah			74
⁴¹ the singers: descendants of Asaph			128
⁴² <u>the descendants of the gatekeepers</u> : descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai			139
⁴³ <u>the Temple servants</u> : descendants of Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth, ⁴⁴ Keros, Siaha, Padon, ⁴⁵ Lebanah, Hagabah, Akkub, ⁴⁶ Hagab, Shalmal, Hanan, ⁴⁷ Giddel, Gahar, Reaiah, ⁴⁸ Rezin, Nekoda, Gazzam, ⁴⁹ Uzza, Paseah, Besai, ⁵⁰ Asnah, Meunim, Nephisim, ⁵¹ Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harshur, ⁵² Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha, ⁵³ Barkos, Sisera, Temah, ⁵⁴ Neziah, Hatipha.			
⁵⁵ <u>descendants of Solomon's servants</u> : descendants of Sotai, Hassophereth, Peruda, ⁵⁶ Jaalah, Darkon, Giddel, ⁵⁷ Shephatiah, Hattil, Pochereth-hazzebaim, Ami.			
⁵⁸ All the Temple servants and descendants of Solomon's servants			392

⁵⁹The following went up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addan, and Immer, but couldn't provide evidence that their families and their descendants were from Israel. This group included ⁶⁰descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda, 652.

⁶¹descendants of the priests: descendants of Habaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai. (This Barzillai had married a daughter of Barzillai the Gileadite and took Barzillai's name.)

⁶²They searched among their genealogical records, but they couldn't locate them. They were considered unqualified for the priesthood. ⁶³The governor said they shouldn't eat the most holy things till a priest stood up with Urim and Thummim.

⁶⁴ The whole assembly numbered	42,360
⁶⁵ plus their male and female servants	7,337
and men and women singers.	200

⁶⁶They had 736 horses, 245 mules, ⁶⁷435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

⁶⁸When some heads of families arrived at the LORD's Temple in Jerusalem, they offered willingly for restoring God's Temple on its foundation. ⁶⁹According to their ability they gave to the treasury 1100 lbs ^{61,000 drachmas} of gold, 6250 lbs ^{5,000 minas} of silver, and 100 priestly vestments.

⁷⁰The priests and Levites, some of the people, singers, gatekeepers, Temple servants, and all Israel lived in their towns. Ezra 2:1-7

The Altar Is Rebuilt

3¹When the **seventh month** came and the Israelites were in the towns, they came together in Jerusalem. ²Jeshua son of Jozadak, his brothers the priests, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and his brothers built God's altar for offering burnt offerings as written in the Law of Moses, the man of God. ³They set up the altar on its original site despite their fear of the people around them. They offered burnt offerings to the LORD morning and evening. ⁴They celebrated the Festival of Booths as written and offered the set number of burnt offerings daily as required by the Law. ⁵From then on, there was continual burnt offering for new moons and the annual festivals the LORD had consecrated. Everyone offered a freewill offering to the LORD. ⁶From the **first day, seventh month**, they offered burnt offerings, but the foundation of the Temple hadn't been laid. ⁷Then they donated money to the masons and carpenters as well as food, drink, and olive oil to the Sidonians and Tyrians to bring cedar from Lebanon by sea to Joppa with permission from Cyrus. Ezra 3:1-7

⁸The **second month, second year** after arriving at God's Temple, Zerubbabel, Jeshua, the rest of the priests and Levites, and everybody from the captivity began the work. They appointed the Levites 20 years and older as supervisors. ⁹To oversee the workmen, Jeshua with his sons and relatives stood united with Kadmiel and his sons (all descendants of Judah/*Hodaviah*) and with the Levites from the family of Henadad. ¹⁰When the builders had laid the foundation, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets. The Levites, descendants of Asaph, *stood* with cymbals to praise the LORD according to King David's directions. ¹¹They sang, praising and thanking the LORD, "*He's good; his love for Israel endures forever.*" The people shouted when they praised him because the foundation had been laid. ¹²Yet many priests, Levites, and heads of families—

old men who'd seen the first Temple—cried out loud. Many others shouted out loud with so much joy ¹³that people couldn't tell the shout of joy from the outcry of weeping. They could be heard for a long way. **Ezra 3:8-13**

Enemies Oppose the Rebuilding

4:¹When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were rebuilding a temple to the LORD God of Israel, ²they approached Zerubbabel and the other leaders, *"Let us build with you. We worship your God too. We've been sacrificing to him since Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, sent us here."* ³But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the other leaders said, *"You don't have anything in common with us building a temple to our God. We'll build it like King Cyrus decreed."*

⁴Other residents in the land tried to discourage the people and scare them away from building. ⁵They bribed advisors to work against them all during Cyrus' reign till the reign of Darius, king of Persia. **Ezra 4:1-5**

Later Opposition Under Xerxes and Artaxerxes

⁶Years later, at the beginning of the reign of Ahasuerus/Xerxes, they lodged a complaint against Judah and Jerusalem.

⁷Still later, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and their associates wrote to Artaxerxes. The letter was in Aramaic *script* and translated *into the Aramaic language for the king*. ⁸Rehum the governor and Shimshai the secretary wrote out the letter against Jerusalem to King Artaxerxes—⁹they and their associates *on behalf of* the judges and local leaders, officials, and secretaries over the people of Erech, Babylonia, and Susa (Elam), ¹⁰and the rest of the nations that the great and honorable Osnappar/Ashurbanipal deported and settled in the city of Samaria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River [*Avar-naharah*, Aramaic]. ¹¹Here's a copy of the letter: **Ezra 4:6-11a**

"To King Artaxerxes

From your subjects in Beyond the River

¹²*The Jews that came up from you have come to us at Jerusalem. They're rebuilding the rebellious, evil city, finishing its walls and repairing its foundation.*

¹³*If it's rebuilt and its walls are finished, they won't pay tribute, custom, or toll, and it'll damage the king's revenue.* ¹⁴*Because we serve the palace, it's not fitting*

for us to see your dishonor. We've sent to inform you ¹⁵*so a search can be made in your ancestors' records. You'll discover that the city has been rebellious and damaging to kings and provinces, that they've incited revolt in the past, and that's why it was destroyed.* ¹⁶*If it's rebuilt and its walls finished, you won't have any possession in Beyond the River."* **Ezra 4:11b-16**

¹⁷The king answered Rehum, Shimshai, and their associates in Samaria and the rest of Beyond the River:

“Greetings,

¹⁸The document you sent us has been translated and read to me. ¹⁹I’ve issued a decree. A search has been made, and it’s been discovered that the city has rebelled against kings in the past, that revolution and sedition have occurred in it; ²⁰that strong kings have ruled Jerusalem, governing the whole province Beyond the River; and that they received tribute, custom, and toll. ²¹So issue a decree to stop those men from rebuilding the city till I issue a decree. ²²Take care of this matter promptly. We must not let this situation harm the royal interests

²³As soon as Rehum, Shimshai, and their associates read a copy of King Artaxerxes’ letter, they hurried to Jerusalem and stopped the Jews by force. ²⁴The work on the Temple halted till the **second year of Darius**, king of Persia. **Ezra 4:17-24**

Tattenai’s Letter to Darius

5:¹The prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo served as prophets to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel. ²Then Zerubbabel and Jeshua started again to rebuild God’s Temple. His prophets supported them. ³At that time, Tattenai, governor of the province Beyond the River, and Shethar-bozenai, and their colleagues came and asked, *“Who issued a decree for you to rebuild this Temple and restore this structure?”* ⁴We told them the names of the men that were reconstructing it. ⁵But God kept an eye on the elders of the Jews. They didn’t stop them till a report could go to Darius and a written reply could come back. **Ezra 5:1-6**

⁶Here’s a copy of Tattenai’s letter to King Darius:

⁷*“To King Darius, all peace.*

⁸We have gone to the province Judah, to the Temple of the great God, which is being built with huge stones and with beams that are being laid in the walls. This work is progressing with great care and is getting done. ⁹We asked those elders who issued them a decree to rebuild that Temple. ¹⁰We asked for their names so we could write down who was in charge and inform you.

¹¹“They answered, ‘We serve the God of earth and sky. We’re rebuilding the Temple that was built many years ago by a great king in Israel. ¹²But because our ancestors provoked the God of earth and sky, he delivered them to Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian. He destroyed that Temple and deported the

people to Babylon. ¹³But **in the first year of Cyrus**, king of Babylon, Cyrus issued a decree to rebuild this Temple. ¹⁴He also took out the gold and silver utensils from God's Temple that Nebuchadnezzar had taken to the temple in Babylon. He gave them to a man named Sheshbazzar, who'd been appointed governor. ¹⁵He told him to take those items and deposit them in the Temple in Jerusalem and let God's Temple be rebuilt on its site. ¹⁶Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations. From then till now, it's been under construction and isn't finished.'

¹⁷"If it pleases you, conduct a search in the royal treasure house there in Babylon to see if King Cyrus did issue a decree to rebuild that Temple, and send us your decision on the matter."

Ezra 5:7-17

Darius' Decree

^{6:1}King Darius issued an order to search the Babylonian archives, which were housed in the treasury. ²But in the fortress in Ecbatana, in the province of Media, they found a scroll with the following written in it:

"Record:

³*In the **first year of King Cyrus**, he issued a decree:*

'As to God's Temple in Jerusalem, rebuild it, where sacrifices are offered. Keep its foundations the same. Its height and width are 90ft ⁴with three courses of large stones alternating with one course of timbers. Pay for it out of the royal treasury. ⁵Take back to God's Temple the gold and silver articles Nebuchadnezzar took from it.'

Ezra 6:1-5

⁶"Now then, Tattenai, governor of Beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai, and your associates, officials in the provinces Beyond the River, don't interfere. ⁷Let the governor and elders of the Jews rebuild God's Temple on its site. ⁸And, I decree what you're to do for those elders in rebuilding this Temple: without delay pay them the full cost out of the royal treasury from taxes in the provinces Beyond the River. ⁹As the priests in Jerusalem request, give daily whatever they need: young bulls, rams, and lambs for burnt offerings, wheat, salt, wine, and anointing oil. ¹⁰Then they can offer acceptable sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and his sons. ¹¹For anybody who violates this edict, I decree that a timber be pulled out of his house, he be impaled on it, and his house be made a garbage pile. ¹²May the God that has put his name there overthrow any king or people that tries to violate this decree and destroy that Temple of God. I, Darius, have made this decree. Carry it out diligently."

Ezra 6:6-12

Completion and Dedication of the Temple

¹³Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai, and their associates carried out the decree diligently. ¹⁴The elders of the Jews succeeded in the construction by the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah. By God's command and the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, ¹⁵they completed it the **third day, the month Adar, sixth year of King Darius**.

¹⁶Israel, the priests, Levites, and the rest of the exiles celebrated the dedication of God's Temple. ¹⁷They offered 100 bulls, 200 rams, 400 lambs, and as a sin offering for Israel 12 male goats corresponding to the 12 tribes in Israel. ¹⁸Then they appointed the priests to their divisions and the Levites in their orders for the service of God as written in the Book of Moses.

Passover Celebrated

¹⁹The exiles observed Passover on the **fourteenth of the first month**. ²⁰The priests and Levites had purified themselves. They killed the Passover lamb for all the exiles, for their brothers the priests, and for themselves. ²¹The Israelites from the exile and the ones that had separated themselves from the impurity of the nations in the land, joined them in reaching out to the LORD God of Israel by eating *the Passover*. ²²They observed the Festival of Unleavened Bread for a week with joy because the LORD had given them reason to celebrate. He had inclined the heart of the Assyrian king to encourage them in the work on his Temple. **Ezra 6:13-22**

Ezra Arrives in Jerusalem

7:¹After that, **in the reign of Artaxerxes**, king of Persia, *came* Ezra son of Seraiah (son of Azariah son of Hilkiah ²son of Shallum son of Zadok son of Ahitub ³son of Amariah son of Azariah son of Meraioth ⁴son of Zerahiah son of Uzzi son of Bukki ⁵son of Abishua son of Phinehas son of Eleazar) son of Aaron the chief priest. ⁶Ezra, a scribe, an expert in the Law of Moses, came up from Babylon. The king granted him everything he requested because the LORD's hand was on him. ⁷Some Israelites, priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and Temple servants came up to Jerusalem **in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes**. [⁸] ⁹On the **first day, first month**, *Ezra* started out from Babylon. On the **first day, fifth month** he arrived at Jerusalem because God's good hand was on him. ¹⁰He had set his heart on studying the Law of the LORD, practicing it, and teaching its statutes and ordinances in Israel. **Ezra 7:1-10**

¹¹ The Decree King Artaxerxes Gave Ezra the Priest and Scribe,
One Learned in the LORD's Commandments

¹²“*Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra, priest and scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, greeting.*

¹³“I’ve decreed that any of the Israelites, their priests, and Levites in my kingdom that want to go to Jerusalem, can go with you. ¹⁴The king and his seven advisors have sent you to ask about Judah and Jerusalem according to the Law of your God that you have with you. ¹⁵They’ve sent you as well to take the silver and gold that the king and his advisors have freely offered to the God of Israel, who lives in Jerusalem. ¹⁶That’s accompanied by all the silver and gold you’ll find in the whole province of Babylon, along with the freewill offering by the people and priests that donated for their God’s Temple in Jerusalem. ¹⁷With this money diligently buy bulls, rams, and lambs, with their grain offerings and liquid offerings, and offer them on the altar in the Temple of your God. ¹⁸Whatever seems good to you and your brothers to do with the rest of the silver and gold, you can do according to the will of your God. ¹⁹To the God in Jerusalem deliver in full the utensils you’ve received for the service of your God’s Temple. ²⁰The rest of the needs for his Temple that you have occasion to provide for, do so from the royal treasury.

Ezra 7:11-20

²¹“I, King Artaxerxes, decree to the treasurers in Beyond the River, that you provide diligently whatever Ezra requires from you, ²²up to 7550 lbs ^{100 talents} of silver, 1100 bushels ^{100 kors} of wheat, 900 gallons ^{100 baths} of wine, 900 gallons ^{100 baths} of olive oil, and salt as needed. ²³Whatever the God of heaven commands, do with zeal for his Temple so there won’t be any anger against the realm of the king and his sons. ²⁴We also inform you not to impose tax, tribute, or toll on any of the priests, Levites, singers, doorkeepers, Nethinim, or workmen in that Temple of God. ²⁵And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God that’s available to you, appoint magistrates and judges in Beyond the River who know the laws of your God. You can teach anybody that doesn’t know them. ²⁶On whoever doesn’t observe the Law of your God and the law of the king, carry out judgment strictly, whether by death, banishment, confiscation of possessions, or imprisonment.”

Ezra Praises the LORD

²⁷Bless the LORD God of our ancestors, who has put such a thing in the king’s heart, to adorn the LORD’s Temple in Jerusalem. ²⁸He has extended enduring love to me in the presence of the king, his advisors, and powerful officials. In that way the LORD gave me courage, and I assembled leading men from Israel to go up with me.

Ezra 7:21-28

8:¹The Heads of Families and the Genealogies of Men Who Went Up from Babylon During the Reign of King Artaxerxes

- ²from the family of Phinehas, Gershom;
 from the family of Ithamar, Daniel;
 from the family of David, Hattush,
 ³a descendant of Shecaniah;
 from the family of Parosh—Zechariah, plus 150 men in the genealogy;
⁴from the family of Pahath-moab, Eliehoenai son of Zerahiah plus 200 men;
⁵from the family Shecaniah son of Jahaziel plus 300 men;
⁶from the family of Adin, Ebed son of Jonathan plus 50 men; **Ezra 8:1-6**
⁷from the family of Elam, Jeshaiiah son of Athaliah plus 70 men;
⁸from the family of Shephatiah, Zebadiah son of Michael plus 80 men;
⁹from the family of Joab, Obadiah son of Jehiel plus 218 men;
¹⁰from the family of Shelomith son of Josiphiah plus 160 men;
¹¹from the family of Bebai, Zechariah son of Bebai plus 28 men;
¹² from the family of Azgad, Johanan son of Hakkatan plus 110 men;
¹³from the family of Adonikam (coming later): Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah plus 60 men;
¹⁴from the family of Bigvai: Uthai and Zabbub plus 70 men. **Ezra 8:7-14**

Ezra's Journey to Jerusalem

¹⁵I assembled them at the canal that runs to Ahava, where we camped for three days. When I looked over the people and the priests, I didn't find any Levites. ¹⁶So I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam (leaders), and for Joiarib and Elnathan (teachers). ¹⁷I sent them to Iddo, leader of the Levites at Casiphia, to tell him and his brothers (the Temple servants at that place) to bring ministers to us for God's Temple. ¹⁸By God's good hand on us, they brought

Sherebiah (an insightful son of Mahli, descendant of Levi) as well as his sons and brothers, 18 men;

¹⁹Hashabiah and Jeshaiiah from the descendants of Merari, with his brothers and their sons, 20 men;

²⁰220 Temple servants that David and the officials had given to assist the Levites—all identified by name.

²¹Then I declared a fast at the Ahava Canal, to humble ourselves toward God and look to him for a safe journey for us, our little ones, and our possessions. ²²I was ashamed to ask the king for troops and cavalry to protect us, because we'd told him, "*God favors those who look to him. His power and anger oppose those who leave him.*" ²³We fasted and looked to God on the matter, and he listened to our plea. **Ezra 8:15-23**

²⁴Then I set apart 12 leading priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and 10 others. ²⁵I weighed out to them the silver and gold, the utensils, and the offering for God's Temple that the king, his advisors, officials, and all Israel present there had offered: ²⁶24½ tons ^{650 talents} of silver, utensils worth 7,550 lbs ^{100 talents} of silver, 7,550 lbs ^{100 talents} of gold, ²⁷20 bowls worth 19 lbs ^{1,000 darics} of gold; and 2 utensils of fine, shiny bronze, precious as gold. ²⁸Then I said,

"You're holy to the LORD; the utensils are holy. The silver and gold are a freewill offering to the LORD God of your ancestors. ²⁹Keep them till you weigh them in the presence of the leading priests, Levites, and heads of families at Jerusalem, in the rooms in the LORD's Temple."

³⁰The priests and Levites received the silver, gold, and utensils, to take to Jerusalem.

³¹Then we left the Ahava River on the **twelfth day, first month** to go to Jerusalem. God watched over us and delivered us from enemies and ambushes along the way. ³²We arrived at Jerusalem and rested three days. ³³On the fourth day, we weighed out in God's Temple the silver, gold, and utensils to Meremoth son of Uriah the priest, Eleazar son of Phinehas, and the Levites, Jozabad son of Jeshua and Noadiah son of Binnui. ³⁴We numbered and weighed everything, and recorded the total.

³⁵The exiles offered burnt offerings to God: 12 bulls for all Israel, 96 rams, 77 lambs, 12 male goats for a sin offering. ³⁶Then they delivered the king's edicts to his satraps and governors of Beyond the River [Ever-hannahar, Hebrew], and they supported the people and God's Temple.

Ezra 8:24-36

Ezra's Prayer About Intermarriage

9:¹When these things had been completed, the officials approached me,

"The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites haven't separated from the foreigners and the disgusting things of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites. ²They've taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons. The holy race has intermingled with foreigners. The officials and rulers have been the most prominent in this unfaithfulness."

³When I heard that, I tore my cloak and my shirt, pulled some hair from my head and beard, and sat down appalled. ⁴Everybody gathered around me that trembled at God's message about the exiles' unfaithfulness. I sat appalled till the evening offering. **Ezra 9:1-4**

⁵Then I got up from my humbled condition with my cloak and shirt torn. I fell on my knees and held out my hands to the LORD:

⁶"I'm ashamed to look at you. Our sins have piled up higher than our heads. Our guilt has grown as high as the sky. ⁷Since the time of our ancestors, we've had serious guilt. Because of our sins, you've delivered us, our kings, and our priests to the kings of nations, to the sword, to captivity, plunder, and open disgrace like

today. ⁸But now for a little while, you've shown grace and left us a remnant and given us a stake in your holy place to enlighten us and grant us a little reviving in our bondage. ⁹We're slaves; yet in our bondage, you haven't left us. You've extended enduring love to us in the presence of the kings of Persia, to revive us for building your Temple, restoring its ruins, and giving us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem. ¹⁰What can we say now, God? We've abandoned what you've commanded ¹¹through your prophets, 'The land you're going in to possess is ceremonially unclean because of its unclean people and disgusting things that fill it end to end. ¹²Don't intermarry with them. Never search for their peace or prosperity so you can be strong, eat the good things of the land, and leave it as a permanent inheritance to your descendants.' ¹³After everything that's happened to us because of our sinful deeds and great guilt—you've paid us back less than our sins deserve and have given us a remnant like this—¹⁴will we again break your commandments and intermarry with people that commit those disgusting things? Wouldn't you be angry with us to the point of destroying us till there was no remnant to escape? ¹⁵LORD God of Israel, you're good, because you left us a remnant. We're guilty in your presence because nobody can withstand you on that account."

Ezra 9:5-15

The People Confess Their Sins

^{10:1}While Ezra was praying and confessing, crying and prostrating himself in front of God's Temple, a big crowd of men, women, and children gathered around him, sobbing with him.

²Shecaniah son of Jehiel, one of Elam's sons, told him,

"We've been unfaithful to our God and married foreign women from the land. But there's still hope for Israel. ³Let's make a covenant with God to put away the wives and their children as you've advised and do it according to the Law. ⁴Get up! This is your responsibility. We'll be with you. Have the courage to do it."

⁵Ezra got up and made the leading priests, Levites, and all Israel swear that they'd adopt that proposal. They took the oath. ⁶Then he went from in front of God's Temple to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. He didn't eat or drink; he was mourning over the exiles' unfaithfulness. ⁷They issued a proclamation for the exiles throughout Judah and Jerusalem to assemble at Jerusalem. ⁸Whoever wouldn't come within three days like the leaders and elders said, would forfeit his possessions and be excluded from the community of exiles.

Ezra 10:1-8

⁹The men of Judah and Benjamin gathered in the three days. It was the **twentieth day, ninth month**, and the people sat down in the open square in front of God's Temple. They were shivering because of this matter and the heavy rain. ¹⁰Ezra stood up and said,

“You’ve been unfaithful in marrying foreign wives and adding to Israel’s guilt. ¹¹Confess to the LORD God of your ancestors, do his will, and separate from the native people and your foreign wives.”

¹²The whole assembly answered out loud,

“That’s true! We have to do that. ¹³But there are lots of people here, it’s raining, and we can’t stand outside. We can’t take care of this problem in a day or two; a lot of us have sinned in this. ¹⁴Have leaders represent the assembly and have the ones in our towns that have foreign wives meet at scheduled times with the elders and judges in each city till God’s fierce anger turns away.”

¹⁵Only Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah opposed it. Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite supported it. Ezra 10:9-15

Men Guilty of Intermarriage

¹⁶The exiles agreed. Ezra selected leaders of each family by name. They met **on first day, tenth month**, to look into the matter. ¹⁷By the **first day, first month**, they’d finished dealing with the men that had married foreign wives.

¹⁸Among the priests with foreign wives were the following:

from the family of Jeshua son of Jozadak and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jerib, and Gedaliah. ¹⁹They pledged to divorce their wives and offer a ram for their guilt.

²⁰from the family of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah;

²¹from the family of Harim: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uzziah;

²²from the family of Pashur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah.

²³among the Levites: Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

²⁴among the singers: Eliashib;

among the gatekeepers: Shallum, Telem, and Uri;

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²⁵among the Israelites:

from the family of Parosh: Ramiah, Izziah, Malchijah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malchijah, and Benaiah;

²⁶from the family of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and Elijah;

²⁷from the family of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad, and Aziza;

²⁸from the family of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai;

²⁹from the family of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal, and Jeremoth;

³⁰from the family of Pahath-moab: Adna, Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh;

³¹from the family of Harim: Eliezer, Isshijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, ³²Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah;

³³from the family Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei;

³⁴from the family of Bani: Maadai, Amram, Uel, ³⁵Benaiah, Bedeiah, Cheluhi, ³⁶Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, ³⁷Mattaniah, Mattenai, Jaasa, ³⁸Bani, Binnui, Shimei, ³⁹Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah, ⁴⁰Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, ⁴¹Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah, ⁴²Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph;

⁴³from the family of Nebo: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel, and Benaiah.

⁴⁴Those had married foreign wives, and some had children by them.

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