

# Ezra 7- 10

## Context Review

Author: Ezra the scribe - a Jewish priest and scribe who was a descendant of Aaron, the chief priest

Ezra 7:10: "Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel."

- Ezra and Nehemiah were originally one book/scroll
- Traditionally Ezra wrote Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, and Malachi. Possibly even Esther.
- Ezra and Nehemiah are a chiasm
  - A. Zerubbabel's return and list of returnees (Ezra 1—2)
    - B. Building of the temple and opposition (Ezra 3—6)
      - C. Return of Ezra (Ezra 7—8)
        - D. Center: Purification of the people (Ezra 9—10)
      - C.' Return of Nehemiah (Neh. 1—2)
    - B.' Building of the walls and opposition (Neh. 3:1—7:3)
  - A.' Zerubbabel's return and list of returnees; final reforms (Neh. 7:4—13:31)
- Chapter 7 starts during the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Artaxerxes I of Persia (465 – 424 BC)
  - 100 years after Cyrus' proclamation in Ezra 1

## Chapter 7: The Journey to Jerusalem

- 7:1-6 – Introduction of Ezra: Ezra's lineage and his role as a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses.
- 7:7-10 – Journey to Jerusalem: Ezra leads a group of Israelites, priests, Levites, and temple servants from Babylon to Jerusalem.
- 7:11-26 – Artaxerxes' Letter to Ezra:
  - Given money to buy sacrifices and offerings for the king on the altar in the temple and to supply for the temple's needs
  - Artaxerxes grants Ezra authority
    - To withdraw money (up to a specific limit) from the royal treasuries within the Trans-Euphrates (Eber-Nari or Syria) Satrapy
    - To exempt taxes, tribute or duty on any of the temple workers
    - To appoint magistrates and judges
    - To teach and enforce the laws of God and the king.

## Chapter 8: The Returnees and the Journey

- 8:1-14 – List of Returnees: A detailed list of the heads of families who returned with Ezra and the count of men.

- 8:15-20 – Gathering at the Ahava Canal: Ezra gathers the people and realizes the need for Levites. He sends a request to Iddo the leader of the Levites for volunteers to journey to Jerusalem and work at the temple.
  - There are plenty of Priests/pastors, but no church staff/volunteers
- 8:21-23 – Fasting and Prayer: Ezra proclaims a fast to seek God's protection for the journey. After his boasting about God, Ezra is too ashamed to ask for protection from the king so they brought no soldiers to protect them on the journey – relying on God for protection instead.
- 8:24-30 – Ezra gives the donation from the king, officials, and Israelites staying behind to the priests for safe keeping on the journey to Jerusalem.
- 8:31-36 – Safe Arrival in Jerusalem: The group safely arrives in Jerusalem; they offer sacrifices and deliver the king's orders to the local governors (satraps).

## Chapter 9: Ezra's Prayer of Confession

- 9:1-4 – Report of Intermarriage: Ezra is informed about the Israelites, including priests and Levites, intermarrying with the surrounding peoples.
  - Ezra deeply distraught by this news – tore his tunic and cloak, pulled hair from head and beard and sat down appalled.
  - Deuteronomy 7:1-4

<sup>1</sup> When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you— <sup>2</sup> and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. <sup>3</sup> **Do not intermarry with them.** Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, <sup>4</sup> for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.

- Israel's current sin will lead them down the exact same road of destruction and exile again!
- Rahab – foreign woman, converted to Israel, in the line of Jesus
- 9:5-15 – Ezra's Prayer: In deep humility, Ezra prays a heartfelt prayer of confession and repentance, acknowledging the people's sins and seeking God's mercy.

## Chapter 10: The People's Repentance

- 10:1-4 – Call to Action: The people, inspired by Ezra's prayer, gather and weep bitterly; Shecaniah proposes a covenant to put away foreign wives.
- 10:5-8 – Ezra's Leadership: Ezra takes charge, the people take an oath to follow the proposal, and a proclamation is made for all to gather in Jerusalem.
- 10:9-15 – Assembly in Jerusalem: The people assemble in Jerusalem in the rain; Ezra confronts them about their sin, and they agree to put away their foreign wives.

- 10:16-17 – Investigation and Resolution: A commission is appointed to investigate the matter, and within three months, the foreign marriages are dissolved.
- 10:18-44 – List of Offenders: A list of those who had married foreign women is provided, and they commit to rectifying their actions. Surprisingly specific