

Ezra 8:1 ¶ These *are* now the chief of their fathers, and *this is* the genealogy of them that went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king.

Ezra 8:2 Of the sons of Phinehas; Gershom: of the sons of Ithamar; Daniel: of the sons of David; Hattush.

Ezra 8:3 Of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of Pharosh; Zechariah: and with him were reckoned by genealogy of the males an hundred and fifty.

Ezra 8:4 Of the sons of Pahathmoab; Elihoenai the son of Zerariah, and with him two hundred males.

Ezra 8:5 Of the sons of Shechaniah; the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males.

Ezra 8:6 Of the sons also of Adin; Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males.

Ezra 8:7 And of the sons of Elam; Jeshaiiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males.

Ezra 8:8 And of the sons of Shephatiah; Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him fourscore males.

Ezra 8:9 Of the sons of Joab; Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males.

Ezra 8:10 And of the sons of Shelomith; the son of Josiphiah, and with him an hundred and threescore males.

Ezra 8:11 And of the sons of Bebai; Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty and eight males.

Ezra 8:12 And of the sons of Azgad; Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him an hundred and ten males.

Ezra 8:13 And of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names *are* these, Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and with them threescore males.

Ezra 8:14 Of the sons also of Bigvai; Uthai, and Zabbud, and with them seventy males.

This chapter opens with a listing of the leaders of Israel that chose to go with Ezra to Jerusalem.

JFB notes: "The number given here amounts to 1754. But this is the register of adult males only, and as there were women and children also (Ezra 8:21), the whole caravan may be considered as comprising between six thousand and seven thousand."

Ezra 8:15 And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava; and there abode we in tents three days: and I viewed the people, and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi.

After Ezra had gathered everyone together at a place by the river that flows to Ahava, they spent three days living in tents making preparations to leave. Ezra noticed that no sons of Levi were represented (other than the priests, descendants of Aaron).

Ezra 8:16 Then sent I for Eliezer, for Ariel, for Shemaiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and for Elnathan, and for Nathan, and for Zechariah, and for Meshullam, chief men; also for Joiarib, and for Elnathan, men of

understanding.

Ezra 8:17 And I sent them with commandment unto Iddo the chief at the place Casiphia, and I told them what they should say unto Iddo, *and* to his brethren the Nethinims, at the place Casiphia, that they should bring unto us ministers for the house of our God.

Ezra 8:18 And 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; and Sherebiah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen;

Ezra 8:19 And Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiiah of the sons of Merari, his brethren and their sons, twenty;

Ezra 8:20 Also of the Nethinims, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinims: all of them were expressed by name.

Ezra then appointed a group of the chief men to go to Iddo, the leader of the Levites in Casiphia, and urge him to get some ministers for the house of God to go with them. The response was positive, and Ezra immediately credits the LORD for the response. The Levites that traveled with them totaled 38 descendants of Mahli and Merari. A group of 220 Nethinims, descendants of those appointed by David to serve in the temple, also became part of the group. Though we aren't given the full listing, Ezra notes that he recorded the name of each man that volunteered to go.

The NIV commentary makes this note regarding the Nethinims: "Socially they were a caste of mixed origins and were inferior to the Levites in status. But God's Spirit had motivated them to respond in larger numbers than the Levites."

Ezra 8:21 ¶ Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

Ezra 8:22 For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God *is* upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath *is* against all them that forsake him.

Ezra 8:23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.

Ezra next proclaimed a fast to humbly seek God's favor and protection for their journey. Maybe he was thinking about the words of David from Psalm 34.

Psalms 34:6–9 "This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him."

Ezra did not want to ask the king for a group of soldiers to protect them since he had told him that God's hand was upon all those that honor and obey Him and that His wrath was against those that rejected Him. Ezra was glad to report that God answered their prayers. Scripture is ever clear that God values the honor of

His name.

Exodus 20:7 "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

Isaiah 48:9–11 "For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another."

Isaiah 50:10 "Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God."

Ezekiel 36:22–23 "Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes."

Ezra 8:24 ¶ Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them,

Ezra 8:25 And weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, *even* the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel *there* present, had offered:

Ezra 8:26 I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, *and* of gold an hundred talents;

Ezra 8:27 Also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand drams; and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold.

Ezra 8:28 And I said unto them, *Ye are* holy unto the LORD; the vessels *are* holy also; and the silver and the gold *are* a freewill offering unto the LORD God of your fathers.

Ezra 8:29 Watch ye, and keep *them*, until ye weigh *them* before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD.

Ezra 8:30 So took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring *them* to Jerusalem unto the house of our God.

Ezra then selected 12 of the chief priests (Sherebiah, Hashabiah and 10 of their relatives) to take custody of the silver, gold and other offerings that had been contributed for use at the temple. I liked the CJB for verses 26-27: "*I weighed out and handed over to them twenty-one-and-a-half tons of silver, three-and-a-third tons of silver articles, three-and-a-third tons of gold, twenty gold bowls weighing twenty-one pounds, and two vessels of fine burnished bronze as precious as gold.*"

Ezra told the priests that just as they were consecrated to the LORD, so too were these treasures with which they had been entrusted. He emphasized that they

were a free will offering to the LORD. Once they reached Jerusalem, they were to weigh them before the religious and civil leaders in Jerusalem and given over to them to use for the house of “our God.”

I would assume that the fact that they were to weigh them was a way of ensuring that all that been donated was given over for use in the temple.

Ezra 8:31 ¶ Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth *day* of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way.

Ezra 8:32 And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.

Ezra 8:33 Now on the fourth day was the silver and the gold and the vessels weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest; and with him *was* Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them *was* Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of Binnui, Levites;

Ezra 8:34 By number *and* by weight of every one: and all the weight was written at that time.

The group headed out on 12th day of the first month, and God’s hand of protection was on them the whole way. When they arrived in Jerusalem, they rested for three days. On the 4th day the priests took the money and gifts and weighed them. Each gift was recorded by number and weight.

Ezra 8:35 *Also* the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he goats *for* a sin offering: all *this was* a burnt offering unto the LORD.

Ezra 8:36 And they delivered the king’s commissions unto the king’s lieutenants, and to the governors on this side the river: and they furthered the people, and the house of God.

The returning exiles then made burnt offerings to “the God of Israel,” including 12 bulls (one for each tribe), 96 rams, 77 lambs, and then 12 goats for a sin offering. They also delivered the king’s orders to his lieutenants and governors west of the Euphrates. All did as commanded to support the people and service at the temple.