

~EZRA 1 (770)

(Ez'ra) [Help]

•• To Jerusalem

•• Even In Ezra's Day, Why Did Jews Who Left Babylon Need Strong

•• Urges Israel To Dismiss Foreign Wives

•• With Nehemiah

•• Writing

- An Aaronic priest, a descendant of Eleazar and Phinehas, a scholar, an expert copyist and teacher of the Law, skilled in both Hebrew and Aramaic. **Ezra** had genuine zeal for pure worship and prepared his heart to consult the Law of Yehowah and to do it and to teach in Israel regulation and justice.
- And after these things in the reign of Artaxerxes the king of Persia, **Ezra** the son of Seraiah the son of Azariah the son of Hilkiah (**Ezra 7:1**)
- The son of Shallum the son of Zadok the son of Ahitub. (**Ezra 7:2**)
- The son of Amariah the son of Azariah the son of Meraioth. (**Ezra 7:3**)
- The son of Zerariah the son of Uzzi the son of Bukki. (**Ezra 7:4**)
- The son of Abishua the son of Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron the chief priest. (**Ezra 7:5**)
- The said **Ezra** himself went up from Babylon, and he was a skilled copyist in the Law of Moses, which Yehowah the God of Israel had given, so that the king granted him, according to the hand of Yehowah his God upon him, all his request. (**Ezra 7:6**)
- For **Ezra** himself had prepared his heart to consult the Law of Yehowah and to do it and to teach in Israel regulation and justice. (**Ezra 7:10**)
- In addition to writing the book bearing his name, **Ezra** apparently wrote the two books of Chronicles, and Jewish tradition credits him with beginning the compiling and cataloging of the books of the Hebrew Scriptures.

- Moreover, **Ezra** was an outstanding researcher, citing about 20 sources of information in the two books of Chronicles. Since many of the Jews were scattered far and wide in **Ezra's** day, it necessitated the making of many copies of the Hebrew Scriptures, and likely **Ezra** pioneered this work.
- No details of **Ezra's** early life are given in the Bible. He lived in Babylon. He was from a family of High Priests but was not of the particular branch that held the High Priesthood immediately after the return from exile in **537 B.C.E.**
- The last of **Ezra's** ancestors to hold that office was Seraiah, who was High Priest in the days of King Zedekiah of Judah. This Seraiah had been put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at the capture of Jerusalem in **607 B.C.E.**
- And after these things in the reign of Artaxerxes the king of Persia, **Ezra** the son of Seraiah the son of Azariah the son of Hilkiah (**Ezra 7:1**)
- The said **Ezra** himself went up from Babylon, and he was a skilled copyist in the Law of Moses, which Yehowah the God of Israel had given, so that the king granted him, according to the hand of Yehowah his God upon him, all his request. (**Ezra 7:6**)
- Furthermore, the chief of the bodyguard took Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah the second priest and three doorkeepers. (**2 Kings 25:18**)
- And the king of Babylon proceeded to strike them down and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah went into exile from off its soil. (**2 Kings 25:21**)
- In Babylon the Jews retained respect for the priesthood, and therefore, the priestly families maintained their identity. Moreover, the Jewish community organization, with the older men as heads, continued functioning.
- Now it came about in the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, that men from the elderly ones of Israel came in to inquire of Yehowah, and they proceeded to sit down before me. (**Ezekiel 20:1**)

- **Ezra's** family likely was interested in seeing that **Ezra** was equipped with a knowledge of God's law, as was **Ezra** himself. Accordingly he was well educated.
- If, as some scholars believe, a man could not become a scribe until reaching the age of 30, **Ezra** may have been more than 30 years old in **468 B.C.E.** when he went to Jerusalem.
- He undoubtedly lived during the rule of Ahasuerus, in the time of Mordecai and Esther, at the time the decree went out to exterminate the Jews throughout the Persian Empire.
- There were many Jews living in Babylon, so this national crisis must have made an indelible imprint on **Ezra**, strengthening him in faith in Yehowah's care for and deliverance of his people and serving as training, maturing him in judgment and competence to accomplish the tremendous task later set before him.
- Now it came about in the days of Ahasuerus, that is, the Ahasuerus who was ruling as king from India to Ethiopia, over a hundred and twenty-seven jurisdictional districts. (**Esther 1:1**)
- In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, someone cast Pur, that is, the Lot, before Haman from day to day and from month to month, to the twelfth, that is, the month Adar. (**Esther 3:7**)
- The kings secretaries were then called in the first month on the thirteenth day of it, and writing went on according to all that Haman commanded the kings satraps and the governor's who were over the different jurisdictional districts, and the princes of the different peoples, of each jurisdictional district, in its own style of writing, and each people in its own tongue, in the name of King Ahasuerus it was written and it was sealed with the kings signet ring. (**Esther 3:12**)
- And there was a sending of the letters by means of couriers to all the kings jurisdictional districts, to annihilate, to kill and to destroy all the Jews, young man as well as old man, little ones and women, on one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar, and to plunder the spoil of them. (**Esther 3:13**)
- Accordingly the secretaries of the king were called at that time in

the third month, that is, the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day of it, and writing went on according to all that Mordecai commanded to the Jews and to the satraps and the governor's and the princes of the jurisdictional districts that were from India to Ethiopia, a hundred and twenty-seven jurisdictional districts, to each jurisdictional district in its own style of writing and to each people in its own tongue, and to the Jews in their own style of writing and in their own tongue. (**Esther 8:9**)

- And in the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day of it, when the king's word and his Law came due to be performed, on the day for which the enemies of the Jews had waited to domineer over them, there was even a turning to the contrary, in that the Jews themselves domineered over those hating them. (**Esther 9:1**)

•• To Jerusalem

- It was in **468 B.C.E.**, 69 years after the return of the faithful Jewish remnant from Babylon under the leadership of Zerubbabel, that the Persian king Artaxerxes Longimanus granted to **Ezra** all his request with respect to going to Jerusalem and advancing pure worship there. According to the king's official letter, those Israelites who of their own free will desired to go with **Ezra** to Jerusalem were to do so.

- And after these things in the reign of Artaxerxes the king of Persia, **Ezra** the son of Seraiah the son of Azariah the son of Hilkiah (**Ezra 7:1**)
- The said **Ezra** himself went up from Babylon, and he was a skilled copyist in the Law of Moses, which Yehowah the God of Israel had given, so that the king granted him, according to the hand of Yehowah his God upon him, all his request. (**Ezra 7:6**)
- Artaxerxes, the king of kings, to **Ezra** the priest, the copyist of the Law of the God of the heavens. Peace be perfected. And now (**Ezra 7:12**)
- By me an order has been put through that everyone in my realm of the people of Israel and their priests and Levites that is willing to go to Jerusalem with you should go. (**Ezra 7:13**)

•• Even In Ezra's Day Why Did Jews Leaving Babylon Need Strong Faith

- Many of the Jews had become prosperous in Babylon, and the prospects offered in Jerusalem were not attractive from a material viewpoint. Jerusalem was sparsely settled. The fine start made by the Jews under Zerubbabel seems to have deteriorated.
- One commentator, **Dean Stanley**, says; Jerusalem itself was thinly inhabited, and seemed to have stopped short in the career which, under the first settlers, had been opening before it. It is certain that, whether from the original weakness of the rising settlement, or from some fresh inroad of the surrounding tribes, of which we have no distinct notice, the walls of Jerusalem were still unfinished, huge gaps left in them where the gates had been burnt and not repaired, the sides of its rocky hills cumbered with their ruins, the Temple, though completed, still with its furniture scanty and its ornaments inadequate. [Ezra and Nehemiah: Their Lives and Times, by George Rawlinson, London, 1890, pp. 21,22]
- So to return to Jerusalem meant loss of position, disruption of ties, the denial of a more or less comfortable way of life, and the building of a new life in a distant land under circumstances that were trying, difficult, and possibly dangerous, not to mention a long and hazardous journey, since many hostile Arab tribes and other enemies might be encountered.
- It called for zeal for true worship, faith in Yehowah, and courage to make the move. Only some 1,500 men and their families were found willing and able to go, perhaps 6,000 or so in all.
- **Ezra** had a difficult task as their leader. But **Ezra's** past course of life had prepared him, and he strengthened himself according to Yehowah's hand upon him.
- For **Ezra** himself had prepared his heart to consult the Law of Yehowah and to do it and to teach in Israel regulation and justice. (**Ezra 7:10**)
- And toward me he has extended loving-kindness before the king and his counselors and as respects all the mighty princes of the king. And I, for my part, strengthened myself according to the hand of Yehowah my God upon me, and I proceeded to collect out of Israel the head ones to go up with me. (**Ezra 7:28**)
- Now these were the heads of their paternal houses and the genealogical enrollment of those going up with me during the reign of Artaxerxes the king out of Babylon. (**Ezra 8:1**)

- **Of the sons of Phinehas, Gershom, of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel, of the sons of David, Hattush. (Ezra 8:2)**
- **Of the sons of Shecaniah, of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah, and with him there was an enrollment of a hundred and fifty males. (Ezra 8:3)**
- **Of the sons of Pahath-moab, Elieho-enai the son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred males. (Ezra 8:4)**
- **Of the sons of Zattu, Shecaniah the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males. (Ezra 8:5)**
- **And of the sons of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males. (Ezra 8:6)**
- **And of the sons of Elam, Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males. (Ezra 8:7)**
- **And of the sons of Shephatiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him eighty males. (Ezra 8:8)**
- **Of the sons of Joab, Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males. (Ezra 8:9)**
- **And of the sons of Bani, Shelomith the son of Josiphiah, and with him a hundred and sixty males. (Ezra 8:10)**
- **And of the sons of Bebai, Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty-eight males. (Ezra 8:11)**
- **And of the sons of Azgad, Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him a hundred and ten males. (Ezra 8:12)**
- **And of the sons of Adonikam, those who were the last, and these were their names, Eliphelet, Jeiel and Shemaiah, and with them sixty males. (Ezra 8:13)**
- **And of the sons of Bigvai, Uthai and Zabbud, and with them seventy males. (Ezra 8:14)**
- **Yehowah God provided much-needed material aid, for the financial condition in Jerusalem was not good and the wealth of those**

traveling with **Ezra** was limited. King Artaxerxes and his seven counselors were moved to make a voluntary contribution to be used for buying sacrificial animals and their grain and drink offerings.

- Furthermore, **Ezra** was authorized to receive contributions for this purpose in the jurisdictional district of Babylon. If there was any surplus of funds, **Ezra** and those with him could determine how this might best be used.
- The vessels for temple service were to be delivered in full to Jerusalem. If needed, additional funds could be obtained from the king's treasury. The treasurers beyond the River were informed that **Ezra** could request of them silver, wheat, wine, and oil up to a certain amount, and salt without limit, and that his request should be granted promptly.
- Moreover, the priests and temple workers were exempted from taxation. Additionally, **Ezra** was empowered to appoint magistrates and judges, and judgment was to be executed upon anyone not obeying God's Law and the Law of the king, whether for death or for banishment, or for money fine or for imprisonment.
- And this is a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave **Ezra** the priest the copyist, a copyist of the words of the commandments of Yehowah and of his regulations toward Israel. (**Ezra 7:11**)
- Artaxerxes, the king of kings, to **Ezra** the priest, the copyist of the Law of the God of the heavens. Peace be perfected. And now (**Ezra 7:12**)
- By me an order has been put through that everyone in my realm of the people of Israel and their priests and Levites that is willing to go to Jerusalem with you should go. (**Ezra 7:13**)
- Inasmuch as from before the king and his seven counselors an order was sent to investigate concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the Law of your God that is in your hand. (**Ezra 7:14**)
- And to bring the silver and the gold that the king and his counselors have voluntarily given to the God of Israel, whose residence is in Jerusalem. (**Ezra 7:15**)
- With all the silver and the gold that you find in all the jurisdictional district of Babylon along with the gift of the people

and the priests who are voluntarily giving to the house of their God, which is in Jerusalem. (**Ezra 7:16**)

- Accordingly you will promptly buy with this money bulls, rams, lambs and their grain offerings and their drink offerings and you will present them upon the altar of the house of your God, which is in Jerusalem. (**Ezra 7:17**)
- And whatever it seems good to you and to your brothers to do with the rest of the silver and gold, according to the will of your God, you men will do. (**Ezra 7:18**)
- And the vessels that are being given to you for the service of the house of your God deliver in full before God at Jerusalem. (**Ezra 7:19**)
- And the rest of the necessities of the house of your God that it devolves upon you to give, you will give out of the king's house of treasures. (**Ezra 7:20**)
- And by me myself, Artaxerxes the king, an order has been put through to all the treasurers that are beyond the River, that everything that **Ezra** the priest, the copyist of the Law of the God of the heavens, requests of you men it will be done promptly. (**Ezra 7:21**)
- Even to a hundred talents of silver and a hundred cor measures of wheat and a hundred bath measures of wine and a hundred bath measures of oil, and salt without limit. (**Ezra 7:22**)
- Let all that is by the order of the God of the heavens be done with zeal for the house of the God of the heavens, that there may occur no wrath against the king's realm and his sons. (**Ezra 7:23**)
- And to you men it is being made known that, as respects any of the priests and the Levites, the musicians, the doorkeepers, the Nethinim, and the workers of this house of God, no tax, tribute or toll is allowed to be imposed upon them. (**Ezra 7:24**)
- And you, **Ezra**, according to the wisdom of your God that is in your hand appoint magistrates and judges that they may continually judge all the people that are beyond the River, even all those knowing the laws of your God, and anyone that has not known them you men will instruct. (**Ezra 7:25**)

- **And as for everyone that does not become a doer of the Law of your God and the Law of the king, let judgment be promptly executed upon him, whether for death or for banishment, or for money fine or for imprisonment. (Ezra 7:26)**
- **Recognizing Yehowah's direction in this, Ezra immediately followed through on his commission. He collected the Israelites at the banks of the river Ahava, where he made a three-day inspection of the people.**
- **Here he found that, although some priests were among their ranks, not one of the non-priestly Levites had volunteered, and they were very much needed for service at the temple. Ezra here demonstrated his qualifications as a leader. Undaunted by the situation, he immediately sent a formal embassy to the Jews at Casiphia.**
- **These responded well, providing 38 Levites and 220 Nethinim. With their families, this no doubt swelled Ezra's entourage to more than 7,000**
- **Blessed be Yehowah the God of our forefathers, who has put such a thing into the heart of the king, to beautify the house of Yehowah, which is in Jerusalem! (Ezra 7:27)**
- **And toward me he has extended loving-kindness before the king and his counselors and as respects all the mighty princes of the king. And I, for my part, strengthened myself according to the hand of Yehowah my God upon me, and I proceeded to collect out of Israel the head ones to go up with me. (Ezra 7:28)**
- **And I proceeded to collect them at the river that comes to Ahava, and we kept encamped there three days, that I might scrutinize the people and the priests, but none of the sons of Levi did I find there. (Ezra 8:15)**
- **Accordingly I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah and Elnathan and Jarib and Elnathan and Nathan and Zechariah and Meshullam, head ones, and for Joiarib and Elnathan, instructors. (Ezra 8:16)**
- **Accordingly I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah and Elnathan and Jarib and Elnathan and Nathan and Zechariah and Meshullam, head ones, and for Joiarib and Elnathan, instructors. (Ezra Chapter 8)**

- Then I gave them a command concerning Iddo the head one in the place Casiphia, and I put in their mouth words to speak to Iddo and his brothers the Nethinim in the place Casiphia, to bring to us ministers for the house of our God. (**Ezra 8:17**)
- So they brought to us, according to the good hand of our God upon us, a man of discretion from the sons of Mahli the grandson of Levi the son of Israel, namely, Sherebiah and his sons and his brothers, eighteen. (**Ezra 8:18**)
- And Hashabiah and with him Jeshaiiah from the sons of Merari, his brothers, and their sons, twenty. (**Ezra 8:19**)
- **Ezra** then proclaimed a fast in order to seek from Yehowah the right way. Even though his caravan would be carrying great riches, **Ezra** did not want to bring the least shadow on Yehowah's name by requesting an escort after he had expressed to the king his full faith in Yehowah's protection for his servants.
- After entreating God, he called in 12 from among the chiefs of the priests, carefully weighed out to them the contribution, which, according to modern-day values, was evidently worth more than \$43,000,000, and entrusted it to them.
- Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river Ahava, to humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him the right way for us and for our little ones and for all our goods. (**Ezra 8:21**)
- For I felt ashamed to ask a military force and horsemen from the king to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had said to the king; The hand of our God is over all those seeking him for good, but his strength and his anger are against all those leaving him. (**Ezra 8:22**)
- Therefore we fasted and made request of our God concerning this, so that he let himself be entreated by us. (**Ezra 8:23**)
- I now separated from the chiefs of the priests twelve, namely, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and with them ten of their brothers. (**Ezra 8:24**)
- And I proceeded to weigh out to them the silver and the gold and the utensils, the contribution to the house of our God that the

king and his counselors and his princes and all the Israelites who were to be found had contributed. (**Ezra 8:25**)

- **Thus I weighed out into their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver and a hundred silver utensils worth two talents, and gold a hundred talents. (**Ezra 8:26**)**
- **And twenty small gold bowls worth a thousand darics and two utensils of good copper, gleaming red, as desirable as gold. (**Ezra 8:27**)**
- **Then I said to them; You are something holy to Yehowah, and the utensils are something holy, and the silver and the gold are a voluntary offering to Yehowah the God of your forefathers. (**Ezra 8:28**)**
- **Keep awake and be on guard until you weigh them out before the chiefs of the priests and the Levites and the princes of the fathers of Israel in Jerusalem, in the dining halls of the house of Yehowah. (**Ezra 8:29**)**
- **And the priests and the Levites received the weight of the silver and the gold and the utensils, to bring them to Jerusalem to the house of our God. (**Ezra 8:30**)**
- **The hand of Yehowah did prove to be with **Ezra** and those with him, protecting them from the enemy in the way, so that they arrived safely in Jerusalem.**
- **For I felt ashamed to ask a military force and horsemen from the king to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had said to the king; The hand of our God is over all those seeking him for good, but his strength and his anger are against all those leaving him. (**Ezra 8:22**)**
- **He had no difficulty in getting recognition by the priests and Levites serving at the temple, to whom he turned over the valuables he had brought.**
- **Finally we pulled away from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month to go to Jerusalem, and the very hand of our God proved to be over us, so that he delivered us out of the palm of the enemy and the ambush by the way. (**Ezra 8:31**)**

- So we came to Jerusalem and dwelt there three days. (**Ezra 8:32**)
- And on the fourth day we proceeded to weigh out the silver and the gold and the utensils in the house of our God into the hand of Meremoth the son of Urijah the priest and with him Eleazar the son of Phinehas and with them Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui the Levites. (**Ezra 8:33**)
- By number and by weight for everything, after which all the weight was written down at that time. (**Ezra 8:34**)

•• Urges Israel To Dismiss Foreign Wives

- After offering sacrifices at the temple, **Ezra** learned from the princes that many of the people, the priests, and the Levites who had been living in the land had taken foreign wives. Upon hearing this, **Ezra** ripped his garment and his sleeveless coat apart, pulled out some of the hair of his head and his beard, and kept sitting stunned until the evening grain offering.
- Then, falling upon his knees and spreading out his palms to Yehowah, he, in the presence of assembled Israelites, made public confession of the sins of his people, starting with the days of their forefathers.
- Those coming out of the captivity, the former exiles, themselves presented burnt sacrifices to the God of Israel, twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven male lambs, twelve he-goats as a sin offering, everything as a burnt offering to Yehowah. (**Ezra 8:35**)
- Now as soon as **Ezra** had prayed and he had made confession while weeping and lying prostrate before the house of the true God, those of Israel collected themselves together to him, a very large congregation, men and women and children, for the people had wept profusely. (**Ezra 10:1**)
- Afterward, Shecaniah, speaking in behalf of the people, recommended that they conclude a covenant with Yehowah to dismiss their foreign wives and the children born to them, and then he said to **Ezra**: Get up, for the matter devolves upon you, and we are with you. Be strong and act.

- Accordingly, **Ezra** had the people take an oath, and word was sent out for all the former exiles to come together at Jerusalem within three days to straighten out this wrong. On that occasion **Ezra** exhorted those assembled to make confession to Yehowah and to separate themselves from their foreign wives.
- However, because of the great number of people involved in this transgression, it was not possible to care for everything right then and there, but gradually, in a period of about three months, the uncleanness was cleared out.
- Then Shecaniah the son of Jehiel of the sons of Elam answered and said to **Ezra**; We, we have acted unfaithfully against our God, so that we gave a dwelling to foreign wives from the peoples of the land. Yet now there exists a hope for Israel concerning this. (**Ezra 10:2**)
- And now let us conclude a covenant with our God to put away all the wives and those born from them according to the counsel of Yehowah and of those trembling at the commandment of our God, that it may be done according to the law. (**Ezra 10:3**)
- Get up, for the matter devolves upon you, and we are with you. Be strong and act. (**Ezra 10:4**)
- At that **Ezra** rose and had the chiefs of the priests, the Levites and all Israel take an oath to do according to this word. Accordingly they took an oath. (**Ezra 10:5**)
- **Ezra** now rose from before the house of the true God and went to the dining hall of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib. Although he went there, he ate no bread and drank no water, for he was mourning over the unfaithfulness of the exiled people. (**Ezra 10:6**)
- Then they caused a call to pass throughout Judah and Jerusalem for all the former exiles to collect themselves together at Jerusalem. (**Ezra 10:7**)
- And anyone that did not come in three days time according to the counsel of the princes and the older men, all his goods would be put under a ban and he himself be separated from the congregation of the exiled people. (**Ezra 10:8**)

- **So all the men of Judah and Benjamin collected themselves together at Jerusalem within three days, that is, in the ninth month on the twentieth day of the month, and all the people kept sitting in the open place of the house of the true God, shivering because of the matter and on account of the showers of rain. (Ezra 10:9)**
- **At length Ezra the priest rose and said to them; You yourselves have acted unfaithfully in that you gave a dwelling to foreign wives so as to add to the guiltiness of Israel. (Ezra 10:10)**
- **And now make confession to Yehowah the God of your forefathers and do his pleasure and separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives. (Ezra 10:11)**
- **To this all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice; Exactly according to your word it devolves upon us to do. (Ezra 10:12)**
- **However, the people are many, and it is the season of showers of rain, and it is not possible to stand outside, and the business will not take one day or two, for we have rebelled to a great extent in this matter. (Ezra 10:13)**
- **So, please, let our princes act representatively for all the congregation, and, as for all in our cities who have given a dwelling to foreign wives, let them come at the times appointed and along with them the older men of each individual city and its judges, until we have turned back the burning anger of our God from us, on account of this matter. (Ezra 10:14)**
- **However, Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahzeiah the son of Tikvah themselves stood up against this, and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levites were the ones that helped them. (Ezra 10:15)**
- **And the former exiles proceeded to do that way, and Ezra the priest and the men that were the heads of the fathers for their paternal house, even all of them by their names, now separated themselves and began sitting on the first day of the tenth month to inquire into the matter. (Ezra 10:16)**
- **And gradually they finished with all the men that had given a dwelling to foreign wives by the first day of the first month. (Ezra**

10:17)

· With Nehemiah

- Whether **Ezra** remained in Jerusalem or returned to Babylon is not certain. But the bad circumstances into which the city came, with the corruption that had infected the priesthood, seem to indicate that he was absent. It may be that he was called upon by Nehemiah to return after the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls.
- We find, at any rate, that he appears on the scene again, where he is shown reading the Law to the congregated people and instructing them. On the second day of that assembly the heads of the people hold a special meeting with Ezra to gain insight into the Law. The Festival of Booths is held with rejoicing.
- After the eight-day observance, Tishri 24 is appointed as a day of abstinence and confession of their sins, with prayer. Under the strong leadership and direction of Ezra and Nehemiah, a trustworthy arrangement is made, not by word of mouth this time, but in writing, attested to by seal of the princes, Levites, and priests.
- And all the people proceeded to gather themselves as one man at the public square that was before the Water Gate. Then they said to **Ezra** the copyist to bring the book of the Law of Moses, which Yehowah had commanded Israel. (**Nehemiah 8:1**)
- Accordingly **Ezra** the priest brought the Law before the congregation of men as well as of women and of all intelligent enough to listen, on the first day of the seventh month. (**Nehemiah 8:2**)
- And he continued to read aloud from it before the public square that is before the Water Gate, from daybreak till midday, in front of the men and the women and the other intelligent ones, and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the Law. (**Nehemiah 8:3**)
- And **Ezra** the copyist kept standing upon a wooden podium, which they had made for the occasion, and there were standing alongside him Mattithiah and Shema and Anaiah and Uriah and Hilkiah and Maaseiah to his right hand, and at his left Pedaiah and Mishael and Malchijah and Hashum and Hash-baddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam. (**Nehemiah 8:4**)

- And **Ezra** proceeded to open the book before the eyes of all the people, for he happened to be above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood up. (**Nehemiah 8:5**)
- Then **Ezra** blessed Yehowah the true God, the great One, at which all the people answered; Amen! Amen! With the lifting up of their hands. They then bowed low and prostrated themselves to Yehowah with their faces to the earth. (**Nehemiah 8:6**)
- And Jeshua and Bani and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, even the Levites, were explaining the Law to the people, while the people were in a standing position. (**Nehemiah 8:7**)
- And they continued reading aloud from the book, from the Law of the true God, it being expounded, and there being a putting of meaning into it, and they continued giving understanding in the reading. (**Nehemiah 8:8**)
- And Nehemiah, that is, the Tirshatha, and **Ezra** the priest, the copyist, and the Levites who were instructing the people proceeded to say to all the people; This very day is holy to Yehowah your God. Do not mourn or weep. For all the people were weeping as they were hearing the words of the law. (**Nehemiah 8:9**)
- And on the second day the heads of the fathers of all the people, the priests and the Levites, gathered themselves together to **Ezra** the copyist, even to gain insight into the words of the law. (**Nehemiah 8:13**)
- Then they found written in the Law that Yehowah had commanded by means of Moses that the sons of Israel should dwell in booths during the festival in the seventh month. (**Nehemiah 8:14**)
- And that they should make proclamation and cause a call to pass throughout all their cities and throughout Jerusalem, saying; Go out to the mountainous region and bring in olive leaves and the leaves of oil trees and myrtle leaves and palm leaves and the leaves of branchy trees to make booths, according to what is written. (**Nehemiah 8:15**)

- **And the people proceeded to go out and bring them in and make booths for themselves, each one upon his own roof and in their courtyards and in the courtyards of the house of the true God and in the public square of the Water Gate and in the public square of the Gate of Ephraim. (Nehemiah 8:16)**
- **Thus all the congregation of those who had come back from the captivity made booths and took up dwelling in the booths, for the sons of Israel had not done that way from the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day, so that there came to be very great rejoicing. (Nehemiah 8:17)**
- **And there was a reading aloud of the book of the Law of the true God day by day, from the first day until the last day, and they went on holding the festival seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule. (Nehemiah 8:18)**

· Writing

- **The Bible books of First and Second Chronicles as well as the book bearing **Ezra's** name give evidence that **Ezra** was an indefatigable researcher, with discernment in deciding between various readings of the copies of the Law existing then.**
- **He exhibited unusual zeal in searching the official documents of his nation, and it is evidently due to his efforts that we have the accurate record Chronicles gives us. We must remember, however, that he had God's spirit of inspiration and that God guided him with a view to preserving a great portion of Israel's history for our benefit.**
- ****Ezra's** zeal for righteousness, his prayerful reliance upon Yehowah, his faithfulness in teaching God's Law to Israel, and his diligence in advancing true worship make him, as one of the so great a cloud of witnesses, a fine example worthy of imitation.**
- **So, then, because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1)**