



Arabic Simplified Text

v4.9

Ezra

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Ezra

conquered the kingdom of ,During the first year after Cyrus, king of Persia¹ 1
Yahweh motivated Cyrus to write a message. Yahweh did this in order to fulfill a ,Babylon
prophecy that Jeremiah had spoken. Cyrus sent messengers throughout his empire with
copies of the message and he ordered them to proclaim it as they went. This is what they
:proclaimed

I, King Cyrus, rule the Persian Empire, and I say this: Yahweh, the God who is in“²
heaven, has made me ruler over the great kingdoms of this part of the world. Now he has
Jerusalem in the city of build a temple for him in make sure that his people assigned me to
All you people who belong to God may go up to Jerusalem in³ .Judah the province of
Judah to rebuild this temple for Yahweh. He is the God who is in Jerusalem, the God whom
There are other people who⁴ !the people of Israel worship. And may God give you success
are living around the Israelites in the places where the Israelites have been living since their
ancestors were exiled here. Those people must contribute silver and gold to the Israelites
.that they might need supplies any who go. They must also give to the Israelites animals and
They should also give them other gifts that they can use to help build the temple of God in
”.Jerusalem

the clan leaders some of Then God motivated some of the priests and Levites and⁵
Judah and Benjamin to return to Jerusalem. Those whom God motivated the tribes of from
Many of their⁶ .got ready to return to Jerusalem and build the temple for him there
neighbors helped them by giving them silver and golden things, animals, and supplies for
the journey. They also gave them other valuable gifts, and they gave them money to buy
to bring out the his servants King Cyrus also commanded⁷ .things for building the temple
had taken from the temple of Yahweh s soldiers’valuable things that King Nebuchadnezzar
King Cyrus ,Specifically⁸ .in Babylon in Jerusalem and had put in the temples of their gods
to bring out all of to command his servants ,of Persia commanded Mithredath, his treasurer
the group that was these items and to give each one of them to Sheshbazzar, the leader of
 ,gold basins 30 :that Cyrus donated This is a list of the items⁹ .Judah going to return to
gold bowls, 410 secondary silver bowls, and 1,000 30¹⁰ ,silver basins, 29 knives 1,000
All together, Cyrus gave 5,400 silver and gold items to Sheshbazzar to¹¹ .other utensils
.Babylon to Jerusalem the kingdom of take with him when he and the others returned from

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had captured **Many years ago, the army of**¹ 2 many Israelite people and taken them away to the kingdom of Babylon. Now, these Israelite people began to return to Judah. Some returned to Jerusalem, and some returned to other places in Judah. Each of them went to the towns where their ancestors had lived. This is a

The leaders of those people who returned were² .list of the groups who returned ,Zerubbabel, Joshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai .Rehum, and Baanah

.The groups of people who returned to Judah are listed next

,descendants of Parosh 2,172³

,descendants of Shephatiah 372⁴

,descendants of Arach 775⁵

,descendants of Pahath-Moab, from the families of Jeshua and Joab 2,812⁶

,descendants of Elam 1,254⁷

,descendants of Zattu 945⁸

,descendants of Zaccai 760⁹

,descendants of Bani 642¹⁰

,descendants of Bebai 623¹¹

,descendants of Azgad 1,222¹²

,descendants of Adonikam 666¹³

,descendants of Bigvai 2,056¹⁴

,descendants of Adin 454¹⁵

,descendants of Ater, who descended from Hezekiah 98¹⁶

,descendants of Bezai 323¹⁷

,descendants of Jorah 112¹⁸

,descendants of Hashum 223¹⁹

.descendants of Gibbar 95²⁰

:The following is a list of people whose ancestors had lived in these towns in Judah²¹

,from Bethlehem 123

,from Netophah 56²²

,from Anathoth 128²³

,from Azmaveth 42²⁴

,from Kiriath Arim, Kephirah, and Beeroth 743²⁵

,from Ramah and Geba 621²⁶

,from Michmas 122²⁷

,from Bethel and Ai 223²⁸

,from Nebo 52²⁹

,from Magbish 156³⁰

,from the other Elam 1,254³¹

,from Harim 320³²

,from Lod, Hadid, and Ono 725³³

,from Jericho 345³⁴

.from Senaah 3,630³⁵

:These are the priests who returned³⁶

,descendants of Jedaiah (that is, those who descended through Jeshua) 973

,descendants of Immer 1,052³⁷

,descendants of Pashur 1,247³⁸

,descendants of Harim 1,017³⁹

:These are the descendants of Levi who returned⁴⁰

,descendants of Jeshua and Kadmiel, who were from the family of Hodaviah 74

,musicians who were descendants of Asaph 128⁴¹

,gatekeepers who were descendants of the gatekeepers Shallum, Ater, Talmon 139⁴²

,Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai

The following is a list of the temple workers who returned. They were the⁴³

,Lebanah⁴⁵ ,Keros, Siaha, Padon⁴⁴ ,descendants of these men: Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth

,Rezin⁴⁸ ,Giddel, Gahar, Reaiah⁴⁷ ,Hagab, Shalmal, Hanan⁴⁶ ,Hagabah, Akkub

,Bakbuk⁵¹ ,Asnah, Meunim, Nephusim⁵⁰ ,Uzza, Paseah, Besai⁴⁹ ,Nekoda, Gazzam

Neziah, and⁵⁴ ,Barkos, Sisera, Temah⁵³ ,Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha⁵² ,Hakupha, Harhur

.Hatipha

They .to Jerusalem The following descendants of King Solomon's servants returned⁵⁵

,Jaalah, Darkon⁵⁶ ,were the descendants of these men: Sotai, Hassophereth, Peruda

Altogether, there were⁵⁸ .Shephatiah, Hattil, Pochereth Hazzebaim, and Ami⁵⁷ ,Giddel

.descendants of temple workers and Solomon's servants who returned 392

Tel Melah, Tel the towns of from to Judah There was another group that returned⁵⁹

But they could not prove that they were .in Babylonia Harsha, Cerub, Addon, and Immer

,This group included 652 people who were descendants of Delaiah⁶⁰ .genuine Israelites

The descendants of the priests in this group included people⁶¹ .Tobiah, and Nekoda

belonging to Habaiah's clan, Hakkoz's clan, and Barzillai's clan. Barzillai had married a

woman who was a descendant of Barzillai from the region of Gilead. He had taken the

The people in this group searched in the⁶² .name of his father-in-law's clan for himself
clans, but they various Israelite from the of the descendants documents that listed the names

So the officials did not permit them to do the work that .their names there did not find

The governor told these men that they could not eat the shares of the⁶³ .priests did

priest could consult Yahweh by using high sacrifices that only the priests could eat until a

to determine that they truly were descendants of priestly families. Only if the the sacred lots

.high priest determined that these men truly were priests could they eat the most sacred food

The Israelites⁶⁵ .Altogether in this group, 42,360 Israelite people returned to Judah⁶⁴

also brought along with them 7,337 male and female servants and 200 male and female

,horses, 245 mules 736 from Babylonia The Israelites also brought with them⁶⁶ .musicians

.camels, and 6,720 donkeys 435⁶⁷

the temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem, some of the **the ruins of** When they arrived at⁶⁸
clan leaders gave money for the supplies needed to rebuild the temple in the same place
Each one gave as much as he was able to give for the⁶⁹ .where the old temple had been
Altogether, they gave 61,000 gold coins, 5,000 silver bars, and 100 **.on the temple work**
.robes for the priests

So all of these priests, Levites, musicians, gatekeepers, temple servants, and other⁷⁰
They settled in the **.of the province of Judah** people returned to live in the towns and villages
.places where their ancestors had lived

began to live in their towns, in the **returned and** After the Israelite people¹ **3**

Then Joshua son of² .autumn of that year, they all gathered together in Jerusalem
Jehozadak and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates all
began to rebuild the altar of the God of Israel. They did that so that they could sacrifice
burnt offerings on it. They wanted to follow what the prophet Moses had written in the laws
Even though they were afraid of the people who were already³ .that God had given to him
.living in that area, they rebuilt the altar at the same place where the previous altar had been
Fifteen⁴ .They began to offer sacrifices to Yahweh on it every morning and every evening
.the people celebrated the Festival of Shelters **,days after they started to offer these sacrifices**
Each day the **.Moses had commanded them to do this in the decrees that God had given to him**
From then on, they presented⁵ .priests offered the sacrifices that were required for that day
for the New Moon **These were** .offerings **other required** the regular burnt offerings and the
festivals and the other festivals that they celebrated as special times each year to honor
not ,Yahweh. They also brought other offerings to Yahweh just because they wanted to
But even though they started bringing burnt⁶ **.because they were required to bring them**
offerings to Yahweh at the beginning of autumn, they had not yet started rebuilding the

to do the Israelites hired stone-cutters and carpenters **leaders of the** So the⁷ .temple
Tyre **the cities of** They also bought logs of cedar trees from the people of **.construction work**
.and Sidon. To pay for the logs, the Israelites sent grain, wine, and olive oil to those people
Since King Cyrus had said that the Israelites could buy these things, the people of Tyre and
to the brought the logs down from the mountains in Lebanon **agreed. They** Sidon
Then they .Joppa **the city of** and then floated them along the coast to **Mediterranean seacoast**
.brought the logs inland from Joppa up to Jerusalem

The Israelites started to rebuild the temple in the second month of the second year⁸
after they had returned to Jerusalem. Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Joshua the son of
Jozadak, their fellow leaders the priests and the Levites, and all the people who had come
from where their enemies had taken them to Jerusalem supported this project. The leaders
assigned the Levites who were twenty years old and older to supervise this work of

Jeshua, his sons, and his other relatives, and Kadmiel⁹ .rebuilding the temple for Yahweh
.and his sons together helped to supervise those who were doing the work on the temple
They were all descendants of Judah. The sons and grandsons of Henadad along with the
When the builders finished laying the¹⁰ .joined in the work rest of their fellow Levites
foundation of the temple of Yahweh, the priests and the Levites did what King David had
.in order to praise Yahweh many years previously told Asaph and the other musicians to do
The priests put on their robes and stood in their places, blowing their trumpets. Then the
Then the Levites praised¹¹ .Levites who were descendants of Asaph clashed their cymbals
:Yahweh and thanked him by singing this song about him

!He is very good to us“

forever.” Then and he will love us He will continue to be faithful and kind to us Israelites
all the people shouted loudly. They praised Yahweh because they had finished laying
Many of the old priests, Levites, and leaders of¹² .the foundation of his temple
families remembered seeing the first temple. They cried aloud when they saw the
because they thought that this temple would not workers lay the foundation of this temple
But the other people shouted joyfully in loud .be as big or as beautiful as the first temple
Since the shouting was so loud, no one could tell the difference between the¹³ .voices
people who were shouting joyfully and the people who were crying sorrowfully. All the
.noise was so loud that even people far away could hear it

Judah and Benjamin learned that the the people of the tribes of The enemies of¹ 4
Israelites who had returned from Babylon were rebuilding the temple for Yahweh, the God
So they approached Zerubbabel the governor and the² .whom the people of Israel worship
.said to them, “We want to help you to build the temple deceptively other clan leaders and
After all, we also worship your God. We have been offering sacrifices to him since the time
”.that Esarhaddon, the king of Assyria, brought us here

But Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the other Jewish clan leaders replied, “We will not allow³
you to help us build a temple for our God. No, we alone will build it for Yahweh, the God
”.whom Israel worships, because that is what King Cyrus of Persia told us to do

before the Israelites returned there Then the people who had been living in that land⁴
the started doing things to make the Jews discouraged and afraid to continue building
to They bribed government officials to prevent the Jews from fulfilling their plans⁵ .temple
They did that all during the time that Cyrus was king of .rebuild the temple and the city
the time when the time of the kings after him, including Persia, and continued to do it during
.Darius was king of Persia

Darius' son These enemies of the Jews continued to accuse them during the time that⁶
Ahasuerus was king. When Ahasuerus became king, they wrote a letter to him in which
of they accused the people living in the province of Judah and the city of Jerusalem
planning to rebel against the government

king of Persia, the **who was the next** ,Then again during the time of Artaxerxes⁷
enemies of the Jews wrote a letter to him. Some men named Bishlam, Mithredath, and
Tabeel were the leaders of this group. They had someone write the letter for them in the
Aramaic language, using the Aramaic alphabet

Rehum, the high commissioner, and Shimshai, the provincial secretary, agreed that⁸
to protest about what was **with their authority** they could write the letter to King Artaxerxes
:happening in Jerusalem. This is what they wrote

From Rehum the high commissioner, Shimshai the provincial secretary, and others⁹
the from **We represent the people** .with us who are judges and other government officials
as well as the other¹⁰ ,Persia, Erech, Babylon, and Susa in the district of Elam **areas of**
people groups whom the great and glorious Ashurbanipal had deported and sent to live in
:River. Therefore **Euphrates** cities in Samaria and in the rest of the province west of the
(:This is what they wrote in the letter that they sent to him)¹¹

This letter is for King Artaxerxes. It comes from the officials serving you who live in
:the province west of the Euphrates River. Therefore

Your Majesty, we want you to know that the Jews who left from your territories are¹²
now living near us. They are rebuilding the city of Jerusalem. These people are wicked and
and **of that city** want to rebel against you. Therefore, they are now rebuilding the walls
It is important for you to know that if they¹³ .**of its buildings** repairing the foundations
,rebuild this city and finish building its walls, they will stop paying any taxes. As a result
.there will be less money in your treasury

So, because we are loyal to you, and because we do not want anyone to humiliate¹⁴
order We suggest that you¹⁵ .you, for these reasons we are sending this information to you
you ,**If you do that** .search among the records that your predecessors kept **your officials to**
will find out that the people in this city have always rebelled against their rulers. You will
find out that these people have withheld taxes from kings and from rulers of provinces. You
will find out that from long ago the leaders of this city have started rebellions. That is the
We want you to know that if they¹⁶ .destroyed this city **the Babylonian army** reason why
any rebuild this city and finish building its walls, then you will no longer be able to control
".River **Euphrates** this province west of the **of the people in**

:sent this reply to them **read this letter**, he the king **After**¹⁷

To you, Rehum, the high commissioner, and Shimshai, the provincial secretary, and“
Euphrates your colleagues in Samaria and in other parts of the province that is west of the
:River, I send my greetings. Therefore

Then I¹⁹ .My officials carefully read out loud to me the letter that you sent to us¹⁸
The .**what you said is true** I have found out that .**the records** ordered my officials to search
people of Jerusalem have repeatedly revolted against their rulers, beginning a long time
powerful kings ruled in Jerusalem. They also ruled over the whole ,**In the past**²⁰ .ago
River. They forced the people there to pay them all kinds of **Euphrates** province west of the
.taxes

Therefore, you must command those Jews to stop rebuilding the city. They will only²¹
 ,Do this immediately²² .be allowed to resume if I tell them that they may rebuild it
any because I do not want those people to do anything more that will cause me to lose
”.**territory or income**

a copy of the letter to Rehum and **messengers with** Then King Artaxerxes sent²³
Shimshai the provincial secretary and their colleagues. As soon as the messengers finished
reading it out loud to them, Rehum and Shimshai and their colleagues went quickly to the
Because the²⁴ .**the city** Jews in Jerusalem, and they forced the Jews to stop rebuilding
the Jews had stopped ,**enemies of the Jews kept opposing them so strongly in these ways**
rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. They did not do any more work to rebuild the temple
.until the second year after Darius had become the king of Persia

At that time two prophets were giving messages from God to the Jews living in¹ **5**
 .**saying that they should continue rebuilding the temple** ,Jerusalem and in other cities in Judah
Those prophets were Haggai and Zechariah, the son of Iddo. They spoke their messages
So² .representing the God whom the people of Israel worshiped, the one who ruled them
Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jozadak led many other people to start
rebuilding the temple of God in Jerusalem again. God’s prophets Haggai and Zechariah
.were with them and helping them

But then Tattenai, the governor of the province west of the Euphrates River, and³
Shethar-Bozenai went to Jerusalem together with some of their officials and said to the
They also⁴ ”?people, “Who has permitted you to do all this work to rebuild this temple
.asked the Jews to tell them the names of the men who were working on this temple

However, God was taking care of the Jewish leaders, and their enemies did not make⁵
Instead, the enemies sent King Darius a report and waited for .building the temple them stop
The decree would either allow the Jewish leaders to finish .him to send back a decree about it
.their work on the temple, or else it would command them to stop their work completely

-This is a copy of the report that Tattenai, governor of the province of Beyond-the⁶
the officials of the province of who were ,River, Shethar-Bozenai, and their associates
When they sent the report to him, this is what⁷ .Beyond-the-River, sent to King Darius
:they wrote in it

.King Darius, we hope everything is going well for you“

We want you to know that we went to the temple of the great God in the province of⁸
Judah. The people are building it with huge stones, and they are putting wooden beams in
.the walls. They are doing this work very carefully, and they are making good progress

’?So we asked the Jewish leaders, ‘Who has permitted you to rebuild this temple⁹
We also asked them for the names of their leaders so that we could write them down and¹⁰
.so that we could inform you who their leaders were

This is what they told us in reply. They said, ‘We serve the God who created heaven¹¹
and earth. We are rebuilding his temple, which a great king of Israel originally completed
But our ancestors did things that caused God, who is in heaven, to¹² .many years ago
Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, a the armies of become very angry. So God allowed
Chaldean, to conquer them. His armies destroyed that temple, and they took many of the
.Israelite people to Babylon

However, during the first year that Cyrus ruled as king of Babylon, he decreed that¹³
There had been a lot of containers made of¹⁴ .our people could rebuild the temple for God
gold and silver in the temple of God. Nebuchadnezzar took them from the temple in
in Babylon. Later, King Cyrus removed for his god Jerusalem and brought them to a temple
,those containers from that temple in Babylon and gave them to a man named Sheshbazzar
King Cyrus told Sheshbazzar to take these¹⁵ .of Judah whom he appointed as governor
containers and put them back in the temple in Jerusalem. He also decreed that the Jews
So Sheshbazzar came¹⁶ .should rebuild the temple at the place where it had been before
laid the foundation of this temple. And since supervised the men who here to Jerusalem and
,.that time, the people have been working on the temple, but they have not finished it yet

Therefore, your Majesty, please order your officials to search in the place in¹⁷
Babylon where you keep the royal records. Have them find out whether or not it is true that

King Cyrus decreed that the Jews should rebuild this temple of God in Jerusalem. Then
”.please tell us what you would like us to do about this matter

So King Darius commanded his servants to search in the places where he kept¹ **6**
found a **searched, and they** They² .important records there in the kingdom of Babylon
in the fortress city of Ecbatana **that contained the information that they wanted to know** scroll
:in the province of Media. This is what that scroll said

During the first year that King Cyrus ruled the empire, he sent out a decree³
concerning the temple of God that was in Jerusalem. He said, ‘I command that the Jews
.shall build a new temple in the same place where they had previously offered sacrifices
They must build the⁴ .They must make the temple 27 meters high and 27 meters wide
a **the workers must put** ,three layers of stones **After putting down** .temple from large stones
I will pay for this work with money from the royal **.on top of them** layer of new timber
the gold and silver containers that had belonged to **to the Jews** I also give back⁵ .treasury
the temple of God but that Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought
to Babylon. The Jews must take these and return them to the temple in Jerusalem. The Jews
””.must put each one back in its original place in the temple of God

After learning this from the scroll, King Darius had a scribe write that information in a **6**
letter that he sent to the leaders of the enemies of the Jews in Jerusalem. He also included this
west of the the province This is a message for you, Tattenai, the governor of“ :message
River, for you, Shethar-Bozenai, and for all of your associates, who are the **Euphrates**
Allow them to continue the work of⁷ !officials of that province: Stay away from there
rebuilding that temple of God. Allow the governor of the Jews and their elders to lead their
Furthermore, I⁸ .people in building this new temple on the same site as the former temple
as they rebuild this **in the following ways** command you to help these leaders of the Jews
temple of God. You must be sure to give these men funds so that they can continue the
the building work. Take the money from my treasury, from the tribute you collect in
The priests in Jerusalem need animals to sacrifice⁹ .River **Euphrates** west of the **province**
as burnt offerings to the God who is in heaven. This may include young bulls or rams or
Make **.to go with those sacrifices** lambs. They may also need wheat, salt, wine, and olive oil
.sure that you diligently give them whatever they demand of those things every day
When you do that, they will be able to offer sacrifices that please the God who is in¹⁰
.heaven, and they will be able to pray that God will bless me and my sons

This is what I command about anyone who disobeys this decree. My soldiers will¹¹
Then they will bury the other end of **.and sharpen one end of it** pull a beam from his house
the beam in the ground so that it stands upright. Then they will pick that person up and ram

beam. Then they will completely destroy that person's house **sharpened** his body onto the God himself has chosen that¹² .until only a pile of rubble is left, because he disobeyed me city of Jerusalem as the place where people will honor him. May he get rid of any king or ,any nation that tries to change this decree or destroy that temple in Jerusalem! I, Darius
".make this decree. You must completely obey it

-Tattenai, the governor of the province west of the Euphrates River, and Shethar¹³
immediately obeyed **read the message from King Darius and** Bozenai and their associates

So the Jewish leaders¹⁴ .what the message from King Darius commanded them to do
The messages that the prophets .**the temple** continued to progress in their work of rebuilding
Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo preached encouraged them greatly. The people
just as their God had commanded them to do, and ,**the temple** worked until they completed
just as the Persian kings Cyrus and Darius had decreed, and as the Persian king Artaxerxes

The people finished building this temple on the third day of the¹⁵ .**would decree later**
.**the kingdom of Persia** month of Adar, during the sixth year that King Darius ruled

the priests, the Levites, and everyone else who had ,**that is** ,Then the people of Israel¹⁶
During the ceremony to¹⁷ .returned from Babylonia, joyfully dedicated this temple to God
.**dedicate this temple to God**, they sacrificed 100 young bulls, 200 rams, and 400 lambs
They also sacrificed 12 male goats as an offering so that God would forgive the sins of all
Then the Jewish¹⁸ .the people, because that was how many tribes there were in Israel
leaders divided the priests and Levites into groups that would take turns serving in the
many years temple of God in Jerusalem. They did this according to what Moses had written
.**in the law previously**

On the fourteenth day of the first month, the Jews who had returned from Babylonia¹⁹
all the ,**To qualify themselves for offering the sacrifices**²⁰ .celebrated the Passover Festival
priests and Levites had already purified themselves by performing the proper rituals. Then
 ,they slaughtered the lambs for the benefit of everyone who had returned from Babylonia

All of the Israelite people celebrated the²¹ .for the other priests, and for themselves
Passover. This included the Israelites who had returned from Babylonia and the people who
had separated themselves from the people of the area around them who worshiped other
gods. They separated themselves from those people and joined the Israelites so that they
Then for the next²² .could worship Yahweh, the God whom the Israelite people worshiped
seven days, they joyfully celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread. They were joyful
because Yahweh had caused the king of Assyria to be favorable to them. As a result, the
 .king had helped them to rebuild the temple of God, the God whom Israel worshiped

there ,Many years later, during the time when Artaxerxes was the king of Persia¹ 7
was a descendant of Seraiah, who was the son of Azariah, who He .Ezra was a man named
Hilkiah was the son of Shallum, who was the son of Zadok, who² .was the son of Hilkiah
who was a descendant of Amariah, who was the son of³ ,was a descendant of Ahitub
who was the son of Zerahiah, who was the⁴ ,Azariah, who was a descendant of Meraioth
who was the son of Abishua, who was the son of⁵ ,son of Uzzi, who was the son of Bukki
.Supreme Priest first Phinehas, who was the son of Eleazar, who was the son of Aaron, the
This man Ezra knew the laws of Moses very well. Those were the laws that Yahweh had⁶
Ezra asked the king for many .given to the people who worship him, the Israelite people
the king gave Ezra everything that he asked for because Yahweh, the God whom things and
to Ezra worshiped, caused all of it to go well for him. Then Ezra traveled from Babylon
.Jerusalem

Many Israelite people came with Ezra to Jerusalem, including some priests, some⁷
men who of the descendants of Levites, some musicians, some gatekeepers, and some
worked in the temple. That was during the seventh year that Artaxerxes was the king of
arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh and the group with him Ezra⁸ .Persia
.year that Artaxerxes was king

Consider this: They started out from Babylon on the first day of the first month. They⁹
arrived safely in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month of that year. God certainly
because Ezra had God made Ezra's journey successful¹⁰ .acted very kindly toward them
devoted himself to studying the laws of Yahweh and understanding how to obey them. He
.had also devoted himself to teach everything in those laws to the Israelite people

King Artaxerxes gave a letter to Ezra the priest and scribe who studied what Yahweh¹¹
:had commanded in the law that Yahweh had given to Israel. This is what the letter said

This letter is from Artaxerxes, the greatest of the kings. I am giving it to Ezra the¹²
to the Israelite priest, who has carefully studied the law that the God who is in heaven gave
:Greetings. This is what I want you to know .people

I am commanding that any of the Israelite people in my kingdom may go with you¹³
.to Jerusalem if they want to go. That includes priests and Levites

I, the king, and my seven advisors are sending you to investigate whether the people¹⁴
We are also¹⁵ .of Judah and Jerusalem are following the law of your God that you carry
telling you to take with you the silver and gold that I and my advisors will give to you. We
You should also take¹⁶ .give it freely to the God of Israel who has a temple in Jerusalem

the entire province of Babylonia may give to you. Add **the people in** any silver and gold that that to the money that the Israelite people and the priests freely give for you to use at the ,Then carefully use this money to buy the bulls, rams¹⁷ .temple of their God in Jerusalem .and lambs that the priests will burn on the altar of the temple of your God in Jerusalem .Also buy the grain and wine that go with these offerings

you and your ,**after you buy all of those things** If there is any silver or gold left over¹⁸ We¹⁹ .companions may use it to buy whatever you think that your God wants you to buy containers for the priests to use in the temple of your **valuable** have also given to you some If you need to supply any other things²⁰ .God. Take all of them to your God in Jerusalem from the **to pay for those things** for the temple of your God, I permit you to get the money .royal treasury

And I, King Artaxerxes, personally command this to all the treasurers in the²¹ province west of the Euphrates River: Ezra is a priest who has carefully studied the laws of .the God who is in heaven. If there is anything that he requests, give it to him quickly Give him up to three and one-third metric tons of silver, up to 500 bushels of wheat, up²² to two and one-fifth kiloliters of wine, up to the same amount of olive oil, and all the salt

Be sure that you provide everything that the God who is in heaven²³ .that he requests requires for his temple. We certainly do not want this God to be angry with me or with my By means²⁴ .**who will later be kings, because I did not provide what he required** ,descendants of this letter, I also prohibit you from collecting tax payments of any kind from any of the priests, Levites, musicians, gatekeepers, or any men who work in the temple. They are

,Now I will address you²⁵ .they serve in the temple of this God **because** exempt from taxes

Ezra. The God whom you worship has made you wise. Therefore, I want you to appoint in **of the Jews** men who can settle disputes between people and interpret God's laws for all the province west of the Euphrates River. They must do this for all of those who know the .laws of this God, and all of you must teach God's laws to those who do not know them

must make sure to severely punish everyone who **You and the men whom you appoint**²⁶ does not obey my law or the law of the God whom you worship. You may decide whether to execute them or to send them out of the country or to take away all of their property or to .put them in prison

Praise Yahweh, the God whom our ancestors“ ,**When I, Ezra, read this letter, I said**²⁷ God also²⁸ .worshiped! He has caused the king to want to honor his temple in Jerusalem acted very kindly to me by causing the king and his advisors and all of his powerful officials to want to help me. When I saw how Yahweh, the God whom I worship, was **to making all of my plans succeed, I boldly asked some of the Israelite leaders to go** .with me **Jerusalem**

This is a list of the names of the clan leaders, along with the names of their¹ **8**
of with me from Babylonia when Artaxerxes was king to **Jerusalem** clans, who traveled
:Persia

.Phinehas **Aaron's grandson** Gershom from the clan descended from²

.Ithamar **Aaron's son** Daniel from the clan descended from

a descendant of **Hattush was also**³ .David **King** Hattush from the clan descended from
.Shecaniah

.Zechariah and 150 other men from the clan descended from Parosh

-Eliehoenai son of Zerahiah and 200 other men from the clan descended from Pahath⁴
.Moab

.**Zattu** Shecaniah son of Jahaziel and 300 other men from the clan descended from⁵

.Ebed son of Jonathan and 50 other men from the clan descended from Adin⁶

.Jeshaiah son of Athaliah and 70 other men from the clan descended from Elam⁷

.Zebadiah son of Michael and 80 other men from the clan descended from Shephatiah⁸

.Obadiah son of Jehiel and 218 other men from the clan descended from Joab⁹

.**Bani** Shelomith son of Josiphiah and 160 other men from the clan descended from¹⁰

another man Zechariah son of Bebai and 28 other men from the clan descended from¹¹
.Bebai **whose name was**

.Johanan son of Hakkatan and 110 other men from the clan descended from Azgad¹²

Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah and 60 other men from the clan descended from¹³
that Adonikam. They were the last three leaders from the clan descended from Adonikam
.had not returned earlier with Zerubbabel

.Uthai and Zaccur and 70 other men from the clan descended from Bigvai¹⁴

I gathered together all of these .**This is an account of how we traveled to Jerusalem**¹⁵
Israelites at the canal that goes from Babylon to Ahava. We set up our tents and stayed there
I interviewed the people and the priests and discovered that **During that time** .for three days

,So I summoned Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan¹⁶ .there were no Levites among us Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, who were all **another man named** ,Jarib Elnathan, who were **a third man named** leaders of the people. I also summoned Joiarib and I sent them all to Iddo, a Levite leader who was living in a place called Kasiphia. I¹⁷ .wise temple workers **descendants of** told them what to say to Iddo and to his fellow Levites, the work **go with us to** whom he oversaw there. I wanted them to send us some men who would .in the temple of our God

Because God acted kindly toward us, they brought us a very wise man named¹⁸ Sherebiah and 18 of his sons and other relatives. He was a descendant of Mahli, who was a ,Hashabiah, along with Jeshaiiah **sent to us** also **They**¹⁹ .grandson of Levi, the son of Israel .**the son of Levi** and 20 of his brothers and their sons. Both men were descendants of Merari They also sent 220 other men to work in the temple. King David and his officials had²⁰ appointed the ancestors of these men to assist the Levites. I listed the names of all of these .men

There alongside the Ahava Canal, I announced a time for all of us to abstain from²¹ to humble ourselves in the presence **I told them that this was a time .and to pray** eating food of our God and to pray that God would protect us, our children, and our possessions while Previously we had told the king that our God takes care of all those who²² .we traveled truly trust in him, but that he powerfully punishes everyone who refuses to obey him. So I would have been ashamed to ask the king to send soldiers and men riding on horses to So we abstained²³ .protect us from our enemies while we were traveling along the road from eating food and we asked our God to protect us. We prayed to him, and he answered .our prayer

I chose 12 of the leaders of the priests and brought them together with Sherebiah²⁴ I assigned to each of them a portion of the²⁵ .and Hashabiah and ten of the other Levites These were .**to transport to Jerusalem** gifts of silver and gold and the other valuable items the items that the king and his advisors and other officials, and the Israelite people who As I gave these²⁶ .were living in Babylonia, had contributed for the temple of our God various items to those men, I weighed each of the items. This was the total: about 21 and one half metric tons of silver, items made from silver that altogether weighed three and one gold bowls that altogether 20²⁷ ,third metric tons, three and one third metric tons of gold weighed about eight and one-half kilograms, and two items made of beautiful polished I said to those priests and Levites, ‘I²⁸ .bronze that were as valuable as ones made of gold have set you apart from the others to serve Yahweh in a special way. The people have also set apart these valuable things for only him. The people also gave the silver and the gold So guard²⁹ .voluntarily as an offering to Yahweh, the God whom our ancestors worshiped

them carefully. When we arrive in Jerusalem, weigh them out where the leading priests and in **They will then put them** .Levites and the other leaders of the Israelite clans can see them
'the storerooms in the temple of Yahweh

So these priests and Levites said that they would be responsible to transport all of³⁰
.silver and gold and other valuable items to the temple of our God in Jerusalem **gifts of the**

On the twelfth day of the first month, we left the Ahava Canal and started to travel³¹
to Jerusalem. Our God took care of us, and while we traveled, he prevented any enemies
.After we arrived in Jerusalem, we rested for three days³² .from attacking or robbing us
Then on the fourth day we went to the temple of our God. There the priests and Levites³³
weighed out the silver and gold and the other items and gave them to the leaders there. The
,leaders there were two priests, Meremoth the son of Uriah and Eleazar the son of Phinehas
They³⁴ .and two Levites, Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui
counted everything, and wrote down how much each item weighed, and wrote a description
.of each one as they received it

The Babylonian soldiers had captured our ancestors and taken them away to³⁵
So we .to **Israel** Babylon, but now we who are their descendants have safely returned
the **each of the 12 tribes of** for **one** ,offered sacrifices of burnt offerings to our God: 12 bulls
Israelite people, 96 rams, and 77 lambs. We also sacrificed 12 male goats to atone for the
We offered all of these sacrifices to .**that all of the Israelite people had committed sins**
.of the altar Yahweh by putting them on the fire

Some of us who had returned from Babylonia took the letter that the king had given³⁶
to us to the governors of the king's provinces and to the officials of the province west of the
they did what the king commanded for us ,**After they read the letter** .Euphrates River
".people and for the temple of God **Israelite**

leaders came to me and said, 'Many Israelites and **Jewish** the **some of** ,After that"¹ **9**
priests and Levites have not kept themselves from doing what the other people **even some**
who are living in this land do. They are doing the same disgusting things that those people
,do. Those people are from the Canaanite, Hittite, Perizzite, Jebusite, Ammonite, Moabite
Specifically, some Israelite men have married² .Egyptian, and Amorite people groups
women from these groups, and they have allowed their sons to do the same thing. So they
are making us, God's sacred people, to be no longer distinct from the other groups that live
here. In fact, some of our leaders and officials have been the first ones to betray God in this
'!way

I tore my clothes and my robe. I even **I was so sad and angry that** ,When I heard that³
.pulled out some hair from my head and my beard. Then I sat down. I was very dismayed
and ,**not to marry foreign women** Many of the Jews still respected God's commandment⁴
they were upset and afraid because some of those who had returned from Babylonia had
disobeyed it. They gathered around me as I sat there dismayed until the time of the evening
.sacrifice

When it was time to offer the evening sacrifice, I stopped sitting there, silently⁵
showing how ashamed and sad I felt. Still wearing those torn clothes, I got on my knees
and this is what I prayed: 'God, I⁶ ,to Yahweh, my God **in prayer** and opened my hands
belong to you. Yet I am very ashamed even to approach you in prayer. This is because the
sins that we Israelites have committed are very bad. It is as though our sins are so many
that they have risen up in a heap that is higher than our heads. We are so guilty for
committing those sins that it is as though the heap of them has risen all the way up to you in
have been very ,**the Jewish people** ,Since the time of our ancestors until now, we⁷ .heaven
the **the armies of** That is the reason why you, God, allowed .**against you** guilty of sinning
kings of other lands to do whatever they wanted to do with our people and with our kings
many of them, they robbed **many of them**, they captured **many of** and our priests. They killed
.them, and they caused them all to be disgraced, just as we are today

But for just a little while now, Yahweh our God, you have been kind to us. You have⁸
allowed some of us to survive. You have given us a secure home in your sacred place. You
have made us joyful and given us some freedom, even though the Persian king is still our
Yes, we are like slaves, but even so, you have not abandoned us. Instead, you⁹ .master
have caused the kings of Persia to act very kindly toward us. They have given us some
freedom and allowed us to rebuild your temple, which had been destroyed. They have
.allowed us to live safely here in the province of Judah and the city of Jerusalem

of the Our God, there is nothing that we can say now to defend ourselves after all¹⁰
They are¹¹ .We have continued to disobey your commands .**sinful things that we have done**
the commands that you gave to your servants, the prophets, to tell to us. They told us that it
was as though the land that we would occupy was a filthy land because the people who live
,there do disgusting things. They said that those people continually do shameful things
,**They said**¹² .making it seem like the land is full of filth from one end to the other
Therefore do not allow your daughters to marry their sons! Do not allow your sons to“
marry their daughters! Do not ever try to cause things to go well for those people! If you
obey these instructions, your nation will be strong. You will enjoy the good crops that grow
”.on the land, and the land will belong to your descendants forever

,But you punished us because we became very guilty for doing wicked things. Still¹³ you, our God, have not punished us as much as we deserve for you to punish us. I say this
However, some of us are again¹⁴ .because you have allowed this group of us to survive disobeying your commands. Some of us have married women from the people groups that do those detestable things. If we continue to do that, you will be so angry with us that you
!will destroy us completely, leaving none of us to survive

Yahweh, God of Israel, you always do the right thing! Because of that, you have¹⁵ continually allowed some of us to survive, just as you have done with this group now. But we acknowledge that we are guilty of disobeying you and so because of what we have
”done, we do not deserve even to pray to you

Ezra prostrated himself on the ground in front of the temple as he cried and¹ 10
While he .to God the sins that the people had committed He was confessing .to God prayed
,was doing that, a very large crowd of Israelites gathered around him, consisting of men
.because they had sinned against God women, and children. They all cried very, very much

:Then Shecaniah, the son of Jehiel from the clan of Elam, spoke. He said this to Ezra²
.We have disobeyed our God. Some of us have married women who are not Israelites“
that They come from the other people groups that live around us. But we can still hope
Here is what I suggest. We should do what³ .us Israelite people Yahweh will be merciful to
God told us to do in his laws. We should make an agreement with our God that we will divorce our foreign wives and send them away with their children. We will do everything
according to what you, sir, and the others who greatly respect what our God has
Since you are our leader, get going, and be courageous, and do⁴ .commanded, tell us to do
”.We will do whatever you say .what is necessary to fix this problem

,He demanded that all of the Israelite people .to fix the problem So Ezra acted⁵
including the leaders of the priests and the Levites, solemnly declare that they would do
Then⁶ .to do that what Shekaniah said that they should do. So they all solemnly promised
Ezra went away from in front of the temple and went to the room where Jehohanan the grandson of Eliashib lived. Ezra continued to grieve because some of the Israelites who had returned from Babylonia had not faithfully obeyed God’s laws. So while he was there, he
.did not eat or drink anything

Then the leaders sent a message to all the people in the province of Judan and the city⁷
of Jerusalem. They told them that all the Jews who had returned from Babylonia had to
The leaders announced the following penalties for⁸ .come to Jerusalem immediately
anyone who did not arrive within three days. They would take away all the property

belonging to that person, and they would banish that person from the community of
So within three days, by the twentieth day of the ninth month, all the men from⁹ .Israelites
the tribes of Judah and Benjamin gathered in Jerusalem. They were sitting in the courtyard
because they in front of the temple. They were trembling because it was raining hard and
.for what they had done were worried that they would be punished

Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, “Some of you have sinned very¹⁰
Specifically, you have married women who are not Israelites. By doing .against God badly
,So now¹¹ .that, you have made us Israelite people more guilty than we were before
confess your sin to Yahweh, the God whom your ancestors worshiped, and do what he
separate yourselves from the people of other nations by divorcing your ,That is .commands
”.foreign wives

”.The whole group answered, shouting loudly, “Yes, we must do what you have said¹²
But we are a very large group, and it is raining hard. We cannot“ ,Then one of them said¹³
continue to stand outside in this rain. Also, since many of us have committed this sin, it will
So please allow our leaders to decide what¹⁴ .take a long time to make things right again
we should all do. Tell everyone in each city who has married a woman who is not an
Israelite to come at a time that you decide. They should each come with the elders and
judges from their own city. If we do that, our God will stop being angry with us because of
”.what we have done

Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah said that they ,Within the crowd¹⁵
disagreed with this plan. Then Meshullam and Shabbethai, a descendant of Levi, said that
they were the only ones who opposed the But¹⁶ .they agreed with Jonathan and Jahzeiah
the others who had returned from Babylonia said that they would do it. So Ezra plan; all of
.the priest chose men who were leaders from each of the clans and wrote down their names
By the first¹⁷ .On the first day of the tenth month these men met to investigate the matter
they had finished determining which men had of the next year day of the first month
.married women who were not Israelites

They determined that some of the descendants of the priests had married foreign¹⁸
.women. These included some descendants of Joshua the son of Jozadak and of his brothers
They solemnly promised to¹⁹ .Their names were Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah
.divorce their wives and they each offered a ram as a sacrifice to atone for their sins

.In the clan of Immer there were Hanani and Zebadiah²⁰

.In the clan of Harim there were Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uziah²¹

,In the clan of Pashhur there were Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad²²
and Elasa^h

The Levites who had married foreign women were Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (whose²³
other name was Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer

,There was Eliashib the musician. Among the temple guards there were Shallum²⁴
Telem, and Uri

:who had married foreign wives This is a list of the names of the other Israelites²⁵

,In the clan of Parosh there were Ramiah, Izziah, Malkijah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malkijah
and Benaiah

In the clan of Elam there were Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and²⁶
Elijah

In the clan of Zattu there were Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad, and²⁷
Aziza

.In the clan of Bebai there were Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai²⁸

In the clan of Bani there were Meshullam, Malluk, Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal²⁹
Jeremoth

,In the clan of Pahath-Moab there were Adna, Kelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah³⁰
Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh

,In the clan of Harim there were Eliezer, Ishijah, Malkijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon³¹
Benjamin, Malluk, and Shemariah³²

,In the clan of Hashum there were Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai³³
Manasseh, and Shimei

,Benaiah, Bedeiah, Keluhi³⁵ ,In the clan of Bani there were Maadai, Amram, Uel³⁴
Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasu³⁷ ,Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib³⁶

,Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah³⁹ ,In the clan of Binnui there were Shimei³⁸
,Shallum, Amariah⁴² ,Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah⁴¹ ,Maknadebai, Shashai, Sharai⁴⁰
and Joseph

In the clan of Nebo there were Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel, and⁴³
All of those men had married women who were not Israelites. Some of those⁴⁴ .Benaiah
so when the men sent the women away, they also sent their ,women had borne children
.children with them