

Ezra 7

Verses 1- 5

Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra went up to Jerusalem; Ezra was the son of Seraiah, son of Azariah, son of Hilkiah, ² son of Shallum, son of Zadok, son of Ahitub, ³ son of Amariah, son of Azariah, son of Meraioth, ⁴ son of Zerahiah, son of Uzzi, son of Bukki, ⁵ son of Abishua, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the chief priest.

In the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra went up to Jerusalem....

See chart 705

Kings of Persia 559 to 330 BC			
King	Reign (BC)	Events	Year
Cyrus	559 - 529	King of Persia	559
	1st return	Cyrus releases the Jews	539
Cambyses	529-522		
Smerdis (Bardiya)	522		
Darius I (Hystaspes)	521-486		520
		Second Temple dedicated	516
Xerxes I (Ahasuerus)	485-465		
Artaxerxes (Longimanus)	465-424		
	2nd Return	Ezra sent to Jerusalem	458
	3rd return	Nehemiah rebuilds the wall	445
Xerxes II	424		

Ezra journeyed from Babylon to Jerusalem but which one of the two Artaxerxes is the one spoken of here? There is some disagreement on this by scholars but the consensus seems to indicate it was Artaxerxes I.

See chart 7110

Kings of Persia 559 to 358 BC			
King	Reign	Event	Year
Darius I (Hystaspes)	521-486		
		Second temple dedicated	516
Xerxes I (Ahashuerus)	485-465		
Artaxerxes (Longimanus)	465-424		
	2nd return	Ezra sent to Jerusalem	458
	3rd return	Nehemiah rebuilds the wall	445
Xerxes II	424		
Sogdianus of Persia	424 – 423 BC		
Darius II (Nothus)	423-405		
Artaxerxes (Mnemon)	404-359		
Artaxerxes III of Persia Ochus	358 – 338 BC		
Arses of Persia (Artaxerxes IV)	338 – 336 BC		
Darius III of Persia Codomannu	336 – 330 BC		

.....**Ezra was the son of Seraiah, son of Azariah, son of Hilkiah, ² son of Shallum, son of Zadok, son of Ahitub, ³ son of Amariah, son of Azariah, son of Meraioth, ⁴ son of Zerariah, son of Uzzi, son of Bukki, ⁵ son of Abishua, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the chief priest.**

The purpose of this long genealogy was to show that Ezra was a direct descendant of the High Priest Aaron. There were 16 generations from Aaron to Ezra. The Exodus took place in 1446 BC and the year at this point in time was 458 BC. 1000 years / 16 generations. = 60 years per generation.

Verses 6 – 10

⁶ So this Ezra went up from Babylon, and he was a scribe skilled in the Law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all he requested because the hand of the Lord his God was upon him. ⁷ Some of the sons of Israel and some of the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. ⁸ And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. ⁹ For on the first *day* of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his God was upon him. ¹⁰ For Ezra had firmly resolved to study the Law of the Lord and to practice *it*, and to teach *His* statutes and ordinances in Israel.

⁶ So this Ezra went up from Babylon, and he was a scribe skilled in the Law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all he requested because the hand of the Lord his God was upon him.

A scribe made copies of the Law but that was only part of their job. It says that Ezra was skilled in the law which means he had a firm grasp of God's word, both the big picture of God's word and an in depth knowledge of the details. This can only be accomplished by a consistent dedication to the subject matter just like a master in any field of study must do. However, God opened the doors that only He can open so his servant could be successful.

⁹ For on the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his God was upon him. ¹⁰ For Ezra had firmly resolved to study the Law of the Lord and to practice *it*, and to teach *His* statutes and ordinances in Israel.

The journey took him 4 months.

See chart 715

Chapter	Events		Year
7	Ezra sent to Jerusalem	2nd return	458
8	Babylon to Jerusalem	4 months	458
9	Message to governors	2 months	458
10	Investigations	3 months	458
	Nehemiah rebuilds the wall	3rd return	445
	Reading of the law by Ezra		445

The direct distance between Babylon and Jerusalem is about 520 miles but the route followed by most to avoid the desert was a distance of 900 miles. So Ezra averaged about eight miles per day.

See Map 720



Verses 11 - 13

¹¹ Now this is the copy of the letter which King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest, the scribe, learned in the words of the commandments of the Lord and His statutes to Israel: ¹² “Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, perfect peace. And now ¹³ I have issued a decree that any of the people of Israel and their priests and the Levites in my kingdom who are willing to go to Jerusalem, may go with you.

This is the 2nd group that we know of, to leave Babylon for Jerusalem.

The temple was completed 58 years before this group arrives.

See Chart 725

Kings of Persia 559 to 358 BC

King	Reign	Event	Year
Cyrus	559 - 529		539
	1st return	Cyrus releases Jews	539
Cambyses	529-522		
Smerdis (Bardiya)	522 BC		
Darius I (Hystaspes)	521-486		
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Xerxes I (Ahashuerus)	485-465		
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Xerxes II	424		

Verses 14 - 20

¹⁴ Since you are sent on the part of the king and his seven advisers to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem according to the Law of your God which is in your hand, ¹⁵ and to bring the silver and gold, which the king and his advisers have voluntarily given to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, ¹⁶ with all the silver and gold which you find in the entire province of Babylon, along with the voluntary offering of the people and of the priests, who offered willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem; ¹⁷ with this money, therefore, you shall diligently buy bulls, rams, *and* lambs, with their grain offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them on the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem. ¹⁸ And whatever seems good to you and your brothers to do with the rest of the silver and gold, you may do according to the will of your God. ¹⁹ Also the utensils which are given to you for the service of the house of your God, deliver in full before the God of Jerusalem. ²⁰ And the rest of the needs of the house of your God, for which it may be incumbent upon you to provide, provide *for them* from the royal treasury.

¹⁴ Since you are sent on the part of the king and his seven advisers to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem according to the Law of your God which is in your hand,

Ezra had a copy of the Torah, the Law of Moses, in his hand.

¹⁵ and to bring the silver and gold, which the king and his advisers have voluntarily given to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, ¹⁶ with all the silver and gold which you find in the entire province of Babylon, along with the voluntary offering of the people and of the priests, who offered willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem;

Ezra received money from 3 sources:

1. The king and his advisors.
2. From freewill-offerings collected from people of Babylon
3. From fellow Jews who remained in Persia.

¹⁷ with this money, therefore, you shall diligently buy bulls, rams, and lambs, with their grain offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them on the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem.

This was intended for the 3 major feasts of the Jews as well as other obligations such as the daily offerings, and the monthly (new moon) offerings.

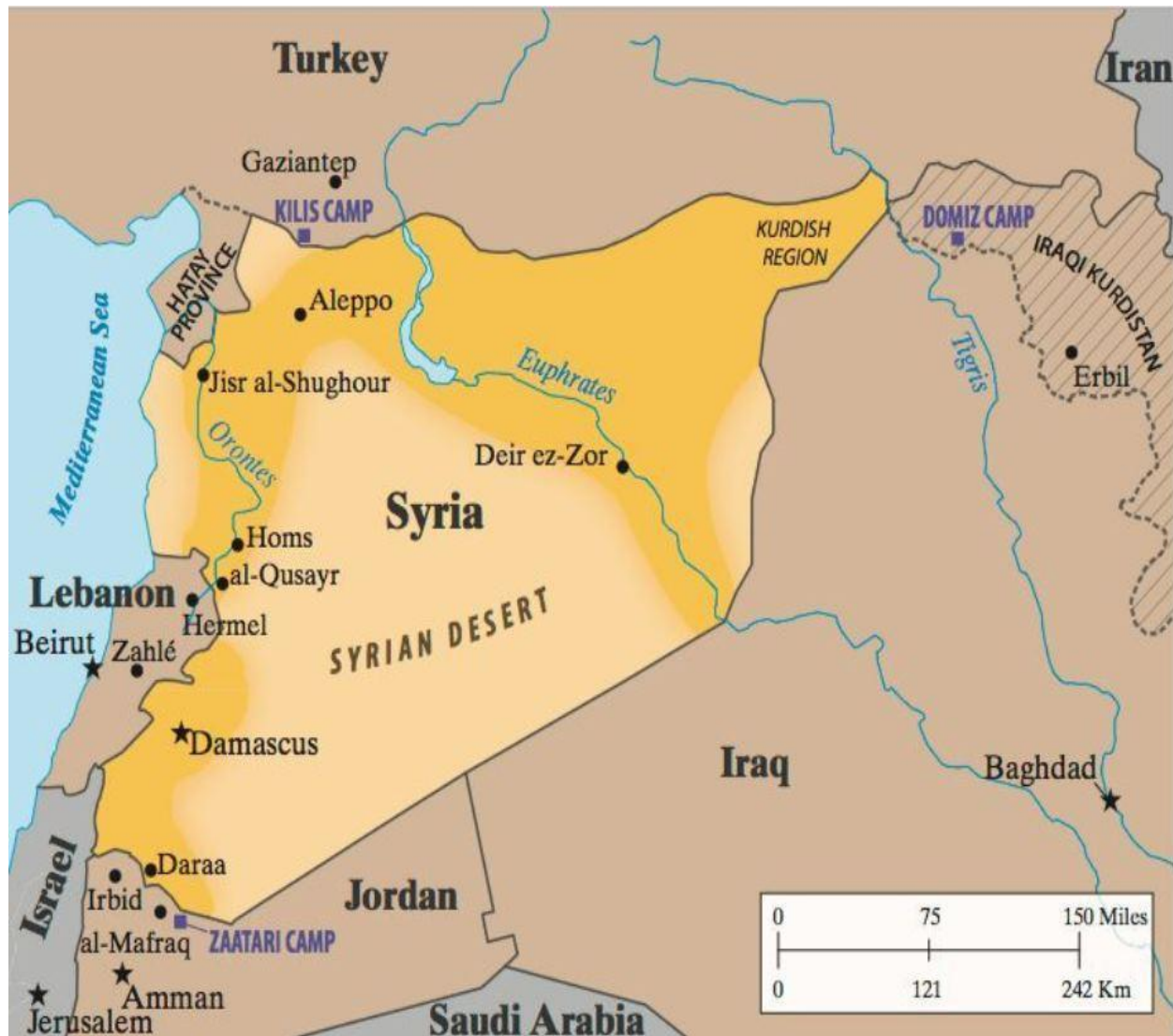
¹⁸ And whatever seems good to you and your brothers to do with the rest of the silver and gold, you may do according to the will of your God.

This shows the confidence and trust that Artaxerxes had in Ezra.

²⁰ And the rest of the needs of the house of your God, for which it may be incumbent upon you to provide, provide for them from the royal treasury.

This is a reference to the treasury of the satraps of Syria.

See map 730



Verses 21 - 24

²¹ “I myself, King Artaxerxes, issue a decree to all the treasurers who are *in the provinces* beyond the *Euphrates* River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, may require of you, it shall be done diligently, ²² up to a hundred talents of silver, a hundred kors of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, a hundred baths of anointing oil, and salt as needed. ²³ Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, it shall be done with zeal for the house of the God of heaven, so that there will not be wrath against the kingdom of the king and his sons. ²⁴ We also inform you that it is not allowed to impose tax, tribute, or toll *on* any of the priests, Levites, singers, doorkeepers, temple servants, or *other* servants of this house of God.

²¹ “I myself, King Artaxerxes, issue a decree to all the treasurers who are *in the provinces* beyond the *Euphrates* River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, may require of you, it shall be done diligently, ²² up to a hundred talents of silver, a hundred kors of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, a hundred baths of anointing oil, and salt as needed.

There was a limit to what Ezra could ask for from the governors but this was a huge help to the people living in Jerusalem who had meager resources at this time.

²³ **Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, it shall be done with zeal for the house of the God of heaven, so that there will not be wrath against the kingdom of the king and his sons.**

The Persian kings honored the gods of all the nations they conquered in order to avoid any wrath from the various gods that ruled in their designated areas. Self-preservation has always been a strong motivator for Politian’s.

²⁴ **We also inform you that it is not allowed to impose tax, tribute, or toll *on any of the priests, Levites, singers, doorkeepers, temple servants, or other servants of this house of God.***

The tax exemption for the religious community was part of the king’s self-preservation policy.

Politian’s of our time no longer believe in many gods and if the truth was known many don’t believe in the one true God, but getting the votes of the religious community is still a self-preservation policy so we still have laws that are favorable to the various religious communities that exist in America.

Verses 25 - 26

²⁵ “And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God which is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges so that they may judge all the people who are in *the province* beyond the *Euphrates* River, that is, all those who know the laws of your God; and you may teach anyone who is ignorant *of them.* ²⁶ And whoever does not comply with the Law of your God and the law of the king, judgment is to be executed upon him strictly, whether for death or for banishment, or for confiscation of property or for imprisonment.”

The king gave Ezra the authority to appoint magistrates (for minor offences) and judges (to deal with major crimes). This put Ezra in a position of high authority and responsibility.

A number of Jewish leaders earned the respect and honor of Babylonian and Medo-Persian rulers including but not limited to the following people:

See chart 735

Kings of Babylon and Medo-Persia			
Kings of Babylon	Reign	Years	Jewish Leader
Nabopolassar	626 - 605	21	
Nebuchadnezzar	605 - 561	44	Daniel, Shadrack Meshach, Abednego
Amel-Marduk	561 - 560	1	
Nergal-shar-usur	560 - 556	4	
Labashi-Marduk	556	< 1	
Nabonidus	556 - 539	17	
Belshazzar	544 - 539	5	Daniel

Kings of Medo-Persia	Reign	Years	Jewish Leader
Cyrus	559 - 529	30	Zerubbabel
Cambyses	529 - 522	7	
Smerdis (Bardiya)	522 BC	1	
Darius I (Hystaspes)	521 - 486	35	
Xerxes I (Ahashuerus)	485 - 465	20	Mordecai
Artaxerxes (Longimanus)	465 - 424	41	Ezra & Nehemiah
Xerxes II	424	1	

26 And whoever does not comply with the Law of your God and the law of the king, judgment is to be executed upon him strictly, whether for death or for banishment, or for confiscation of property or for imprisonment.”

Artaxerxes recognized the Law of Moses as the supreme law of the land in Israel and he gave Ezra great authority to enforce that law.

Verses 27 - 28

²⁷ Blessed be the Lord, the God of our fathers, who has put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to glorify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem, ²⁸ and has extended favor to me before the king and his counselors and before all the king's mighty officials. So I was strengthened according to the hand of the Lord my God *that was upon me*, and I gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me.

Ezra knew he was respected by the King and his advisors because God had put this in the king's heart. Therefore, Ezra gave God all of the credit for the high position that the king had afforded him and all that he was able to do because of this. Any success that we have comes from God and his favor.