

Ezra

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The

5 LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the

10 LORD, the God of Israel--he is the God who is in Jerusalem; and let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem." Then rose up the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, every one whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the LORD

15 which is in Jerusalem; and all who were about them aided them with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, with beasts, and with costly wares, besides all that was freely offered. Cyrus the king also brought out the vessels of the house of the LORD which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods. Cyrus king of Persia brought these out

20 in charge of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Shesh-baz'zar

the prince of Judah. And this was the number of them: a thousand basins of gold, a thousand basins of silver, twenty-nine censers, thirty bowls of gold, two thousand four hundred and ten bowls of silver, and a thousand other vessels; all the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand four hundred

5 and sixty-nine. All these did Shesh-baz'zar bring up, when the exiles were brought up from Babylonia to Jerusalem. Now these were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried captive to Babylonia; they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town. They came with

10 Zerub'babel, Jeshua, Nehemi'ah, Serai'ah, Re-el-ai'ah, Mor'decai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigva'i, Rehum, and Ba'anah. The number of the men of the people of Israel: the sons of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two. The sons of Shephati'ah, three hundred and seventy-two. The sons of Arah, seven hundred and seventy-five. The sons of Pa'hath-moab, namely the sons

15 of Jeshua and Jo'ab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve. The sons of Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four. The sons of Zattu, nine hundred and forty-five. The sons of Zac'cai, seven hundred and sixty. The sons of Bani, six hundred and forty-two. The sons of Be'bai, six hundred and twenty-three. The sons of Azgad, one thousand two hundred and twenty-two.

20 The sons of Adoni'kam, six hundred and sixty-six. The sons of Bigva'i, two

thousand and fifty-six. The sons of Adin, four hundred and fifty-four. The sons of Ater, namely of Hezeki'ah, ninety-eight. The sons of Be'zai, three hundred and twenty-three. The sons of Jorah, one hundred and twelve. The sons of Hashum, two hundred and twenty-three. The sons of Gibbar, ninety-

5 five. The sons of Bethlehem, one hundred and twenty-three. The men of Neto'phah, fifty-six. The men of An'athoth, one hundred and twenty-eight. The sons of Az'maveth, forty-two. The sons of Kir'iathar'im, Chephi'rah, and Be-er'oth, seven hundred and forty-three. The sons of Ramah and Geba, six hundred and twenty-one. The men of Michmas, one hundred and twenty-two.

10 The men of Bethel and Ai, two hundred and twenty-three. The sons of Nebo, fifty-two. The sons of Magbish, one hundred and fifty-six. The sons of the other Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four. The sons of Harim, three hundred and twenty. The sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-five. The sons of Jericho, three hundred and forty-five. The sons

15 of Sena'ah, three thousand six hundred and thirty. The priests: the sons of Jedai'ah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy-three. The sons of Immer, one thousand and fifty-two. The sons of Pashhur, one thousand two hundred and forty-seven. The sons of Harim, one thousand and seventeen. The Levites: the sons of Jeshua and Kad'mi-el, of the sons of Hodavi'ah,

20 seventy-four. The singers: the sons of Asaph, one hundred and twenty-eight.

The sons of the gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons
 of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hati'ta, and the sons of Sho'bai,
 in all one hundred and thirty-nine. The temple servants: the sons of Ziha, the
 sons of Hasu'pha, the sons of Tabba'oth, the sons of Keros, the sons of
 5 Si'aha, the sons of Padon, the sons of Leba'nah, the sons of Hag'abah, the
 sons of Akkub, the sons of Hagab, the sons of Shamlai, the sons of Hanan,
 the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, the sons of Re-ai'ah, the sons of
 Rezin, the sons of Neko'da, the sons of Gazzam, the sons of Uzza, the sons
 of Pase'ah, the sons of Besai, the sons of Asnah, the sons of Me-u'nim, the
 10 sons of Nephi'sim, the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Haku'pha, the sons of
 Harhur, the sons of Bazluth, the sons of Mehi'da, the sons of Harsha, the
 sons of Barkos, the sons of Sis'era, the sons of Temah, the sons of Nezi'ah,
 and the sons of Hati'pha. The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of So'tai,
 the sons of Hasso'phereth, the sons of Peru'da, the sons of Ja'alah, the sons
 15 of Darkon, the sons of Giddel, the sons of Shephati'ah, the sons of Hattil,
 the sons of Po'chereth-hazzeba'im, and the sons of Ami. All the temple
 servants and the sons of Solomon's servants were three hundred and ninety-
 two. The following were those who came up from Tel-me'lah, Tel-har'sha,
 Cherub, Addan, and Immer, though they could not prove their fathers' houses
 20 or their descent, whether they belonged to Israel: the sons of Delai'ah, the

sons of Tobi'ah, and the sons of Neko'da, six hundred and fifty-two. Also, of the sons of the priests: the sons of Habai'ah, the sons of Hakkoz, and the sons of Barzil'lai (who had taken a wife from the daughters of Barzil'lai the Gileadite, and was called by their name). These sought their registration

5 among those enrolled in the genealogies, but they were not found there, and so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean; the governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food, until there should be a priest to consult Urim and Thummim. The whole assembly together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, besides their menservants and

10 maidservants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred male and female singers. Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules were two hundred and forty-five, their camels were four hundred and thirty-five, and their asses were six thousand seven hundred and twenty. Some of the heads of families, when

15 they came to the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem, made freewill offerings for the house of God, to erect it on its site; according to their ability they gave to the treasury of the work sixty-one thousand darics of gold, five thousand minas of silver, and one hundred priests' garments. The priests, the Levites, and some of the people lived in Jerusalem and its

20 vicinity; and the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants lived in

their towns, and all Israel in their towns. When the seventh month came, and the sons of Israel were in the towns, the people gathered as one man to Jerusalem. Then arose Jeshua the son of Jo'zadak, with his fellow priests, and Zerub'babel the son of She-al'ti-el with his kinsmen, and they built the altar

5 of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings upon it, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God. They set the altar in its place, for fear was upon them because of the peoples of the lands, and they offered burnt offerings upon it to the LORD, burnt offerings morning and evening. And they kept the feast of booths, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt

10 offerings by number according to the ordinance, as each day required, and after that the continual burnt offerings, the offerings at the new moon and at all the appointed feasts of the LORD, and the offerings of every one who made a freewill offering to the LORD. From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD. But the foundation

15 of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid. So they gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the Sido'nians and the Tyrians to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the grant which they had from Cyrus king of Persia. Now in the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month,

20 Zerub'babel the son of She-al'ti-el and Jeshua the son of Jo'zadak made a

beginning, together with the rest of their brethren, the priests and the Levites and all who had come to Jerusalem from the captivity. They appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to have the oversight of the work of the house of the LORD. And Jeshua with his sons and his kinsmen,
5 and Kad'mi-el and his sons, the sons of Judah, together took the oversight of the workmen in the house of God, along with the sons of Hen'adad and the Levites, their sons and kinsmen. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the
10 LORD, according to the directions of David king of Israel; and they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures for ever toward Israel." And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and
15 heads of fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy; so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard afar. Now when
20 the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were

building a temple to the LORD, the God of Israel, they approached
Zerub'babel and the heads of fathers' houses and said to them, "Let us build
with you; for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing
to him ever since the days of E'sar-had'don king of Assyria who brought us
5 here." But Zerub'babel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of fathers' houses in
Israel said to them, "You have nothing to do with us in building a house to
our God; but we alone will build to the LORD, the God of Israel, as King
Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us." Then the people of the land
discouraged the people of Judah, and made them afraid to build, and hired
10 counselors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king
of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. And in the reign of
Ahasu-e'rus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against
the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. And in the days of Ar-ta-xerx'es,
Bishlam and Mith'redath and Tab'eel and the rest of their associates wrote to
15 Ar-ta-xerx'es king of Persia; the letter was written in Aramaic and translated.
Rehum the commander and Shim'shai the scribe wrote a letter against
Jerusalem to Ar-ta-xerx'es the king as follows-- then wrote Rehum the
commander, Shim'shai the scribe, and the rest of their associates, the judges,
the governors, the officials, the Persians, the men of Erech, the Babylonians,
20 the men of Susa, that is, the Elamites, and the rest of the nations whom the

great and noble Osnappar deported and settled in the cities of Sama'ria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River, and now this is a copy of the letter that they Sent--"to Ar-ta-xerx'es the king: Your servants, the men of the province Beyond the River, send greeting. And now be it known to the king

5 that the Jews who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city; they are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations. Now be it known to the king that, if this city is rebuilt and the walls finished, they will not pay tribute, custom, or toll, and the royal revenue will be impaired. Now because we eat the salt of the

10 palace and it is not fitting for us to witness the king's dishonor, therefore we send and inform the king, in order that search may be made in the book of the records of your fathers. You will find in the book of the records and learn that this city is a rebellious city, hurtful to kings and provinces, and that sedition was stirred up in it from of old. That was why this city was

15 laid waste. We make known to the king that, if this city is rebuilt and its walls finished, you will then have no possession in the province Beyond the River." The king sent an answer: "To Rehum the commander and Shim'shai the scribe and the rest of their associates who live in Sama'ria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River, greeting. And now the letter which

20 you sent to us has been plainly read before me. And I made a decree, and

search has been made, and it has been found that this city from of old has
risen against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made in it.
And mighty kings have been over Jerusalem, who ruled over the whole
province Beyond the River, to whom tribute, custom, and toll were paid.

5 Therefore make a decree that these men be made to cease, and that this city
be not rebuilt, until a decree is made by me. And take care not to be slack
in this matter; why should damage grow to the hurt of the king?" Then,
when the copy of King Ar-ta-xerxes' letter was read before Rehum and
Shim'shai the scribe and their associates, they went in haste to the Jews at
10 Jerusalem and by force and power made them cease. Then the work on the
house of God which is in Jerusalem stopped; and it ceased until the second
year of the reign of Darius king of Persia. Now the prophets, Haggai and
Zechari'ah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and
Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. Then
15 Zerub'babel the son of She-al'ti-el and Jeshua the son of Jo'zadak arose and
began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and with them
were the prophets of God, helping them. At the same time Tat'tenai the
governor of the province Beyond the River and She'thar-boz'enai and their
associates came to them and spoke to them thus, "Who gave you a decree to
20 build this house and to finish this structure?" They also asked them this,

"What are the names of the men who are building this building?" But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, and they did not stop them till a report should reach Darius and then answer be returned by letter concerning it. The copy of the letter which Tat'tenai the governor of the

5 province Beyond the River and She'thar-boz'enai and his associates the governors who were in the province Beyond the River sent to Darius the king; they sent him a report, in which was written as follows: "To Darius the king, all peace. Be it known to the king that we went to the province of Judah, to the house of the great God. It is being built with huge stones, and

10 timber is laid in the walls; this work goes on diligently and prospers in their hands. Then we asked those elders and spoke to them thus, 'Who gave you a decree to build this house and to finish this structure?' We also asked them their names, for your information, that we might write down the names of the men at their head. And this was their reply to us: 'We are the servants

15 of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the house that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and finished. But because our fathers had angered the God of heaven, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chalde'an, who destroyed this house and carried away the people to Babylonia. However in the first year of

20 Cyrus king of Babylon, Cyrus the king made a decree that this house of

God should be rebuilt. And the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple that was in Jerusalem and brought into the temple of Babylon, these Cyrus the king took out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered to one whose name was

5 Shesh-baz'zar, whom he had made governor; and he said to him, "Take these vessels, go and put them in the temple which is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its site." Then this Shesh-baz'zar came and laid the foundations of the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and from that time until now it has been in building, and it is not yet finished.' Therefore,

10 if it seem good to the king, let search be made in the royal archives there in Babylon, to see whether a decree was issued by Cyrus the king for the rebuilding of this house of God in Jerusalem. And let the king send us his pleasure in this matter." Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in Babylonia, in the house of the archives where the documents were

15 stored. And in Ecbat'ana, the capital which is in the province of Media, a scroll was found on which this was written: "A record. In the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king issued a decree: Concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, let the house be rebuilt, the place where sacrifices are offered and burnt offerings are brought; its height shall be sixty cubits and

20 its breadth sixty cubits, with three courses of great stones and one course of

timber; let the cost be paid from the royal treasury. And also let the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that is in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and brought back to the temple which is in Jerusalem, each to its place; you

5 shall put them in the house of God." "Now therefore, Tat'tenai, governor of the province Beyond the River, She'thar-boz'enai, and your associates the governors who are in the province Beyond the River, keep away; let the work on this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews rebuild this house of God on its site. Moreover I make a

10 decree regarding what you shall do for these elders of the Jews for the rebuilding of this house of God; the cost is to be paid to these men in full and without delay from the royal revenue, the tribute of the province from Beyond the River. And whatever is needed--young bulls, rams, or sheep for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, or oil, as the priests

15 at Jerusalem require--let that be given to them day by day without fail, that they may offer pleasing sacrifices to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and his sons. Also I make a decree that if any one alters this edict, a beam shall be pulled out of his house, and he shall be impaled upon it, and his house shall be made a dunghill. May the God who has

20 caused his name to dwell there overthrow any king or people that shall put

forth a hand to alter this, or to destroy this house of God which is in
Jerusalem. I Darius make a decree; let it be done with all diligence." Then,
according to the word sent by Darius the king, Tat'tenai, the governor of the
province Beyond the River, She'thar-boz'enai, and their associates did with all
5 diligence what Darius the king had ordered. And the elders of the Jews built
and prospered, through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechari'ah
the son of Iddo. They finished their building by command of the God of
Israel and by decree of Cyrus and Darius and Ar-ta-xerx'es king of Persia;
and this house was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, in the
10 sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. And the people of Israel, the
priests and the Levites, and the rest of the returned exiles, celebrated the
dedication of this house of God with joy. They offered at the dedication of
this house of God one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs,
and as a sin offering for all Israel twelve he-goats, according to the number
15 of the tribes of Israel. And they set the priests in their divisions and the
Levites in their courses, for the service of God at Jerusalem, as it is written
in the book of Moses. On the fourteenth day of the first month the returned
exiles kept the passover. For the priests and the Levites had purified
20 themselves together; all of them were clean. So they killed the passover lamb
for all the returned exiles, for their fellow priests, and for themselves; it was

eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile, and also by every one who had joined them and separated himself from the pollutions of the peoples of the land to worship the LORD, the God of Israel. And they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy; for the LORD had made

5 them joyful, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, so that he aided them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel. Now after this, in the reign of Ar-ta-xerx'es king of Persia, Ezra the son of Serai'ah, son of Azari'ah, son of Hilki'ah, son of Shallum, son of Zadok, son of Ahi'tub, son of Amari'ah, son of Azari'ah, son of Merai'oth, son of

10 Zerahi'ah, son of Uzzi, son of Bukki, son of Abi'shu-a, son of Phin'ehas, son of Elea'zar, son of Aaron the chief priest-- this Ezra went up from Babylonia. He was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses which the LORD the God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all that he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was upon him. And there went up also to

15 Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Ar-ta-xerx'es the king, some of the people of Israel, and some of the priests and Levites, the singers and gatekeepers, and the temple servants. And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king; for on the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylonia, and on the first day of the fifth month

20 he came to Jerusalem, for the good hand of his God was upon him. For

Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach his statutes and ordinances in Israel. This is a copy of the letter which King Ar-ta-xerx'es gave to Ezra the priest, the scribe, learned in matters of the commandments of the LORD and his statutes for Israel: "Ar-ta-xerx'es,

5 king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven. And now I make a decree that any one of the people of Israel or their priests or Levites in my kingdom, who freely offers to go to Jerusalem, may go with you. For you are sent by the king and his seven counselors to make inquiries about Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of your God,

10 which is in your hand, and also to convey the silver and gold which the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, with all the silver and gold which you shall find in the whole province of Babylonia, and with the freewill offerings of the people and the priests, vowed willingly for the house of their God which is

15 in Jerusalem. With this money, then, you shall with all diligence buy bulls, rams, and lambs, with their cereal offerings and their drink offerings, and you shall offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem. Whatever seems good to you and your brethren to do with the rest of the silver and gold, you may do, according to the will of your God.

20 The vessels that have been given you for the service of the house of your

God, you shall deliver before the God of Jerusalem. And whatever else is required for the house of your God, which you have occasion to provide, you may provide it out of the king's treasury. "And I, Ar-ta-xerx'es the king, make a decree to all the treasurers in the province Beyond the River:

- 5 Whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, requires of you, be it done with all diligence, up to a hundred talents of silver, a hundred cors of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, a hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much. Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done in full for the house of the God of heaven,
- 10 lest his wrath be against the realm of the king and his sons. We also notify you that it shall not be lawful to impose tribute, custom, or toll upon any one of the priests, the Levites, the singers, the doorkeepers, the temple servants, or other servants of this house of God. "And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God which is in your hand, appoint magistrates and
- 15 judges who may judge all the people in the province Beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God; and those who do not know them, you shall teach. Whoever will not obey the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be strictly executed upon him, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of his goods or for imprisonment." Blessed be
- 20 the LORD, the God of our fathers, who put such a thing as this into the

heart of the king, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem,
and who extended to me his steadfast love before the king and his
counselors, and before all the king's mighty officers. I took courage, for the
hand of the LORD my God was upon me, and I gathered leading men from
5 Israel to go up with me. These are the heads of their fathers' houses, and
this is the genealogy of those who went up with me from Babylonia, in the
reign of Ar-ta-xerx'es the king: Of the sons of Phin'ehas, Gershom. Of the
sons of Ith'amar, Daniel. Of the sons of David, Hattush, of the sons of
Shecani'ah. Of the sons of Parosh, Zechari'ah, with whom were registered one
10 hundred and fifty men. Of the sons of Pa'hath-mo'ab, Eli-e-ho-e'nai the son
of Zerahi'ah, and with him two hundred men. Of the sons of Zattu,
Shecani'ah the son of Jaha'ziel, and with him three hundred men. Of the sons
of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty men. Of the sons of
Elam, Jeshai'ah the son of Athali'ah, and with him seventy men. Of the sons
15 of Shephati'ah, Zebadi'ah the son of Michael, and with him eighty men. Of
the sons of Jo'ab, Obadi'ah the son of Jehi'el, and with him two hundred and
eighteen men. Of the sons of Bani, Shelo'mith the son of Josiphi'ah, and
with him a hundred and sixty men. Of the sons of Be'bai, Zechari'ah, the
son of Be'bai, and with him twenty-eight men. Of the sons of Azgad,
20 Joha'nan the son of Hak'katan, and with him a hundred and ten men. Of the

sons of Adoni'kam, those who came later, their names being Eliph'elet, Jeu'el, and Shemai'ah, and with them sixty men. Of the sons of Bigva'i, Uthai and Zaccur, and with them seventy men. I gathered them to the river that runs to Aha'va, and there we encamped three days. As I reviewed the people and the

5 priests, I found there none of the sons of Levi. Then I sent for Elie'zer, Ar'i-el, Shemai'ah, Elna'than, Jarib, Elna'than, Nathan, Zechari'ah, and Meshul'lam, leading men, and for Joi'arib and Elna'than, who were men of insight, and sent them to Iddo, the leading man at the place Casiphi'a, telling them what to say to Iddo and his brethren the temple servants at the place Casiphi'a,

10 namely, to send us ministers for the house of our God. And by the good hand of our God upon us, they brought us a man of discretion, of the sons of Mahli the son of Levi, son of Israel, namely Sherebi'ah with his sons and kinsmen, eighteen; also Hashabi'ah and with him Jeshai'ah of the sons of Merar'i, with his kinsmen and their sons, twenty; besides two hundred and

15 twenty of the temple servants, whom David and his officials had set apart to attend the Levites. These were all mentioned by name. Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Aha'va, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a straight way for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and

20 horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way; since we had told the

king, "The hand of our God is for good upon all that seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all that forsake him." So we fasted and besought our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty. Then I set apart twelve of the leading priests: Sherebi'ah, Hashabi'ah, and ten of their kinsmen

5 with them. And I weighed out to them the silver and the gold and the vessels, the offering for the house of our God which the king and his counselors and his lords and all Israel there present had offered; I weighed out into their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels worth a hundred talents, and a hundred talents of gold, twenty bowls of gold

10 worth a thousand darics, and two vessels of fine bright bronze as precious as gold. And I said to them, "You are holy to the LORD, and the vessels are holy; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to the LORD, the God of your fathers. Guard them and keep them until you weigh them before the chief priests and the Levites and the heads of fathers' houses in Israel at

15 Jerusalem, within the chambers of the house of the LORD." So the priests and the Levites took over the weight of the silver and the gold and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem, to the house of our God. Then we departed from the river Aha'va on the twelfth day of the first month, to go to Jerusalem; the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from

20 the hand of the enemy and from ambushes by the way. We came to

Jerusalem, and there we remained three days. On the fourth day, within the house of our God, the silver and the gold and the vessels were weighed into the hands of Mer'emoth the priest, son of Uri'ah, and with him was Elea'zar the son of Phin'ehas, and with them were the Levites, Jo'zabad the son of

5 Jeshua and No-adi'ah the son of Bin'nui. The whole was counted and weighed, and the weight of everything was recorded. At that time those who had come from captivity, the returned exiles, offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel, twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and as a sin offering twelve he-goats; all this was a burnt offering to

10 the LORD. They also delivered the king's commissions to the king's satraps and to the governors of the province Beyond the River; and they aided the people and the house of God. After these things had been done, the officials approached me and said, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with

15 their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Per'izzites, the Jeb'usites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken some of their daughters to be wives for themselves and for their sons; so that the holy race has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands. And in this faithlessness the hand of the officials and chief men has

20 been foremost." When I heard this, I rent my garments and my mantle, and

pulled hair from my head and beard, and sat appalled. Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the faithlessness of the returned exiles, gathered round me while I sat appalled until the evening sacrifice. And at the evening sacrifice I rose from my fasting, with my

5 garments and my mantle rent, and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God, saying: "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to thee, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens. From the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt; and for our iniquities we,

10 our kings, and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as at this day. But now for a brief moment favor has been shown by the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant, and to give us a secure hold within his holy place, that our God may brighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in

15 our bondage. For we are bondmen; yet our God has not forsaken us in our bondage, but has extended to us his steadfast love before the kings of Persia, to grant us some reviving to set up the house of our God, to repair its ruins, and to give us protection in Judea and Jerusalem. "And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken thy commandments,

20 which thou didst command by thy servants the prophets, saying, 'The land

which you are entering, to take possession of it, is a land unclean with the pollutions of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness. Therefore give not your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never

5 seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever.' And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, seeing that thou, our God, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserved and hast given us such a remnant as this, shall we break thy commandments

10 again and intermarry with the peoples who practice these abominations? Wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou wouldst consume us, so that there should be no remnant, nor any to escape? O LORD the God of Israel, thou art just, for we are left a remnant that has escaped, as at this day. Behold, we are before thee in our guilt, for none can stand before thee

15 because of this." While Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children, gathered to him out of Israel; for the people wept bitterly. And Shecani'ah the son of Jehi'el, of the sons of Elam, addressed Ezra: "We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women

20 from the peoples of the land, but even now there is hope for Israel in spite

of this. Therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. Arise, for it is your task, and we are with you; be

5 strong and do it." Then Ezra arose and made the leading priests and Levites and all Israel take oath that they would do as had been said. So they took the oath. Then Ezra withdrew from before the house of God, and went to the chamber of Jehoha'nan the son of Eli'ashib, where he spent the night, neither eating bread nor drinking water; for he was mourning over the

10 faithlessness of the exiles. And a proclamation was made throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the returned exiles that they should assemble at Jerusalem, and that if any one did not come within three days, by order of the officials and the elders all his property should be forfeited, and he himself banned from the congregation of the exiles. Then all the men of

15 Judah and Benjamin assembled at Jerusalem within the three days; it was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month. And all the people sat in the open square before the house of God, trembling because of this matter and because of the heavy rain. And Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have trespassed and married foreign women, and so increased the

20 guilt of Israel. Now then make confession to the LORD the God of your

fathers, and do his will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives." Then all the assembly answered with a loud voice, "It is so; we must do as you have said. But the people are many, and it is a time of heavy rain; we cannot stand in the open. Nor is this a work for

5 one day or for two; for we have greatly transgressed in this matter. Let our officials stand for the whole assembly; let all in our cities who have taken foreign wives come at appointed times, and with them the elders and judges of every city, till the fierce wrath of our God over this matter be averted from us." Only Jonathan the son of As'ahel and Jahzei'ah the son of Tikvah

10 opposed this, and Meshul'lum and Shab'bethai the Levite supported them. Then the returned exiles did so. Ezra the priest selected men, heads of fathers' houses, according to their fathers' houses, each of them designated by name. On the first day of the tenth month they sat down to examine the matter; and by the first day of the first month they had come to the end of

15 all the men who had married foreign women. Of the sons of the priests who had married foreign women were found Ma-asei'ah, Elie'zer, Jarib, and Gedali'ah, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jo'zadak and his brethren. They pledged themselves to put away their wives, and their guilt offering was a ram of the flock for their guilt. Of the sons of Immer: Hana'ni and

20 Zebadi'ah. Of the sons of Harim: Ma-asei'ah, Eli'jah, Shemai'ah, Jehi'el, and

Uzzi'ah. Of the sons of Pashhur: Eli-o-e'nai, Ma-asei'ah, Ish'mael, Nethan'el, Jo'zabad, and Ela'sah. Of the Levites: Jo'zabad, Shim'e-i, Kelai'ah (that is, Keli'ta), Petha-hi'ah, Judah, and Elie'zer. Of the singers: Eli'ashib. Of the gatekeepers: Shallum, Telem, and Uri. And of Israel: of the sons of Parosh:

5 Rami'ah, Izzi'ah, Malchi'jah, Mi'jamin, Elea'zar, Hashabi'ah, and Benai'ah. Of the sons of Elam: Mattani'ah, Zechari'ah, Jehi'el, Abdi, Jer'emoth, and Eli'jah. Of the sons of Zattu: Eli-o-e'nai, Eli'ashib, Mattani'ah, Jer'emoth, Zabad, and Azi'za. Of the sons of Be'bai were Jehoha'nan, Hanani'ah, Zab'bai, and Ath'lai. Of the sons of Bani were Meshul'lum, Malluch, Adai'ah, Jashub,

10 She'al, and Jer'emoth. Of the sons of Pa'hath-mo'ab: Adna, Chelal, Benai'ah, Ma-asei'ah, Mattani'ah, Bez'alel, Bin'nui, and Manas'seh. Of the sons of Harim: Elie'zer, Isshi'jah, Malchi'jah, Shemai'ah, Shim'e-on, Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemari'ah. Of the sons of Hashum: Matte'nai, Mat'tattah, Zabad, Eliph'elet, Jer'emaï, Manas'seh, and Shim'e-i. Of the sons of Bani: Ma-ada'i,

15 Amram, Uel, Benai'ah, Bedei'ah, Chel'uhi, Vani'ah, Mer'emoth, Eli'ashib, Mattani'ah, Matte'nai, Ja'asu. Of the sons of Bin'nui: Shim'e-i, Shelemi'ah, Nathan, Adai'ah, Machnad'ebai, Shashai, Sha'rai, Az'arel, Shelemi'ah, Shemari'ah, Shallum, Amari'ah, and Joseph. Of the sons of Nebo: Je-i'el,

Mattithi'ah, Zabad, Zebi'na, Jaddai, Jo'el, and Benai'ah. All these had married foreign women, and they put them away with their children.*

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