

## Ezra 7

King James Version (KJV)

(It is believed that Ezra penned the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles II & II, Ester and Esdreus I & II in the Apocrypha)

**7** Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, (Artaxerxes = the Great King – a title of honor; like the title Pharaoh in Egypt; the king at this time was Darius)

<sup>2</sup>The son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub,

<sup>3</sup>The son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth,

<sup>4</sup>The son of Zerariah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki,

<sup>5</sup>The son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest: (Unlike many of the returned priests, Ezra can prove that his genealogy is of Levi. This is important because God ruled that only Levites descended from Aaron were authorized to be priests in His temple. All priests were Levites, not all Levites could be priests)

<sup>6</sup>This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. (This is a second group of people coming out of Babylon, to Judah, under King Darius of Persia) (God directed Ezra to go to Jerusalem, with the king's blessing. Because he was skilled at being a scribe, he was qualified to teach the people the Word of God)

<sup>7</sup>And there went up some of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king. (This was one year after the completion of the temple in Jerusalem)

<sup>8</sup>And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king.

<sup>9</sup>For upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. (Babylon = confusion) (Physically going from Babylon to Jerusalem; spiritually

coming out of babel <confusion> into God's Word <the temple where God was worshipped>)

<sup>10</sup> For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments. (A knower, a doer and a teacher of God's Word) James-1:22

(Churches who only perform services, but never teach the Bible chapter by chapter and verse by verse, are false churches. They should be avoided by Christians)

<sup>11</sup> Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel. (King Darius is sending a letter with Ezra to legitimize his position and authority in Jerusalem)

<sup>12</sup> Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time. (A salutation and dating the letter; Darius recognized the God of Israel, although he also had other gods)

<sup>13</sup> I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee. (This decree gave the Israelites a choice – go with Ezra if you want to go. Many chose not to go, being established and comfortable in Babylon)

(We find out in later chapters that not one priest chose to go with Ezra. Like today, they were comfortable staying in confusion; teaching church doctrine instead of God's Word, chapter by chapter, verse by verse. It's a lot more work than just having a repetitive weekly service and writing a sermon)

<sup>14</sup> Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counsellors, to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which is in thine hand; (The seven counselors – in the book of Ester-1:14 - these are 7 princes of Persia and Media; not Israelites, and not priests)

<sup>15</sup> And to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem, (They took offering to make in the temple to God)

<sup>16</sup> And all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the freewill offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem: (Ask the people who remained to contribute of their free will as well. Don't beg or browbeat them into offering)

<sup>17</sup> That thou mayest buy speedily with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem. (To re-institute the worship of Yahoveh in Jerusalem)

<sup>18</sup> And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do after the will of your God. (Put the rest of the money in the treasury of the temple to use as you see fit)

<sup>19</sup> The vessels also that are given thee for the service of the house of thy God, those deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem.

<sup>20</sup> And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the king's treasure house. (If you need more money to re-establish the worship of Yahoveh in Jerusalem, take the money from the king's treasury. This is definitely divine intervention. God chooses the right people to fulfill His plan. Obviously Cyrus and Darius were two good kings, even though they also worshipped the gods of Persia)

<sup>21</sup> And I, even I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which are beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily, (Also to the provinces of Persia, you will fund them as needed)

<sup>22</sup> Unto an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much. (One talent = 110 – 280 pounds; that is a lot of silver. He also gave them a lot of food)

<sup>23</sup> Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? (Darius understood the great power of Yahoveh. He wisely wanted to stay on God's good side. He understood that it was God who established him as the king of a great empire)

(Side Note – In our studies of western civilization, it is implied that the Greeks <who established our governmental systems> were the good guys who defeated the implied enemy <the Persians> in the Peloponnesian wars. Yet it was the Persians who recognized and respected the Great God of Israel, while the Greeks were wallowing in idolatry and perversion. Homosexuality and pedophilia were rampant in Greece)

<sup>24</sup> Also we certify you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them. (Anyone working for the temple of God was exempted of taxes to the king)

<sup>25</sup> And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not. (Teach and judge the people of Judah according to God's Word and God's Laws) (Many of our judges today have no idea of what is in God's Laws, yet they are appointed to judge people in a purportedly Christian nation)

<sup>26</sup> And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment. (Laws must be enforced in order to be effective. The king gave the people a lot of power, although they remained his subjects)

<sup>27</sup> Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem: (A prayer of thanks to God, asking for God's blessings on King Darius)

<sup>28</sup> And hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened as the hand of the LORD my God was upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me. (chief men = heads of families)