

# A TIME TO BUILD

Let us rise up and build ... Nehemiah 2:18

The Book of

## EZRA

Restoring The Heart of The Nation



Stand and be Counted

Ezra 8

Lesson 6

## Background Information

To be numbered with the returnees of the second wave, was to be one who had accepted the cost and stood to be counted. It must have surprised Ezra to find that of those who followed him, there were many laypeople but not one Levite! The Levites were to function as teachers of the Law, and therefore had an extremely important role in the community. The people desperately needed to understand the importance of the Law as they faced the situation of reestablishing themselves back in the land.

To be a Levite was to be involved in the disciplined ministry of temple service. They may have found a more comfortable way of living during their exile and were reluctant to put themselves under the disciplined way of life that would be required of them. In addition to the 38 Levites who were induced to join Ezra's returning group, a body of 220 temple servants were also enrolled. The importance of these individuals as assistants to the Levites should not be overlooked. With such a small number of Levites available, these servants would have been essential to proper ritual activity since there were many menial tasks to be done. This should encourage us to recognize that no task is considered small in God's eyes.

On the road to Jerusalem, the large Jewish caravan would have been an easy target for robbers. Depending on the Lord to protect them meant, taking time out to pray and fast. It was essential to ensure that their journey was successful, Prayer and fasting is never wasted time, but necessary preparation for the heart! The hand of the Lord was on His people to protect them every step of their journey.

### *Treasures of the Heart*

*"The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him."*

*Ezra 8:22*

## What does it say?

The first step is getting the lay of the land. Carefully observe the text looking to see where you might dig to find hidden treasure. Studying a narrative requires following the key characters and paying special attention to what God says and does. Mark your text looking for repeated words, contrasts or similarities. **Does a key verse stand out in each section?** Look for answers to: Who? What? When? Where? Why or How?

### **Ezra 8:1-20**

**1** These are the heads of their fathers' houses, and this is the genealogy of those who went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of King Artaxerxes: **2** of the sons of Phinehas, Gershom; of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel; of the sons of David, Hattush; **3** of the sons of Shecaniah, of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah; and registered with him were one hundred and fifty males; **4** of the sons of Pahath-Moab, Eliehoenai the son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred males; **5** of the sons of Shechaniah, Ben-Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males; **6** of the sons of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males; **7** of the sons of Elam, Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males; **8** of the sons of Shephatiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him eighty males; **9** of the sons of Joab, Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males; **10** of the sons of Shelomith, Ben-Josiphiah, and with him one hundred and sixty males; **11** of the sons of Bebai, Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty-eight males; **12** of the sons of Azgad, Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him one hundred and ten males; **13** of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names are these — Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah — and with them sixty males; **14** also of the sons of Bigvai, Uthai and Zabbud, and with them seventy males.

**15** Now I gathered them by the river that flows to Ahava, and we camped there three days. And I looked among the people and the priests, and found none of the sons of Levi there. **16** Then I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, leaders; also for Joiarib and Elnathan, men of understanding. **17** And I gave them a command for Iddo the chief man at the place Casiphia, and I told them what they should say to Iddo and his brethren the Nethinim at the place Casiphia — that they should bring us servants for the house of our God. **18** Then, by the good hand of our God upon us, they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli the son of Levi, the son of Israel, namely Sherebiah, with his sons and brothers, eighteen men; **19** and Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, his brothers and their sons, twenty men; **20** also of the







## What does it mean?

**What lesson can I draw from my observations?** Ask yourself, "What was the intended meaning of the original author?" Is there a command to obey, a warning to heed, or an example to follow or avoid? State each lesson in a simple sentence that you could share with someone else.

(aim for 10 words or less)

Ezra 8:1-20 \_\_\_\_\_

Ezra 8:21-30 \_\_\_\_\_

Ezra 8:31-36 \_\_\_\_\_

## How can I apply it?

**Ask yourself, "What course of action do I need to take to apply each lesson?"** How should it change me? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions?

(aim for 10 words or less)

Ezra 8:1-20 \_\_\_\_\_

Ezra 8:21-30 \_\_\_\_\_

Ezra 8:31-36 \_\_\_\_\_

## What did God say?

See if you can discover what God wants us to understand about His character and His ways? Which of His attributes is He displaying? When we are questioning the circumstances that surround us, understanding Who God is helps us trust Him when we don't see Him working. Simply state what God is trying to communicate about Himself **and how it affects your thinking**.

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What words or phrases are repeated? Repeated words help us discover the main point.

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## Getting the point!

Discover the "Big Idea" of each section. The main point of the passage is like a topic sentence in a paragraph. See if you can boil down the meaning of each section into one or two words. This helps you fully understand what the author is trying to convey. (It's fun to alliterate if you want to try) Did you find the "Big Idea"

Ezra 8:1-20 \_\_\_\_\_

Ezra 8:21-30 \_\_\_\_\_

Ezra 8:31-36 \_\_\_\_\_

# Title

State the main point of the entire passage in the form of a title.

## Flex Your Muscles

From your title Can you discover a N.T. example of this O.T. truth?

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## Time to build

Take note of how each challenge is met. Ask yourself: How was it responded to? How did it affect those who interacted? What building materials were used? (prayer, confrontation, standing firm, waiting etc.)  
What did you learn that can help you next time you meet a similar challenge?

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## *Radiating His Truth*

*Valuable indeed in any movement of God's Spirit are such men; like those of old, who had "understanding of the times," to know what Israel ought to do.*

*Harry Ironsides*







