

# 1 ESDRAS

## TO THE READER

### EDITION OF THE GREEK TEXT

The NETS version of 1 Esdras is based on the standard critical edition prepared by Robert Hanhart (*Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum VIII.1: Esdrae liber I* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974]).

### OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

This book is known as Esdras A' in the Greek tradition and 1 Esdras in English translations. 1 Esdras and 2 Esdras (Esdras B') are one pair of double traditions found in Septuagint collections (see as well the double traditions of Daniel and Esther). They represent material from the Hebrew-Aramaic 2 Chronicles (2 Supplements), Ezra (2 Esdras 1–10), and Nehemiah (2 Esdras 11–23); in addition, in 1 Esdras there is a story of three youths who served as bodyguards for King Darius of Persia.

The general relationship of content among the various versions is as follows:

1 Esdras	Chr-Ezra-Neh (NRSV) (Suppl–2 Esd [NETS])
1.1–55	2 Chr (2 Suppl) 35.1–36.21
2.1–5	Ezra 1.1–3 // 2 Chr (2 Suppl) 36.22–23
2.6–14	Ezra 1.4–11
2.15–25	4.6–24
3.1–5.6	–
5.7–45	2.1–70 // Neh 7.7–73 (2 Esd 17.7–73)
5.46–70	3.1–4.5
6.1–9.36	5.1–10.44
9.37–55	Neh 7.73–8.12 (2 Esd 17.73–18.12)

The relationship of this Greek book to the Hebrew-Aramaic biblical tradition, from a source-critical point of view, is unclear. There are two main positions: 1) that the book represents an earlier form of the biblical accounts, although the present form is thought to be only a portion of that larger work;<sup>1</sup> and 2) that the book is a composition subsequent to, and depending upon, the biblical books.<sup>2</sup>

In this book, Zorobabel (Zerubbabel) plays a more prominent role, being the winner of the wisdom contest in the story of the three young men (4.13), and appearing where he does not in the MT version (6.17 // Ezra 5.14; 6.26b // Ezra 6.7; 6.28b // Ezra 6.9a). Neemias (Nehemiah), however, is mentioned only in 5.8 (Ezra 2.2) and 5.40 (Ezra 2.63), the latter, significantly, being an addition compared to the Hebrew.

Another emphasis is the temple, the culmination of the restoration program (walls, altar, temple), and items and persons associated with it being made more prominent and distinct through the use of the *ἱερ*-stem: the temple (*ἱερόν* “temple” 1.2 *et passim*), its paraphernalia and practices (*ἱερός* “holy, sacred” 1.39 *et passim*; *ἁγιερόω* “to consecrate, devote” 9.4), priests and priestly figures like the priest with the Urim and Thummim and Ezra, (*ἱερατεύω* “to serve as priest” 5.39; *ἱερατικός* “priestly” 4.54; 5.44; *ἱερεύς* “priest” 1.2 *et passim*; *ἱερωσύνη* “priesthood” 5.38; *ἄρχιερεύς* “high priest” 5.40 *et passim*) and various temple officials (*ἱερόδουλος* “temple-slave” 1.3 *et passim*; *ἱεροστάτης* “temple official” 7.2; *ἱεροψάλτης* “temple-musician” 1.15 *et passim*).

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Dieter Böhler. *Die heilige Stadt in Esdras a und Esra-Nehemia: zwei Konzeptionen der Wiederherstellung Israels* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 158; Freiburg/Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Zipora Talshir, *1 Esdras: From Origin to Translation* (SBLSCS 47; Atlanta: SBL, 1999).

## TRANSLATION PROFILE OF THE GREEK

*General character*

It is unclear whether this book is strictly the translation of a non-MT Hebrew-Aramaic text or loosely a composition in Greek that made use of 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah or Greek translations of those works. It is clear that the work contains a few characteristics similar to those found in other translations. However, unlike works that are clearly translations, the Greek of this book is of a good quality. Thus, if it is a translation, it is of a much freer quality than the counterparts with parallel material (2 Supplements and 2 Esdras). There are few signs of literalism, due to the translator's/composer's contextualization of lexical choices and use of more normal Greek structures.<sup>3</sup> Some features that suggest a Semitic source are:

*Pleonasm*

There are only a few examples of superfluous pronouns: 2.9 ("that Nabouchodonosor had removed . . . and stored them"; ἃ μετήγαγεν Ναβουχοδονοσορ . . . καὶ ἀπηρεΐσατο αὐτά; Ezra 1.7 אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיֵא נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר . . . וַיְהַנֵּם); 3.5 ("whosever his statement seems wiser"; καὶ οὗ ἂν φανῆ τὸ ῥῆμα αὐτοῦ σοφώτερον // -); 4.63 ("the temple where his name is named on it"; καὶ τὸ ἱερόν, οὗ ὠνομάσθη τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπ' αὐτῶ // -); 6.32 ("the Lord, whose his name is there called upon"; καὶ ὁ κύριος οὗ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπικέκληται ἐκεῖ; Ezra 6.12 וְאֵלֹהֵי דַי שְׁכַן שְׁמֵהּ תְּמָהּ)

*Hebraisms*

There is greater than normal occurrence of the conjunction καί, suggesting Semitic influence of the conjunction ו. The phrase καὶ ἐγένετο "and it happened," for Hebrew וַיְהִי, is found only one time (9.3 // Ezra 10.7; 8.61a // Ezra 8.32 uses a participle), but in neither case is the comparable construction in the source. At 8.87 we find ἰδοῦ, "behold" (Ezra 9.15b, הִנֵּנוּ, "Behold, us!"), but forms of הִנֵּה, "Behold!" occur 3 additional times in the parallel materials in Ezra-Nehemiah (2 Chronicles 35.25 // 1.30; 35.27 // 1.31; 36.8 // 1.40), but they are represented only here in 1 Esdras.

*Dependence*

Although the vocabulary of 1 Esdras is distinct from other translations, one phrase stands out as dependent upon existing tradition: ἕως ἀναστῆ ἀρχιερεὺς ἐνδεδυμένος τὴν δῆλωσιν καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν "until a high priest should arise wearing Explanation and Truth," (5.40) for עַד עֹמֵד כֹּהֵן לְאֻרִים וְלִתְּמִים (Ezra 2.63), "until there should be a priest to consult Urim and Thummim" (NRSV). The 1 Esdras translation is in keeping with those in the LXX: Ex 28.30 [MT 26]; Leu 8.8; Deut 33.8.

## THE NETS TRANSLATION OF 1 ESDRAS

As a matter of convenience this translation began with the NRSV, which was modified as necessary to fit this project. While the NRSV seeks to smooth out problematic constructions, uncertainties, etc., NETS seeks to represent the Greek as much as possible. Thus, alterations were made to the NRSV to bring it into line with Hanhart's edition. As well, for vocabulary and style, an attempt was made to keep consistency with the rest of NETS and particularly with 2 Esdras: as much as possible, words from the same stem, used to translate the same material from Ezra-Nehemiah, are represented by words from the same stem in English in both 1 and 2 Esdras.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

Versification differs among Greek editions of 1 Esdras and among the translations, and all have differences from the MT. In this translation, I have followed the versification of the critical edition.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The translation on which this is based is the NRSV. I also consulted Jacob M. Myers, *I and II Esdras: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (AB 42; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974).

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<sup>3</sup> See Talshir, *1 Esdras*, 181–268 for a detailed analysis of the characteristics of the translation.

**1** And Iosias celebrated the pascha to his Lord in Ierouusalem, and he sacrificed the pascha on the fourteenth day of the first month, <sup>2</sup>after he had arranged the priests by their daily duties, robed, in the temple of the Lord. <sup>3</sup>And he told the Leuites, temple-slaves of Israel, that they should sanctify themselves to the Lord for the task of putting the holy ark of the Lord in the house that Salomon the king, the son of Dauid, had built, <sup>4</sup>"You need no longer carry it on your shoulders. And now, serve the Lord, your God, and attend to his nation Israel, and prepare yourselves by your paternal families and tribes, according to the writing of Dauid, king of Israel, and according to the magnificence of his son Salomon. <sup>5</sup>And having stationed yourselves in the temple by the paternal groupings of you, the Leuites, who stand before your kindred, sons of Israel, <sup>6</sup>in order, sacrifice the pascha, and prepare the sacrifices for your kindred. And keep the pascha according to the ordinance of the Lord that was given to Moyses."

**7** To the people who were found there, Iosias presented a gift of thirty thousand lambs and kids and three thousand calves; these were given, according to promise, from the king's possessions to the people and the priests and Leuites. <sup>8</sup>Chelkias and Zacharias and Eyselos, the chief officers of the temple, gave the priests two thousand six hundred sheep, three hundred calves, for the pascha. <sup>9</sup>And Iechonias and Samaias and his brother Nathanael and Hasabias and Ochielos and Ioram, officers of thousands, gave the Leuites five thousand sheep, seven hundred calves, for the pascha.

**10** And when these things were done in proper order, the priests and the Leuites, holding the unleavened bread, stood before the people by tribe and by groupings of fathers to offer to the Lord in accordance with what is written in the book of Moyses, and so they did in the morning. <sup>11</sup>And they roasted the pascha with fire, as required, and they boiled the sacrifices in bronze pots and cauldrons, with a pleasing odor, and carried them to all that were from the people. <sup>12</sup>Now, after this they prepared both for themselves and for their kindred the priests, sons of Aaron. <sup>13</sup>For the priests were offering the fat until quite late, and the Leuites prepared it for themselves and for their kindred the priests, sons of Aaron. <sup>14</sup>And the temple-musicians, sons of Asaph, were in their order according to what had been arranged by Dauid—and Asaph and Zacharias and Eddinous, the king's representatives. <sup>15</sup>And the doorkeepers were at each gateway. It was not possible that anyone omit his own daily service, for their kindred, the Leuites, made preparations for them.

**16** And the things that had to do with the sacrifice of the Lord were accomplished in that day: that the pascha was celebrated and that the sacrifices were offered on the altar of the Lord according to the injunction of King Iosias. <sup>17</sup>And the sons of Israel who were found at that time celebrated the pascha and the feast of unleavened bread for seven days. <sup>18</sup>And no pascha like it had been celebrated in Israel since the times of Samouel the

prophet, <sup>19</sup>and none of the kings of Israel had celebrated such a pascha as Iosias celebrated, and the priests and the Leuites and the Judeans and all of Israel, who were found in their dwelling place, in Ierouusalem. <sup>20</sup>This pascha was celebrated in the eighteenth year when Iosias reigned. <sup>21</sup>And the deeds of Iosias, done with his heart full of piety, were deemed right in the sight of his Lord. <sup>22</sup>Now, also the matters of his reign in previous times have been recorded: about those who sinned and those who acted impiously toward the Lord, more than any nation and kingdom, and how they conspicuously grieved him—and the words of the Lord rose up against Israel.

**23** And after all this activity of Iosias, it happened that Pharaos, king of Egypt, came to incite war at Charkamys on the Euphrates, and Iosias went out to confront him. <sup>24</sup>And the king of Egypt sent a dispatch to him, saying, "What issue do I and you have, O king of Judea? <sup>25</sup>I have not been sent out against you by the Lord God, for my war is at the Euphrates. Now then, the Lord is with me! Also, the Lord with me is urging me on! Stand aside, and do not oppose the Lord."

**26** And Iosias did not turn himself away to his chariot, but he undertook to fight with him, not heeding the words of Ieremias the prophet from the mouth of the Lord. <sup>27</sup>On the contrary, he joined battle with him in the plain of Mageddao, and the rulers came down against King Iosias. <sup>28</sup>And the king said to his servants, "Take me away from the fight, for I have become very weak." And his servants immediately took him from the line of battle, <sup>29</sup>and he got into his secondary chariot. And after he was brought back to Ierouusalem, he departed this life and was buried in his ancestral tomb.

**30** In the whole of Judea they mourned for Iosias. And Ieremias the prophet lamented for Iosias. And the principal men, together with women, lament him to this day. And this has been handed on to the whole race of Israel always to do. <sup>31</sup>These things stand inscribed in the document of the events being recorded about the kings of Judea. And every single thing done of the activity of Iosias and of his splendor and of his understanding of the law of the Lord, both which were done by him before and now, have been recorded in the book of the kings of Israel and Ioudas.

**32** And when the people of the nation had taken Iechonias son of Iosias, they appointed him king in place of Iosias his father, when he was twenty-three years old. <sup>33</sup>And he reigned in Ioudas and Ierouusalem for three months. And the king of Egypt deposed him from reigning in Ierouusalem <sup>34</sup>and fined the nation one hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold. <sup>35</sup>And the king of Egypt appointed his brother, King Ioakeim, king of Judea and Ierouusalem. <sup>36</sup>And Ioakeim incarcerated the nobles. But he seized his brother Zarios and brought him back from Egypt.

**37** Now Ioakeim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign in Judea and Ierouusalem; he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.

<sup>38</sup>Now Nabouchodonosor, the king of Babylon, came up against him, and he bound him with a bronze fetter and took him away to Babylon. <sup>39</sup>Nabouchodonosor also took some sacred vessels of the Lord and carried them away; he deposited them in his shrine in Babylon. <sup>40</sup>And the things recorded, about him and his uncleanness and impiety, stand inscribed in the document of the times of the kings.

<sup>41</sup>And his son Ioakeim became king in his place, for when he was appointed king, he was eighteen years old. <sup>42</sup>Now he reigned in Ierousalem for three months and ten days, and he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. <sup>43</sup>And a year later Nabouchodonosor sent and removed him to Babylon, together with the sacred vessels of the Lord. <sup>44</sup>And he appointed Sedekias king of Judea and Ierousalem, when Sedekias was twenty-one years old.

Now he reigned eleven years. <sup>45</sup>And he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and felt no hesitation arising from the words spoken by Jeremias the prophet from the mouth of the Lord. <sup>46</sup>And although he had been made to swear, by King Nabouchodonosor, by the name of the Lord, he broke his oath, rebelled and, having hardened his neck and his heart, he transgressed the precepts of the Lord, God of Israel. <sup>47</sup>Now also the leaders of the people and of the priests committed many acts of impiety and lawlessness, more than all the unclean deeds of all the nations, and they defiled the temple of the Lord that had been sanctified in Ierousalem. <sup>48</sup>And the God of their fathers sent word through his messenger to call them back, because he tried to spare them and his covert. <sup>49</sup>But they mocked at his messengers, and on the day the Lord spoke, they were scoffing at his prophets until in his anger against his nation, on account of their impious acts, he ordered that the kings of the Chaldeans go up against them. <sup>50</sup>These killed their young men by sword around about their holy temple, and they did not spare young man or young woman and old man and younger man, but all he handed over into their hands. <sup>51</sup>And they took away all the sacred vessels of the Lord, great and small, the treasure chests of the Lord and the royal stores and carried them off to Babylon. <sup>52</sup>And they set fire to the house of the Lord, and they wrecked the walls of Ierousalem and burned its towers with fire. <sup>53</sup>And they finished rendering useless all its glorious features. And the survivors he led away by sword to Babylon. <sup>54</sup>And they were servants to him and to his sons until the Persians reigned, in fulfilment of the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremias, <sup>55</sup>"Until the land takes pleasure in its sabbaths, it shall sabbatize all the time of its desolation until the completion of seventy years."

**2** In the first year that Cyrus was reigning the Persians, with a view to fulfilment of a word of the Lord by Jeremias' mouth, <sup>2</sup>the Lord stirred the spirit of Cyrus, king of the Persians, and he proclaimed in his whole kingdom and at the same time in written form,

<sup>3</sup>"This is what Cyrus, the king of the Persians, says: The Lord of Israel, Lord the Most High, has appointed me king of the world, <sup>4</sup>and he indicated to me that I should build him a house in Ierousalem in Judea. <sup>5</sup>If anyone of you, therefore, is of his nation, let his Lord be with him, and when they have gone up to Ierousalem, which is in Judea, let him build the house of the Lord of Israel. This is the Lord who encamps in Ierousalem. <sup>6</sup>So, as many as dwell in each place, let those in his place help him with gold and with silver, with gifts, along with horses and livestock, together with the other things added as votive offerings for the temple of the Lord that is in Ierousalem."

<sup>7</sup>And there arose the chiefs of the paternal families of the tribe of Ioudas and Benjamin and the priests and the Leuites and all whose spirit the Lord had stirred to go up to build the house for the Lord, which is in Ierousalem, <sup>8</sup>and the people in their surrounding area, and they helped them with everything, with silver and gold, horses and livestock and with the greatest number of vows from many whose mind was stirred.

<sup>9</sup>And King Cyrus brought out the sacred vessels of the Lord that Nabouchodonosor had removed from Ierousalem and stored them in his own idol temple. <sup>10</sup>Now when Cyrus, the king of the Persians, had brought them out, he gave them over to Mithridates, his own treasurer, <sup>11</sup>and they were handed over by him to Sanabassaros, administrator of Judea. <sup>12</sup>Now the number of these was: gold libation bowls, one thousand; silver libation bowls, one thousand; silver censers, twenty-nine; gold saucers, thirty; silver, two thousand four hundred ten; and other vessels, one thousand. <sup>13</sup>Now all the vessels were recovered, gold and silver: five thousand four hundred sixty-nine. <sup>14</sup>Now they were carried back by Sanabassaros, along with the people of the captivity, from Babylon to Ierousalem.

<sup>15</sup>Now in the times under Artaxerxes, the king of the Persians, Beslemos and Mithridates and Tabellios and Raoumos and Beelteemos and Samsaios the scribe and the rest of those associated with them but living in Samaria and the other places wrote out the following letter to him against those who were living in Judea and Ierousalem,

<sup>16</sup>"To King Artaxerxes, Sir, your servants Raoumos the one for events and Samsaios the scribe and the rest of their council and the judges who are in Coele-Syria and Phoenicia. <sup>17</sup>And now, let it be known to the lord king that, when Judeans came up from you to us, having come to Ierousalem, they are building the rebellious and wicked city, repairing both its market places and the walls, and are laying the foundations for a shrine. <sup>18</sup>So if this city is built and the walls are completed, not only will they not submit to paying tribute, but they will also resist kings. And since the work on the shrine is in progress, we assume it best not to overlook such a matter but to address our lord king in order that, if it seems good to you, a search may be made in the books from your fathers. <sup>19</sup>And you will find in the records what has been

written about them and will learn that that city was rebellious, troubling both kings and cities, and that the Judeans were rebels and set up blockades in it from of old, for which reason this city was also laid waste. <sup>20</sup>Therefore we are now pointing out to you, Lord King, that if this city is built and its walls rise up, you will no longer have a way down to Coele-Syria and Phoenicia."

21 Then the king wrote back the following to Raoumos the recorder of events and to Beelteemos and Samsaios the scribe and to the rest associated with them and living in Samaria and Syria and Phoenicia,

22 "I read the letter that you have sent to me. I therefore ordered that a search be made, and it was found that that city from of old has been opposing kings <sup>23</sup>and that the people in it perpetrate rebellions and wars and that strong and cruel kings used to be masters in Ierousalem and were extracting tribute from Coele-Syria and Phoenicia. <sup>24</sup>Now, therefore, I have ordered that you prevent those people from building the city and that you take care that nothing more be done and that such wicked proceedings go no further so as to annoy kings."

25 Then when what was written by King Artaxerxes had been read, Raoumos and Samsaios the scribe and those associated with them marched in haste to Ierousalem with cavalry and a throng of the first rank and began to hinder those who were building. And the construction of the temple that is in Ierousalem stopped until the second year of the reign of Darius, the king of the Persians.

**3** And King Darius gave a great banquet for all who were under him and for all his homebred and for all the nobles of Media and of Persia <sup>2</sup>and for all the satraps and generals and district governors that were under him in the hundred twenty-seven satrapies from India to Ethiopia. <sup>3</sup>And they ate and drank, and when they were satisfied, they went away, but Darius the king went to his bedroom and went to sleep but woke up again.

4 Then the three young men, the bodyguards, who kept guard over the person of the king, said one to another, <sup>5</sup>"Let us state, each of us, one thing which will prove superior, and whosoever his statement seems wiser than the other—Darius the king will give him grand gifts and great prizes of victory <sup>6</sup>and that he be clothed in purple and drink from wrought gold and sleep on gold and have a chariot with a gold studded bridle and a turban of fine linen and a torque around his neck. <sup>7</sup>And because of his wisdom, he shall take his seat next to Darius and shall be called Kinsman of Darius."

8 And then they wrote, each his own statement, sealed it and put it under the pillow of Darius the king. And they said, <sup>9</sup>"When the king gets up, they will give him what is written, and whomever the king picks—and the three nobles of Persia—because his statement is wisest, to him the victory shall be given, as it stands written." <sup>10</sup>The first

wrote, "Wine proves superior." <sup>11</sup>The second wrote, "The king proves superior." <sup>12</sup>The third wrote, "Women prove superior, but above all things truth is victorious."

13 And when the king awoke, they took what was written and gave it to him, and he read. <sup>14</sup>And he sent and summoned all the nobles of Persia and of Media and satraps and generals and district governors and consuls<sup>a</sup>, and he took his seat in the council chamber, and what was written was read in their presence. <sup>15</sup>And he said, "Call the young men, and they themselves shall explain their statements." And they were summoned and came in. <sup>16</sup>And they said to them, "Tell us about what you have written."

And the first, who had spoken of the strength of wine, began and spoke thus, <sup>17</sup>"O Gentlemen, how does wine prove superior? It leads astray the thoughts of all men who drink it. <sup>18</sup>It makes equal the thoughts of both the king and the orphan, of both the domestic and the free, of both the poor and the rich. <sup>19</sup>And it turns every thought to feasting and mirth and does not remember any sorrow or any obligation. <sup>20</sup>And it makes all hearts rich and does not remember king or satrap and makes everyone talk in talents<sup>b</sup>. <sup>21</sup>And when people drink, they do not remember to be friendly with friends and kindred, and before long they draw daggers. <sup>22</sup>And when they recover from the wine, they do not remember what they did. <sup>23</sup>O Gentlemen, does not wine prove superior, since it forces people to behave thus?" And when he had said this, he fell silent.

**4** And the second, who had spoken of the strength of the king, began to speak, <sup>2</sup>"O Gentlemen, do not humans prove superior, since they rule over land and sea and all that is in them? <sup>3</sup>But the king proves superior and is lord of all and their master, and whatever he says to them they heed. <sup>4</sup>If he tells them to make war one against the other, they do it, and if he sends them out against enemies, they proceed and conquer mountains and walls and towers. <sup>5</sup>They murder and are murdered and do not transgress the king's bidding, and if they are victorious, they bring everything to the king—whatever spoil they take and everything else. <sup>6</sup>And as many as do not serve in the army or go to war, they instead till the soil; in turn, whenever they sow and reap, they send some to the king, and one compels the other to bring levies to the king. <sup>7</sup>And he is one single man! If he tells them to kill, they kill. He tells them to release, they release; <sup>8</sup>he tells them to smite, they strike; he tells them to lay waste, they lay waste; he tells them to build, they build; <sup>9</sup>he tells them to cut down, they cut down; he tells them to plant, they plant. <sup>10</sup>And all his people and his forces heed him. Furthermore, he himself reclines; he eats and drinks and sleeps, <sup>11</sup>but they keep watch all around him, and no one may go away and tend to his own affairs, nor do they disobey him. <sup>12</sup>O Gentlemen, how

<sup>a</sup>Possibly *prefects* <sup>b</sup>i.e. *large sums of money*

does not the king prove superior, since he is to be obeyed in this way?" And he fell silent.

13 Now the third, who had spoken of women and truth (he was Zorobabel), began to speak, 14"Gentlemen, is not the king great, are not men many, and does not wine prove superior? Who is it, then, that is master over them, or who is lord over them? Is it not women? 15Women give birth to the king and to all people that are lord over sea and land. 16And from them they were born, and it is they that brought up those who plant the vineyards from which comes the wine. 17And it is they that make men's robes, and it is they that bring men glory, and men cannot exist apart from women. 18Now if men gather gold and silver or any beautiful thing, and they see one woman lovely in appearance and beauty, 19they then let all those things go and gape at her and with open mouths stare at her, and all choose her rather than gold or silver or any beautiful thing. 20A man leaves his own father, who brought him up, and his own country and clings to his own wife. 21And with his wife he releases his soul and neither remembers father or mother or country. 22And as a result you must realize that women are lords over you.

"Do you not labor and toil and bring and give everything to women? 23And a man takes his sword and goes out to travel and rob and steal and to sail the sea and rivers, 24and he faces the lion, and he proceeds through darkness, and when he steals and robs and plunders, he brings it back to her he desires. 25And a man loves his own wife more than his father and mother. 26And many have been driven to distraction by their own minds because of women and have become slaves because of them. 27And many have perished and stumbled and sinned because of women. 28And now, do you not believe me?

"Is not the king great in his authority? Do not all lands fear to touch him? 29I have watched him and Apame the daughter of the illustrious Bartocos, the king's concubine, sitting at the king's right hand 30and taking the diadem from the king's head and put it on herself. And she would slap the king with her left hand. 31And at this the king would gaze at her with mouth agape. And if she smiles at him, he laughs, but if she is cross with him, he flatters her so that she may be reconciled to him. 32O Gentlemen, how are women not strong, since thus they act?"

33 And then the king and the nobles looked one at the other. And he began to speak about truth, 34"Gentlemen, are not women strong? The earth is vast, and the sky is high, and swift is the sun in its course, for it makes the circuit of the sky and returns again to its own place in one day. 35Is not the one who does these things great? Truth also is great and stronger than all things. 36"All the earth calls upon truth, and heaven blesses her. And all his<sup>a</sup> works quake and tremble, and with him<sup>a</sup> there is nothing unrighteous. 37Wine is unrighteous;

the king is unrighteous; women are unrighteous; all sons of men are unrighteous, and all their works are unrighteous—all such things. And there is no truth in them, and in<sup>b</sup> their injustice they will perish. 38But truth endures and is strong forever and lives and prevails forever and ever. 39And with it there is no partiality or preference, but it does what is righteous instead of anything that is unrighteous or wicked. And all approve her deeds, 40and there is nothing unrighteous in her judgment. And to her belongs the strength and the kingship and the authority and the majesty of all the ages. Blessed be the God of truth!" 41And he stopped speaking, and all the people then shouted and then said, "Great is truth, and it proves superior!"

42 Then the king said to him, "Request what you want in addition to what is written, and we will give it to you, for you have been found to be the wisest. And you shall sit next to me and be called my Kinsman." 43Then he said to the king, "Remember the vow that you made on the day you received your kingship to build Ierusalem 44and to send back all the vessels that had been taken from Ierusalem, which Cyrus set apart when he vowed to destroy Babylon and vowed to send them back there. 45You also vowed to build the shrine, which the Idumeans burned when Judea was laid waste by the Chaldeans. 46And now, O Lord King, this is what I ask of you and what I request of you, and this is greatness that is yours. I pray, therefore, that you fulfill the vow that you vowed with your mouth to do for the king of heaven."

47 Then Darius the king got up and kissed him and wrote letters for him to all the stewards and district governors and generals and satraps, that they should give safe conduct to him and all who were going up with him to build Ierusalem. 48He also wrote letters to all the district governors in Coele-Syria and Phoenicia and to those in Lebanon, to convey cedar timber from Lebanon to Ierusalem, and that they should build the city with him. 49He also wrote for all the Judeans who were going from his kingdom to Judea, in the interest of their freedom, that no officer or satrap or district governor or steward should assail their doors 50and that all the country they would seize should be theirs without tribute and that the Idumeans should give up the villages of the Judeans that they held and 51that twenty talents a year should be given for the building of the temple until it was built 52and an additional ten talents a year for whole burnt offerings to be offered on the altar every day, in accordance with the commandment they have, to offer seventeen, 53and that all who would come from Babylonia to found the city should have their freedom, both they and their children and all the priests who would come. 54Now, he also stipulated the expense and the priestly vestment, in what way they would serve in it. 55He also stipulated that they should give the Leuites the expense until the day when the house

<sup>a</sup>I.e. heaven <sup>b</sup>Or by

would be finished and Ierousalem built. <sup>56</sup>He also stipulated that they give allotments of land and wages to all who would guard the city. <sup>57</sup>He also sent back from Babylon all the vessels that Cyrus had set apart, and everything that Cyrus said that he would do he too instructed to be done and to be sent back to Ierousalem.

58 And when the young man went out, he lifted up his face to heaven toward Ierousalem and blessed the king of heaven, saying, <sup>59</sup>"From you comes victory, and from you comes wisdom, and yours is the glory. And I am your domestic. <sup>60</sup>Blessed are you, who have given me wisdom, and you I acknowledge, O Master of our fathers."

61 And he took the letters and departed, and he went to Babylon and told all his kindred. <sup>62</sup>And they blessed the God of their fathers, because he had given them permission and release <sup>63</sup>to go up and build Ierousalem and the temple where his name is named on it, and with music and rejoicing they drank hard for seven days.

**5** Now, after these things the leaders of the house of the paternal families and their wives and sons and daughters and their male and female servants and their livestock were chosen to go up by their tribes. <sup>2</sup>And Darius sent along with them a thousand cavalry until they would restore them to Ierousalem in peace, and with the music of drums and flutes. <sup>3</sup>And all their kindred were making merry, and he made them go up along with them.

4 And these are the names of the men who went up, by their paternal families for the tribes, over their groups: <sup>5</sup>the priests, sons of Phinees son of Aaron: Iesous the son of Iosedek the son of Saraias and Ioakeim the son of Zorobabel the son of Salathiel, of the house of Dauid, of the lineage of Phares and of the tribe of Ioudas, <sup>6</sup>who spoke wise words before Darius, the king of the Persians, in the second year of his reign, in the month of Nisan, the first month.

7 Now, the following are those from Judea who went up out of the captivity in exile, whom Nabouchodonosor, the king of Babylon, had deported to Babylon, <sup>8</sup>and each returned to Ierousalem and the rest of Judea, to his own town, those who came with their leaders Zorobabel and Iesous, Neemias, Zariaias, Resaias, Eneuios, Mardochaios, Beelsaros, Aspharasos, Borolias, Roimos and Baana.

9 The number of those from the nation and their leaders: sons of Phoros, two thousand one hundred seventy-two; sons of Saphat, four hundred seventy-two; <sup>10</sup>sons of Aree, seven hundred fifty-six; <sup>11</sup>sons of Phaathmoab, with respect to the sons of Iesous and Ioab, two thousand eight hundred twelve; <sup>12</sup>sons of Olamos, one thousand two hundred fifty-four; sons of Zatos, nine hundred forty-five; sons of Chorbe, seven hundred five; sons of Bani, six hundred forty-eight; <sup>13</sup>sons of Bebai, six hundred twenty-three; sons of Asgad, three thousand three hundred twenty-two; <sup>14</sup>sons

of Adonikam, six hundred sixty-seven; sons of Bagoi, two thousand sixty-six; sons of Adinos, four hundred fifty-four; <sup>15</sup>sons of <sup>a</sup>Ater son of Hezekias<sup>a</sup>, ninety-two; sons of Kilan and Azetas, sixty-seven; sons of Azouros, four hundred thirty-two; <sup>16</sup>sons of Hannias, one hundred one; sons of Arom; sons of Bassai, three hundred twenty-three; sons of Hariphos, one hundred twelve; <sup>17</sup>sons of Baiterous, three thousand five; sons from Baithlomon, one hundred twenty-three. <sup>18</sup>Those from Netebas, fifty-five; those from Enatos, one hundred fifty-eight; those from Baitasmon, forty-two; <sup>19</sup>those from Kariathiaros, twenty-five; those from Kapiros and Berot, seven hundred forty-three. <sup>20</sup>The Chadiasai and Hammidians, four hundred twenty-two; those from Kiramas and Gabbes, six hundred twenty-one; <sup>21</sup>those from Makalon, one hundred twenty-two; those from Baitolion, fifty-two. Sons of Niphis, one hundred fifty-six; <sup>22</sup>sons of the other Kalamo and Onous, seven hundred twenty five; sons of Ierechos, three hundred forty-five; <sup>23</sup>sons of Sanaas, three thousand three hundred thirty.

24 The priests: sons of Ieddos the son of Iesous, with reference to the sons of Anasib, nine hundred seventy-two; sons of Emmeros, one thousand and fifty-two; <sup>25</sup>sons of Phassouros, one thousand two hundred forty-seven; sons of Charme, one thousand seventeen.

26 Now, the Leuites: sons of Iesous and Kadmielos and Bannos and Houdias, seventy-four. <sup>27</sup>The temple-musicians: sons of Asaph, one hundred forty-eight. <sup>28</sup>The doorkeepers: sons of Saloum, sons of Atar, sons of Tolman, sons of Akoub, sons of Hateta, sons of Sobi, in all one hundred thirty-nine.

29 The temple-slaves: sons of Esau, sons of Hasipha, sons of Tabaoth, sons of Keras, sons of Soua, sons of Phadaiaias, sons of Labana, sons of Haggaba, <sup>30</sup>sons of Akoud, sons of Outa, sons of Ketab, sons of Hagaba, sons of Sybai, sons of Hanan, sons of Kathoua, sons of Geddour, <sup>31</sup>sons of Iairos, sons of Daisan, sons of Noeba, sons of Chaseba, sons of Gazera, sons of Ozias, sons of Phinoe, sons of Asara, sons of Basthai, sons of Asana, sons of Maani, sons of Naphisi, sons of Akouph, sons of Hachiba, sons of Hasour, sons of Pharakim, sons of Basaloth, <sup>32</sup>sons of Meedda, sons of Koutha, sons of Charea, the sons of Barchous, sons of Serar, sons of Thomoi, sons of Nasie, sons of Hatipha.

33 Sons of Salomon's servants: sons of Hasaphioth, sons of Pharida, sons of Ieeli, sons of Lozon, sons of Geddel, sons of Saphyithi, <sup>34</sup>sons of Hatil, sons of <sup>b</sup>Phakareth of Sabieb<sup>b</sup>, sons of Sarothie, sons of Masias, sons of Gas, sons of Addous, sons of Soubas, sons of Apherra, sons of Barodis, sons of Saphat, sons of Amon.

35 All the temple-slaves and the sons of Salomon's servants were three hundred seventy-two.

36 And the following are those who came up from Thermelee and Thelersas with Charaath lead-

<sup>a</sup>Or *Ater Hezekias* <sup>b</sup>Or *Phakareth Sabie*

ing them: Adan and Amar—<sup>37</sup>and they could not prove by their paternal families or generations how they were from Israel—sons of Dalan the son of Touban, sons of Nekodan, six hundred fifty-two.

<sup>38</sup> Also, from the priests those who had assumed the priesthood but were not found: sons of Hobbia, sons of Hakkos and the sons of Ioddous who took Augia to wife, one of the daughters of Pharzellaias, and was called by his name. <sup>39</sup>And when their genealogical entry was sought in the register and was not found, they were excluded from serving as priests, <sup>40</sup>and Neemias and Hatharias told them that they were not to share in the holy things until a high priest should arise wearing Explanation and Truth.

<sup>41</sup> Now, their total was: of Israel, twelve or more years of age, besides male and female servants, forty-two thousand three hundred sixty; their male and female servants were seven thousand three hundred thirty-seven; there were two hundred forty-five harpists and harp singers. <sup>42</sup>There were four hundred thirty-five camels and seven thousand thirty-six horses, two hundred forty-five mules and five thousand five hundred twenty-five beasts of burden.

<sup>43</sup> And some of those who led by paternal families, when they arrived at the temple of God that is in Ierousalem, vowed that they would erect the house on its site according to their power <sup>44</sup>and that they would give to the temple treasury for the work a thousand minas<sup>a</sup> of gold and five thousand minas of silver and one hundred priests' vestments.

<sup>45</sup> And the priests and the Leuites and those who were from his people were settled in Ierousalem and its vicinity, and the temple-musicians and the doorkeepers and all Israel were in their villages.

<sup>46</sup> Now, when the seventh month came and the sons of Israel were all in their own homes, they gathered with a single purpose in the open area of the first eastward facing gateway. <sup>47</sup>And Iesous the son of Iosedek with his brothers, the priests and Zorobabel the son of Salathiel with his kindred took their places and prepared the altar of the God of Israel <sup>48</sup>so that they could offer whole burnt offerings upon it, following what was prescribed in the book of Moyses the man of God. <sup>49</sup>And some from the other nations of the land joined them. And they erected the altar in their place, because all the nations that were in the land were hostile to them and were stronger than they, and they offered sacrifices at the proper time and whole burnt offerings to the Lord in the morning and late afternoon. <sup>50</sup>They celebrated the feast of tent pitching, as it is ordered in the law, and sacrifices every day, as was proper, <sup>51</sup>and thereafter the perpetual offerings and sacrifices on sabbaths and new moons and all the consecrated feasts. <sup>52</sup>And as many as had made a vow to God began to offer sacrifices to God from the new moon of the seventh month, and the shrine of God had not yet been built.

<sup>53</sup>And they gave money<sup>b</sup> to the masons and carpenters and food and drink and carts to the Sidonians and the Tyrians, to deliver cedar logs from Lebanon, to convey them in rafts to the harbor of Joppe, according to the written ordinance that they had from Cyrus, the Persians' king.

<sup>54</sup> And in the second year after his arrival at the temple of God in Ierousalem, during the second month, Zorobabel the son of Salathiel and Iesous the son of Iosedek and their kindred, the Leuitical priests, and all who had arrived at Ierousalem from the captivity made a beginning <sup>55</sup>and laid the foundation of the shrine of God on the new moon of the second month in the second year of their coming to Judea and Ierousalem. <sup>56</sup>And they appointed the Leuites who were twenty or more years of age to have charge of the work of the Lord. And Iesous stood, along with his sons and kindred, both Kadmiel his brother and the sons of Iesous Emadaboun<sup>c</sup> and the sons of Ioda son of Iliadoun with their sons and kindred, all the Leuites, as taskmasters functioning with a single purpose for the work on the house of the Lord.

And the builders built the shrine of the Lord, <sup>57</sup>and the priests stood in their vestments with musical instruments and trumpets, and the Leuites, sons of Asaph, holding cymbals, were singing hymns to the Lord and blessing according to Daud, the king of Israel, <sup>58</sup>and they intoned through hymns, acknowledging the Lord, because his goodness and his glory are forever in all Israel. <sup>59</sup>And all the people trumpeted and shouted with a loud voice, singing hymns to the Lord for the erection of the house of the Lord. <sup>60</sup>And some of the Leuitical priests and of those who presided over their paternal families, the old men who had seen the house before this one, came to the building of this one with outcries and loud weeping, <sup>61</sup>and many people with trumpets and joy with a loud sound, <sup>62</sup>so that the people could not hear the trumpets because of the people's weeping. For it was the crowd that was trumpeting so loudly that they were heard far away.

<sup>63</sup> And when the enemies of the tribe of Ioudas and Benjamin heard it, they came to learn what the sound of trumpets meant. <sup>64</sup>And they learned that those who were from the captivity were building the shrine for the Lord, God of Israel, <sup>65</sup>and when they approached Zorobabel and Iesous and the leaders of the paternal families they said to them, "We will build along with you. <sup>66</sup>For, like you, we hear<sup>d</sup> your Lord, and we have been <sup>e</sup>making offerings<sup>e</sup> to him ever since the days of Asbasareth, the king of the Assyrians, who transferred us to here." <sup>67</sup>And Zorobabel and Iesous and the leaders of the paternal families of Israel said to them, "You have nothing to do with us in building the house for the Lord, our God, <sup>68</sup>for we alone will build it for the Lord of Israel, following what Cyrus, the king of the Persians, has ordered us." <sup>69</sup>But the nations of the land, by <sup>f</sup>falling asleep over<sup>f</sup> those in Judea and laying siege to them, con-

<sup>a</sup>Gk 1 mina = 0.6 kg <sup>b</sup>Or silver <sup>c</sup>Perhaps son of Emadaboun <sup>d</sup>Possibly obey <sup>e</sup>Or burning incense <sup>f</sup>Gk uncertain

strained the building. <sup>70</sup>And by bringing about plots and demagoguery and uprisings, they prevented the completion of the building as long as King Cyrus lived. And they were kept from building for two years until the reign of Darius.

**6** Now in the second year of the reign of Darius, the prophets Haggaios and Zacharias the son of Eddo prophesied to the Judeans who were in Judea and Ierousalem, in the name of the Lord, God of Israel, who is over them. <sup>2</sup>Then Zorobabel the son of Salathiel and Iesous the son of Iosedek arose and began to build the house of the Lord that is in Ierousalem, the prophets of the Lord joining in and helping them.

<sup>3</sup> At the same time, there came to them Sisinnes, the governor of Syria and Phoenicia, and Sathrabouzanes and their associates, and they said to them, <sup>4</sup>"By whose order to you are you building this house and this roof and are finishing all the other things? And who are the builders that are finishing these things?" <sup>5</sup>And the elders of the Judeans had favor with the captives, due to consideration from the Lord, <sup>6</sup>and they were not prevented from building until Darius would be notified about them and his orders be issued.

<sup>7</sup> A copy of a letter Sisinnes, the governor of Syria and Phoenicia—and Sathrabouzanes and their associate leaders in Syria and Phoenicia—wrote to Darius and sent,

"To King Darius, greetings! <sup>8</sup>Let it be fully known to our lord the king that, when we arrived in the region of Judea and entered the city of Ierousalem, we found the elders of the Judeans of the captivity building in the city of Ierousalem a great new house for the Lord, using smoothed stones with costly timbers in the walls, <sup>9</sup>and that those projects are proceeding with speed and that the work is going well in their hands and that they are being completed with all splendor and care. <sup>10</sup>Then we inquired of these elders, saying, 'By whose orders are you building this house and laying the foundations of these projects?' <sup>11</sup>So, in order that we might inform you and write you about who the individuals are that lead them, we questioned them and asked them for the list of the names of the proponents. <sup>12</sup>But they answered us, 'We are the servants of the Lord who created heaven and earth. <sup>13</sup>And the house had been built rather many years ago by a great and strong king of Israel, and it was completed. <sup>14</sup>And when our fathers sinned against the heavenly Lord of Israel, provoking him, he gave them into the hands of Nabouchodonosor, king of Babylonia, king of the Chaldeans. <sup>15</sup>They, having pulled it down, both burned the house and carried off the people captive to Babylonia. <sup>16</sup>But in the first year that Cyrus reigned over the country of Babylonia, King Cyrus wrote that they could build this house. <sup>17</sup>And the sacred vessels of gold and silver, which Nabouchodonosor had taken out of the house in Ierousalem and stored in his own shrine, these Cyrus

the king took out again from the shrine in Babylonia, and they were given to Zorobabel and Sanabassaros the governor, <sup>18</sup>and he ordered him to return all these vessels and put them in the shrine in Ierousalem, and that this shrine of the Lord should be built on its site. <sup>19</sup>Then when this Sanabassaros arrived, he put in the foundations of the house of the Lord that is in Ierousalem, and although it has been in the process of construction from that time until now, it has not reached completion.' <sup>20</sup>Now therefore, O King, if it is judged right, let there be a search in our lord king's royal archives in Babylonia, <sup>21</sup>and if it is found that the building of the house of the Lord, which is in Ierousalem, was done with the consent of Cyrus the king and if it be judged right by our lord king, let him give us directions about these things."

<sup>22</sup> Then King Darius ordered that search be made in the royal archives that were stored in Babylonia. And in Ecbatana, the bastion<sup>a</sup> that is in the country of Media, one volume was found in which the following was recorded, <sup>23</sup>"The first year of the reign of Cyrus: King Cyrus ordered that the house of the Lord that is in Ierousalem, where they <sup>b</sup>make offerings<sup>b</sup> with perpetual fire, be built; <sup>24</sup>its height is to be sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits, with three courses of smoothed stones and one course of new native timber, and the cost to be paid from the house of Cyrus the king, <sup>25</sup>and that the sacred vessels of the house of the Lord, both of gold and of silver, which Nabouchodonosor took out of the house in Ierousalem and carried away to Babylonia, should be restored to the house in Ierousalem where they used to be in order that they be placed there."

<sup>26</sup> Now, he ordered Sisinnes, the governor of Syria and Phoenicia, and Sathrabouzanes and their associates and those who were appointed as leaders in Syria and Phoenicia to take care to keep away from the place and to permit Zorobabel the servant of the Lord and governor of Judea and the elders of the Judeans to build that house of the Lord at the site. <sup>27</sup>"And I have also instructed that they build it completely and that they watch carefully that they work closely with those who have returned from the captivity of Judea until the house of the Lord be finished <sup>28</sup>and that from the tribute of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia a portion be scrupulously given to these people, to Zorobabel the governor, for sacrifices to the Lord, for bulls and rams and lambs, <sup>29</sup>and likewise also wheat and salt and wine and oil, perpetually, on a yearly basis, without quibbling, for daily use as the priests in Ierousalem may indicate, <sup>30</sup>in order that libations may be offered to the Most High God for the king and his servants<sup>c</sup>, and they might pray for their life, <sup>31</sup>and I order that, if any should transgress or even not act on any of the things herein said and written, a beam should be taken out of their own house, and they should be hanged upon it, and their property be forfeited to the crown.

<sup>32</sup> "For the same reasons, also, may the Lord,

<sup>a</sup>Or tower <sup>b</sup>Or burned incense <sup>c</sup>Possibly children

whose his name is there called upon, destroy any king and nation that shall stretch out its hand to hinder or damage that house of the Lord that is in Ierusalem.

33 "I, King Darius, have decreed that it be done with all diligence as here prescribed."

**7** Then Sisinnes, the governor of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, and Sathrabouzanes and their associates, in compliance with the orders given by King Darius, <sup>2</sup>supervised the sacred work with very great care, assisting the elders of the Judeans and the temple officials. <sup>3</sup>And the sacred work prospered while the prophets Haggaios and Zacharias were prophesying, <sup>4</sup>and they completed it by the sixth year of Darius, the king of the Persians, due to the ordinance of the Lord, God of Israel, and with the consent of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of the Persians. <sup>5</sup>The holy house was completed by the twenty-third of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of King Darius. <sup>6</sup>And the sons of Israel, even the priests, the Leuites and the rest of those added from the captivity, acted in accordance with what is in the book of Moyses. <sup>7</sup>At the dedication of the temple of the Lord, they offered one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, <sup>8</sup>twelve male goats for the sin of all Israel, according to the number of the twelve tribal leaders of Israel, <sup>9</sup>and the priests and the Leuites stood in their vestments, by tribe, for the projects of the Lord, God of Israel, following the book of Moyses, and the doorkeepers stood at each gateway.

<sup>10</sup>And the sons of Israel, of those from the captivity, celebrated the pascha on the fourteenth of the first month, when the priests and the Leuites had been sanctified together. <sup>11</sup>And not all sons of the captivity were sanctified, because the Leuites were all sanctified together <sup>12</sup>and sacrificed the pascha for all the sons of the captivity and for their brothers the priests and for themselves. <sup>13</sup>And the sons of Israel who had returned from captivity ate it, all those who had been separated from the abominations of the nations of the land, as they were seeking the Lord. <sup>14</sup>They also celebrated the feast of unleavened bread seven days, rejoicing before the Lord, <sup>15</sup>because he had changed the will of the king of the Assyrians concerning them, to strengthen their hands for the projects of the Lord, God of Israel.

**8** And later than these, when Artaxerxes king of the Persians was reigning, Esdras came—son of Saraias the son of Ezerias the son of Chelkias the son of Salemos <sup>2</sup>the son of Saddoukos the son of Achitob the son of Amarias the son of Ezias the son of Mareroth the son of Zariaias the son of Saouia the son of Bokka son of Abisoué the son of Phinees the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron the first priest. <sup>3</sup>This Esdras went up from Babylon as a scribe, being a man of genius in the law of Moyses, which had been delivered by the God of Israel, <sup>4</sup>and the king showed him honor, for he found favor before

the king <sup>a</sup>in all his requests<sup>a</sup>. <sup>5</sup>And some of the sons of Israel and of the priests and Leuites and temple-musicians and doorkeepers and temple-slaves came back with him to Ierusalem <sup>6</sup>in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, in the fifth month (this was the king's seventh year), for they left Babylon on the new moon of the first month and arrived in Ierusalem on the new moon of the fifth month, due to the successful journey that the Lord gave them. <sup>7</sup>For Esdras possessed much knowledge, so that he omitted nothing from the law of the Lord or the commandments to teach all Israel all the statutes and judgments.

<sup>8</sup>The written ordinance from Artaxerxes the king, having come to the attention of Esdras the priest and reader of the law of the Lord, a copy of which follows,

<sup>9</sup>King Artaxerxes to Esdras the priest and reader of the law of the Lord, greetings. <sup>10</sup>Since I on my part have also decided on humane treatment, I have given orders that those that desire of the nation of Judeans and of the priests and the Leuites and, moreover, those in our own realm—if they so choose—go together with you to Ierusalem. <sup>11</sup>Let as many as are so disposed, therefore, set out with you, just as both I and the seven Friends, my counsellors, have decreed, <sup>12</sup>in order to look into the affairs of Judea and the affairs of Ierusalem, in accordance with what is in the law of the Lord, <sup>13</sup>and to take along to Ierusalem the gifts for the Lord of Israel that both I and the Friends have vowed and to collect for the Lord in Ierusalem all the gold and silver that may be found in the country of Babylonia, together with what is given by the nation for the temple of their Lord which is in Ierusalem, <sup>14</sup>both the gold and the silver for bulls and rams and lambs and what goes with them, <sup>15</sup>so as to offer sacrifices to the Lord on the altar of their Lord, which is in Ierusalem. <sup>16</sup>And whatever you, along with your kindred, wish to do with gold and silver, discharge it in accordance with the will of your God; <sup>17</sup>also you shall place before your God who is in Ierusalem the sacred vessels of the Lord that have been given you for the use of the temple of your God that is in Ierusalem. And whatever else occurs to you as required for the temple of your God, <sup>18</sup>you will provide out of the royal treasury.

<sup>19</sup>Moreover, I, King Artaxerxes, have ordered the treasurers of Syria and Phoenicia that whatever Esdras the priest and reader of the law of the Most High God sends for, they are to take care to give to him, up to one hundred talents of silver, <sup>20</sup>and likewise also up to one hundred kors<sup>b</sup> of wheat and one hundred measures<sup>c</sup> of wine and salt in abundance. <sup>21</sup>Let all things prescribed in accordance with the law of God be scrupulously fulfilled for the Most High God so that wrath may not come upon the realm of the king and his sons. <sup>22</sup>You are also informed that no tribute or any other imposition be laid on any of the priests and the Leuites and temple-musicians and doorkeepers

<sup>a</sup>Or for all his worthy projects   <sup>b</sup>Heb 1 kor = 22 liters   <sup>c</sup>Gk 1 metretres = 22 liters

and temple-slaves and officials of this temple and that no one has authority to impose such things on them.

23 "And you, Esdras, in keeping with the wisdom of God, appoint judges and justices to judge all those who know the law of your God, throughout all Syria and Phoenicia; moreover you shall teach it to those who do not know. 24And all who transgress both the law of your God and the royal law shall be strictly punished, whether by death and physical punishment or by financial penalty or arrest."

25 Blessed be the Lord alone, who put this into the heart of the king, to glorify his house, which is in Ierousalem, 26and who honored me before the king and those who give him counsel and all his Friends and nobles. 27As for me—I became encouraged by the support of the Lord my God, and I gathered men from Israel to go up with me.

28 And these are the leaders, by their paternal families and their groups, who went up with me from Babylon in the reign of Artaxerxes the king: 29Of the sons of Phinees, Garsomos. Of the sons of Ietamaros, Gamelos. Of the sons of Daudid, Hattous the son of Sechanias. 30Of the sons of Phoros, Zacharias, and with him a hundred fifty men from the register. 31Of the sons of Phaathmoab, Eliaonias son of Zariaias, and with him two hundred men. 32Of the sons of Zathoe, Sechanias son of Iezelos, and with him three hundred men. Of the sons of Adinos, Ben son of Ionathos, and with him two hundred fifty men. 33Of the sons of Elam, Iesias son of Gotholias, and with him seventy men. 34Of the sons of Saphatias, Zariaias son of Michaelos, and with him seventy men. 35Of the sons of Ioab, Abadias son of Iezelos, and with him two hundred twelve men. 36Of the sons of Bania, Salimoth son of Iosaphias, and with him a hundred sixty men. 37Of the sons of Babi, Zacharias son of Bebai, and with him twenty-eight men. 38Of the sons of Asgath, Ioanes son of Hakatan, and with him a hundred ten men. 39Of the sons of Adonikam—they were the last ones, and these were their names: Eliphalatos, Ieouel and Samaias, and with them seventy men. 40Of the sons of Bago, Outhi the son of Istalkouros, and with him seventy men.

41 And I gathered them at the river called Theras, and we encamped at that spot three days, and I inspected them. 42And when I found there none of the sons of the priests or of the Leuites, 43I sent word to Eleazaros and Idouelos and Maasmas and Elnatan and Samaias and Ioribos, Nathan, Ennatan, Zacharias and Mosollamos, who were the leaders and men of knowledge, 44and I told them to go to Addaios, who was the leading man at the place of the treasury 45and commanded them to discuss with Addaios and his kindred and the treasurers at that place to send us men to serve as priests in the house of our Lord. 46And by the mighty hand of our Lord they brought us knowledgeable men of the sons of Mooli son of Leui son of Israel: Asebias and his sons and kindred, who numbered eighteen; 47also Hasebias and Announos and Osaias, a brother from the sons of Chanounaios, and

their sons, twenty men; 48and of the temple-slaves, whom Daudid and the leaders had given for the service of the Leuites, two hundred twenty temple-slaves; the list of all their names was reported.

49 And I proclaimed there a fast for the young men before our Lord 50so that we could seek from him both a successful journey for ourselves and for our children and the livestock that were with us. 51For I hesitated to ask the king for both foot soldiers and cavalry and for an escort for security against those who were opposed to us, 52for we had said to the king, "The strength of our Lord will be with those who seek after him for complete restoration." 53And again we petitioned our Lord about all these things, and we found him very merciful.

54 And I set apart twelve men from the tribal leaders of the priests, both Serebias and Hasamias, and ten men from their kindred with them, 55and I weighed out to them the silver and the gold and the sacred vessels of the house of our Lord, which the king himself had granted—and his counselors and the nobles and all Israel. 56And when I had weighed out, I handed over to them six hundred fifty talents of silver and silver vessels worth a hundred talents and a hundred talents of gold and twenty items of wrought gold and twelve bronze vessels of fine bronze that glittered like gold. 57And I said to them, "You too are holy to the Lord, and the vessels are holy, and the silver and the gold as a vow to the Lord, Lord of our fathers. 58Be watchful and on guard until you deliver them to the tribal leaders of the priests and the Leuites and to the leaders of the paternal families of Israel, in Ierousalem, in the priests' chambers of the house of our Lord." 59And the priests and the Leuites who took along the silver and the gold and the vessels that had been in Ierousalem carried them to the temple of the Lord.

60 And when we had left the river Theras on the twelfth of the first month, we traveled until we arrived in Ierousalem by the mighty hand of our Lord, which was upon us; the Lord rescued us from investigation—from every enemy, and we came to Ierousalem. 61And when we had been at that location three days, the silver and the gold having been weighed were handed over in the house of our Lord to the priest Marmothi of Ourias—62and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinees, and there were with them the Leuites, Iosabdos son of Iesus and Moeth son of Sabannos—all by count and weight, and the weight of everything was recorded at that very time. 63Now, those who had arrived from captivity offered sacrifices to God, Lord of Israel: twelve bulls on behalf of all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-two lambs, twelve male goats for deliverance—all as a sacrifice to the Lord. 64And they delivered the king's ordinances to the royal stewards and to the governors of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, and they honored the nation and the temple of the Lord.

65 And when these things had been completed, the leaders came to me, saying, 66"The nation of Israel and the rulers and the priests and the

Leuites have not put away from themselves the alien nations of the land as their uncleanness requires—the Chananites and Chettites and Pherozites and Iebousites and Moabites and Egyptians and Idumeans. <sup>67</sup>For both they and their sons have lived with their daughters, and the holy seed has been mixed with the alien nations of the land, and from the beginning of the matter the leaders and the nobles have been sharing in this lawlessness.”

<sup>68</sup> And it happened that, as soon as I heard these things, I tore my garments and my sacred clothing and pulled out hair from my head and beard and sat in anxiety and grief. <sup>69</sup>And all that were ever moved at the word of the Lord of Israel gathered together to me, as I mourned over this lawlessness, and I sat grief-stricken until the late afternoon sacrifice. <sup>70</sup>And when I rose from my fast, with my garments and my sacred clothing torn, when I had bent my knees and stretched out my hands to the Lord, I said,

<sup>71</sup> “O Lord, I am ashamed; I am embarrassed before your face. <sup>72</sup>For our sins have exceeded the height of our heads, and our mistakes had piled up to the sky <sup>73</sup>already from the times of our fathers, and we are in great sin to this day. <sup>74</sup>And on account of our sins and the sins of our fathers, we with our kindred and with our kings and with our priests were given over to the kings of the earth for sword and captivity and plundering, in shame until this selfsame day. <sup>75</sup>And now in some measure mercy has come to us from you, O Lord, so that a root has been left to us and a name in the location of your holiness, <sup>76</sup>even to uncover our light in the house of our Lord, to give us food in the time of our slavery. And when we were in slavery, we were not forsaken by our Lord, <sup>77</sup>but he brought us into favor before the kings of the Persians, to give us nourishment <sup>78</sup>and to honor our temple and to raise desolate Zion for us as a stronghold in Judea and Ierusalem.

<sup>79</sup> “And now, O Lord, what shall we say, when we have these things? For we have transgressed your ordinances, which you gave by the hand of your servants the prophets, saying, <sup>80</sup>“The land that you are entering to possess is a land polluted with the pollution of the aliens of the land, and they have filled it with their uncleanness. <sup>81</sup>And now, do not let their daughters marry your sons, and do not give your daughters to their sons, <sup>82</sup>and do not seek at any time to have peaceful relations with them in order that you may prevail and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever.” <sup>83</sup>And all that is happening to us results from our evil deeds and our great sins. For you, O Lord, you canceled our sins <sup>84</sup>and gave us such a root as this. Again we have turned back to transgress your law so as to be mixed up with the uncleanness of the nations of the land. <sup>85</sup>Were you not angry enough with us to destroy us without leaving us root and seed and name? <sup>86</sup>O Lord of Israel, you are genuine, for we were left as a root

on this very day. <sup>87</sup>Behold, we are now before you with our lawless deeds, for no one is able to stand in your presence any longer because of these things.”

<sup>88</sup> And when Esdras was praying—he was making confession—weeping, on the ground before the temple, there gathered to him a very large crowd from Ierusalem, men and women and youths. For there was great weeping among the multitude. <sup>89</sup>And Iechonias son of Ieelos, of the sons of Israel, called out and said to Esdras, “We have sinned against the Lord and have married alien women from the nations of the land. Even now there is hope for Israel. <sup>90</sup>Let us take an oath to the Lord on this, that we will put out all our alien wives along with their children, because it was judged right by you—and as many as submit to the authority of the law of the Lord. <sup>91</sup>Rise up, and get it done, for the task is yours, and we are with you to enforce it.” <sup>92</sup>And Esdras stood up and put under oath the tribal leaders of the priests and the Leuites of all Israel to do this. And they took an oath.

**9** And Esdras got up and went from the court of the temple to the priest’s chamber of Ioanan the son of Eliasibos. <sup>2</sup>And though he spent the night there, he did not taste food or drink water, mourning over the great acts of lawlessness of the multitude. <sup>3</sup>And a proclamation occurred throughout the whole of Judea and Ierusalem to all who had returned from the captivity that they should assemble at Ierusalem. <sup>4</sup>And if any did not present themselves within two or three days, in accordance with the judgment of the ruling elders, their livestock would be devoted to temple use, and he himself would be deemed estranged from the multitude of the captivity.

<sup>5</sup> And all those from the tribe of Ioudas and Benjamin assembled together at Ierusalem within three days; this was the ninth month, on the twentieth of the month. <sup>6</sup>And the entire multitude sat together in the large open area before the temple, shivering because of present winter. <sup>7</sup>And Esdras stood up and said to them, “You have broken the law and married alien women to add sins to Israel. <sup>8</sup>Now then, give glory, as a confession, to the Lord, God of our fathers, <sup>9</sup>and do his will, and be separated from the nations of the land and from the alien women.”

<sup>10</sup> And the entire multitude shouted and said with a loud voice, “We will do as you have said. <sup>11</sup>But the multitude is large, and the weather is wintry, and we do not have the strength to stand in the open air and have not found it, and the task we cannot do in one day or two. For we have sinned rather much in these things. <sup>12</sup>But let the leaders of the multitude take a stand, and let all those from our settlements, as many as have alien wives, come, having received time, <sup>13</sup>and furthermore the elders and judges of each location, until they undo from us the anger of the Lord over this matter.”

<sup>a</sup>Or *holy precinct*

14 Ionathas son of Azaelos and Iezias son of Thokanos undertook the matter on these terms, and Mosollamos and Leuis and Sabbataios served together as arbitrators for them. <sup>15</sup>Those from the captivity acted in accordance with all this.

16 And Esdras the priest chose for himself men who were leaders of their paternal families, all of them by name, and on the new moon of the tenth month they sat down together to examine the matter. <sup>17</sup>And the cases of the men who had taken to themselves alien wives were brought to an end by the new moon of the first month.

18 And of the priests, those who gathered together and were found to have alien wives were: <sup>19</sup>of the sons of Iesus son of Iozedek and his kindred, Maseas and Eleazaros and Ioribos and Iodanos. <sup>20</sup>And they <sup>a</sup>put on their hands to put away their wives and as expiation to offer rams for their mistake. <sup>21</sup>And of the sons of Emmer: Hananias and Zabdaios and Manes and Samaios and Iereel and Azarias. <sup>22</sup>And of the sons of Phaisour: Elioenais, Maesias, Ismaelos and Nathanaelos and Okidelos and Salthas.

23 And of the Leuites: Iozabdos and Semeis and Kolios (this is, Kalitas) and Pathaios and Ooudas and Ioanas. <sup>24</sup>Of the temple-musicians: Eliasibos, Bakchouros. <sup>25</sup>Of the doorkeepers: Salloumos and Tolbanes.

26 Of Israel: of the sons of Phoros: Iermas and Iezias and Melchias and Miaminos and Eleazaros and Hasibias and Bannaia. <sup>27</sup>Of the sons of Elam: Matthania and Zacharias and Jezrielos and Obadimos and Ieremoth and Elias. <sup>28</sup>And of the sons of Zamothe: Eliadas, Eliasimos, Othonias, Iarimoth and Sabathos and Zerdaias. <sup>29</sup>And of the sons of Bebai: Ioanes and Hananias and Zabdos and Emathis. <sup>30</sup>And of the sons of Mani: Olamos, Mallouchos, Iedaivos, Iasoubos and Asaelos and Ieremoth. <sup>31</sup>And of the sons of Addi: Naathos and Moossias, Lakkounos and Naidos and Matthania and Sesthel and Balnouos and Manasseas. <sup>32</sup>And of the sons of Hannan: Elionas and Asaias and Melchias and Sabbaia and Simon Chosamaios. <sup>33</sup>And of the sons of Hasom: Maltannaivos and Mattathaias and Sabadaivos and Eliphalat and Manasses and Semei. <sup>34</sup>And of the sons of Baani: Ieremias, Moadios, Maeros, Iouel, Mamdai and Pedias and Anos, Karabasion and Eliasibos and Mamnitaimos, Eliasib, Bannous, Elialis, Someis, Selemias, Nathania. And of the sons of Ezora: Sesis, Ezril, Azaelos, Samatos, Zambris, Iosepos. <sup>35</sup>And of the sons of Nooma: Mazitias, Zabadaias, Edais, Iouel, Banaia. <sup>36</sup>All these had married alien women, and they divorced them together with their children.

37 And the priests and the Leuites and those from Israel settled down in Ierousalem and throughout the country. On the new moon of the seventh month—and the sons of Israel were in their settlements—<sup>38</sup>and the entire multitude gathered with one accord in the large open area before the gateway toward the east of the temple, <sup>39</sup>and they told Esdras the chief priest and reader to bring the law of Moyses that had been handed over by the Lord, God of Israel. <sup>40</sup>And Esdras the chief priest brought the law for the entire multitude, from man to woman, and for all the priests to hear the law, on the new moon of the seventh month. <sup>41</sup>And he kept reading aloud in the large open area before the gateway of the temple from dawn until midday in the presence of both men and women, and the entire multitude gave its attention to the law. <sup>42</sup>And Esdras the priest and reader of the law stood on the wooden platform that had been prepared, <sup>43</sup>and beside him stood Mattathias, Sammous, Hananias, Azarias, Ourias, Hezekias and Baalsamos on his right <sup>44</sup>and on his left Phadaivos, Misael, Melchias, Lothasoubos, Nabarias, Zacharias. <sup>45</sup>And when Esdras took up the book of the law in the presence of the multitude (for he was seated in the place of honor in the presence of all) <sup>46</sup>and when he opened the law, they all stood straight. And Esdras blessed the Lord, God Most High, God Sabaoth, Almighty, <sup>47</sup>and the whole multitude exclaimed "Amen," and when they lifted up their hands and fell to the ground, they did obeisance to God. <sup>48</sup>The Leuites Iesus and Annious and Sarabias, Iadinos, Iakoubos, Sabbataios, Hautaias, Maiannas, Kalitas, Azarias and Iozabdos, Hananias, Phalias were teaching the law of the Lord and were reading the law of the Lord to the multitude, at the same time inspiring the reading.

49 And Hattharates said to Esdras, the chief priest and reader, and to the Leuites who were teaching the multitude, with regard to all, <sup>50</sup>"This day is holy to the Lord"—and all were weeping when they heard the law—<sup>51</sup>"so proceed, and eat fats, and drink sweet drinks, and send portions to those who do not have, <sup>52</sup>for the day is holy to the Lord. And do not be sorrowful, for the Lord will exalt you." <sup>53</sup>And the Leuites were commanding all the common people, saying, "This day is holy; do not be sorrowful." <sup>54</sup>And they all departed to eat and drink and enjoy themselves and to give portions to those who had none and to be greatly joyful, <sup>55</sup>because they were also inspired by the words by which they had been taught, and they had gathered together.

<sup>a</sup>Possibly *pledged themselves*

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