

# The First Book of Esdras

## Chapter One

<sup>1</sup> Josiah kept the Passover to his Lord in Jerusalem; he killed the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month, <sup>2</sup> having placed the priests according to their divisions, arrayed in their vestments, in the temple of the Lord. <sup>3</sup> He told the Levites, the temple servants of Israel, that they should sanctify themselves to the Lord and put the holy ark of the Lord in the house that King Solomon, son of David, had built, <sup>4</sup> and he said, "You need no longer carry it on your shoulders. Now worship the Lord your God and serve his nation Israel; prepare yourselves by your families and kindred, in accordance with the directions of King David of Israel and the magnificence of his son Solomon. <sup>5</sup> Stand in order in the temple according to the groupings of the ancestral houses of you Levites, who minister before your kindred the people of Israel, <sup>6</sup> and kill the Passover lamb and prepare the sacrifices for your kindred, and keep the Passover according to the commandment of the Lord that was given to Moses."

<sup>7</sup> To the people who were present Josiah gave thirty thousand lambs and kids and three thousand calves; these were given from the king's possessions, as he promised, to the people and the priests and Levites. <sup>8</sup> Hilkiyah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the chief officers of the temple, gave to the priests for the Passover two thousand six hundred sheep and three hundred calves. <sup>9</sup> And Jeconiah and Shemaiah and his brother Nethanel, and Hashabiah and Ochiel and Joram, captains over thousands, gave the Levites for the Passover five thousand sheep and seven hundred calves.

<sup>10</sup> This is what took place. The priests and the Levites, having the unleavened bread, stood in proper order according to kindred and the grouping of the ancestral houses, before the people, to make the offering to the Lord as it is written in the book of Moses; this they did in the morning. <sup>11</sup> They roasted the Passover lamb with fire, as required, and they boiled the sacrifices in bronze pots and caldrons, with a pleasing odor, and carried them to all the people. <sup>12</sup> Afterward they prepared the Passover for themselves and for their kindred the priests, the sons of Aaron, <sup>13</sup> because the priests were offering the fat until nightfall, so the Levites prepared it for themselves and for their kindred the priests, the sons of Aaron. <sup>14</sup> The temple singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their place according to the arrangement made by David, and also Asaph, Zechariah, and Eddinus, who represented the king. <sup>15</sup> The gatekeepers were at each gate; no one needed to interrupt his daily duties, for their kindred the Levites prepared the Passover for them.

<sup>16</sup> So the things that had to do with the sacrifices to the Lord were accomplished that day: the Passover was kept and the sacrifices were offered on the altar of the Lord, according to the command of King Josiah. <sup>17</sup> And the people of Israel who were present at that time kept the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread seven

days. <sup>18</sup> No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the times of the prophet Samuel; <sup>19</sup> none of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as was kept by Josiah and the priests and Levites and the people of Judah and all of Israel who were living in Jerusalem. <sup>20</sup> In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept.

<sup>21</sup> And the deeds of Josiah were upright in the sight of the Lord, for his heart was full of godliness. <sup>22</sup> In ancient times the events of his reign have been recorded— concerning those who sinned and acted wickedly toward the Lord beyond any other nation or kingdom and how they grieved the Lord deeply, so that the words of the Lord fell upon Israel.

<sup>23</sup> After all these acts of Josiah, it happened that Pharaoh, king of Egypt, went to make war at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah went out against him. <sup>24</sup> And the king of Egypt sent word to him, saying, “What have we to do with each other, O king of Judea? <sup>25</sup> I was not sent against you by the Lord God, for my war is at the Euphrates. And now the Lord is with me! The Lord is with me, urging me on! Stand aside, and do not oppose the Lord.”

<sup>26</sup> Josiah, however, did not turn back to his chariot but tried to fight with him and did not heed the words of the prophet Jeremiah from the mouth of the Lord. <sup>27</sup> He joined battle with him in the plain of Megiddo, and the commanders came down against King Josiah. <sup>28</sup> The king said to his servants, “Take me away from the battle, for I am very weak.” And immediately his servants took him out of the line of battle. <sup>29</sup> He got into his second chariot, and after he was brought back to Jerusalem he died and was buried in the tomb of his ancestors.

<sup>30</sup> In all Judea they mourned for Josiah. The prophet Jeremiah lamented for Josiah, and the principal men, with the women have made lamentation for him to this day; it was ordained that this should always be done throughout the whole people of Israel. <sup>31</sup> These things are written in the book of the histories of the kings of Judea, and every one of the acts of Josiah and his splendor and his understanding of the law of the Lord and the things that he had done before and these that are now told are recorded in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

<sup>32</sup> The people of the nation took Jeconiah son of Josiah, who was twenty-three years old, and made him king in succession to his father Josiah. <sup>33</sup> He reigned three months in Judah and Jerusalem. Then the king of Egypt deposed him from reigning in Jerusalem <sup>34</sup> and fined the nation one hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold. <sup>35</sup> The king of Egypt made his brother Jehoiakim king of Judea and Jerusalem. <sup>36</sup> Jehoiakim put the nobles in prison and seized his brother Zarius and brought him back from Egypt.

<sup>37</sup> Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign in Judea and Jerusalem; he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. <sup>38</sup> King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came up against him; he bound him with a chain of bronze and took him

away to Babylon. <sup>39</sup> Nebuchadnezzar also took some holy vessels of the Lord and carried them away and stored them in his temple in Babylon. <sup>40</sup> But the things that are reported about Jehoiakim and his uncleanness and impiety are written in the annals of the kings.

<sup>41</sup> His son Jehoiachin became king in his place; when he was made king he was eighteen years old, <sup>42</sup> and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. <sup>43</sup> A year later Nebuchadnezzar sent and removed him to Babylon, with the holy vessels of the Lord, <sup>44</sup> and made Zedekiah king of Judea and Jerusalem.

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old, and he reigned eleven years. <sup>45</sup> He also did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and did not heed the words spoken by the prophet Jeremiah from the mouth of the Lord. <sup>46</sup> Although King Nebuchadnezzar had made him swear by the name of the Lord, he broke his oath and rebelled; he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart and transgressed the laws of the Lord, the God of Israel. <sup>47</sup> Even the leaders of the people and of the priests committed many acts of sacrilege and lawlessness beyond all the unclean deeds of all the nations and polluted the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem—the temple that God had made holy. <sup>48</sup> The God of their ancestors sent his messenger to call them back, because he would have spared them and his dwelling place. <sup>49</sup> But they mocked his messengers, and whenever the Lord spoke, they scoffed at his prophets, until God, in his anger against his nation because of their ungodly acts, gave the command to bring the kings of the Chaldeans against them. <sup>50</sup> The Chaldeans killed their young men with the sword around their holy temple and did not spare young man or young woman, elder or child, for he gave them all into their hands. <sup>51</sup> They took all the holy vessels of the Lord, great and small, the treasure chests of the Lord, and the royal stores and carried them away to Babylon. <sup>52</sup> They burned the house of the Lord, broke down the walls of Jerusalem, burned its towers with fire, <sup>53</sup> and utterly destroyed all its glorious things. Nebuchadnezza led the survivors away to Babylon with the sword, <sup>54</sup> and they were servants to him and to his sons until the Persians began to reign, in fulfillment of the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, <sup>55</sup> saying, “Until the land has enjoyed its Sabbaths, it shall keep Sabbath all the time of its desolation until the completion of seventy years.”

## **Chapter 2**

<sup>1</sup> In the first year of Cyrus as king of the Persians, so that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, <sup>2</sup> the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of the Persians, and he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing:

<sup>3</sup> “Thus says Cyrus king of the Persians: The Lord of Israel, the Lord Most High, has made me king of the world, <sup>4</sup> and he has commanded me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judea. <sup>5</sup> If any of you, therefore, are of his nation, may your

Lord be with you; go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judea, and build the house of the Lord of Israel—he is the Lord who dwells in Jerusalem—<sup>6</sup> and let each of you, wherever you may live, be helped by your neighbors with gold and silver, with gifts and with horses and cattle, besides the other things added as votive offerings for the temple of the Lord that is in Jerusalem.”

<sup>7</sup> Then arose the heads of families of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, and all whose spirit the Lord had stirred to go up to build the house in Jerusalem for the Lord; <sup>8</sup> their neighbors helped them with everything, with silver and gold, with horses and cattle, and with a very great number of votive offerings from many whose hearts were stirred.

<sup>9</sup> King Cyrus also brought out the holy vessels of the Lord that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and stored in his temple of idols. <sup>10</sup> When King Cyrus of the Persians brought these out, he gave them to Mithridates, his treasurer, <sup>11</sup> and by him they were given to Sheshbazzar, the governor of Judea. <sup>12</sup> The number of these was: one thousand gold cups, one thousand silver cups, twenty-nine silver censers, thirty gold bowls, two thousand four hundred ten silver bowls, and one thousand other vessels. <sup>13</sup> All the vessels were handed over, gold and silver, five thousand four hundred sixty-nine, <sup>14</sup> and they were carried back by Sheshbazzar with the returning exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem.

<sup>15</sup> In the time of King Artaxerxes of the Persians, Bishlam, Mithridates, Tabeel, Rehum, Beltethmus, the scribe Shimshai, and the rest of their associates living in Samaria and other places wrote him the following letter, against those who were living in Judea and Jerusalem:

<sup>16</sup> “To King Artaxerxes our lord, your servants the recorder Rehum and the scribe Shimshai and the other members of their council, and the judges in Coelesyria and Phoenicia: <sup>17</sup> Let it now be known to our lord the king that the Jews who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem and are building that rebellious and wicked city, repairing its marketplaces and walls and laying the foundations for a temple. <sup>18</sup> Now if this city is built and the walls finished, they will not only refuse to pay tribute but will even resist kings. Since the building of the temple is now going on, we think it best not to neglect such a matter but to speak to our lord the king in order that, if it seems good to you, search may be made in the records of your ancestors. <sup>19</sup> You will find in the annals what has been written about them and will learn that this city was rebellious, troubling both kings and other cities, and that the Jews were rebels and kept setting up blockades in it from of old. That is why this city was laid waste. <sup>20</sup> Therefore we now make known to you, O lord and king, that if this city is built and its walls finished, you will no longer have access to Coelesyria and Phoenicia.”

<sup>21</sup> Then the king, in reply to the recorder Rehum, Beltethmus, the scribe Shimshai, and the others associated with them and living in Samaria and Syria and Phoenicia, wrote as follows:

<sup>22</sup> "I have read the letter that you sent me. So I ordered search to be made, and it has been found that this city from of old has fought against kings, <sup>23</sup> that the people in it were given to rebellion and war, and that mighty and cruel kings ruled in Jerusalem and exacted tribute from Coelesyria and Phoenicia. <sup>24</sup> Therefore I have now issued orders to prevent these people from building the city and to take care that nothing more be done and that such wicked proceedings go no further to the annoyance of kings."

<sup>25</sup> Then, when the letter from King Artaxerxes was read, Rehum and the scribe Shimshai and their associates went quickly to Jerusalem, with cavalry and a large number of armed troops, and began to hinder the builders. And the building of the temple in Jerusalem stopped until the second year of the reign of King Darius of the Persians.

### **Chapter Three**

<sup>1</sup> Now King Darius gave a great banquet for all who were under him, all who were born in his house, and all the nobles of Media and Persia, <sup>2</sup> and all the satraps and generals and governors who were under him in the hundred twenty-seven satrapies from India to Ethiopia. <sup>3</sup> They ate and drank, and when they were satisfied they went away, and King Darius went to his bedroom; he went to sleep but woke up again.

<sup>4</sup> Then the three young men of the bodyguard who kept guard over the person of the king said to one another, <sup>5</sup> "Let each of us state what one word is strongest, and to the one whose statement seems wisest, King Darius will give rich gifts and great honors of victory. <sup>6</sup> He shall be clothed in purple and drink from gold cups and sleep on a gold bed and have a chariot with gold bridles and a turban of fine linen and a necklace around his neck, <sup>7</sup> and because of his wisdom he shall sit next to Darius and shall be called Kinsman of Darius."

<sup>8</sup> Then each bodyguard wrote his own statement, and they sealed them and put them under the pillow of King Darius and said, <sup>9</sup> "When the king wakes, they will give him the writing, and to the one whose statement the king and the three nobles of Persia judge to be wisest the victory shall be given according to what is written." <sup>10</sup> The first wrote, "Wine is strongest." <sup>11</sup> The second wrote, "The king is strongest." <sup>12</sup> The third wrote, "Women are strongest, but above all things truth is victor."

<sup>13</sup> When the king awoke, they took the writing and gave it to him, and he read it. <sup>14</sup> Then he sent and summoned all the nobles of Persia and Media and the satraps

and generals and governors and prefects, and he took his seat in the council chamber, and the writing was read in their presence. <sup>15</sup> He said, "Call the young men, and they shall explain their statements." So they were summoned and came in. <sup>16</sup> They said to them, "Explain to us what you have written."

Then the first, who had spoken of the strength of wine, began and said: <sup>17</sup> "Gentlemen, how is wine the strongest? It leads astray the minds of all who drink it. <sup>18</sup> It makes equal the mind of the king and the orphan, of the slave and the free, of the poor and the rich. <sup>19</sup> It turns every thought to feasting and gladness and forgets all sorrow and debt. <sup>20</sup> It makes all hearts feel rich, forgets kings and satraps, and makes everyone talk of extravagant sums. <sup>21</sup> When people drink they forget to be friendly with friends and kindred, and before long they draw their swords. <sup>22</sup> And when they recover from the wine, they do not remember what they have done. <sup>23</sup> Gentlemen, is not wine the strongest, since it forces people to do these things?" When he had said this, he stopped speaking.

## Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup> Then the second, who had spoken of the strength of the king, began to speak: <sup>2</sup> "Gentlemen, are not men strongest, who rule over land and sea and all that is in them? <sup>3</sup> But the king is stronger; he is their lord and master, and whatever he says to them they obey. <sup>4</sup> If he tells them to make war on one another, they do it, and if he sends them out against the enemy, they go and conquer mountains, walls, and towers. <sup>5</sup> They kill and are killed and do not disobey the king's command; if they win the victory, they bring everything to the king—whatever spoil they take and everything else. <sup>6</sup> Likewise those who do not serve in the army or make war but till the soil; whenever they sow and reap, they bring some to the king, and they compel one another to pay taxes to the king. <sup>7</sup> And yet he is only one man! If he tells them to kill, they kill; if he tells them to release, they release; <sup>8</sup> if he tells them to attack, they attack; if he tells them to lay waste, they lay waste; if he tells them to build, they build; <sup>9</sup> if he tells them to cut down, they cut down; if he tells them to plant, they plant. <sup>10</sup> All his people and his armies obey him. Furthermore, he reclines, he eats and drinks and sleeps, <sup>11</sup> but they keep watch around him, and no one may go away to attend to his own affairs, nor do they disobey him. <sup>12</sup> Gentlemen, why is not the king the strongest, since he is to be obeyed in this fashion?" And he stopped speaking.

<sup>13</sup> Then the third, who had spoken of women and truth (and this was Zerubbabel), began to speak: <sup>14</sup> "Gentlemen, is not the king great, and are not men many, and is not wine strong? Who is it, then, who rules them or has the mastery over them? Is it not women? <sup>15</sup> Women gave birth to the king and to every people that rules over sea and land. <sup>16</sup> From women they came, and women brought up the very men who plant the vineyards from which comes wine. <sup>17</sup> Women make men's clothes; they bring men glory; men cannot exist without women. <sup>18</sup> If men gather gold and silver or any other beautiful thing and then see a woman lovely in appearance and

beauty, <sup>19</sup> they let all those things go and gape at her and with open mouths stare at her, and all prefer her to gold or silver or any other beautiful thing. <sup>20</sup> A man leaves his own father, who brought him up, and his own region and clings to his wife. <sup>21</sup> With his wife he ends his days, with no thought of his father or his mother or his region. <sup>22</sup> Therefore you must realize that women rule over you!

“Do you not labor and toil and bring everything and give it to women? <sup>23</sup> A man takes his sword and goes out to travel and rob and steal and to sail the sea and rivers; <sup>24</sup> he faces lions, and he walks in darkness, and when he steals and robs and plunders, he brings it back to the woman he loves. <sup>25</sup> A man loves his wife more than his father or his mother. <sup>26</sup> Many men have lost their minds because of women and have become slaves because of them. <sup>27</sup> Many have perished or stumbled or sinned because of women. <sup>28</sup> And now do you not believe me?

“Is not the king great in his authority? Do not all lands fear to touch him? <sup>29</sup> Yet I have seen him with Apame, the king’s concubine, the daughter of the illustrious Bartacus; she would sit at the king’s right hand <sup>30</sup> and take the crown from the king’s head and put it on her own and slap the king with her left hand. <sup>31</sup> At this the king would gaze at her with mouth agape. If she smiles at him, he laughs; if she loses her temper with him, he flatters her, so that she may be reconciled to him. <sup>32</sup> Gentlemen, why are not women strong, since they do such things?”

<sup>33</sup> Then the king and the nobles looked at one another, and he began to speak about truth: <sup>34</sup> “Gentlemen, are not women strong? The earth is vast, and heaven is high, and the sun is swift in its course, for it makes the circuit of the heavens and returns to its place in one day. <sup>35</sup> Is not the one who does these things great? But truth is great and stronger than all things. <sup>36</sup> The whole earth calls upon truth, and heaven blesses it. All the works quake and tremble, and with it there is nothing unrighteous. <sup>37</sup> Wine is unrighteous; the king is unrighteous; women are unrighteous; all humans are unrighteous; all their works are unrighteous and all such things. There is no truth in them, and in their unrighteousness they will perish. <sup>38</sup> But truth endures and is strong forever and lives and prevails forever and ever. <sup>39</sup> With it there is no partiality or preference, but it does what is righteous instead of anything that is unrighteous or wicked. Everyone approves its deeds, <sup>40</sup> and there is nothing unrighteous in its judgment. To it belongs the strength and the kingship and the power and the majesty of all the ages. Blessed be the God of truth!”<sup>41</sup> When he stopped speaking, all the people shouted and said, “Great is truth and strongest of all!”

<sup>42</sup> Then the king said to Zerubbabel. “Ask what you wish, even beyond what is written, and we will give it to you, for you have been found to be the wisest. You shall sit next to me and be called my Kinsman.” <sup>43</sup> Then he said to the king, “Remember the vow that you made on the day when you became king, to build Jerusalem <sup>44</sup> and to send back all the vessels that were taken from Jerusalem, which Cyrus set apart when he began to destroy Babylon and vowed to send them back there. <sup>45</sup> You also vowed to build the temple, which the Edomites burned when

Judea was laid waste by the Chaldeans. <sup>46</sup> And now, O lord the king, this is what I ask and request of you, and this befits your greatness. I pray, therefore, that you fulfill the vow whose fulfillment you vowed to the King of heaven with your own lips.”

<sup>47</sup> Then King Darius got up and kissed him and wrote letters for him to all the treasurers and governors and generals and satraps, that they should give safe conduct to him and to all who were going up with him to build Jerusalem.<sup>48</sup> And he wrote letters to all the governors in Coelesyria and Phoenicia and to those in Lebanon, to bring cedar timber from Lebanon to Jerusalem and to help him build the city. <sup>49</sup> He wrote in behalf of all the Jews who were going up from his kingdom to Judea, in the interest of their freedom, that no officer or satrap or governor or treasurer should forcibly enter their doors; <sup>50</sup> that all the region that they would occupy should be theirs without tribute; that the Idumeans should give up the villages of the Jews that they held; <sup>51</sup> that twenty talents a year should be given for the building of the temple until it was completed <sup>52</sup> and an additional ten talents a year for burnt offerings to be offered on the altar every day, in accordance with the commandment to make seventeen offerings; <sup>53</sup> and that all who came from Babylonia to build the city should have their freedom, they and their children and all the priests who came. <sup>54</sup> He wrote also concerning their support and the priests’ vestments in which they were to minister. <sup>55</sup> He wrote that the support for the Levites should be provided until the day when the temple would be finished and Jerusalem built. <sup>56</sup> He wrote that land and wages should be provided for all who guarded the city. <sup>57</sup> And he sent back from Babylon all the vessels that Cyrus had set apart; everything that Cyrus had ordered to be done, he also commanded to be done and to be sent to Jerusalem.

<sup>58</sup> When the young man went out, he lifted up his face to heaven toward Jerusalem and praised the King of heaven, saying, <sup>59</sup> “From you comes the victory; from you comes wisdom, and yours is the glory. I am your servant.<sup>60</sup> Blessed are you, who have given me wisdom; I give you thanks, O Lord of our ancestors.”

<sup>61</sup> So he took the letters and went to Babylon and told this to all his kindred. <sup>62</sup> And they praised the God of their ancestors because he had given them freedom and permission <sup>63</sup> to go up and build Jerusalem and the temple that is called by his name, and they feasted, with music and rejoicing, for seven days.

## **Chapter Five**

<sup>1</sup> After this the heads of ancestral houses were chosen to go up, according to their tribes, with their wives and sons and daughters and their male and female servants and their livestock. <sup>2</sup> And Darius sent with them a thousand cavalry to take them back to Jerusalem in safety, with the music of drums and flutes; <sup>3</sup> all their kindred were making merry. And he made them go up with them.



<sup>4</sup> These are the names of the men who went up, according to their ancestral houses in the tribes, over their groups: <sup>5</sup> the priests, the descendants of Phinehas son of Aaron; Jeshua son of Jozadak son of Seraiah and Joakim son of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, of the house of David, of the lineage of Phares, of the tribe of Judah, <sup>6</sup> who spoke wise words before King Darius of the Persians, in the second year of his reign, in the month of Nisan, the first month.

<sup>7</sup> These are the Judeans who came up out of their sojourn in exile, whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had carried away to Babylon <sup>8</sup> and who returned to Jerusalem and the rest of Judea, each to his own town. They came with Zerubbabel and Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Resaiah, Eneneus, Mordecai, Beelsarus, Aspharasus, Borolias, Rehum, and Baanah, their leaders.

<sup>9</sup> The number of those of the nation and their leaders: the descendants of Parosh, two thousand one hundred seventy-two. The descendants of Shephatiah, four hundred seventy-two. <sup>10</sup> The descendants of Arah, seven hundred fifty-six. <sup>11</sup> The descendants of Pahath-moab, of the descendants of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred twelve. <sup>12</sup> The descendants of Elam, one thousand two hundred fifty-four. The descendants of Zattu, nine hundred forty-five. The descendants of Chorbe, seven hundred five. The descendants of Bani, six hundred forty-eight. <sup>13</sup> The descendants of Bebai, six hundred forty-eight. <sup>13</sup> The descendants of Bebai, six hundred twenty-three. The descendants of Azgad, one thousand three hundred twenty-two. <sup>14</sup> The descendants of Adonikam, six hundred sixty-seven. The descendants of Bigvai, two thousand sixty-six. The descendants of Adin, four hundred fifty-four. <sup>15</sup> The descendants of Ater, namely, of Hezekiah, ninety-two. The descendants of Kilan and Azetas, sixty-seven. The descendants of Azaru, four hundred thirty-two. <sup>16</sup> The descendants of Annias, one hundred one. The descendants of Arom. The descendants of Bezai, three hundred twenty-three. The descendants of Arsiphurith, one hundred twelve. <sup>17</sup> The descendants of Baiterus, three thousand five. The descendants of Bethlomon, one hundred twenty-three. <sup>18</sup> Those from Netophah, fifty-five. Those from Anathoth, one hundred fifty-eight. Those from Bethasmoth, forty-two. <sup>19</sup> Those from Kiriatharim, twenty-five. Those from Chephirah and Beeroth, seven hundred forty-three. <sup>20</sup> The Chadasans and Ammidians, four hundred twenty-two. Those from Kirama and Geba, six hundred twenty-one. <sup>21</sup> Those from Macalon, one hundred twenty-two. Those from Betolio, fifty-two. The descendants of Niphish, one hundred fifty-six. <sup>22</sup> The descendants of the other Calamolalus and Ono, seven hundred twenty-five. The descendants of Jerechus, three hundred forty-five. <sup>23</sup> The descendants of Senaah, three thousand three hundred thirty.

<sup>24</sup> The priests: the descendants of Jedaiah son of Jeshua, of the descendants of Anasib, nine hundred seventy-two. The descendants of Immer, one thousand and fifty-two. <sup>25</sup> The descendants of Pashhur, one thousand two hundred forty-seven. The descendants of Charme, one thousand seventeen.

<sup>26</sup> The Levites: the descendants of Jeshua and Kadmiel and Bannas and Sudias, seventy-four. <sup>27</sup> The temple singers: the descendants of Asaph, one hundred twenty-eight. <sup>28</sup> The gatekeepers: the descendants of Shallum, the descendants of Ater, the descendants of Talmon, the descendants of Akkub, the descendants of Hatita, the descendants of Shobai, in all one hundred thirty-nine.

<sup>29</sup> The temple servants: the descendants of Esau, the descendants of Hasupha, the descendants of Tabbaoth, the descendants of Keros, the descendants of Sua, the descendants of Padon, the descendants of Lebanah, the descendants of Hagabah, <sup>30</sup> the descendants of Akkub, the descendants of Uthai, the descendants of Ketab, the descendants of Hagab, the descendants of Subai, the descendants of Hana, the descendants of Cathua, the descendants of Geddur, <sup>31</sup> the descendants of Jairus, the descendants of Daisan, the descendants of Noeba, the descendants of Chezib, the descendants of Gazera, the descendants of Uzza, the descendants of Phinoe, the descendants of Hasrah, the descendants of Basthai, the descendants of Asnah, the descendants of Maani, the descendants of Nephisim, the descendants of Acuph, the descendants of Hakupha, the descendants of Asur, the descendants of Pharakim, the descendants of Bazluth, <sup>32</sup> the descendants of Mehida, the descendants of Cutha, the descendants of Charea, the descendants of Barkos, the descendants of Serar, the descendants of Temah, the descendants of Neziah, the descendants of Hatipha.

<sup>33</sup> The descendants of Solomon's servants: the descendants of Assaphioth, the descendants of Peruda, the descendants of Jaalah, the descendants of Lozon, the descendants of Isdael, the descendants of Shephatiah, <sup>34</sup> the descendants of Agia, the descendants of Pochereth-hazzebaim, the descendants of Sarothie, the descendants of Masiah, the descendants of Gas, the descendants of Addus, the descendants of Subas, the descendants of Apherra, the descendants of Barodis, the descendants of Shaphat, the descendants of Allon.

<sup>35</sup> All the temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants were three hundred seventy-two.

<sup>36</sup> The following are those who came up from Tel-melah and Tel-harsha, under the leadership of Cherub, Addan, and Immer, <sup>37</sup> though they could not prove by their ancestral houses or lineage that they belonged to Israel: the descendants of Delaiah son of Tobiah, and the descendants of Nekoda, six hundred fifty-two.

<sup>38</sup> Of the priests the following had assumed the priesthood but were not found registered: the descendants of Habaiah, the descendants of Hakkoz, and the descendants of Jaddus who had married Agia, one of the daughters of Barzillai, and was called by his name. <sup>39</sup> When a search was made in the register and the genealogy of these men was not found, they were excluded from serving as priests. <sup>40</sup> And Nehemiah and Attharias told them not to share in the holy things until a high priest should appear wearing Urim and Thummim.

<sup>41</sup> All those of Israel, twelve or more years of age, besides male and female servants, were forty-two thousand three hundred sixty; their male and female servants were seven thousand three hundred thirty-seven; there were two hundred forty-five musicians and singers. <sup>42</sup> There were four hundred thirty-five camels, seven thousand thirty-six horses, two hundred forty-five mules, and five thousand five hundred twenty-five donkeys.

<sup>43</sup> Some of the heads of families, when they came to the temple of God that is in Jerusalem, vowed that, to the best of their ability, they would erect the house on its site <sup>44</sup> and that they would give to the sacred treasury for the work a thousand minas of gold, five thousand minas of silver, and one hundred priests' vestments.

<sup>45</sup> The priests, the Levites, and some of the people settled in Jerusalem and its region and the temple singers, the gatekeepers, and all Israel in their towns.

<sup>46</sup> When the seventh month came and the Israelites were all in their own homes, they gathered with a single purpose in the square before the first gate toward the east. <sup>47</sup> Then Jeshua son of Jozadak, with his fellow priests, and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, with his kinsmen, took their places and prepared the altar of the God of Israel, <sup>48</sup> to offer burnt offerings upon it, in accordance with the directions in the book of Moses the man of God. <sup>49</sup> And some joined them from the other nations of the land. And they erected the altar in its place, for all the peoples of the land were hostile to them and were stronger than they, and they offered sacrifices at the proper times and burnt offerings to the Lord morning and evening. <sup>50</sup> They kept the Festival of Booths, as it is commanded in the law, and offered the proper sacrifices every day <sup>51</sup> and thereafter the regular offerings and sacrifices on Sabbaths and at new moons and at all the consecrated feasts. <sup>52</sup> And all who had made any vow to God began to offer sacrifices to God, from the new moon of the seventh month, though the temple of God was not yet built. <sup>53</sup> They gave money to the masons and the carpenters and food and drink and carts to the Sidonians and the Tyrians to bring cedar logs from Lebanon and convey them in rafts to the harbor of Joppa, according to the decree that they had in writing from King Cyrus of the Persians.

<sup>54</sup> In the second year after their coming to the temple of God in Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak made a beginning, together with their kindred and the Levitical priests and all who had come back to Jerusalem from exile, <sup>55</sup> and they laid the foundation of the temple of God on the new moon of the second month in the second year after they came to Judea and Jerusalem. <sup>56</sup> They appointed the Levites who were twenty or more years of age to have charge of the work of the Lord. And Jeshua arose and his sons and kindred and his brother Kadmiel and the sons of Jeshua Emadabun and the sons of Joda son of Iliadun, with their sons and kindred, all the Levites, pressing forward the work on the house of God with a single purpose.

So the builders built the temple of the Lord. <sup>57</sup> And the priests stood arrayed in their vestments, with musical instruments and trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of

Asaph, with cymbals, praising the Lord and blessing him, according to the directions of King David of Israel; <sup>58</sup> they sang hymns, giving thanks to the Lord, "For his goodness and his glory are forever upon all Israel." <sup>59</sup> And all the people sounded trumpets and shouted with a great shout, praising the Lord for the erection of the house of the Lord. <sup>60</sup> Some of the Levitical priests and heads of ancestral houses, old men who had seen the former house, came to the building of this one with outcries and loud weeping, <sup>61</sup> while many came with trumpets and a joyful noise, <sup>62</sup> so that the people could not hear the trumpets because of the weeping of the people.

For the multitude sounded the trumpets loudly, so that the sound was heard far away, <sup>63</sup> and when the enemies of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin heard it, they came to find out what the sound of the trumpets meant. <sup>64</sup> They learned that those who had returned from exile were building the temple for the Lord God of Israel. <sup>65</sup> So they approached Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the heads of the ancestral houses and said to them, "We will build with you. <sup>66</sup> For we obey your Lord just as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of King Esar-haddon of the Assyrians, who brought us here." <sup>67</sup> But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the heads of the ancestral houses in 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, as Cyrus, the king of the Persians, has commanded us." <sup>69</sup> But the nations of the land besieged those in Judea, cut off their supplies, and hindered their building, <sup>70</sup> and by plots and demagoguery and uprisings they prevented the completion of the building as long as King Cyrus lived. They were kept from building for two years, until the reign of Darius.

## **Chapter Six**

<sup>1</sup> Now in the second year of the reign of Darius, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo prophesied to the Jews who were in Judea and Jerusalem; they prophesied to them in the name of the Lord God of Israel. <sup>2</sup> Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak began to build the house of the Lord that is in Jerusalem, with the help of the prophets of the Lord who were with them.

<sup>3</sup> At the same time Sisinnus the governor of Syria and Phoenicia and Sathrabuzanes and their associates came to them and said, <sup>4</sup> "By whose order are you building this house and this roof and finishing all the other things? And who are the builders who are finishing these things?" <sup>5</sup> Yet the elders of the Jews were dealt with kindly, for the providence of the Lord was over the captives; <sup>6</sup> they were not prevented from building until word could be sent to Darius concerning them and a report made.

<sup>7</sup> A copy of the letter that Sisinnus the governor of Syria and Phoenicia and Sathrabuzanes and their associates the local rulers in Syria and Phoenicia wrote and sent to Darius:

“To King Darius, greetings. <sup>8</sup> Let it be fully known to our lord the king that, when we went to the region of Judea and entered the city of Jerusalem, we found the elders of the Jews, who had been in exile, building in the city of Jerusalem a great new house for the Lord, of hewn stone, with costly timber laid in the walls. <sup>9</sup> These operations are going on rapidly, and the work is prospering in their hands and being completed with all splendor and care. <sup>10</sup> Then we asked these elders, ‘At whose command are you building this house and laying the foundations of this structure?’ <sup>11</sup> In order that we might inform you in writing who the leaders are, we questioned them and asked them for a list of the names of those who are instigating the disturbance. <sup>12</sup> They answered us, ‘We are the servants of the Lord who created the heaven and the earth. <sup>13</sup> The house was built many years ago by a king of Israel who was great and strong, and it was finished. <sup>14</sup> But when our ancestors sinned against the Lord of Israel who is in heaven and provoked him, he gave them over into the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, king of the Chaldeans, <sup>15</sup> and they pulled down the house and burned it and carried the people away captive to Babylon. <sup>16</sup> But in the first year that Cyrus reigned over the region of Babylonia, King Cyrus wrote that this house should be rebuilt. <sup>17</sup> And the holy vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the house in Jerusalem and stored in his own temple, these King Cyrus took out again from the temple in Babylon, and they were delivered to Zerubbabel and Sheshbazzar the governor <sup>18</sup> with the command that he should take all these vessels back and put them in the temple at Jerusalem and that this temple of the Lord should be rebuilt on its site. <sup>9</sup> Then this Sheshbazzar, after coming here, laid the foundations of the house of the Lord that is in Jerusalem. Although it has been in process of construction from that time until now, it has not yet reached completion.’<sup>20</sup> Now therefore, O king, if it seems wise to do so, let search be made in the royal archives of our lord the king that are in Babylon; <sup>21</sup> if it is found that the building of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem was done with the consent of King Cyrus, and if it is approved by our lord the king, let him send us directions concerning these things.”

<sup>22</sup> Then Darius commanded that search be made in the royal archives that were deposited in Babylon. And in Ecbatana, the fortress that is in the region of Media, a scroll was found in which this was recorded: <sup>23</sup> “In the first year of the reign of King Cyrus, he ordered the building of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, where they sacrifice with fire continuously: <sup>24</sup> its height sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits, with three courses of hewn stone and one course of new native timber; the cost to be paid from the treasury of King Cyrus; <sup>25</sup> and the holy vessels of the house of the Lord, both of gold and of silver, that Nebuchadnezzar took out of the house in Jerusalem and carried away to Babylon to be restored to the house in Jerusalem, to be placed where they had been.”

<sup>26</sup> So Darius commanded Sisinnus the governor of Syria and Phoenicia and Sathrabuzanes and their associates and those who were appointed as local rulers in Syria and Phoenicia to keep away from the place and to permit Zerubbabel, the servant of the Lord and governor of Judea, and the elders of the Jews to build this house of the Lord on its site. <sup>27</sup> “And I command that it be built completely and that full effort be made to help those who have returned from the exile of Judea until the house of the Lord is finished <sup>28</sup> and that out of the tribute of Coelestria and Phoenicia a portion be scrupulously given to these men, that is, to Zerubbabel the governor, for sacrifices to the Lord, for bulls and rams and lambs, <sup>29</sup> and likewise wheat and salt and wine and oil, regularly every year, without quibbling, for daily use as the priests in Jerusalem may indicate, <sup>30</sup> in order that libations may be made to the Most High God for the king and his children and prayers be offered for their lives.”

<sup>31</sup> He commanded that if anyone should transgress or nullify any of the things herein written, a beam should be taken out of the house of the perpetrator, who then should be impaled upon it and all property forfeited to the king.

<sup>32</sup> “Therefore may the Lord, whose name is there called upon, destroy every king and nation that shall stretch out their hands to hinder or damage that house of the Lord in Jerusalem.

<sup>33</sup> “I, King Darius, have decreed that it be done with all diligence as here prescribed.”

## **Chapter Seven**

<sup>1</sup> Then Sisinnus the governor of Coelestria and Phoenicia and Sathrabuzanes and their associates, following the orders of King Darius, <sup>2</sup> supervised the holy work with very great care, assisting the elders of the Jews and the chief officers of the temple. <sup>3</sup> The holy work prospered, while the prophets Haggai and Zechariah prophesied, <sup>4</sup> and they completed it by the command of the Lord God of Israel. So with the consent of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of the Persians, <sup>5</sup> the holy house was finished by the twenty-third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of King Darius. <sup>6</sup> And the people of Israel, the priests, the Levites, and the rest of those who returned from exile who joined them did according to what was written in the book of Moses. <sup>7</sup> They offered at the dedication of the temple of the Lord one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, <sup>8</sup> and twelve male goats for the sin of all Israel, according to the number of the twelve leaders of the tribes of Israel, <sup>9</sup> and the priests and the Levites stood arrayed in their vestments, according to divisions, for the services of the Lord God of Israel in accordance with the book of Moses, and the gatekeepers were at each gate.

<sup>10</sup> The people of Israel who came from exile kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, after the priests and the Levites were purified together. <sup>11</sup> Not all of the returned captives were purified, but the Levites were all purified together, <sup>12</sup> and they sacrificed the Passover lamb for all the returned captives and for their kindred the priests and for themselves. <sup>13</sup> The people of Israel who had returned from exile ate it, all those who had separated themselves from the abominations of the nations of the land and sought the Lord. <sup>14</sup> They also kept the Festival 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 service of the Lord God of Israel.

## Chapter Eight

<sup>1</sup> After these things, when Artaxerxes, the king of the Persians, was reigning, Ezra came, the son of Seraiah, son of Azariah, son of Hilkiah, son of Shallum, <sup>2</sup> son of Zadok, son of Ahitub, son of Amariah, son of Uzzi, son of Bukki, son of Abishua, son of Phineas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the high priest. <sup>3</sup> This Ezra came up from Babylon as a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which was given by the God of Israel, <sup>4</sup> and the king showed him honor, for he found favor before the king in all his requests. <sup>5</sup> There came up with him to Jerusalem some of the people of Israel and some of the priests and Levites and temple singers and gatekeepers and temple servants, <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 Jerusalem on the new moon of the fifth month, by the successful journey that the Lord gave them. <sup>7</sup> For Ezra possessed great knowledge, so that he omitted nothing from the law of the Lord or the commandments but taught all Israel all the ordinances and judgments.

<sup>8</sup> The following is a copy of the written decree from King Artaxerxes that was delivered to Ezra the priest and reader of the law of the Lord:

<sup>9</sup> "King Artaxerxes to Ezra the priest and reader of the law of the Lord, greeting. <sup>10</sup> In accordance with my gracious decision, I have given orders that those of the Jewish nation and of the priests and Levites and others in our realm, those who freely choose to do so, may go with you to Jerusalem. <sup>11</sup> Let as many as are so disposed, therefore, leave with you, just as I and the seven Friends who are my counselors have decided, <sup>12</sup> in order to look into matters in Judea and Jerusalem, in accordance with what is in the law of the Lord, <sup>13</sup> and to carry to Jerusalem the gifts for the Lord of Israel that I and my Friends have vowed, and to collect for the Lord in Jerusalem all the gold and silver that may be found in the region of Babylonia, together with what is given by the nation for the temple of their Lord that is in Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup> both gold and silver for bulls and rams and lambs and what goes with them, <sup>15</sup> so as to offer sacrifices on the altar of their Lord that is in Jerusalem. <sup>16</sup> Whatever you and

your kindred wish to do with the gold and silver, perform it in accordance with the will of your God; <sup>17</sup> deliver the holy vessels of the Lord that are given you for the use of the temple of your God that is in Jerusalem. And whatever else occurs to you as necessary for the temple of your God, <sup>18</sup> you may provide out of the royal treasury.

<sup>19</sup> “I, King Artaxerxes, have commanded the treasurers of Syria and Phoenicia that whatever Ezra the priest and reader of the law of the Most High God sends for, they shall take care to give him, up to a hundred talents of silver, <sup>20</sup> and likewise up to a hundred cors of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, and salt in abundance. <sup>21</sup> Let all things prescribed in the law of God be scrupulously fulfilled for the Most High God, so that wrath may not come upon the kingdom of the king and his sons. <sup>22</sup> You are also informed that no tribute or any other tax is to be laid on any of the priests or Levites or temple singers or gatekeepers or temple servants or persons employed in this temple and that no one has authority to impose any tax on them.

<sup>23</sup> “And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of God, appoint judges and justices to judge all those who know the law of your God throughout all Syria and Phoenicia, and you shall teach it to those who do not know it. <sup>24</sup> All who transgress the law of your God or the law of the kingdom shall be strictly punished, whether by death or some other punishment, either fine or imprisonment.”

<sup>25</sup> Then Ezra the scribe said, “Blessed be the Lord alone, who put this into the heart of the king, to glorify his house that is in Jerusalem, <sup>26</sup> and who honored me in the sight of the king and his counselors and all his Friends and nobles. <sup>27</sup> I was encouraged by the help of the Lord my God, and I gathered men from Israel to go up with me.”

<sup>28</sup> These are the leaders, according to their ancestral houses and their groups, who went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of King Artaxerxes: <sup>29</sup> Of the descendants of Phineas, Gershom. Of the descendants of Ithamar, Gamael. Of the descendants of David, Hattush son of Shecaniah. <sup>30</sup> Of the descendants of Parosh, Zechariah and with him a hundred fifty men enrolled. <sup>31</sup> Of the descendants of Pahath-moab, Eliehoenai son of Zerahiah and with him two hundred men. <sup>32</sup> Of the descendants of Zattu, Shecaniah son of Jahaziel and with him three hundred men. Of the descendants of Adin, Obed son of Jonathan and with him two hundred fifty men. <sup>33</sup> Of the descendants of Elam, Jeshaiiah son of Gotholiah and with him seventy men. <sup>34</sup> Of the descendants of Shephatiah, Zeraiah son of Michael and with him seventy men. <sup>35</sup> Of the descendants of Joab, Obadiah son of Jehiel and with him two hundred twelve men. <sup>36</sup> Of the descendants of Bani, Shelomith son of Josiphiah and with him a hundred sixty men. <sup>37</sup> Of the descendants of Bebai, Zechariah son of Bebai and with him twenty-eight men. <sup>38</sup> Of the descendants of Azgad, Johanan son of Hakkatan and with him a hundred ten men. <sup>39</sup> Of the descendants of Adonikam, the last ones, their names being Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah, and with them seventy men. <sup>40</sup> Of the descendants of Bigvai, Uthai son of Istalcurus and with him seventy men.



<sup>41</sup> I assembled them at the river called Theras, and we encamped there three days, and I inspected them. <sup>42</sup> When I found there none of the descendants of the priests or of the Levites, <sup>43</sup> I sent word to Eleazar, Iduel, Maasmas, Elnathan, Shemaiah, Jarib, Nathan, Elnathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, who were leaders and men of understanding; <sup>44</sup> I told them to go to Iddo, who was the leading man at the place of the treasury, <sup>45</sup> and ordered them to tell Iddo and his kindred and the treasurers at that place to send us men to serve as priests in the house of our Lord. <sup>46</sup> And by the mighty hand of our Lord they brought us competent men of the descendants of Mahli son of Levi, son of Israel, namely, Sherebiah with his descendants and kinsmen, eighteen; <sup>47</sup> also Hashabiah and Annunus and his brother Jeshaiiah, of the descendants of Hananiah, and their descendants, twenty men; <sup>48</sup> and of the temple servants whom David and the leaders had given for the service of the Levites, two hundred twenty temple servants; the list of all their names was reported.

<sup>49</sup> There I proclaimed a fast for the young men before our Lord, <sup>50</sup> to seek from him a successful journey for ourselves and for our children and the livestock with us. <sup>51</sup> For I was ashamed to ask the king for infantry and cavalry and an escort to keep us safe from our adversaries, <sup>52</sup> for we had said to the king, "The power of our Lord will be with those who seek him and will support them in every way." <sup>53</sup> And again we prayed to our Lord about these things, and we found him very merciful.

<sup>54</sup> Then I set apart twelve of the leaders of the priests, Sherebiah and Hashabiah and ten of their kinsmen with them, <sup>55</sup> and I weighed out to them the silver and the gold and the holy vessels of the house of our Lord that the king himself and his counselors and the nobles and all Israel had given. <sup>56</sup> I weighed and gave to them six hundred fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels worth a hundred talents, and a hundred talents of gold, and twenty golden bowls, and twelve bronze vessels of fine bronze that glittered like gold. <sup>57</sup> And I said to them, "You are holy to the Lord, and the vessels are holy, and the silver and the gold are vowed to the Lord, the Lord of our ancestors. <sup>58</sup> Be watchful and on guard until you deliver them to the leaders of the priests and the Levites and to the heads of the ancestral houses of Israel, in Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of our Lord." <sup>59</sup> So the priests and the Levites who took the silver and the gold and the vessels that had been in Jerusalem carried them to the temple of the Lord.

<sup>60</sup> We left the River Theras on the twelfth day of the first month, and we arrived in Jerusalem by the mighty hand of our Lord, which was upon us; he delivered us from every enemy on the way, and so we came to Jerusalem. <sup>61</sup> When we had been there three days, the silver and the gold were weighed and delivered in the house of our Lord to the priest Meremoth son of Uriah; <sup>62</sup> with him was Eleazar son of Phinehas, and with them were Jozabad son of Jeshua and Moeth son of Binnui, the Levites. The whole was counted and weighed, and the weight of everything was recorded at that very time. <sup>63</sup> And those who had returned from exile offered sacrifices to the Lord, the God of Israel, twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-two lambs, and as a thank offering twelve male goats—all as a sacrifice to the Lord. <sup>64</sup> They

delivered the king's orders to the royal stewards and to the governors of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, and these officials honored the nation and the temple of the Lord.

<sup>65</sup> After these things had been done, the leaders came to me and said,<sup>66</sup> "The nation of Israel and the rulers and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the foreign nations of the land and their pollutions, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Edomites. <sup>67</sup> For they and their sons have married the daughters of these people, and the holy seed has been mixed with the foreign nations of the land, and from the beginning of this matter the leaders and the nobles have been sharing in this iniquity."

<sup>68</sup> As soon as I heard these things, I tore my garments and my holy vestments and pulled out hair from my head and beard and sat down in anxiety and grief. <sup>69</sup> And all who were ever moved at the word of the Lord of Israel gathered around me, as I mourned over this iniquity, and I sat grief-stricken until the evening sacrifice. <sup>70</sup> Then I rose from my fast, with my garments and my holy vestments torn, and kneeling down and stretching out my hands to the Lord I said,

<sup>71</sup> "O Lord, I am ashamed and dishonored before your face. <sup>72</sup> For our sins have risen higher than our heads, and our mistakes have mounted up to heaven <sup>73</sup> from the times of our ancestors, and we are in great sin to this day. <sup>74</sup> Because of our sins and the sins of our ancestors, we with our kindred and our kings and our priests were given over to the kings of the earth, to the sword and exile and plundering, in shame until this day. <sup>75</sup> And now in some measure mercy has come to us from you, O Lord, to leave to us a root and a name in your holy place <sup>76</sup> and to uncover a light for us in the house of the Lord our God and to give us food in the time of our servitude. Even in our bondage we were not forsaken by our Lord, <sup>77</sup> but he brought us into favor with the kings of the Persians, so that they have given us food <sup>78</sup> and glorified the temple of our Lord and raised Zion from desolation, to give us a stronghold in Judea and Jerusalem.

<sup>79</sup> "And now, O Lord, what shall we say when we have these things? For we have transgressed your commandments that you gave by 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 foreigners of the land, and they have filled it with their uncleanness. <sup>81</sup> Therefore do not give your daughters in marriage to their sons, and do not take their daughters for your sons; <sup>82</sup> do not seek ever to have peace with them, so that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever.' <sup>83</sup> And all that has happened to us has come about because of our evil deeds and our great sins. For you, O Lord, lifted the burden of our sins <sup>84</sup> and gave us such a root as this, but we turned back again to transgress your law by mixing with the uncleanness of the nations of the land. <sup>85</sup> Were you not angry enough with us to destroy us without leaving a root or seed or name? <sup>86</sup> O Lord of Israel, you are faithful, for we are left as a root to this day. <sup>87</sup> See, we are now

before you in our iniquities, for we can no longer stand in your presence because of these things.”

<sup>88</sup> While Ezra was praying and making his confession, weeping and lying on the ground before the temple, there gathered around him a very great crowd of men and women and youths from Jerusalem, for there was great weeping among the multitude. <sup>89</sup> Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, one of the men of Israel, called out and said to Ezra, “We have sinned against the Lord and have married foreign women from the nations of the land, but even now there is hope for Israel. <sup>90</sup> Let us take an oath to the Lord about this, that we will put away all our foreign wives with their children, as seems good to you and to all who obey the law of the Lord. <sup>91</sup> Rise up and take action, for it is your task, and we are with you to take strong measures.” <sup>92</sup> Then Ezra rose up and made the leaders of the priests and Levites of all Israel swear that they would do this. And they swore to it.

## Chapter Nine

<sup>1</sup> Then Ezra set out and went from the court of the temple to the chamber of Jehohanan son of Eliashib <sup>2</sup> and spent the night there, and he did not eat bread or drink water, for he was mourning over the great iniquities of the multitude. <sup>3</sup> And a proclamation was made throughout Judea and Jerusalem to all who had returned from exile that they should assemble at Jerusalem <sup>4</sup> and that if any did not meet there within two or three days, in accordance with the decision of the ruling elders, their livestock would be seized for sacrifice and the men themselves expelled from the multitude of those who had returned from the captivity.

<sup>5</sup> Then the men of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin assembled at Jerusalem within three days; this was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month. <sup>6</sup> All the multitude sat in the open square before the temple, shivering because of the bad weather that prevailed. <sup>7</sup> Then Ezra stood up and said to them, “You have broken the law and married foreign women and so have increased the sin of Israel. <sup>8</sup> Now, then, make confession and give glory to the Lord the God of our ancestors <sup>9</sup> and do his will; separate yourselves from the nations of the land and from your foreign wives.”

<sup>10</sup> Then all the multitude shouted and said with a loud voice, “We will do as you have said. <sup>11</sup> But the multitude is great, and it is winter, and we are not able to stand in the open air. This is not a work we can do in one day or two, for we have sinned too much in these things. <sup>12</sup> So let the leaders of the multitude stay, and let all those in our settlements who have foreign wives come at the time appointed <sup>13</sup> with the elders and judges of each place, until we are freed from the wrath of the Lord over this matter.”

<sup>14</sup> Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah undertook the matter on these terms, and Meshullam and Levi and Shabbethai served with them as judges. <sup>15</sup> And those who had returned from exile acted in accordance with all this.

<sup>16</sup> Ezra the priest chose for himself the leading men of their ancestral houses, all of them by name, and on the new moon of the tenth month they began their sessions to investigate the matter. <sup>17</sup> And the cases of the men who had foreign wives were brought to an end by the new moon of the first month.

<sup>18</sup> Of the priests, those who were brought in and found to have foreign wives were: <sup>19</sup> of the descendants of Jeshua son of Jozadak and his kindred, Maaseiah, Eliezar, Jarib, and Jodan. <sup>20</sup> They pledged themselves to put away their wives and to offer rams in expiation of their error. <sup>21</sup> Of the descendants of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah and Maaseiah and Shemaiah and Jehiel and Azariah. <sup>22</sup> Of the descendants of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, and Nathanael, and Gedaliah, and Salthas.

<sup>23</sup> And of the Levites: Jozabad and Shimei and Kelaiah, who was Kelita, and Pethahiah and Judah and Jonah. <sup>24</sup> Of the temple singers: Eliashib and Zaccur. <sup>25</sup> Of the gatekeepers: Shallum and Telem.

<sup>26</sup> Of Israel: of the descendants of Parosh: Ramiah, Izziah, Malchijah, Mijamin, and Eleazar, and Asibias, and Benaiah. <sup>27</sup> Of the descendants of Elam: Mattaniah and Zechariah, Jezrielus and Abdi, and Jeremoth and Elijah. <sup>28</sup> Of the descendants of Zamoth: Eliadas, Eliashib, Othoniah, Jeremoth, and Zabad and Zerdaiah. <sup>29</sup> Of the descendants of Bebai: Jehohanan and Hananiah and Zabbai and Emathis. <sup>30</sup> Of the descendants of Mani: Olamus, Mamuchus, Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal and Jeremoth. <sup>31</sup> Of the descendants of Addi: Naathus and Moossias, Laccunus and Naidus, and Bescaspasmys and Sesthel, and Belnuus and Manasseas. <sup>32</sup> Of the descendants of Annan, Elionas and Asaias and Melchias and Sabbaias and Simon Chosamaeus. <sup>33</sup> Of the descendants of Hashum: Mattenai and Mattattah and Zabad and Eliphelet and Manasseh and Shimei. <sup>34</sup> Of the descendants of Bani: Jeremai, Momdius, Maerus, Joel, Mamdai and Bedeiah and Vaniah, Carabasion and Eliashib and Mamitanemus, Eliasis, Binnui, Elialis, Shimei, Shelemiah, Nethaniah. Of the descendants of Ezora: Shashai, Azarel, Azael, Samatus, Zambris, Joseph. <sup>35</sup> Of the descendants of Nooma: Mazitias, Zabad, Iddo, Joel, Benaiah. <sup>36</sup> All these had married foreign women, and they put them away together with their children.

<sup>37</sup> The priests and the Levites and the Israelites settled in Jerusalem and in the region. On the new moon of the seventh month, when the people of Israel were in their settlements, <sup>38</sup> the whole multitude gathered with one accord in the open square before the east gate of the temple; <sup>39</sup> they told Ezra the chief priest and reader to bring the law of Moses that had been given by the Lord God of Israel. <sup>40</sup> So Ezra the chief priest brought the law, for all the multitude, men and women, and all the priests to hear the law, on the new moon of the seventh month. <sup>41</sup> He read aloud in the open square before the gate of the temple from early morning until midday, in

the presence of both men and women, and all the multitude gave attention to the law. <sup>42</sup> Ezra the priest and reader of the law stood on the wooden platform that had been prepared, <sup>43</sup> and beside him stood Mattathiah, Shema, Ananias, Azariah, Uriah, Hezekiah, and Baalsamus on his right, <sup>44</sup> and on his left Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Lothasubus, Nabariah, and Zechariah. <sup>45</sup> Then Ezra took up the book of the law in the sight of the multitude, for he had the place of honor in the presence of all. <sup>46</sup> When he opened the law, they all stood erect. And Ezra blessed the Lord God Most High, the God of hosts, the Almighty, <sup>47</sup> and the multitude answered, "Amen." They lifted up their hands and fell to the ground and worshiped God. <sup>48</sup> Jeshua and Anniuth and Sherebiah, Jadinus, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maiannas and Kelita, Azariah and Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, taught the law of the Lord, at the same time explaining what was read.

<sup>49</sup> Then Attharates said to Ezra the chief priest and reader and to the Levites who were teaching the multitude and to all, <sup>50</sup> "This day is holy to the Lord"—now they were all weeping as they heard the law— <sup>51</sup> "so go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to those who have none, <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> The Levites commanded all the people, saying, "This day is holy; do not be sorrowful." <sup>54</sup> Then they all went their way, to eat and drink and enjoy themselves and to give portions to those who had none and to make great rejoicing, <sup>55</sup> because they were inspired by the words which they had been taught. And they came together.