

# **Ezra 08 - Ezra Sends for Levites and Temple Servants; Fast for the Lord's Protection; Gifts for the Temple; Arrival in Jerusalem**

## **II. Restoration of the people (Ezra 7:1–10:44)**

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### **The Second Return**

In the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, 458 BC, just 58 years after the completion of the temple, Ezra led a group of some 1,500 men and their families back to Israel. Times had been difficult in Judah. To reconstruct the agricultural base for their economy, the people had scattered from Jerusalem and had built smaller communities throughout the land. Even the Levites, dedicated to temple service, had built homes and cleared land. The walls of Jerusalem had not been rebuilt, and the people had begun to intermarry with the pagans of the land. This last act was a serious breach of OT Law, which insisted that God's people maintain a separate identity. This was a very practical law: history demonstrates over and over again that when the Israelites intermarried with pagans, the sure outcome was the introduction of idolatry. Ezra was no political reformer. He was, however, a teacher, "for Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law

of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel" (7:10). There was no doubt in Ezra's mind that a fresh start for God's people could be found only in a return to God's Word.

## Ezra 8

### (C) Description of the journey (8:1-36)

#### (a) Those that took the journey (8:1-20)

##### (i) People (8:1-14)

1 Now these are the heads of their fathers' *households* and the genealogical enrollment of those who went up with me from Babylon in the reign of King Artaxerxes:

1 Now these are the heads of their fathers' *households* and the genealogical enrollment of those who went up with me from Babylon in the reign of King Artaxerxes:

1 These are the leaders of the families listed among those who left Babylon with me during the reign of King Artaxerxes:

1 These are now the chief of their fathers, and this is the genealogy of them that went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king.

- This chapter provides more details concerning the events of the second return that were summarized earlier (Cf. 7:7-9)

- This list consists of the family heads who returned, as well as the number of those who accompanied them. Most of the people listed were related to the families who had returned previously under Zerubbabel (538 BC) 80 years earlier (Cf. Ezra 2).

2 of the sons of Phinehas, **Gershom**; of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel; of the sons of David, Hattush;

2 of the sons of Phinehas, Gershom; of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel; of the sons of David, Hattush;

2 From Phinehas's descendants: Gershom. From Ithamar's descendants: Daniel. From David's descendants: Hattush.

2 Of the sons of Phinehas; Gershom: of the sons of Ithamar; Daniel: of the sons of David; Hattush.

- "...Gershom" - a descendant of Phinehas, son of Aaron's third son Eleazar (Ex 6:25); Daniel was descended from Ithamar, Aaron's fourth son (Ex 6:23).

3 of the sons of Shecaniah *who was* of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah, and with him 150 males *who were* in the genealogical list;

3 of the sons of Shecaniah *who was* of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah and with him 150 males *who were* in the genealogical list;

3 From Shecaniah's descendants and from Parosh's descendants: Zechariah, along with 150 men whose genealogies had been certified.

3 Of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of Pharosh; Zechariah: and with him were reckoned by genealogy of the males an hundred and fifty.

- Many of the family names in 8:3c-14 are also mentioned in 2:3-15

- The total number of men who returned was 1,514 including 18 heads of families and 1,496 other men

— With the 258 Levites assembled later (v15-20), the number came to 1,772. With women and children, the group may have totaled 4,000-5,000.

— This group was much smaller than the near-50,000 of the first return (2:64-65)

4 of the sons of Pahath-moab, Eliehoenai the son of Zerahiah and two hundred males with him;

4 of the sons of Pahath-moab, Eliehoenai the son of Zerahiah and 200 males with him;

4 From Pahath-moab's descendants: Zerahiah's son Eliehoenai and 200 men with him.

4 Of the sons of Pahathmoab; Elihoenai the son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred males.

5 of the sons of Zattu, Shecaniah, the son of Jahaziel and three hundred males with him;

5 of the sons of Zattu, Shecaniah, the son of Jahaziel and 300 males with him;

5 From Zattu's descendants: Jahaziel's son Shecaniah and 300 men with him.

5 Of the sons of Shechaniah; the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males.

6 and of the sons of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan and fifty males with him;

6 and of the sons of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan and 50 males with him;

6 From Adin's descendants: Jonathan's son Ebed and 50 men with him.

6 Of the sons also of Adin; Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males.

7 and of the sons of Elam, Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah and seventy males with him;

7 and of the sons of Elam, Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah and 70 males with him;

7 From Elam's descendants: Athaliah's son Jeshaiah and 70 men with him.

7 And of the sons of Elam; Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males.

8 and of the sons of Shephatiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael and eighty males with him;

8 and of the sons of Shephatiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael and 80 males with him;

8 From Shephatiah's descendants: Michael's son Zebadiah and 80 men with him.

8 And of the sons of Shephatiah; Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him fourscore males.

9 of the **sons of Joab**, Obadiah the son of Jehiel and 218 males with him;  
9 of the sons of Joab, Obadiah the son of Jehiel and 218 males with him;  
9 From Joab's descendants: Jehiel's son Obadiah and 218 men with him.  
9 Of the sons of Joab; Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males.  
- "...sons of Joab" - the only family mentioned in v3c-14 that isn't mentioned in 2:3-15

10 and of the sons of Bani, Shelomith, the son of Josiphiah and 160 males with him;  
10 and of the sons of Bani, Shelomith, the son of Josiphiah and 160 males with him;  
10 From Bani's descendants: Josiphiah's son Shelomith and 160 men with him.  
10 And of the sons of Shelomith; the son of Josiphiah, and with him an hundred and threescore males.

11 and of the sons of Bebai, Zechariah the son of Bebai and twenty-eight males with him;  
11 and of the sons of Bebai, Zechariah the son of Bebai and 28 males with him;  
11 From Bebai's descendants: Bebai's son Zechariah and 28 men with him.  
11 And of the sons of Bebai; Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty and eight males.

12 and of the sons of Azgad, Johanan the son of Hakkatan and 110 males with him;  
12 and of the sons of Azgad, Johanan the son of Hakkatan and 110 males with him;  
12 From Azgad's descendants: Hakkatan's son Johanan and 110 men with him.  
12 And of the sons of Azgad; Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him an hundred and ten males.

13 and of the sons of Adonikam, the last ones, these being their names: Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and sixty males with them;  
13 and of the sons of Adonikam, the last ones, these being their names, Eliphelet, Jeuel and Shemaiah, and 60 males with them;  
13 From Adonikam's later descendants: Eliphelet, Jeuel, Shemaiah, and 60 men with him.  
13 And of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names are these, Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and with them threescore males.

14 and of the sons of Bigvai, Uthai and Zabbud, and seventy males with them.  
14 and of the sons of Bigvai, Uthai and Zabbud, and 70 males with them.  
14 From Bigvai's descendants: Uthai, Zabbud, and 70 men with him.  
14 Of the sons also of Bigvai; Uthai, and Zabbud, and with them seventy males.

(ii) Levites (8:15-20)

**15** Now I assembled them at **the river that runs to Ahava**, where we camped for three days; and when I paid close attention to the people and the priests, I did not find any Levites there.

**15** Now I assembled them at the river that runs to Ahava, where we camped for three days; and when I observed the people and the priests, **I did not find any Levites there.**

**15** I gathered them together at the river that flows toward Ahava, where we camped three days. Afterwards, I examined the people and the priests, but found no descendants of Levi there.

**15** And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava; and there abode we in tents three days: and I viewed the people, and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi.

- "...the river that runs to Ahava" - the Ahava waterway flowed through Babylon. It was one of many irrigation canals that tapped water from the Euphrates and flowed toward the Tigris.

- "...I did not find any Levites there" - Levites were to function as teachers of the Law (Cf. Lev 10:11; Deut 33:10). Therefore they were to have an extremely important role in the re-established community.

— The people desperately needed to understand the importance of the Law as they faced their situation as returnees from exile

— The Levites would have a difficult time in the new land for they were to be involved in the disciplined ministry of temple service. Perhaps that is why none were present when Ezra and his group were ready to depart (Cf. v21,31).

— Even Zerubbabel had comparatively few Levites on his return (733 [2:40-58], less than 1.5% of the 49,897 [2:64-65])

**16** So I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, leading men, and for Joiarib and Elnathan, teachers.

**16** So I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah and Meshullam, leading men, and for Joiarib and Elnathan, teachers.

**16** So I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, who were senior leaders, as well as for Joiarib and Elnathan, who were men of discernment.

**16** Then sent I for Eliezer, for Ariel, for Shemaiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and for Elnathan, and for Nathan, and for Zechariah, and for Meshullam, chief men; also for Joiarib, and for Elnathan, men of understanding.

- Ezra sent these 11 representatives to find some Levites and temple servants to return with them to Israel

17 And I sent them to **Iddo the leading man at the place called Casiphia**; and I told them what to say to Iddo and his brothers, the temple servants at the place Casiphia, *that is*, to bring ministers to us for the house of our God.

17 I sent them to Iddo the leading man at the place Casiphia; and I told them what to say to Iddo *and* his brothers, the temple servants at the place Casiphia, *that is*, to bring ministers to us for the house of our God.

17 I told them to go see Iddo, a leader of Casiphia, and tell him and his relatives (administrators of Casiphia) to bring us men who could serve in the Temple of our God.

17 And I sent them with commandment unto Iddo the chief at the place Casiphia, and I told them what they should say unto Iddo, and to his brethren the Nethinims, at the place Casiphia, that they should bring unto us ministers for the house of our God.

- "...Iddo the leading man" - the chief president of the college of Levites

- "...the place *called* Casiphia" - a location where there was a college of Levites; probably a street or square in Babylon allowed for that purpose

- Ezra told the messengers what to say, which seems to indicate that this was a delicate task which needed to have some weight behind the message.

18 And as the good hand of our God *was* upon us, they brought us a man of insight from the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel, namely Sherebiah, and his sons and brothers, eighteen men;

18 According to the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of insight of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel, namely Sherebiah, and his sons and brothers, 18 men;

18 By the grace of our God they brought back a discerning man from the descendants of Mahli, a descendant of Israel's son Levi, along with Sherebiah and eighteen of his sons and brothers;

18 And by the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and Sherebiah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen;

19 and Hashabiah and Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, *with* his brothers and their sons, twenty men;

19 and Hashabiah and Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, with his brothers and their sons, 20 men;

19 Hashabiah and Jeshaiah from the descendants of Merari and 20 of his brothers and their sons;

19 And Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, his brethren and their sons, twenty;

20 and 220 of the temple servants, whom David and the officials had provided for the service of the Levites, all of them designated by name.

20 and 220 of the temple servants, whom David and the princes had given for the service of the Levites, all of them designated by name.

20 220 descendants of the Temple Servants whom David and the leaders had appointed to serve the descendants of Levi, listed by name.

20 Also of the Nethinims, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinims: all of them were expressed by name.

- The men were able to secure 38 Levites from two families—18 from Sherebiah's family and 20 from Jeshaiah's relatives—as well as 220 temple servants.

— Only then was Ezra ready to start on the important journey. Without the Levite teachers of the Law and people to serve at the temple, all would be lost and the trip futile.

(b) Preparations (8:21-30)

(i) Spiritual (8:21-23)

**21** Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, to humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him a safe journey for us, our little ones, and all our possessions.

**21** Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from Him a safe journey for us, our little ones, and all our possessions.

**21** Then I called for a fast there at the Ahava River so we could humble ourselves before our God and seek from him an appropriate way for us and our little ones to live, and how we should guard our personal wealth,

**21** Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

- Ezra sensed a great need for God's help in the dangerous trip they were about to take back to Israel. This moved him to seek God's help in prayer.

- "...I proclaimed a fast" - the fast enabled the people to devote more time and concentration to prayer (Cf. Neh 1:4; Acts 13:3). Fasting facilitates prayer, but it does not manipulate God.

— He wanted the assembled group thereby to humble themselves before God in order to ask Him for a safe journey for themselves, their children, and their possessions.

— Being humble before God shows one's spiritual dependence, an acknowledgment that God is in total control

22 For I was ashamed to request from the king troops and horsemen to protect us from the enemy on the way, because we had said to the king, "The hand of our God is favorably disposed to all who seek Him, but His power and His anger are against all those who abandon Him."

22 For I was ashamed to request from the king troops and horsemen to protect us from the enemy on the way, because we had said to the king, "The hand of our God is favorably disposed to all those who seek Him, but His power and His anger are against all those who forsake Him."

22 because I was ashamed to ask the king for a contingent of soldiers and cavalry to protect us from enemies we might encounter on the way. After all, we had told the king, "The hand of our God seeks the good of all who seek him, but his power and anger are against everyone who forsakes him."

22 For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying,

- Ezra did not want to ask for military protection (soldiers and horsemen) because he had already publicly announced that God would take care of the people as they returned

— In contrast, Nehemiah readily accepted a military escort on his way back to the land (Neh 2:9)

— The refusal to request an armed escort, especially given the amount of valuables and material goods they would transport, was surprising. But Ezra was concerned for God's reputation based on what he had already publicly announced.

23 So we fasted and sought our God concerning this *matter*, and He listened to our pleading.

23 So we fasted and sought our God concerning this *matter*, and He listened to our entreaty.

23 So we fasted and asked our God about this, and he listened to us.

23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.

#### (ii) Financial (8:24-30)

**24** Then I selected twelve of the leading priests: Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and with them ten of their brothers;

**24** Then I set apart twelve of the leading priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and with them ten of their brothers;

24 Next I selected twelve of the chief priests—Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brothers with them—

24 Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them,

25 and I weighed out to them the silver, the gold, and the utensils, the offering for the house of our God which the king, his counselors, his officials, and all Israel who were present *there* had contributed.

25 and I weighed out to them the silver, the gold and the utensils, the offering for the house of our God which the king and his counselors and his princes and all Israel present *there* had offered.

25 and divided between them the silver, the gold, the vessels, and the offering for the Temple of our God which the king had offered, along with his advisors, his senior officials, and all of Israel assembled there.

25 And weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, even the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel there present, had offered:

26 So I weighed into their hands 650 talents of silver, and silver utensils *worth* a hundred **talents**, and a hundred gold **talents**,

26 Thus I weighed into their hands 650 talents of silver, and silver utensils *worth* 100 talents, and 100 gold talents,

26 I divided among them 650 silver talents, silver utensils weighing 100 talents, 100 talents of gold,

26 I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, and of gold an hundred talents;

- "...talents" [2x] - a Babylonian talent weighed about 66 pounds

27 and twenty gold bowls *worth* a thousand **darics**, and two utensils of fine shiny bronze, precious as gold.

27 and 20 gold bowls *worth* 1,000 darics, and two utensils of fine shiny bronze, precious as gold.

27 20 gold basins weighing 1,000 darics each, and two vessels made of polished brass, as valuable as gold.

27 Also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand drams; and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold.

- "...daric" - a thick gold Persian coin that weighed 130 grams or 4-1/2 ounces

- Ezra took special precautions to make sure the expensive temple utensils arrived safely, and to ensure that everyone would view his handling of the precious cargo as completely honest

— The total weight of the precious cargo that the returnees took with them was about 28 tons

28 Then I said to them, "You are holy to the LORD, and the utensils are holy; and the silver and the gold are a voluntary offering to the LORD God of your fathers.

28 Then I said to them, "You are holy to the LORD, and the utensils are holy; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to the LORD God of your fathers.

28 I told them, "You are consecrated to the LORD, and the vessels are also consecrated. The silver and the gold are a freely given offering to the LORD God of your ancestors.

28 And I said unto them, Ye are holy unto the LORD; the vessels are holy also; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering unto the LORD God of your fathers.

- Ezra charged these key men with the responsibility of getting the precious metals and valuables back to Jerusalem safely

— In his charge he said that these material possessions were consecrated to the LORD and that the silver and gold were freely given by God's people

29 Watch and keep *them* until you weigh *them* before the leading priests, the Levites, and the leaders of the fathers' *households* of Israel in Jerusalem, *in the chambers of the house of the LORD.*"

29 Watch and keep *them* until you weigh *them* before the leading priests, the Levites and the heads of the fathers' *households* of Israel at Jerusalem, *in the chambers of the house of the LORD.*"

29 Guard and protect them until you disperse them to the chief priests, the descendants of Levi, and to the family leaders of Israel at Jerusalem in the chambers of the Temple of the LORD."

29 Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD.

- He emphasized the need for guarding the money and articles carefully by noting that they would all be weighed on arrival to be sure none had disappeared

30 So the priests and the Levites accepted the weight of silver and gold and the utensils, to bring *them* to Jerusalem to the house of our God.

30 So the priests and the Levites accepted the weighed out silver and gold and the utensils, to bring *them* to Jerusalem to the house of our God.

30 So the priests and descendants of Levi took possession of the silver, the gold, and the vessels in order to bring them to Jerusalem, to the Temple of our God.

30 So took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem unto the house of our God.

- The priests and Levites accepted the responsibility of taking the metals and utensils to Jerusalem

(c) The journey itself (8:31-32)

**31** Then we journeyed from the river Ahava on the twelfth of the first month to go to Jerusalem; and the hand of our God was upon us, and He rescued us from the hand of the enemy and the ambushes by the road.

**31** Then we journeyed from the river Ahava on the twelfth of the first month to go to Jerusalem; and the hand of our God was over us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the ambushes by the way.

**31** Then we left the Ahava River for Jerusalem on the twelfth day of the first month. Our God's protection was with us, and he delivered us from the enemy's power and from ambush along the way.

**31** Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way.

32 So we came to Jerusalem and remained there for three days.

32 Thus we came to Jerusalem and remained there three days.

32 We arrived in Jerusalem and remained there three days.

32 And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.

(d) The arrival in Jerusalem (8:33-36)

(i) Cargo recorded (8:33-34)

33 And on the fourth day the silver, the gold, and the utensils were weighed out in the house of our God into the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest, and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them were the Levites, Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui.

33 On the fourth day the silver and the gold and the utensils were weighed out in the house of our God into the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest, and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them were the Levites, Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui.

33 On the fourth day the silver, the gold, and the vessels were distributed at the Temple of our God into the care of Uriah's son Meremoth the priest, Phinehas' son Eleazar, Jeshua's

son Jozabad, and Binnui's son Noadiah, the descendants of Levi.

**33** Now on the fourth day was the silver and the gold and the vessels weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest; and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them was Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of Binnui, Levites;

**34** *A notation was made* for everything by number and weight, and all the weight was recorded at that time.

**34** Everything was numbered and weighed, and all the weight was recorded at that time.

**34** Distribution was according to inventory and weight, with all weights being recorded at that time.

**34** By number and by weight of every one: and all the weight was written at that time.

- The group left Babylon on the 1st day of the first month (7:9) and they left Ahava on the 12th of the same month. Since they were at the canal three days (8:15), the site of their canal encampment was about nine days' travel from Babylon, perhaps 100-130 miles away.  
— The total journey was about 900 miles and would have been difficult for a group without a military escort

— However, Ezra was content merely to relate that the hand of our God was on us (Cf. 7:6,9,28; 8:18,22) and that the Lord granted the returnees protection

— On arriving in Jerusalem, after a three-day rest, everything was turned over to the priests and Levites and weighed (v33-34)

— Several of these temple officials are also mentioned in the Book of Nehemiah: Meremoth (Neh 3:4,21), Jozabad (Neh 11:16), and Binnui (Neh 3:24)

#### (ii) Offerings (8:35)

**35** The exiles who had come from the captivity offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, twelve male goats for a sin offering, all as a burnt offering to the LORD.

**35** The exiles who had come from the captivity offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel: 12 bulls for all Israel, 96 rams, 77 lambs, 12 male goats for a sin offering, all as a burnt offering to the LORD.

**35** The descendants of those who had been taken into captivity and who had returned from captivity offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all of Israel, 96 rams, 77 lambs, and twelve male goats as a sin offering—all of them burnt offerings to the LORD.

**35** Also the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety

and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he goats for a sin offering: all this was a burnt offering unto the LORD.

- Burnt offerings represented the consecration of the worshippers' persons to God (Lev 1; 6:8-13). Sin offerings provided atonement (covering) for the worshippers' sinful natures (Lev 4:1—5:13; 6:24-30).
  - The four kinds of animals—bulls (apparently one for each tribe of Israel), rams, lambs, and goats—were the same as those offered at the temple dedication (6:17), but now the number was smaller.

(iii) Edicts of Artaxerxes given (8:36)

36 Then they delivered the king's edicts to the king's satraps and the governors *in the provinces* beyond the *Euphrates* River, and **they supported the people and the house of God.**

36 Then they delivered the king's edicts to the king's satraps and to the governors *in the provinces* beyond the River, and they supported the people and the house of God.

36 Then they delivered copies of the king's orders to the king's officers, and governors on this side of the Euphrates River. The orders were in support of the people and God's Temple.

**36** And they delivered the king's commissions unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors on this side the river: and they furthered the people, and the house of God.

- A copy of the king's edict was given to the surrounding officials (royal satraps and governors), who were to carry out his wishes under Ezra's leadership. This caused the surrounding peoples to assist the Jewish post-exilic community.

- "...they supported the people and the house of God" - God's good hand was so evident on His people that even surrounding peoples helped them in the sacrificial system, their means of fellowship with God