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The List of Exiles who Returned with Ezra Ezra 7:28b to 8:14

The list of the exiles who returned with Ezra DIG: What shift in the Chronicler's viewpoint do you see in Ezra 7:27 and continues here through Ezra 9? What do you make of the first reference to "me"? Why was this particular genealogical record important to Ezra? Compare this list with the one in 2:1-70. Which numbers don't add up the same? What do you make of the similarities and differences in the names and numbers?

During the ministry of Ezra (**to see link click Bf – The Second Return**).
Compiled by: The Chronicler from the Ezra and Nehemiah memoirs
(see **Ac – Ezra-Nehemiah from a Jewish Perspective: The Ezra Memoirs**)**.**

The list that follows no doubt included those who lived in surrounding areas. The total number of males in this section was **1,496**, along with only **38 Levites** and **220 Temple servants (Ezra 8:19).** If we add the women and children the number of **the Second Return** could have easily approached 6,000, about one-seventh of **the First Return**. However, just as with **the First Return**, many **Jews** remained behind in Babylon after this group had departed, content with their established and comfortable lifestyle.



And I gathered leading men from Isra'el to go up with me (Ezra 7:28b).
There is an unusual concentration on the number **twelve** in **Chapter 8**. The register of those returning with **Ezra** lists **twelve** families of **Israelites** after

mentioning the priestly families of **Phineas** and **Ithamar**, and the royal family of **David**. Similarly, **Ezra** commissions **twelve priests** and **twelve Levites (Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their kinsmen)** to bring the gifts for **the Temple**, donated by Persian officials and by the non-returning **Israelites (Ezra 8:24)**. At the sacrifice of thanksgiving marking the conclusion of the chapter, the number **twelve** is also conspicuous. **Twelve bulls** are offered for all **Isra'el**; ninety six **rams** (8X12), seventy-two **lambs** (6X12) and **twelve goats** were offered as a **sin offering (8:35)**.[137]

Now these are the patriarchal leaders, and the genealogical records of those who came up with me from Babylon during the reign of King Artaxerxes (Ezra 8:1):

Two priestly families returned: **from the sons of Phinehas and Gershom: This was also the name of a son of Moshe and, in a slightly different form, of one of the sons of Levi, and from the sons of Ithamar: the name of the youngest of Aaron's sons (Exodus 6:23) – Dani'el (Nehemiah 10:7): These**, then, were related to **Ezra himself**, who also traced **his** lineage to **Aaron** through **Phinehas (Ezra 7:1-5).** We can only guess why they had remained in Babylon in the first place. There was little priestly work for **them** to do in Babylon, with no **Temple**! But it might be argued in **their** defense that even those who remained behind needed the help and instruction of **the priests**, even if they couldn't participate in the Levitical practices in the Temple the way they were supposed to.

The priests in **Ezra 8** are counted after the family of **Aaron**, whereas in **Ezra 2** they follow the family of **Zadok**. There was apparently a shift in the priority of **priestly** authority in Babylon between **the First Return** with **Zerubbabel** and **the Second Return** with **Ezra;**[138] **from the sons of David – Hattush (Ezra 8:2): He was a descendant of David, and Zerubbabel was his great-great grandfather (First Chronicles 3:22).** However, **he** is barely mentioned! The writings of **Ezra** and **Nehemiah** lack any explicit hope for a messianic ruler from **the house of David**. It seems that the most important people were **the priests**. One indication of **their** place of honor is that **they** are listed first among the returning families. Standing in the second rank is the family of **David** represented by **Hattush**.[139]

Now follows the names of twelve heads of families who returned with Ezra.

from the sons of Shecaniah, of the sons of Parosh – Zechariah and with him were 150 males were enrolled by genealogy (Ezra 8:3);

from the sons of Pahath-moab – Eliehoenai the son of Zerahiah and with him were 200 males enrolled by genealogy (Ezra 8:4);

from the sons of Shechaniah (not the same man as the one mentioned in verse 3 – the son of Jahaziel and 300 males with him (Ezra 8:5).

from the sons of Adin – Ebed the son of Jonathan and 50 males with him (Ezra 8:6);

from the sons of Elam – Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah and 70 males with him (Ezra 8:7);

from the sons of Shephatiah – Zebadiah the son of Michael and 80 males with him (Ezra 8:8);

from the sons of Joab – Obadiah the son of Jehiel and 128 males with him (Ezra 8:9);

from the sons of Shelomith – the son of Josiphiah and 160 males with him (Ezra 8:10);

from the sons of Bebai – Zechariah the son of Bebai and 28 males with him (Ezra 8:11);

from the sons of Azgad – Johanan the son of Hakkatan and 110 males with him (Ezra 8:12);

from the sons of Adonikam some had joined **Zerubbabel** in **the First Return (but these came later, and these are their names) – Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah and 60 males with them (Ezra 8:13).** This shows that **they** didn't all come at the same time, and that **the First Return** had divided families. **Some** had gone in obedience to **King Cyrus' decree** (see), while **others** remained in **Babylon**. **Those** who had remained had carefully followed the progress (or lack of it) in **Yerushalayim**. But it would be several generations before another exodus would occur**;**

from the sons of Bigvai – Uthai and Zaccur and 70 males with him (Ezra

8:14).

Hattush was not one of **the leaders** of the community and therefore does not appear in the list in **Ezra 8:16**. But **he** *was* there! **David's** line, though now darkened and veiled and almost extinguished among the faithful, still continues. And suddenly, in a place where they least expect it, **David's** line will emerge again. **Matthew** and **Luke** do not include **Hattush** in **their** different genealogies (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Ai – The Genealogies of Joseph and Mary**). But the covenant made with **David's** house (see the commentary on **the Life of David Ct – The LORD's Covenant with David**), a covenant that would eventually yield the Messiah Yeshua, though clouded and almost entirely obliterated as a consequence of the Babylonian exile (see the commentary on **Jeremiah Gu – Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule**), still remains. These were dark days, but out of this darkness would come one who would say: **I am the light of the world (John 8:12).**

The promises of **ADONAI** can sometimes appear to be almost extinguished. There are dark days in **Isra'el's** history. The exile itself was one of the darkest in **her** history. But the mercy of **God endures forever; the Word of the Lord endures forever (First Peter 1:25). His** promises will never fail.[140]