

Rebuilding What Was Lost
The Book of Ezra-Nehemiah



Rebuilding What Was Lost

- *A Little Bit of Background*
- *The Return*
- *Laying the Foundation*
- *Letters to Kings*
- *The Return of the Heroes (part 3)*



The Return of the Heroes

- Ezra's coming back to Jerusalem
 - So let's catch up with what we know...
 - What do we know about Ezra personally from Ezra 7:1-6?
 - What do we know about Ezra and his mission from Ezra 7:7-10?
 - What do we know about Ezra and his mission from Ezra 7:11-14?

(which actually suggests that Ezra had his own copy of the Law of God with him—so how important was this guy?)

(or maybe they didn't even *have* a complete copy back in Jerusalem, so he was bringing it with him—think about how precious *that* cargo was...)



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 - What do we know about Ezra and his mission from Ezra 7:11-14?
 - What do we know about Ezra and his mission from Ezra 7:15-22?
(that adds up to about \$3 million in today's values
—so again, that's a lot of precious cargo)



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 - What do we know about Ezra and his mission from Ezra 7:15-22?
 - What do we know about Ezra and his mission from Ezra 7:23-26?
(how seriously is Artaxerxes taking this—and why?)



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 - What do we know about Ezra and his mission from Ezra 7:23-26?
 - What do we know about Ezra and his heart by his response to all of this in Ezra 7:27-28?



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- Ezra's coming back to Jerusalem
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 - So what happens next?
 - Please read Ezra 8:1
 - I'm not going to make anyone read Ezra 8:2-14, but who can summarize what he's saying here?
(and what does it remind us about Ezra that he takes this much effort to document all of this?)



The Return of the Heroes

- **Ezra's coming back to Jerusalem**
 - So let's catch up with what we know...
 - **So what happens next?**
 - **Please read Ezra 8:1**
 - I'm not going to make anyone read Ezra 8:2-14, but who can summarize what he's saying here?
 - **This is more than 1500 people joining Ezra as he returns to Jerusalem from Babylon, laden with treasure and the Law of God—how significant is that?**
 - **What do we know from history about large caravans like this?**



The Return of the Heroes

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 - So let's catch up with what we know...
 - So what happens next?
 - Please read Ezra 8:1-14
 - Please read Ezra 8:15
 - Why did Ezra stop and make an assessment before they ever even left Babylonian territory?
 - Why didn't they didn't have any Levites?
(I mean, they had Levites in Jerusalem, right?)



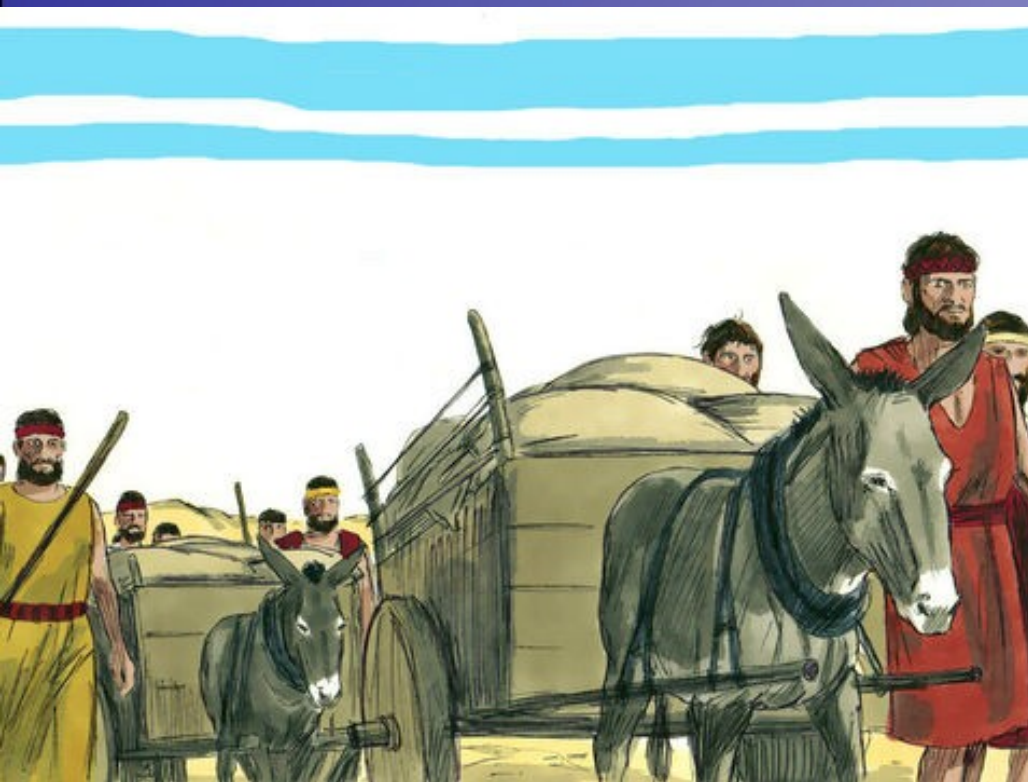
The Return of the Heroes

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 - So what happens next?
 - Please read Ezra 8:1-14
 - Please read Ezra 8:15
 - Please read Ezra 8:16-17
 - Look at the details in these verses—what do they tell us about Ezra and his retinue?



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 - Please read Ezra 8:1-14
 - Please read Ezra 8:15
 - Please read Ezra 8:16-17
 - Please read Ezra 8:18-20
 - Why had these Levites and "Nethinim" not *already* gone back to Jerusalem over the past generation? (what are the possibilities?)

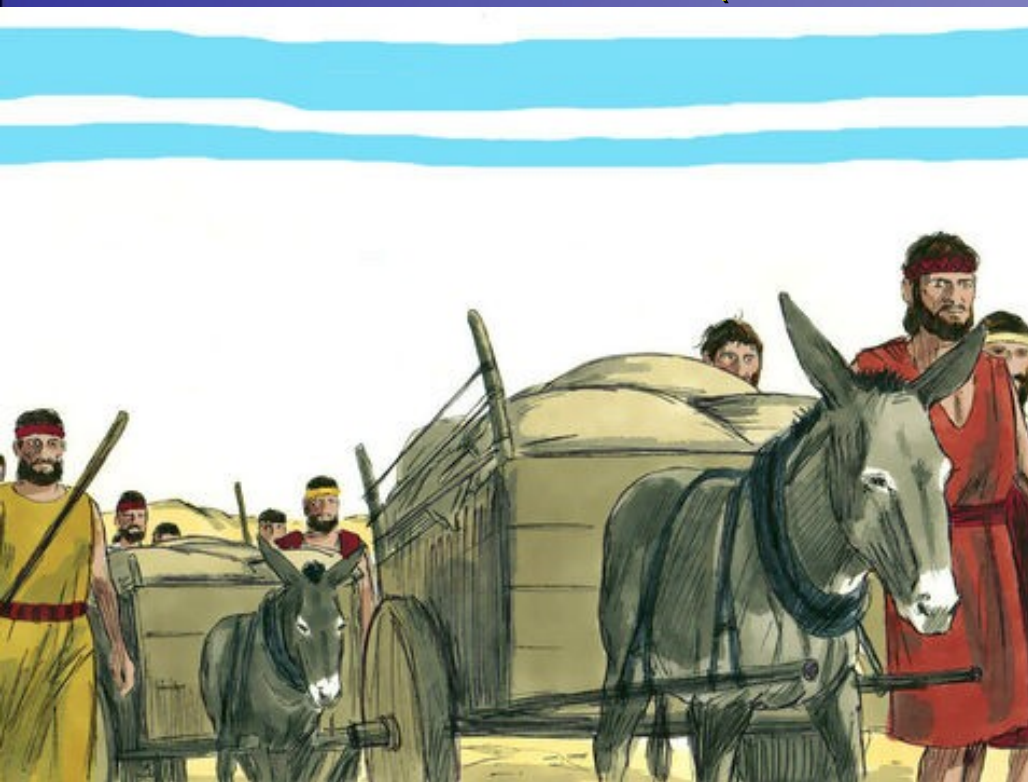


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 - Please read Ezra 8:18-20
 - Please read Ezra 8:21

(Cuz remember their precious cargo, right?)

(isn't this a wise move for *any* of us to make before we go on *any* trip?)
(then again, how hard would it be to wrangle hundreds of people, with hundreds of their kids, and millions of dollars worth of precious cargo—is it *worth* it?)



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 - Please read Ezra 8:21-22
 - And yet, what did they *not* do in verse 22?

(and yes, I've been a tricky PK for the past two lessons as I've kept talking about all of those armed, Babylonian royal guards who must've been protecting them...)



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 - And yet, what did they *not* do in verse 22?



- How wise was that?
 - I mean, you have \$3 million in assets, plus your children and families, plus a priceless copy of the Law of God
 - I lock my “nobody wants this car” car when I go into the *Walmart* in *MORTON* and yet Ezra says he was ashamed to ask the king for protection for the *most* precious cargo... *why...?*



The Return of the Heroes



Funky little teaching moment...

- Ezra was ashamed to even *suggest* to the King that his armed guards could protect their precious cargo better than God Himself could
 - Stop and think about things that we tend to put our faith in on a daily basis to protect us—not *bad* things, but things that we leap to first (and maybe last)
 - Do you ever functionally trust anything in your life *more* than you trust God?
 - What decisions have you made or feelings have you indulged even this week based not on a trust of God, but on a functional *dis-trust* of God?



The Return of the Heroes



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 - Stop and think about things that we tend to put our faith in on a daily basis to protect us—not *bad* things, but things that we leap to first (and maybe last)
 - Do you ever functionally trust anything in your life *more* than you trust God?
 - How can we apply a more Ezra-type faith to our lives? (let's be as specific as we can be)



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 - Please read Ezra 8:21-22
 - Please read Ezra 8:23-29
 - NOTE: This is *over and above* the other treasures

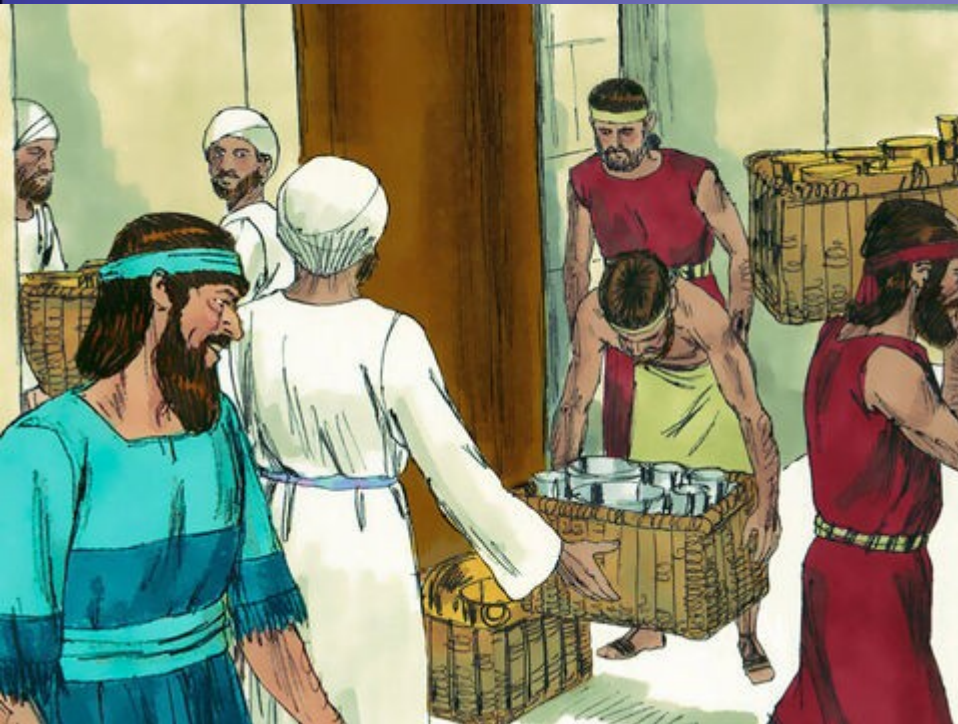


- This is now roughly \$500 million—and it's being entrusted to a bunch of... priests...?
 - But what clarification and/or justification does Ezra give to them for this in verse 28?
 - Is the consecrated precious metal more important than the consecrated people?
 - Well, which one did Ezra list *first*?
 - How can we still apply that **T**ruth today?



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 - Please read Ezra 8:30-33

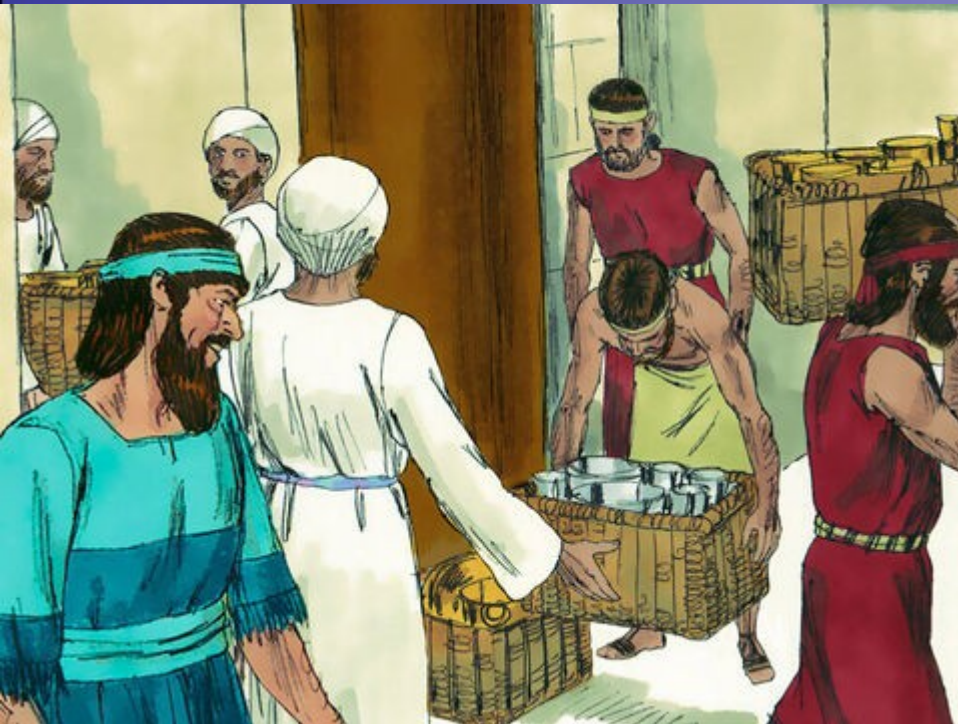


- How could they just... *rest...* for three days without counting all of the gold and silver to make sure that it's all still there?
 - What did Ezra say about both the men and the precious cargo of stuff back in verse 28?
 - What did Ezra say about God back in verse 22?
 - So what's left in the equation to stress about?
 - How can we apply that sort of math to our own lives?



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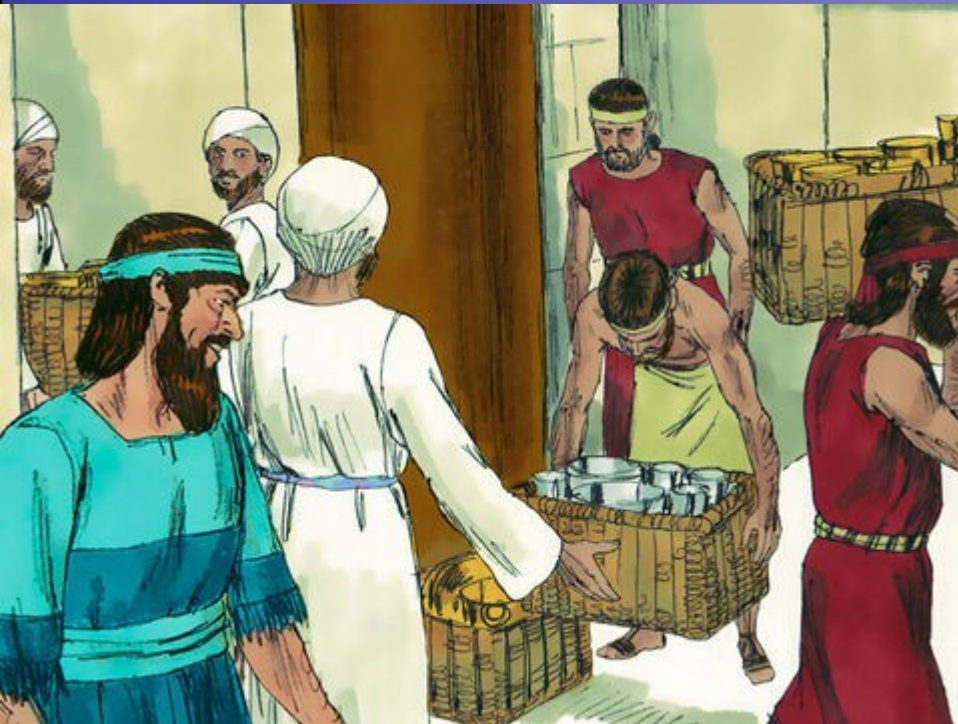


- How could they just... *rest...* for three days without counting all of the gold and silver to make sure that it's all still there?
- And what are we told in verse 34?
 - Is *that* the point where Ezra decided that he could totally trust God with stuff?
 - If not, then when was point where Ezra decided that he could totally trust God with stuff?



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- How could they just... *rest*... for three days without counting all of the gold and silver to make sure that it's all still there?
- And what are we told in verse 34?
 - Is *that* the point where Ezra decided that he could totally trust God with stuff?
 - How can we apply that sort of Ezra-type faith to our own lives today?
(let's be as specific as we can be)

