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EZIAS, ê-zî'as: RV OZIAS (q.v.).

EZION-GEBER, ê-zi-on-gê'bêr (עִזְיֹן גִבְעָר, 'ezyôn gebher; Γασιδών Γάβερ, *Gasidôn Gâber*): Always mentioned along with Elath ("Eziongeber," Nu 33 35 f AV). When the children of Israel left "the way of the Arabah," having come from the N.W., they seem to have turned to the N.E. from the neighborhood of 'Akaba, passing up by *Wâdy el-Ithm* toward the eastern desert (Dt 2 8). Elath and Ezion-geber were evidently not far apart. They are named together again in connection with the maritime enterprises of Solomon and Jehoshaphat (1 K 9 26, etc). They therefore both lay on the shore of the sea. No trace of Ezion-geber is to be found on the present coast line. It is probable, however, that in ancient times the sea covered a considerable stretch of the mud flats at the S. end of *Wâdy el-'Arabah*, and the site of Ezion-geber may be sought near the spring 'Ain el-Ghudyân, about 15 miles N. of the present head of the Gulf of 'Akaba. W. EWING

EZNITE, ez'nit (עֲזִנִּי or עֲזִנִּי, 'eçnî or 'eçnô). See ADINO.

EZORA, ê-zô'ra (Εἰζώρα, *Ezôrá*, AV Ozora): He and his six sons "gave their hands to put away their strange wives" (1 Esd 9 20.34="Machnadebai" of Ezr 10 40).

EZRA, ez'ra (Aram. or Chaldee, עֲזָרָא, 'ezrâ', "help"; a hypocoristicon, or shortened form of Azariah, "Jeh has helped." The Heb spells the name עֲזָרָה, 'ezrah, as in 1 Ch 4 17, or uses the Aram. spelling of the name, as in Ezr 7 1. The Gr form is Esdras):

(1) A priest who returned with Zerubbabel from Babylon (Neh 12 1). In Neh 10 2, Azariah, the full form of the name, is found.

(2) A descendant of Judah and father of Jethro and other sons (1 Ch 4 17).

(3) The distinguished priest who is the hero of the Book of Ezr and coworker with Nehemiah.

The genealogy of Ezra is given in Ezr 7 1-6, where it appears that he was the son of Seraiah,

the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, the son of Shallum, the son of Ahitub, the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, the son of Zerariah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the high priest. Since Seraiah, according to the Book of K, was killed by Nebuchadrezzar at Riblah (2 K 25 18-21), and since he was the father of Jehozadak, the high priest who was carried into captivity by Nebuchadrezzar (1 Ch 6 14.15 [Heb 5 40], etc) in 588 BC, and since the return under Ezra took place in 458 BC, the word "son" must be used in Ezr 7 2 in the sense of descendant. Since, moreover, Joshua, or Jeshua, the high priest, who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel, was the son of Jehozadak and the grandson of Seraiah, Ezra was probably the great-grandson or great-great-grandson of Seraiah. Inasmuch as Jehozadak is never mentioned as one of his forefathers, Ezra was probably not descended from Jehozadak, but from a younger brother. He would thus not be a high priest, though he was of high-priestly descent as far as Seraiah. For the sake of shortening the list of names, six names are omitted in Ezr 7 2-7 between Azariah and Meraioth, and one between Shallum and Ahitub from the corresponding list found in 1 Ch 6 4-14 (Heb 5 30-40).

Being a priest by birth, it is to be supposed that Ezra would have performed the ordinary functions of a member of his order, if he had been born and had lived in Pal. Jos, indeed, says that he was

high priest of his brethren in Babylon, a statement that in view of the revelation of the Elephantine papyri may not be without a foundation in fact. According to the Scriptures

2. **Occupation** and Jewish tradition, however, Ezra was preëminently a scribe, and esp. a scribe of the law of Moses. He is called "a ready scribe in the law of Moses," a "scribe of the words of the commandments of Jeh, and of his statutes to Israel," "the scribe of the law of the God of heaven." As early as the time of Jeremiah (cf Jer 8 8), "scribe" had already attained the meaning of one learned in the Scriptures, one who had made the written law a subject of investigation. Ezra is the first who is called by the title of "the scribe," the title by which Artaxerxes designates him in his letter of instructions in Ezr 7 6.11.

In the 7th year of Artaxerxes I (459-458 BC) Ezra requested permission of the king to go up to

Jerus; for "Ezra had set his heart to

3. **His Commission** to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances." Artaxerxes granted his request, and gave him a letter permitting as many

of the people of Israel and of the priests and Levites as so desired to accompany him to Jerus, and commissioning him to inquire concerning Judah and Jerus, and to carry a gift of money from the king and his counsellors, and all the money to be found in the province of Babylon, and the freewill offerings of the people and priests, with which to buy offerings to offer upon the altar of the house of God which was in Jerus. He was commissioned also to carry vessels for the service of the house of God, and to do at the expense of the royal treasury whatever was needful for the house of God. The king decreed, moreover, that the treasurers of the king should assist Ezra with a tribute of wheat, wine, oil and salt, and that they should impose no tribute, custom or toll upon any of those employed in the service of the house of God. Moreover, Ezra was authorized to appoint judges to judge the people according to the law of God and the law of the king, and to inflict punishments upon all who would not obey these laws.

Ascribing this marvelous letter of the king to the lovingkindness of his God, and strengthened by this evidence of God's power, Ezra proceeded to gather together out of Israel the chief men and teachers and ministers of the house to go up with him to Jerus. He gathered these men in camp at Casiphia, on the river Ahava. Here he proclaimed a time of fasting and prayer, that God might prosper their journey (Ezr 8 15-23). Then, having delivered the treasures into the hands of the priests, the assembled company departed for Jerus, where by the help of God they arrived in safety, delivered over the money and gifts by number and weight, offered burnt offerings and sin offerings, delivered the king's commissions and furthered the people and the house of God.

Shortly after Ezra's arrival at Jerus, the princes accused the people, the priests, and the Levites of having intermarried with the peoples of the land, even asserting that the princes and rulers had been leaders in the trespass. Upon hearing this, Ezra was confounded, rent his garments, plucked off his hair, fell upon his knees and prayed a prayer of confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God. While he prayed the people assembled and wept, acknowledged their sin and promised to do according to the law. The whole people were then assembled in counsel, and in spite of some opposition the strange wives were put away.

In Neh 8, Ezra appears again upon the scene at the Feast of Tabernacles as the chief scribe of the law of Moses, the leader of the priests and Levites who

read and explained the law to the people. On his advice the people ceased from their mourning and celebrated the festival according to the law of Moses with joy and thanksgiving and giving of gifts, dwelling also in booths in commemoration of the manner of their fathers' sojourning while in the wilderness.

The traditions with regard to Ezra found in Jos and in the Talm are so discrepant that it is impossible to place reliance upon any of their statements which are not found also in the canonical Scriptures.

4. Traditions

R. DICK WILSON

EZRA-NEHEMIAH:

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|------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Name | 6. Literary Character |
| 2. Object | 7. Languages |
| 3. Plan | 8. Historicity |
| 4. Unity | 9. Text |
| 5. Sources | LITERATURE |

The books of Ezr and Neh, by whomsoever written, are properly so named according to analogy

1. Name

from the principal persons mentioned in them. In the Heb Bibles, the former is headed simply, Ezra, and the latter, Nehemiah. The two books are counted in the Talm, in Jos, and in the Canon of Melito, 171 AD, as one, and are so treated also in the subscription of the MT, which reads: "The totality of the verses of Ezr and Neh is 688, and its sign is 'Remember, Jeh, the reproach of thy servants,' and its two parts [are at the sentence] 'unto the ascent of the corner' [Neh 3 31] and its chapters (*ṣḏhārāyū*) are ten, and its sign is 'Upon a high mountain get thee up, O thou that announcest good tidings to Zion.'" In the LXX, Ezr-Neh is called Esdras B, while an apocryphal Book of Ezr is called Esdras A (see below). In the catalogues of the OT writings handed down to us by the Fathers (Origen, Cyril, Melito, Jerome and the Council of Laodicea) our Ezr is called 1 Ezr; Neh, 2 Ezr; the apocryphal Gr Ezr, 3 Ezr; and an apocalyptic book, falsely called a book of Ezr, is denominated 4 Ezr.

The object of the books is to show that God fulfilled His promise, or prophecy, to restore His exiled

2. Object

people to their inheritance, through the instrumentality on the one hand of the great heathen monarchs, Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, and on the other hand by stirring up the spirit of such great men among the chosen people as Joshua and Zerubbabel, Haggai and Zechariah, and Ezra and Nehemiah, through whom the altar, the temple, the houses and walls of Jerus, and finally the worship and ceremony of the Jewish people were reestablished, the people being separated from foreign admixtures, customs and idolatry, and their religious observances purified and fixed for all time.

The object of the work justifies the selection and arrangement of the material and the plan pursued

3. Plan

by the composer, or composers; all matter being stringently excluded which does not bear directly upon the purpose in view. However much we may wish that other historical records had been included, it is not proper to criticize the work because of these omissions, nor is it fair to argue that the writer was ignorant of what he has not seen fit to record.

The unity of the combined work is shown by the fact that they have the same common object, the same

4. Unity

plan, and a similarity of language and style; that they treat, for the most part, of the same period of time; and that Ezra is one of the most prominent persons in both. It is not fair to deny the essential unity on the ground that the list of priests and others found in Ezr 2 is repeated in Neh 7; for there is no doubt that Ezra was the compiler of parts at least of the book called after him, and that Nehemiah also was the original writer of parts of the book that bears

his name. Whoever was the final editor of the whole work, he has simply retained the two almost identical lists in their appropriate places in the documents which lay before him.

The Books of Ezr and Neh are a compilation of genealogical lists, letters and edicts, memoirs and chronicles. We cannot be certain as

5. Sources

to who was the composer of either or both books. Many think that Ezra compiled both the books out of preëxisting materials, adding parts of his own composition. Others, suppose that Ezra wrote the book named after him, while Nehemiah composed the Book of Neh. Others, again, are of the opinion that neither Ezra nor Nehemiah, but some other unknown editor, most probably the compiler of the Books of Ch, put together the Books of Ezr and Neh, using largely the memoirs of the two great men who are the principal persons in the records. While there is still much difference of opinion as to who was the final redactor, there is a general agreement as to the composite character of the whole, and that the person who wrote the parts that bind together the original sources was the same as he who wrote the canonical books of Chronicles.

The diversified character of the style, languages and other literary peculiarities of the books is

counted for by the large number and the variety of sources. From the style and contents of the first chapter it has

6. Literary Character

of the

Books

been argued with great plausibility that it was written by Daniel; for similar reasons it has been argued that the portion of Ezr from 3 2 to 4 22 inclusive was written by Haggai the prophet. All admit that the parts of Ezr and Neh in which the 1st per. is employed were written by Ezra and Nehemiah respectively. As to who it was who added the other connecting portions there is and must always be great doubt arising from the fact that the author is not mentioned. The style points to the same hand as that which composed the Book of Chronicles. Those who believe that Ezra compiled the Book of Ch will believe that he most probably composed also the Books of Ezr and Neh. The principal objection to his authorship arises from the inexplicable change from the 1st to the 3d per. occurring in both Ezr and Neh. Inasmuch as the 3d per. is the proper form to use in the best style of Bib. historical composition; inasmuch as Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon often employ it in their histories; inasmuch as some of the Bab monuments mingle the 1st and 3d pers. in the same document; and finally, inasmuch as the prophets and psalmists of Israel likewise interchange the persons in what is for us often an unaccountable manner: this characteristic of the style of Ezr-Neh seems an insufficient reason upon which to base the denial of the claim that Ezra may have been the author.

The facts that there is unevenness in the treatment of the history, and that there are long periods on which the narrator is silent, do not militate against the authorship of Ezra nor do they imply a date long after his age; for the author is perfectly consistent in his purpose to stick to the object and plan which he had in view for himself, that is, to give an account of the reestablishment of the Israelitish people and of their Divinely given institutions. That he has omitted other matters does not imply that he was ignorant of them.

The language of the books is Heb, except Ezr 4 7-6 18 and 7 12-26, which is written in Aram.

7. Languages

The Heb closely resembles that of Dnl, Hag and Ch, much more so than it does that of Ecclus, which was written probably about 180 BC. The Aram. (formerly called Chaldee) is very much like