
EZRA 1: 1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the LORD's word by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

At the conclusion of 2 Kings, and also of the preceding book, 2 Chronicles, we have seen the state of misery and desolation to which the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were reduced through their unparalleled ingratitude to God, and their innumerable backslidings and rebellions. These at last issued in their captivity; the inhabitants of the former country being carried away by the Assyrians, and those of the latter by the Chaldeans. The former never recovered their ancient territories, and were so disposed of by their enemies that they either became amalgamated with the heathen nations, so as to be utterly undistinguishable, or they were transported to some foreign and reclusive place of settlement, that the place of their existence, though repeatedly guessed at, has for more than two thousand years been totally unknown.

In mercy to the less polluted inhabitants of the kingdom of Judah, though delivered up into the hands of their enemies, God had promised by his prophet, that at the expiration of seventy years they should be enlarged, and restored to their own country. This prediction was most literally fulfilled; and the books of Ezra, Esther, and Nehemiah, inform us how the Divine goodness accomplished this most gracious design, and the movers and agents he employed on the occasion. The writer of the following book was undoubtedly the chief agent under God; and his history, as found in the most authentic writings of the Jews, is too nearly connected with this book, and too important in every point of view, to be passed by. No man has written on this subject with such perspicuity as Dean Prideaux; and from his invaluable work, *The Connected History of the Old and New Testaments*, I shall freely borrow whatever may be best calculated to throw light upon the ensuing history. "In the beginning of the year 458 before the Christian era, Ezra obtained of King Artaxerxes and his seven counsellors a very ample commission for his return to Jerusalem, with all of his nation that were willing to accompany him thither; giving him full authority there to restore and settle the state, and reform the Church of the Jews, and to regulate and govern both according to their own laws. This extraordinary favor, not being likely to have been obtained but by some more than ordinary means, appears to have been granted by King Artaxerxes to the solicitations of Esther, who, though not at that time advanced to the dignity of his queen, was yet the best beloved of his concubines. "Ezra was of the descendants of Seraiah, the high priest who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar when he burnt the temple and city of Jerusalem. "As Ezra was a very holy, so also was he a very learned man, and especially skilled excellently in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; and therefore he is said to have been a very ready scribe in the law of God, for which he was so eminent that Artaxerxes takes particular notice of it in his commission. He began his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, called Nisan, which might fall about the middle of our March; and having halted at the river of Ahava till the rest of his company was come up to him, he there, in a solemn fast, recommended himself and all that were with him to the Divine protection; and then, on the twelfth day, set forward for Jerusalem, they all having spent four months in their journey from Babylon thither. On his arrival he delivered up to the temple the offerings which had been made to it by the king and his nobles, and the rest of the people of Israel that stayed behind; which amounted to a hundred talents of gold, with twenty basons of gold of the value of a thousand darics, and six hundred and fifty talents of silver, with vessels of silver of the weight of a hundred talents more: and then, having communicated his commission to the king's lieutenants and governors throughout all Syria and Palestine, he betook himself to the executing of the contents of

it, whereby he was fully empowered to settle both the Church and the state of the Jews, according to the law of Moses; and to appoint magistrates and judges to punish all such as should be refractory; and that, not only by imprisonment and confiscation of goods, but also with banishment and death, according as their crimes should be found to deserve. And all this power Ezra was invested with, and continued faithfully to execute, for the space of thirteen years, till Nehemiah arrived with a new commission from the Persian court for the same work. Ezra, having found in the second year of his government (Ezr 9:1-15 and 10) that many of the people had taken strange wives, contrary to the law, and that several of the priests and Levites, as well as the chief men of Judah and Benjamin, had transgressed herein, after he had in fasting and prayer deprecated God's wrath for it, caused proclamation to be made for all the people of Israel that had returned from the captivity to gather themselves together at Jerusalem, under the penalty of excommunication, and forfeiture of all their goods. And when they were met, he made them sensible of their sins, and engaged them in promise and covenant before God, to depart from it by putting away their strange wives, and all such as were born of them, that the seed of Israel might not be polluted with such an undue commixture; and thereon commissioners were appointed to inquire into this matter, and cause every man to do according to the law. "And they sat down the first day of the tenth month to examine into this matter, and made an end by the first day of the first month; so that in three months' time, that is, in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth months of the Jewish years a thorough reformation was made of this transgression: which three months answer to January, February, and March of our year. "About this time (Est 2:21) Bigthan and Jeush, two eunuchs of the palace, entered into a conspiracy against the life of King Artaxerxes. Most likely they were of those who had attended Queen Vashti; and being now out of their offices by the degrading of their mistress, and the advancing of another in her place, took such a disgust at this as to resolve to revenge themselves on the king for it; of which Mordecai, having got the knowledge, made discovery to Queen Esther, and she in Mordecai's name to the king; whereon inquiry being made into the matter, and the whole treason laid open and discovered, the two traitors were both crucified for it, and the history of the whole matter was entered on the public registers and annals of the kingdom. "Ezra continued in the government of Judea till the end of the year 446; and by virtue of the commission he had from the king, and the powers granted him thereby, he reformed the whole state of the Jewish Church, according to the law of Moses, in which he was excellently learned, and settled it upon that bottom upon which it afterwards stood till the time of our Savior. The two chief things which he had to do, were to restore the observance of the Jewish law according to the ancient approved usages which had been in practice before the captivity, under the directions of the prophets; and to collect together and set forth a correct edition of the Holy Scriptures; in the performance of both which, the Jews inform us he had the assistance of what they call the Great Synagogue, which they tell us was a convention consisting of one hundred and twenty men, who lived all at the same time under the presidency of Ezra, and assisted him in both of these two works; and among these they name Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. "But the whole conduct of the work, and the glory of accomplishing it, is by the Jews chiefly attributed to him under whose presidency they tell us it was done; and therefore they look upon him as another Moses: for the law, they say, was given by Moses; but it was reviewed and restored by Ezra, after it had in a manner been extinguished and lost in the Babylonish captivity. And therefore they reckon him as the second founder of it: and it is a common opinion among them that he was Malachi the prophet; that he was called Ezra as his proper name, and Malachi, which signifies an angel or messenger, from his office, because he was sent as the angel and messenger of God to restore again the Jewish religion, and establish it in the same manner as it was before the captivity on the foundation of the law and the prophets. And indeed, by virtue of that ample commission which he had from King Artaxerxes, he had an opportunity of doing more herein than any other of his nation; and he executed all the

powers thereof to the utmost he was able, for the resettling both of the ecclesiastical and political state of the Jews in the best posture they were then capable of: and from hence his name is in so high esteem and veneration among the Jews, that it is a common saying among their writers, 'that if the law had not been given by Moses, Ezra was worthy, by whom it should have been given.' As to the ancient and approved usages of the Jewish Church which had been in practice before the captivity, they had by Joshua and Zerubbabel, with the chief elders, then contemporaries, and by others that after succeeded them, been gathering together from their first return to Jerusalem, as they could be recovered from the memories of the ancients of their nation who had either seen them practiced themselves before the captivity, or who had been informed concerning them by their parents or others who had lived before them. "All these, and whatsoever else was pretended to be of the same nature, Ezra brought under review, and, after due examination, allowed such of them as were to be allowed, and settled them by his approbation and authority: they gave birth to what the Jews now call their oral law; for they own a twofold law - the first, the written law, which is recorded in the Holy Scriptures; and the second, the oral law, which they have only by the tradition of their elders. And both these, they say, were given them by Moses from Mount Sinai, of which the former only was committed to writing, and the other delivered down to them from generation to generation by the tradition of the elders; and therefore holding them both to be of the same authority, as having both of them the same Divine original, they think themselves to be bound as much by the latter as the former, or rather much more; for the written law is, they say, in many places, obscure, scanty, and defective, and could be no perfect rule to them without the oral law, which, containing according to them a full, complete, and perfect interpretation of all that is included in the other, supplies all the defects and solves all the difficulties of it; and therefore they observe the written law no otherwise than according as it is explained and expounded by their oral law. And hence it is a common saying among them, 'that the covenant was made with them, not upon the written law, but upon the oral law;' and therefore they do in a manner lay aside the former to make room for the latter, and resolve their whole Religion into their traditions, in the same manner as the Romanists do theirs, having no farther regard to the written word of God than as it agrees with their traditionary explications of it, but always preferring them thereto, though in many particulars they are quite contradictory to it, which is a corruption that had grown to a great height among them even in our Savior's time; for he charges them with it, and tells them that they make the word of God of none effect through their traditions; Mar 7:13. But they have done it much more since, professing a greater regard to the latter than the former; and hence it is that we find it so often said in their writings, 'that the words of the scribes are lovely above the words of the law; that the words of the law are weighty and light, but the words of the scribes are all weighty; that the words of the elders are weightier than the words of the prophets;' where, by the words of the scribes and the words of the elders, they mean their traditions, delivered to them by their scribes and elders. And in other places, 'that the written text is only as water; but the Mishnah and Talmud, in which are contained the traditions, are as wine and hippocras.' And again, 'that the written law is only as salt, but the Mishnah and Talmud as pepper and sweet spices.' And in many other sayings, very common among them, do they express the very high veneration which they bear towards the oral or traditionary law, and the little regard which they have to the written word of God in comparison of it, making nothing of the latter but as expounded by the former; as if the written word were no more than the dead letter, and the traditionary law alone the soul that gives it the whole life and essence. "And this being what they hold of their traditions, which they call their oral law, the account which they give of its original is as follows: they tell us that 'at the same time when God gave unto Moses the law in Mount Sinai, he gave unto him also the interpretation of it, commanding him to put the former into writing, but to deliver the other only by word of mouth, to be preserved in the memories of men, and to be transmitted down by them from generation to

generation by tradition only; and from hence the former is called the written, and the other the oral law.' And to this day all the determinations and dictates of the latter are termed by the Jews 'Constitutions of Moses from Mount Sinai,' because they do as firmly believe that he received them all from God in his forty days' converse with him in that mount, as that he then received the written text itself. That on his return from this converse he brought both of these laws with him, and delivered them unto the people of Israel in this manner: As soon as he was returned to his tent, he called Aaron thither unto him, and first delivered unto him the text, which was to be the written law, and after that the interpretation of it, which was the oral law, in the same order as he received both from God in the mount. Then Aaron arising and seating himself at the right hand of Moses, Eleazar and Ithamar his sons went next in, and both these being taught laws at the feet of the prophet in the same manner as Aaron had been, they also arose and seated themselves, the one on the left hand of Moses, the other on the right hand of Aaron; and then the seventy elders who constituted the Sanhedrin, or great senate of the nation, went in, and being taught by Moses both these laws in the same manner, they also seated themselves in the tent; and then entered all such of the people as were desirous of knowing the law of God, and were taught in the same manner. After this, Moses withdrawing, Aaron repeated the whole of the law as he had heard it from him, and also withdrew; and then Eleazar and Ithamar repeated the same, and on their withdrawing, the seventy elders made the same repetition to the people then present; so that each of them having heard both these laws repeated to them four times, they all had it thereby fixed in their memories; and that then they dispersed themselves among the whole congregation, and communicated to all the people of Israel what had been thus delivered to them by the prophet of God. That they did put the text into writing, but the interpretation of it they delivered down only by word of mouth to the succeeding generations; that the written text contained the six hundred and thirteen precepts into which they divide the law and the unwritten interpretations, all the manners, ways, and circumstances, that were to be observed in the keeping of them; that after this, towards the end of the fortieth year from their coming up out of the land of Egypt, in the beginning of the eleventh month, (which fell about the beginning of our June), Moses, calling all the people of Israel together, acquainted them of the approaching time of his death, and therefore ordered that if any of them had forgot aught of what he had delivered to them, they should repair to him, and he would repeat to them what had slipped their memories, and farther explain to them every difficulty and doubt which might arise in their minds concerning what he had taught them of the law of their God; and that hereon they applying to him, all the remaining term of his life, that is, from the said beginning of the eleventh month till the sixth day of the twelfth month, was employed in instructing them in the text, which they call the written law, and in the interpretation of it, which they call the oral law; and that on the said sixth day having delivered unto them thirteen copies of the written law, all copied out with his own hand, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Deuteronomy, one to each of the twelve tribes, to be kept by them throughout their generations, and the thirteenth to the Levites, to be laid up by them in the tabernacle before the Lord, and having moreover repeated the oral law to Joshua his successor, he went on the seventh day into Mount Nebo, and there died; that after his death Joshua delivered the same oral law to the elders who after succeeded him, and they delivered it to the prophets, and the prophets transmitted it down to each other till it came to Jeremiah, who delivered it to Baruch, and Baruch to Ezra, by whom it was delivered to the men of the great synagogue, the last of whom was Simon the Just; that by him it was delivered to Antigonus of Socho, and by him to Jose the son of Jochanan, and by him to Jose the son of Joeser, and by him to Nathan the Arbelite and Joshua the son of Berachiah, and by them to Judah the son of Jabhai, and, Simeon the son of Shatah, and by them to Shemaiah and Abitulion, and by them to Hillel and by Hillel to Simeon his son, who is supposed to have been the same who took our Savior into his arms when he was brought to the temple to be there presented to the Lord at the time of his mother's purification;

and by Simeon it was delivered to Gamaliel his son, the same at whose feet Paul was brought up, and by him to Simeon his son, by him to Gamaliel his son, and by him to Simeon his son, and by him to Rabbah Judah Hakkadosh his son, who wrote it into the book called the Mishnah. But all this is mere fiction spun out of the fertile invention of the Talmudists, without the least foundation either in Scripture or in any authentic history for it. But since all this has made a part of the Jewish creed, they do as firmly believe their traditions thus to have come from God in the manner I have related, as they do the written word itself; and have now, as it were, wholly resolved their religion into these traditions. There is no understanding what their religion at present is without it, and it is for this reason I have here inserted it. "But the truth is this: After the death of Simon the Just there arose a sort of men whom they call The Jarmain, or the Mishnical doctors, who made it their business to study and descant upon those traditions which had been received and allowed by Ezra and the men of the great synagogue, and to draw inferences and consequences from them, all of which they ingrafted into the body of these ancient traditions, as if they had been as authentic as the others; which example being followed by those who after succeeded them in this profession, they continually added their own imaginations to what they had received from those who went before them, whereby the traditions, becoming as a snow-ball, the farther they rolled down from one generation to another the more they gathered, and the greater the bulk of them grew. And thus it went on till the middle of the second century after Christ, then Antoninus Pius governed the Roman empire, by which time they found it necessary to put an these traditions into writing; for they were then grown to so great a number, and enlarged to so huge a heap, as to exceed the possibility of being any longer preserved in the memory of men. And besides, in the second destruction which their country had undergone from the Romans a little before, in the reign of Adrian the preceding emperor, most of their learned men having been cut off, and the chiefest of their schools broken up and dissolved, and vast numbers of their people dissipated, and driven out of their land, the usual method of preserving their traditions had then in a great measure failed; and therefore, there being danger that under these disadvantages they might be all forgotten and lost, for the preservation of them it was resolved that they should be all collected together, and put into a book; and Rabbi Judah, the son of Simeon, who from the reputed sanctity of his life was called Hakkadosh, that is, The Holy, and was then rector of the school which they had at Tiberis in Galilee, and president of the Sanhedrin that there sat, undertook the work, and compiled it in six books, each consisting of several tracts, which altogether made up the number of sixty-three; in which, under their proper heads, he methodically digested all that had hitherto been delivered to them, of their law and their religion, by the tradition of their ancestors. And this is the book called The Mishnah, which book was forthwith received by the Jews with great veneration throughout all their dispersions, and has ever since been held in high estimation among them; for their opinion of it is, that all the particulars therein contained were dictated by God himself to Moses from Mount Sinai, as well as the written word itself, and consequently must be of the same Divine authority with it, and ought to be as sacredly observed. And therefore, as soon as it was published, it became the subject of the studies of all their learned men; and the chiefest of them, both in Judea and Babylonia, employed themselves to make comments on it; and these, with the Mishnah, make up both their Talmuds; that is, the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonish Talmud. These comments they call the Gemara, i.e., The Complement, because by them the Mishnah is fully explained, and the whole traditionary doctrines of their law and their religion completed. For the Mishnah is the text, and the Gemara the comment; and both together is what they call the Talmud. That made by the Jews of Judea is called the Jerusalem Talmud, that by the Jews of Babylonia is called the Babylonish Talmud. The former was completed about the year of our Lord 300, and is published in one large folio; the latter was published about two hundred years after, in the beginning of the sixth century, and has had several editions since the invention of printing. The last, published at Amsterdam, is in twelve folios; and in these two

Talmuds, the law and the prophets being in a manner quite justled out of them, is contained the whole of the Jewish religion that is now professed among them; but the Babylonish Talmud is that which they chiefly follow; for the other, that is, the Jerusalem Talmud, being obscure, and hard to be understood, is not now much regarded by them. But this and the Mishnah, being the most ancient books which they have, except the Chaldee Paraphrases of Onkelos and Jonathan, and both written in the language and style of the Jews of Judea; our countryman, Dr. Lightfoot, has made very good use of them in explaining several places of the New Testament by parallel phrases and sayings out of them. For the one being composed about the one hundred and fiftieth year of our Lord, and the other about the three hundredth, the idioms, proverbial sayings, and phraseologies, used in our Savior's time, might very well be preserved in them. But the other Talmud being written in the language and style of Babylonia, and not compiled till about the five hundredth year of our Lord, or, as some will have it, much later, this cannot so well serve for this purpose. However, it is now the Alcoran of the Jews, into which they have resolved all their faith, and all their religion, although framed almost with the same imposture as that of Mohammed, out of the doctrines falsely pretended to be brought from heaven. And in this book all that now pretend to any learning among them place their studies; and no one can be a master in their schools, or a teacher in their synagogues, who is not well instructed and versed herein; that is, not only in the text, which is the Mishnah, but also in the comment thereon, which is the Gemara; and this comment they so highly esteem beyond the other, that the name of Gemara is wholly engrossed by it; the Gemara of the Babylonish Talmud being that only which they now usually understand by that word; for this with the Mishnah, to which it is added, they think truly completes and makes up the whole of their religion, as fully and perfectly containing all the doctrines, rules, and rites thereof; and therefore it is, in their opinion, the most deserving of that name, which signifies what completes, fills up, or perfects; for this is the meaning of the word in the Hebrew language. "They who professed this sort of learning, that is, taught and propagated this traditionary doctrine among them, have been distinguished by several different titles and appellations, according to the different ages in which they lived. From the time of the men of the great synagogue to the publishing of the Mishnah, they were called Jarmin; and they are the Mishnical doctors, out of whose doctrines and traditions the Mishnah was composed. And from the time of the publishing of the Mishnah to the publishing of the Babylonish Talmud, they were called Amoraim; and they are the Gemarical doctors, out of whose doctrines and traditions the Gemara was composed. And for about a hundred years after the publishing of the Talmud, they were called Seburaim, and after that Georim. And these were the several classes in which their learned men have been ranked, according to the several ages in which they lived. But for these later times, the general name of Rabbi is that only whereby their learned men are called, there being no other title whereby they have been distinguished for nearly seven hundred years past. "For about the year 1040 all their schools in Mesopotamia, where only they enjoyed these high titles, being destroyed, and all their learned men thence expelled and driven out by the Mohammedan princes, who governed in those parts; they have since that, with the greatest number of their people, flocked into the western parts, especially into Spain, France, and England; and from that time all these pompous titles which they affected in the East being dropped, they have retained none other for their learned men from that time but that of Rabbi; excepting only that those of them who minister in their synagogues are called Chacams, i.e., wise men. "But the great work of Ezra was, his collecting together and setting forth a correct edition of the Holy Scriptures, which he labored much in, and went a great way in the perfecting of it. Of this both Christians and Jews gave him the honor; and many of the ancient fathers attribute more to him in this particular than the Jews themselves; for they hold that all the Scriptures were lost and destroyed in the Babylonish captivity, and that Ezra restored them all again by Divine revelation. Thus says Irenaeus and thus say Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Basil, and others. But they had no other foundation

for it than that fabulous relation which we have of it in the fourteenth chapter of the second Apocryphal book of Esdras, a book too absurd for the Romanists themselves to receive into their canon. "Indeed, in the time of Josiah, through the impiety of the two preceding reigns of Manasseh and Amon, the book of the law was so destroyed and lost. The copy of it which Hilkiah is said to have found, and the grief which Josiah expressed at the hearing of it read, do plainly show that neither of them had ever seen it before. "And if the king and the high priest, who were both men of eminent piety, were without this part of the Holy Scripture, it can scarcely be thought that any one else then had it. But so religious a prince as King Josiah could not leave this long unremedied. By his orders copies were written out from this original; and search being made for all the other parts of Holy Scripture, both in the colleges of the sons of the prophets, and all other places where they could be found, care was taken for transcripts to be made out of these also; and thenceforth copies of the whole became multiplied among the people; all those who were desirous of knowing the laws of their God, either writing them out themselves, or procuring others to do it for them; so that within a few years after the holy city and temple were destroyed, and the authentic copy of the law, which was laid up before the Lord, was burnt and consumed with them, yet by this time many copies, both of the law and the prophets, and all the other sacred writings, were got into private hands, who carried them with them into captivity. "That Daniel had a copy of the Holy Scriptures with him in Babylon is certain, for he quotes the law, and also makes mention of the prophecies of the prophet Jeremiah, which he could not do had he never seen them. And in the sixth chapter of Ezra it is said, that on the finishing of the temple, in the sixth year of Darius, the priests and the Levites were settled in their respective functions, according as it is written in the law of Moses. But how could they do this according to the written law, if they had not copies of the law then among them? And this was nearly sixty years before Ezra came to Jerusalem. "And farther, in Nehemiah, Neh 8:1, the people called for the law of Moses, to have it read to them, which the Lord had commanded Israel, which plainly shows that the book was then well known to have been extant, and not to need such a miraculous expedient as that of the Divine revelation for its restoration; all that Ezra did in this manner was to get together as many copies of the sacred writings as he could, and out of them all to set forth a correct edition; in the performance of which he took care of the following particulars: First, He corrected all the errors that had crept into these copies, through the negligence or mistakes of transcribers; for, by comparing them one with the other, he found out the true reading, and set all at rights. Whether the *keri cethib*, or various readings, that are in our present Hebrew Bibles were of these corrections, I dare not say. The generality of the Jewish writers tell us that they were; and others among them hold them as much more ancient, referring them, with absurdity enough, as far back as the times of the first writers of the books in which they are found, as if they themselves had designedly made these various readings for the sake of some mysteries comprised under them. It is most probable that they had their original from the mistakes of the transcribers after the time of Ezra, and the observations and corrections of the Masorites made thereon. If any of them were of those ancient various readings which had been observed by Ezra himself in the comparing of those copies he collated on this occasion, and were by him annexed in the margin as corrections of those errors which he found in the text, it is certain those could not be of that number which are now in those sacred books that were written by himself, or taken into the canon after his time; for there are *keri cethib* in them as well as in the other books of the Hebrew Scriptures. Secondly, He collected together all the books of which the Holy Scriptures did then consist, and disposed them in their proper order; and settled the canon of Scripture for his time. These books he divided into three parts:

1. The Law.
2. The Prophets.

3. The Cethubim, or Hagiographa; i.e., the Holy Writings: which division our Savior himself takes notice of, Luk 24:44, where he says: 'These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things might be fulfilled which are written in the law, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.' For there, by the Psalms, he means the whole third part called the Hagiographa; for, that part beginning with the Psalms, the whole was for that reason then commonly called by that name; as usually with the Jews, the particular books are named from the words with which they begin. Thus with them Genesis is called Bereshith, Exodus Shemoth, Leviticus Vaijakra, etc., because they begin with these Hebrew words. "And Josephus makes mention of this same division; for he says, in his first book against Apion, 'We have only two and twenty books which are to be believed as of Divine authority, of which five are the books of Moses. From the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, king of Persia, the prophets, who were the successors of Moses, have written in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and documents of life for the use of men:' in which division, according to him, the law contains Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. The writings of the prophets, Joshua, Judges, with Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, with his Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, the twelve minor prophets, Job, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther; and the Hagiographa, i.e., the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, which altogether make two and twenty books. This division was made for the sake of reducing the books to the number of their alphabet, in which were twenty-two letters. But at present they reckon these books to be twenty-four, and dispose of them in this order: First, the Law, which contains Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Secondly, the Writings of the Prophets, which they divide into the former prophets and the latter prophets: the books of the former prophets are, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings; the books of the latter prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; the twelve minor prophets; the Hagiographa, which are the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the Song of Solomon, which they call the Song of Songs, Ruth, the Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, and the Chronicles. Under the name of Ezra they comprehend the book of Nehemiah; for the Hebrews, and also the Greeks, anciently reckoned Ezra and Nehemiah but as one book. But this order has not been always observed among the Jews; neither is it so now in all places, for there has been great variety as to this, and that not only among the Jews, but also among the Christians, as well as the Greeks and Latins: but no variation herein is of any moment, for in what order soever the books are placed, they are still the word of God; and no change as to this can make any change as to that Divine authority which is stamped upon them. But all these books were not received into the canon in Ezra's time, for Malachi it is supposed lived after him; and in Nehemiah mention is made of Jaddua as high priest, and of Darius Codomannus as king of Persia; who were at least a hundred years after his time. And in 1 Chronicles 3:1-24 of the first book of Chronicles the genealogy of the sons of Zerubbabel is carried down for so many generations as must necessarily make it reach to the time of Alexander the Great; and therefore the book could not be put into the canon till after his time. "It is most likely that the two books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, as well as Malachi, were afterwards added in the time of Simon the Just, and that it was not till then that the Jewish canon of the Holy Scriptures was fully completed: and indeed these last books seem very much to want the exactness and skill of Ezra in their publication, they falling far short of the correctness which is in the other parts of the Jewish Scriptures. The five books of the law are divided into fifty-four sections. This division many of the Jews hold to be one of the constitutions of Moses from Mount Sinai; but others, with more likelihood of truth, attribute it to Ezra. It was made for the use of their synagogues, and the better instructing of the people there in the law of God; for every Sabbath day one of these sections was read in their synagogues; and this, we are assured in the Acts of the Apostles, was done among them of old time, which may well be interpreted from the time of Ezra. They ended the last section with the last words of Deuteronomy on the Sabbath of the feast of tabernacles, and then recommenced with the first section from the

beginning of Genesis the next Sabbath after; and so went on round in this circle every year. The number of the sections was fifty-four; because in their intercalated years (a month being added) there were fifty-four Sabbaths. "On other years they reduced them to the number of the Sabbaths which were in those years by joining two short ones several times into one; for they held themselves obliged to have the whole law thus read over to them in their synagogues every year. Until the time of the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes they read only the law; but, being then forbid to read it any more, in the room of the fifty-four sections of the law, they substituted fifty-four sections out of the prophets, the reading of which they ever after continued. So that when the reading of the law was again restored by the Maccabees, the section which was read every Sabbath out of the law served for their first lesson, and the section out of the prophets for the second lesson; and so it was practiced in the time of the apostles. And therefore, when Paul entered into the synagogue at Antioch, in Pisidia, it is said that 'he stood up to preach after the reading of the law and the prophets;' that is, after the reading of the first lesson out of the law, and the second lesson out of the prophets. And in that very sermon which he then preached, he tells them, 'That the prophets were read at Jerusalem every Sabbath day,' that is, in those lessons which were taken out of the prophets. "These sections were divided into verses, which the Jews call *pesukim*; they were marked out in the Hebrew Bibles by two great points at the end of them, called from hence *soph-pasuk*, i.e., the end of the verse. If Ezra himself was not the author of this division, (as most say), it was not long after him that it was introduced, for certainly it is very ancient. It is most likely that it was introduced for the sake of the Targumist or Chaldee interpreters; for after the Hebrew language had ceased to be the mother tongue of the Jews, and the Chaldee grew up into use among them instead of it, (as was the case after their return from the Babylonish captivity), their usage was that, in the public reading of the law to the people, it was read to them, first in the original Hebrew, and after that rendered by an interpreter into the Chaldee language, that so all might fully understand the same; and this was done period by period; and therefore, that these periods might be the better distinguished, and the reader more certainly know how much to read at every interval, and the interpreter know how much to interpret at every interval, there was a necessity that some marks should be invented for their direction herein. The rule given in the ancient books is, that in the law the reader was to read one verse, and then the interpreter was to render the same into Chaldee; but that in the prophets the reader was to read three verses together, and then the interpreter was to render the same three verses into Chaldee, in the same manner; which manifestly proves that the division of the Scriptures into verses must be as ancient as the way of interpreting them into the Chaldee language in their synagogues, which was from the very time that the synagogues were erected, and the Scriptures publicly read in them, after the Babylonish captivity. This was at first done only in the law; for till the time of the Maccabees, the law only was read in their synagogues: but afterwards, in imitation of this, the same was also done in the prophets, and in the Hagiographa especially. After that the prophets also began to be publicly read among them, as well as the law; and from hence the division of the Holy Scriptures into verses, it is most likely, was first made; but without any numerical figures annexed to them. "The manner whereby they are now distinguished in their common Hebrew Bibles is by the two great points called *soph-pasuk* above mentioned; but whether this is the ancient way is by some made a question. The objection against it is this: If the distinction of verses was introduced for the sake of the Chaldee interpreters in their synagogues, and must therefore be held as ancient as that way of interpreting the Scriptures in them, it must then have place in their sacred synagogical books; for none others were used, either by their readers or their interpreters, in their public assemblies. But it has been anciently held as a rule among them, that any points or accents written into these sacred books pollute and profane them; and therefore, no copy of either the law or the prophets now used in their synagogues has any points or accents written in it. To this I answer, Whatever be the practice of the modern Jews, this is no rule to let us

know what was the ancient practice among them, since in many particulars they have varied from the ancient usages, as they now do from each other, according to the different parts of the world in which they dwell. For mention is made of them in the Mishnah; and that the reason for this division was for the direction of the readers, and the Chaldee interpreters, is also there implied; and therefore, supposing a division for this use, it must necessarily follow, that there must have been some marks to set it out; otherwise it would not have answered the end intended. "It is most likely that anciently the writing of those books was in long lines, from one side of the parchment to the other, and that the verses in them were distinguished in the same manner as the stichi afterwards were in the Greek Bibles; for the manner of their writing those stichi was, to allow a line to every stichus, and then to end the writing where they ended the stichus, leaving the rest of the line void, in the same manner as a line is left at a break: but this was losing too much of the parchment, and making the book too bulky; for the avoiding of both these inconveniences, the way afterwards was, to put a point at the end of every stichus, and so continue the writing without leaving any part of the line void as before. And in the same manner I conceive the pesukim, or verses of the Hebrew Bibles, were anciently written. At first they allowed a line to every verse, and a line drawn from one end of the parchment to the other, of the length as above mentioned, was sufficient to contain any verse that is now in the Hebrew Bible; but many verses falling short of this length, they found the same inconveniences that the Greeks after did in the first way of writing their stichi; and therefore came to the same remedy, that is, they did put the two points above mentioned (which they call soph-pasuk) at the place where the former verse ended, and continued the writing of the next verse in the same line, without leaving any void space at all in the line. And so their manner has continued ever since, excepting only that between their sections, as well the smaller as the larger, there is some void space left, to make the distinction between them; and I am the more inclined to think this to be the truth of the matter; that is, that anciently the verses of the Hebrew Bible were so many lines, because among the ancients of other nations, about the same time, the lines in the writings of prose authors, as well as the poets, were termed verses; and hence it is that we are told that Zoroaster's works contain two millions of verses, and Aristotle's, four hundred and forty-five thousand two hundred and seventy; though neither of them wrote any thing but in prose; and so also we find the writings of Tully, of Origen, of Lactantius, and others, who were all prose writers, reckoned by the number of verses, which could be no other than so many lines. And why then might not the Bible verses anciently have been of the same nature also? I mean when written in long lines as aforesaid. But the long lines often occasioning, that in reading to the end of one verse, they lost the beginning of the next, and so often did read wrong, either by skipping a line, or beginning the same again; for the avoiding of this they came to the way of writing in columns and in short lines, as above mentioned. But all this I mean of their sacred synagogical books. In their common Bibles they are not tied up to such rules, but write and print them so as they may serve for their instruction and convenience in common use. "But the division of the Holy Scriptures into chapters, as we now have them, is of a much later date. The Psalms, indeed, were always divided as at present; for St. Paul, in his sermon at Antioch, in Pisidia, quotes the second Psalm: but as to the rest of the Holy Scriptures, the division of them into such chapters as we find at present is a matter of which the ancients knew nothing. Some attribute it to Stephen Langton, who was archbishop of Canterbury in the reigns of King John and King Henry III. his son. But the true author of this invention was Hugo de Sancto Claro, who being from a Dominican monk advanced to the dignity of a cardinal, and the first of that order that was so, is commonly called Hugo Cardinalis. "The third thing that Ezra did about the Holy Scriptures in his edition of them was: - he added in several places, throughout the books of this edition, what appeared necessary for the illustrating, correcting, or completing of them, wherein he was assisted by the same Spirit by which they were at first written. Of this sort we may reckon the last chapter of Deuteronomy, which, giving an account of the death and burial of Moses, and of the

succession of Joshua after him, could not be written by Moses himself, who undoubtedly was the penman of all the rest of that book. It seems most probable that it was added by Ezra at this time: and such also we may reckon the several interpolations which occur in many places of the Holy Scriptures. For that there are such interpolations is undeniable, there being many passages through the whole sacred writers which create difficulties which can never be solved without the allowing of them: as for instance, Gen 12:6, it is remarked on Abraham's coming into the land of Canaan, that the 'Canaanites were then in the land;' which is not likely to have been said till after the time of Moses, when the Canaanites, being extirpated by Joshua, were then no longer in the land: and Gen 22:14, we read, 'As it is said to this day, In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.' But Mount Moriah, which is the mount there spoken of, was not called the Mount of the Lord till the temple was built on it many hundred years after; and this being here spoken of as a proverbial saying that obtained among the Israelites in after ages, the whole style of the text manifestly points at a time after Moses, when they were in the possession of the land in which this mountain stood; and, therefore, both these particulars prove the words cited to have been an interpolation. Gen 36:3, it is written, 'And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the land of Israel,' which could not have been said till after there had been a king in Israel; and therefore they cannot be Moses's words, but must have been interpolated afterwards. Exo 16:35, the words of the text are, 'And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, till they came to a land inhabited. They did eat manna till they came into the borders of the land of Canaan.' But Moses was dead before the manna ceased; and, therefore, these cannot be his words, but must have been inserted afterwards. Deu 2:12, it is said, 'The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime, but the children of Esau succeeded them when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead, as Israel did unto the land of his possession which the Lord gave unto them.' Which could not have been written by Moses, Israel having not till after his death entered into the land of his possession, which the Lord gave unto them. Deu 3:11, it is said, 'Only Og, king of Bashan, remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron. Is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon?' The whole style and strain of which text, especially that of the last clause of it, plainly speaks it to have been written a long while after that king was slain; and therefore it could not have been written by Moses, who died within five months after. In the same chapter, Deu 3:14, it is said, 'Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi; and called them after his own name, Bashan-havoth-jair, unto this day.' Where the phrase unto this day speaks a much greater distance of time after the fact related than those few months in which Moses survived after the conquest; and therefore what is there written must have been inserted by some other hand than that of Moses, and long after his death. And in the book of Proverbs, which was certainly King Solomon's, in the beginning of the twenty-fifth chapter, it is written, 'These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.' Which must certainly have been added many ages after Solomon; for Hezekiah was the twelfth generation in descent from him. "Many more instances of such interpolated passages might be given; for throughout the whole Scriptures they have been frequently cast in by way of parentheses; where they have appeared necessary for the explaining, connecting, or illustrating the text, or supplying what was wanting in it: but those already mentioned are sufficient to prove the thing. Of which interpolations undoubtedly Ezra was the author, in all the books which passed his examination; and Simon the Just in all the rest which were added afterwards; for they all seem to refer to those latter times. "But these additions do not at all detract from the Divine authority of the whole, because they were all inserted by the direction of the same Holy Spirit which dictated all the rest. This, as to Ezra, is without dispute, he being himself one of the Divine persons of the Holy Scriptures: for he was most certainly the writer of that book in the Old Testament which bears his name; and he is, upon good grounds, supposed to be the author of two more, that is, of the two books of Chronicles,

as perchance he was also of the book of Esther. And if the books written by him be of Divine authority, why may not every thing else be so which he has added to any of the rest, since there is reason for us to suppose that he was as much directed by the Holy Spirit of God in the one as in the other? The great importance of the work proves the thing, for as it was necessary for the Church of God that this work should be done; so also it was necessary for the work that the person called thereto should be thus assisted in the completing of it. "Fourthly, He changed the names of several places that were grown obsolete, putting instead of them the new names by which they were at that time called, that the people might the better understand what was written. Thus, Gen 14:14, Abraham is said to have pursued the kings who carried Lot away captive as far as Dan, whereas the name of that place was Laish till the Danites, long after the death of Moses, possessed themselves of it, and called it, Dan after the name of their father; and, therefore, it could not be called Dan in the original copy of Moses, but that name must have been put in afterwards instead of that of Laish on this review. And so in several places in Genesis, and also in Numbers, we find mention made of Hebron, whereas the name of that city was Kiriath-arba, till Caleb, having the possession of it after the division of the land, called it Hebron after the name of Hebron, one of his sons: and, therefore, that name could not be had in the text, till placed there long after the time of Moses by way of exchange for that of Kiriath-arba, which it is not to be doubted was done at the time of this review. "And many other like examples of this may be given; whereby it appears that the study of those who governed the Church of God at those times was to render the Scriptures as plain and intelligible to the people as they could; and not to hide and conceal any of it from them. "Fifthly, He wrote out the whole in the Chaldee character: for that having now grown wholly into use among the people after the Babylonish captivity, he changed the old Hebrew character for it, which hath since that time been retained only by the Samaritans, among whom it is preserved even to this day. This was the old Phoenician character, from which the Greeks borrowed theirs; and the old Ionian alphabet bears some resemblance to it, as Scaliger shows in his notes upon Eusebius's Chronicon. In this Moses and the other prophets recorded the sacred oracles of God; and in this the finger of God himself wrote the ten commandments in the two tables of stone. Eusebius, in his Chronicon, tells us so, and St. Jerome doth the same; and so do also both the Talmuds; and the generality of learned men, as well among the Jews as Christians, hold this opinion. "Whether Ezra on this review did add the vowel points which are now in the Hebrew Bibles, is a hard question to be decided: it went without contradiction in the affirmative till Elias Levita, a German Jew, wrote against it about the beginning of the Reformation, Buxtorf, the father, endeavored to refute his argument; but Capellus, a Protestant divine of the French Church, and professor of Hebrew in their university at Saumur, hath, in a very elaborate discourse, made a thorough reply to all that can be said on this head, and very strenuously asserted the contrary. Buxtorf, the son, in vindication of his father's opinion, has written an answer to it, but not with that satisfaction to the learned world as to hinder the generality of them from going into the other opinion. "There is in the church of St. Dominic, in Bononia, a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures, kept with a great deal of care, which they pretend to be the original copy written by Ezra himself, and therefore it is there valued at so high a rate that great sums of money have been borrowed by the Bononians upon the pawn of it, and again repaid for its redemption. It is written in a very fair character upon a sort of leather, and made up in a roll, according to the ancient manner; but it having the vowel points annexed, and the writing being fresh and fair, without any decay, both these particulars prove the novelty of that copy. "But though Ezra's government over all Judah and Jerusalem expired in this year, 446; yet his labor to serve the Church of God did not end here; for he still went on as a preacher of righteousness, and a skillful scribe in the law of God, to perfect the reformation which he had begun, both in preparing for the people correct editions of the Scriptures, and also in bringing all things in Church and state to be conformed to Scripture rules. And this he continued to do so long as he lived, and in this he was thoroughly assisted and supported by

the next governor, who, coming to Jerusalem with the sane intention, and the same zeal for promoting the honor of God, and the welfare of his people in Judah and Jerusalem, as Ezra did, struck in heartily with Ezra in the work, so that Ezra went on still to do the same things by the authority of the new governor, which he before did by his own; and, by their thus joining together in the same holy undertaking, and their mutually assisting each other, it exceedingly prospered in their hands, till at length, notwithstanding all opposition, both from within and without, it was brought to full perfection forty-nine years after it had been begun by Ezra. Whether Ezra lived so long is uncertain; but what he had not time to do was completed by the piety and zeal of his successor."

See the Introduction to the book of Nehemiah; and see Prideaux's Connection, vol. i., edit. 1725.

For all other matters relative to the text, see the notes as they occur.

The proclamation of Cyrus for the rebuilding of the temple, Ezr 1:1-4. The people provide for their return, Ezr 1:5, Ezr 1:6. Cyrus restores to Sheshbazzar the vessels taken by Nebuchadnezzar out of the temple of Solomon, Ezr 1:7-11.

In the introduction to this book the reader will find the history of Ezra detailed at considerable length. It is only necessary to say here that he is generally allowed among the Jews to have been of the sacerdotal family, and therefore he is called ὁ ἱερεὺς, the priest by the Septuagint. Among the rabbins he passes for a most extraordinary critic, Divinely authorized to collect and arrange the different portions of the sacred writings, and digest them into a system. How far all they say on this subject is true, we cannot tell; he was, beyond all controversy, a very eminent man; and in all that he did, acted under the immediate direction and inspiration of the Almighty.

This history contains the transactions of about eighty-two years; from the first year of Cyrus in Babylon, according to Archbishop Usher, A.M. 3468, to the nineteenth year of Ardsheer Diraz Dest, or Artaxerxes Longimanus, who sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem, about A.M. 3550. For all other particulars, see the introduction.

Verse 1

Now in the first year - This is word for word with the two last verses of the preceding book; which stand here in their proper place and connection, but there are entirely destitute of chronological connection and reference.

Cyrus - This prince, so eminent in antiquity, is said to have been the son of Cambyses king of Persia, and Mandane, daughter of Astyages king of the Medes; and was born about six hundred years before Christ. Josephus accounts for his partiality to the Jews from this circumstance; that he was shown the places in Isaiah the prophet where he is mentioned by name, and his exploits and conquests foretold: see Isa 44:28; Isa 45:1, etc. Finding himself thus distinguished by the God of the Jews, he was anxious to give him proofs of his gratitude in return; and so made the decree in favor of the Jews, restored their sacred vessels, gave them liberty to return to their own land, and encouraged them to rebuild the temple of Jehovah, etc.

It is very probable that when Cyrus took Babylon he found Daniel there, who had been long famed as one of the wisest ministers of state in all the East; and it is most likely that it was this person who pointed out to him the prophecy of Isaiah, and gave him those farther intimations relative to the Divine will which were revealed to himself. Of his death there are contradictory accounts. Herodotus says, that having turned his arms against the Massagetes, and killed the son of Tomyris their queen, the mother, impatient to avenge the death of her son, sent him a defiance; promised to glut him with blood; and, having attacked him, pretended to be worsted and to fly; and thus she drew him

and his army into an ambush, where he was routed and slain, and a considerable part of his army destroyed. The enraged queen having found his body, cut off his head, and threw it into a vessel full of human blood, with this most bitter sarcasm: - Εὐ μὲν, ἐμεῦ ζωῆς τε καὶ νικῶσης ἐς μάχην, ἀπώλεσας παῖδα τὸν ἐμὸν, ἔλῳν δολῶ· σὲ δ' ἐγὼ, καταπερ ἠπειλήσα, αἵματος κορέσω. - Herod. Clio, c. 214. "Although living and victorious, thou hast destroyed me in slaying my son, whom thou hast overcome by deceit; but, as I have threatened, I will now slake thy thirst with blood."

Cyrus, thy thirst was blood, now drink thy fill.

By - Jeremiah - This prophet, Jer 25:12; Jer 29:11, had foretold that the Babylonish captivity should last only seventy years: these were now ended; Cyrus had given the Jews permission and encouragement to return to Judea, and rebuild the temple of the Lord; and thus the prediction of Jeremiah was fulfilled.

EZRA 1: 2 "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he has commanded me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Verse 2

The Lord God of heaven - It is not unworthy of remark, that in all the books written prior to the captivity, Jehovah is called The Lord of Hosts; but in all the books written after the captivity, as 2 Chronicles, Ezra Nehemiah, and Daniel, he is styled The God of Heaven. The words however have the same meaning.

All the kingdoms of the earth. At this time the empire of the Medo-Persians was very extensive: according to ancient writers, Cyrus, at this time, reigned over the Medes, Persians, Hyrcanians, Armenians, Syrians, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, Lydians Phoenicians, Babylonians, Bactrians, Indians, Saci, Cilicians, Paphlagonians, Moriandrians, and many others. His empire extended on the East, to the Red Sea; on the North, to the Euxine Sea; on the West, to the island of Cyprus and Egypt; and on the South, to Ethiopia.

EZRA 1: 3 Whoever there is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD, the God of Israel (he is God), which is in Jerusalem.

EZRA 1: 4 Whoever is left, in any place where he lives, let the men of his place help him with silver, with gold, with goods, and with animals, besides the freewill offering for God's house which is in Jerusalem."

Verse 4

Whosoever remaineth in any place - Every one was at liberty to go, but none was obliged to go. Thus their attachment to God was tried; he whose heart was right with God went; he who was comfortably settled in Babylon, might go if he chose. Those who did not go, were commanded to assist their brethren who went.

EZRA 1: 5 Then the heads of fathers' households of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, even all whose spirit God had stirred to go up rose up to build the LORD's house which is in Jerusalem.

EZRA 1: 6 All those who were around them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with animals, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered.

Verse 6

Vessels of silver - Articles of silver, gold, etc.

EZRA 1: 7 Also Cyrus the king brought out the vessels of the LORD's house, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought out of Jerusalem, and had put in the house of his gods;

Verse 7

The king brought forth the vessels - See on Ezr 1:9-11 (note).

EZRA 1: 8 even those, Cyrus king of Persia brought out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.

Verse 8

Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah - This was probably the Chaldean name of him who was originally called Zerubbabel: the former signifies joy in affliction; the latter, a stranger in Babylon. The latter may be designed to refer to his captive state; the former, to the prospect of release. Some think this was quite a different person, a Persian or Chaldean, sent by Cyrus to superintend whatever officers or men Cyrus might have sent to assist the Jews on their return; and to procure them help in the Chaldean provinces, through which they might be obliged to travel.

EZRA 1: 9 This is the number of them: thirty platters of gold, one thousand platters of silver, twenty-nine knives,

EZRA 1: 10 thirty bowls of gold, silver bowls of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels one thousand.

EZRA 1: 11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. Sheshbazzar brought all these up, when the captives were brought up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

Verse 11

All the vessels - were five thousand and four hundred - This place is without doubt corrupted; here it is said the sum of all the vessels, of every quality and kind, was five thousand four hundred; but the enumeration of the articles, as given in Ezr 1:9, Ezr 1:10, gives the sum of two thousand four hundred and ninety-nine only. But we can correct this account from 1 Esdras 2:13, 14.

I shall set both accounts down, that they may be compared together. Ezr 1:9, Ezr 1:11 1 Esdras 2:13,
 14 Golden chargers 30 Golden cups 1000 Silver chargers 1000 Silver cups 1000 Knives 29 Silver
 censers 29 Golden basons 30 Golden vials 30 Silver basons, second sort 410 Silver vials 2410 Other
 vessels 1000 Other vessels 1000 Said to be 5400 - only 2499 Total 5469 Difference of the first
 account from itself: 2901 Difference of the second account from the first: 69

According, therefore, to the sum total in Ezra, the sum total in Esdras is only 69 different. See the next chapter, Ezra 2 (note).

It may be said that the vessels did actually amount to 5400, and that the chief of them only were intended to be specified; and these happen to amount to 2499; but that it was not the design of Ezra to insert the whole; and that the ninth verse should be considered as stating, And of the chief of them, that is, the gold and silver articles, this is the number. But the expression in Ezr 1:10, other vessels, sets this conjecture aside: the place is most manifestly corrupted.