

# Ezra 7:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.

## Analysis

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The decree—"I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their free will to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee"—grants permission for voluntary emigration. The phrase 'of their free will' emphasizes that participation must be voluntary, not coerced. This respects human agency while providing divine authorization and imperial permission. True spiritual response requires willing hearts, not forced compliance.

## Historical Context

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By 458 BC, most Jews had lived in Babylon for three or four generations. Many had established successful lives, businesses, and community ties. Artaxerxes' permission allowed but didn't require return. Approximately 1,500 men responded (Ezra 8:1-14)—a small fraction of Babylon's Jewish population. This selective response demonstrates that genuine faith requires costly choice. Those who went abandoned security for uncertainty, showing faith in God's promises over present comfort.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. What does the voluntary nature of return teach about authentic faith versus cultural or coerced religious affiliation?
2. How does the small response demonstrate that true discipleship requires costly choice, not just convenient participation?

## Interlinear Text

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מִן	שׁ יֵם	טִעַם	דָּ י	כָּל	מִתְנֵד ב	
<b>I</b>	<b>make</b>	<b>a decree</b>	H1768	<b>that all</b>	<b>which are minded of their own freewill</b>	
H4481	H7761	H2942		H3606	H5069	
בְּמַלְכוּתִי	מִן	עַם ה	יִשְׂרָאֵל	וְכֹהֵן וְהִי	וְלֵוִי א	יְהִי:
<b>in my realm</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>the people</b>	<b>of Israel</b>	<b>and of his priests</b>	<b>and Levites</b>	<b>go</b>
H4437	H4481	H5972	H3479	H3549	H3879	H1946
לִירוּשָׁלַם	עִמָּךְ	יְהִי:				
<b>to Jerusalem</b>	<b>with thee</b>	<b>go</b>				
H3390	H5974	H1946				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ezra 6:1** (Parallel theme): Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon.