

# Ezra 8:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way.

## Analysis

**Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem**—*וְנִסְעָה* (vannisah, then we departed/journeyed) on *בָּשָׁנָה עָשָׂר לְחַדְשָׁה הָרִישׁוֹן* (bishneneim asar lachodesh harishon, the twelfth of the first month) precisely dates the departure. The first month (Nisan/Abib) was Israel's sacred calendar beginning (Exodus 12:2), making this departure during Passover season theologically significant—a new exodus from Babylon to the Promised Land. **And the hand of our God was upon us**—*וְיַד־אֱלֹהֵינוּ עִמָּתָה עַלְּנוּ* (v'yad-Eloheinu hayetah aleinu, and the hand of our God was upon us), Ezra's characteristic refrain (7:6, 7:9, 7:28, 8:18, 8:22), attributes the journey's success entirely to divine providence.

**And he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way**—*וְמִקְרָב עַל־הַדְּרֵךְ* (vayyatzilenu, and He delivered us) from *מִקְרָב אֹיֵב* (mikkaf oyev, from the hand/power of enemy) and *מִאֲרֵב עַל־הַדְּרֵךְ* (me'orev al-haderekh, from ambush on the road). This is answered prayer—the fast and supplication at Ahava (vv. 21-23) specifically requested safe passage. The *אֹיֵב* (ambush) suggests actual threat, not hypothetical danger. God's protection wasn't passive absence of attack but active deliverance from real enemies.

## Historical Context

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The Syrian desert route was notorious for Bedouin raiders who attacked caravans for plunder. A group carrying 24 tons of silver and 3.75 tons of gold without military escort should have been massacred. The fact that they arrived unmolested was a miracle verifying Ezra's testimony to Artaxerxes (v. 22) that 'the hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him.' This deliverance story would have been retold in the Jerusalem community as evidence of God's covenant faithfulness, strengthening faith during subsequent trials under Nehemiah.

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does dating the departure during Passover season frame the journey as a new exodus from bondage to freedom?
2. What does God's deliverance 'from ambush' (actual threat, not hypothetical) teach about His active protective intervention?
3. In what ways should answered prayer be memorialized and retold to strengthen community faith?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיָּגַע הַר אַהֲבָה בְּשָׁנָה יָמָן עַשֶּׂר לְחַדְשָׁה	Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth month	H5265 H5104 H163 H8147 H6240 H2320
בְּיֹם הַרְאֵשׁ לְלִכְתָּב יְרֻשָּׁלָם וְעַד יָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ	day of the first unto Jerusalem and the hand of our God	H7223 H1980 H3389 H3027 H430 H1961
עַל יָנוּן וְאֵיל נָכוֹן מִכְּפָלָה אֹוֹב בְּ	was upon us and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy	H5921 H5337 H3709 H341
וְאָוֹר בְּעַל פְּדָרָה	and of such as lay in wait by the way	H693 H5921 H1870

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ezra 8:15** (Parallel theme): And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava; and there abode we in tents three days: and I viewed the people, and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi.

**Ezra 7:9** (References God): For upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him.