

# 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**—וַנִּסַּעָה (vannisah, then we departed/journeyed) on בִּשְׁנֵינֵים עָשָׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן (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**—וַיָּדֹאֵלֵהֵינוּ הַיְּתָה עָלֵינוּ (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**—וַיַּצִּילֵנוּ (vayyatzilenu, and He delivered us) from מִכַּף אוֹיֵב (mikkaf oyev, from the hand/power of enemy) and מֵאֹרֶב עַל־הַדֶּרֶךְ (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 אֹרֶב (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

**Psalms 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 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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וְנִסַּע הַ	מִמֶּנָּה רַ	אֶהָיוּ אַ	בַּשָּׁנָה יָמִים	עָשָׂר	לַחֹדֶשׁ
Then we departed	from the river	of Ahava	on the twelfth	H6240	month
H5265	H5104	H163	H8147		H2320
הַיּוֹם הַרִאשׁוֹן	לְלֵיל כֶּת	יְרוּשָׁלַם	וְיָד	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	הָיְתָה הַ
day of the first	H1980	unto Jerusalem	and the hand	of our God	H1961
H7223		H3389	H3027	H430	
עָלֵינוּ	וַיֵּצֵאנוּ	מִיָּד	אֹיְבֵינוּ		
H5921	was upon us and he delivered	us from the hand	of the enemy		
	H5337	H3709	H341		
וְאִיֵּךְ בַּ	עַל הַדֶּרֶךְ:				
and of such as lay in wait	H5921	by the way			
H693		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.