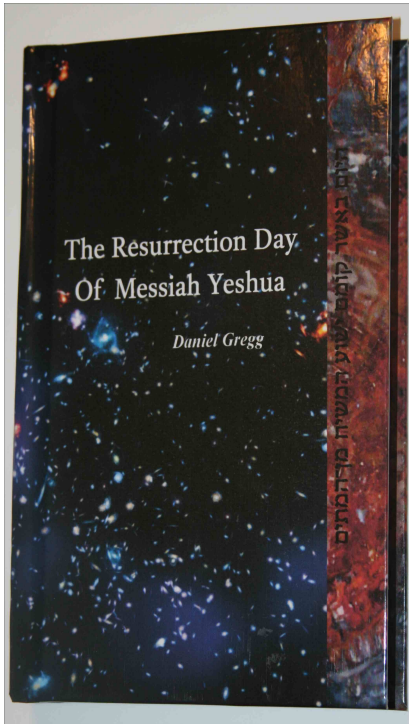


הַיּוֹם בַּאֲשֶׁר קוֹמַם יֵשׁוּעַ
הַמָּשִׁיחַ מִן־הַמָּוֶת



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Eliashib” was the High Priest. For it was his office in the Temple that Ezra went into. The High Priestly line is also given again in Nehemiah 12:22, only this time, the name is spelled: **יֹהָנָן**. And again in Neh. 12:23. The difference between **יֹהָנָן** and **יְהוֹנָן** is merely one letter, and is analogous to the difference between *Yeshua* and *Yehoshua*, a short and long form of the same name. So Ezra 10:6 simply employs the correct long form of the High Priest’s name. If there is an error in spelling it is in one of Nehemiah’s lists (12:11), and not in Ezra 10:6. The Elephantine Papyrus AP 30 spells the high priests’ name with the long form exactly as Ezra 10:6 does: **יְהוֹנָן**.³⁴²

The importance of these papyri for the history of the high priesthood is great, indeed. In the first place, TAD A4.7 = AP 30 names the Jerusalem high priest *Johanān* (**יְהוֹנָן**), gives his Aramaic title (**כהנא רבא**), and firmly dates one incident in his reign to the year 410 BCE (the date when a letter was sent to him from Yeb). These data are thoroughly compatible with the chronological information in the book of Nehemiah, where Eliashib was high priest in 445 BCE and continued possibly to 433, though by that time Joiada, Johanān’s predecessor, may already have been in office (see Neh 13:28). The least one can say is that Joiada had a son of marriageable age by 433. Consequently, it would not be at all surprising to find his successor serving by 410. The reference to Johanān also demonstrates that his name belongs in the high-priestly list, as Neh 12:22 leads one to believe. Second, the fact that the Jews of Elephantine wrote to the high priest in Jerusalem to ask for his support shows the high regard in which this office was held by at least one group in the Diaspora.³⁴³

Nehemiah was a contemporary of Eliashib, who was the grandfather of Johanān. This makes it clear that the placement of Ezra before Nehemiah is contrary to the priestly succession. Yet, it was exposed to the public as early as 1888 by Bullinger in *The*

³⁴² *From Joshua to Caiaphas: high priests after the Exile*, James C. VanderKam, pg. 56. The full Aramaic quotation is: “יְהוֹנָן כהנא רבא.” This Papyrus is also referred to as TAD A4.7. Another copy of it is TAD A4.8 = AP 31. It dates to 17th year of Darius II, which is to say 407 B.C.

³⁴³ VanderKam, *ibid*, pg. 57.

Companion Bible. Edwin Yamauchi states:

[Scholars] conclude that since the Elephantine papyri indicate that Johanan was high priest in 410 BC, it is much more likely that Ezra came...in the seventh year of Artaxerxes II...It must be admitted that if these identifications are correct, this line of reasoning provides one of the strongest arguments for reversing the order of Ezra and Nehemiah.³⁴⁴

Provan states the point more directly:

On last example shall suffice. In Ezra 10:6, Ezra goes to the room of a man named Jehohanan, the son of Eliashib, and the question arises whether the latter, Eliashib, is the same person mentioned in the Elephantine papyrus (AramP 30:18). If so, the latter—we know—lived in 408 B.C., which would make a meeting with an Ezra dated to an earlier period difficult if not impossible.³⁴⁵

John Bright adds his objections to the traditional order:

More seriously, it is difficult to believe that Ezra, though commissioned to teach and impose the law, and filled with zeal, did not even read the law to the people until over thirteen years after his arrival (Neh. 8:1-8)...What is still more serious, any theory placing Ezra's reforms (Ezra, chs. 9; 10) before Nehemiah's inevitably involves the conclusion that Ezra in one way or another failed. One must assume that his reforms were so ineffective that Nehemiah had to repeat them (Neh., ch. 13); or that he aroused such opposition that he had to desist until Nehemiah came to the rescue; or that, having exceeded his authority (say in the affair of Ezra 4:7-23), he was in disgrace or was disciplined by the Persians—for which there is no evidence whatsoever. That Ezra was a failure is, to me, unbelievable. Not only does the Bible not so paint him, the whole course of Judaism was shaped by his work. Would this have been the case, and would tradition have made of him no less than a second Moses, had he been a failure? Yet so he was if his reforms preceded those of

³⁴⁴ http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ezra_yamauchi.pdf. Yamauchi himself does not agree with what he states, but he acknowledges it.

³⁴⁵ *A Biblical History of Israel*, Provan, pg. 299.

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