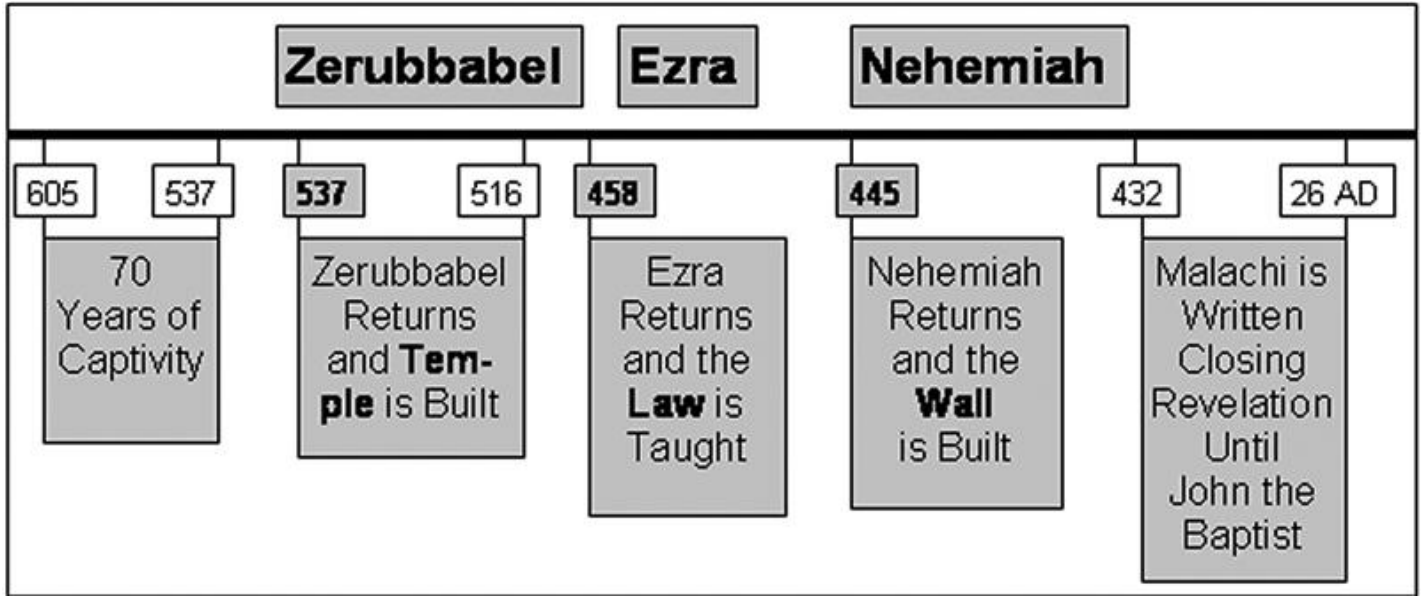


Ezra 1



1. Ezra 1-6 provides a general historical background for the books.

538 BC

- a. Ch. 1 – **Edict of Cyrus 538** and the first returning Jews under Sheshbazzar
- b. Ch. 3 the building of the new altar and foundation of the temple in 537 under Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel and Jeshua
- c. Ch. 4 Samaritans resist the Jews building efforts
- d. Persian kings:

520 BC

516 BC

- i. Cyrus the Great – 550-530
- ii. Cambyses II – 530-522
- iii. Darius I (the Great) – 522-486 (**Haggai 520, Zechariah 520-516 BC**)
- iv. Xerxes – 485-465 (**Esther 479 BC**)
- v. Artaxerxes I – 465-424 (**Malachi 432 BC**)
- vi. Darius II – 424-404
- vii. Artaxerxes II – 404-358 (**Joel 360?**)
- viii. Darius III – 336-330

458 BC

446 BC

445 BC

- e. Ezra 4:24-6:22 **second attempt to rebuild the temple** under Darius in 516
- f. Ezra 7 through Nehemiah 13 – information about the activities of Ezra and Nehemiah
- g. Ezra 7:6, 8 - April 18, **458 BC, Ezra leaves** Babylon
- h. Ezra 8:31 – August 4, **458 BC, Ezra arrives** in Jerusalem
- i. Nehemiah 1:1 – Nov/Dec **446 Nehemiah's brother returns** - Judah to Susa
- j. Nehemiah 2:1 – Mar/Apr **445 BC, Nehemiah speaks to Artaxerxes**
- k. Nehemiah 6:15 – Oct. 2, **445 BC, the wall of Jerusalem was completed**
- l. Nehemiah 8:2 – Oct. 8, **445 BC, Ezra reads the Law** to the people

538-445 BC = 93 years

Ezra 1:1 – “In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing:

3414 [e]	6310 [e]	3068 [e]	1697 [e]	3615 [e]	6539 [e]	4428 [e]	3566 [e]	259 [e]	8141 [e]
yir·mə·yāh;	mip·pī	Yah·weh	də·ḅar-	lik·lō·wī	pā·ras,	me·lək	lə·kō·w·reš	'a·ḥaṭ,	ū·biš·naṭ
יְרֵמְיָהּ	מִפִּי	יְהוָה	דְּבַר־	לְקִלּוֹת	פָּרַס	מֶלֶךְ	לְכוֹרֶשׁ	אֶחָת	וּבִשְׁנַת ¹
of Jeremiah	by the mouth	of Yahweh	the word	that might be fulfilled	of Persia	king	Cyrus	of first	And in the year
N-proper-ms	Prep-m N-msc	N-proper-ms	N-msc	Prep-I V-Qal-Inf	N-proper-fs	N-msc	Prep-I N-proper-ms	Number-fs	Conj-w, Prep-b N-fsc
3605 [e]	6963 [e]	5674 [e]	6539 [e]	4428 [e]	3566 [e]	7307 [e]	853 [e]	3068 [e]	5782 [e]
bə·kāl	qō·wl	way·ya·'ā·ḅer-	pā·ras,	me·lək-	kō·reš	rū·aḥ	'et-	Yah·weh	hə·'īr
בְּכָל־	קוֹל־	וַיַּעֲבֵר־	פָּרַס	מֶלֶךְ־	כּוֹרֶשׁ	רוּחַ	אֶת־	יְהוָה	הָעִיר
throughout all	a proclamation	so that he made	of Persia	king	of Cyrus	the spirit	-	Yahweh	stirred up
Prep-b N-msc	N-ms	Conj-w V-Hifil-Consecimperf-3ms	N-proper-fs	N-msc	N-proper-ms	N-csc	DirObjM	N-proper-ms	V-Hifil-Perf-3ms
					559 [e]	4385 [e]	1571 [e]	4438 [e]	
					lé·mōr.	bə·miḵ·tāb	wə·ḡam-	mal·kū·tōw,	
					לְאֹמַר	בְּמִכְתָּב	וְגַם־	מַלְכוּתוֹ	
					saying	in writing	and [put it]	his kingdom	
					Prep-I V-Qal-Inf	Prep-b N-ms	Conj-w Conj	N-fsc 3ms	

1. First year was 538 BC

- a. Cyrus became king of Anshan in 559 under the Median king Astyages who he later rebelled against.
- b. Cyrus took Sardis in 546
- c. His General Ugbaru conquered Babylon in 539
- d. This “first year” was Cyrus’ first year as king of Mesopotamia
- e. The documents of Nabonidus already calls Cyrus the king of Persia before this.

2. Jeremiah’s word:

- a. Jeremiah 25:8-13 (605 BC) – “Therefore the Lord Almighty says this: “Because you have not listened to my words, I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,” declares the Lord, “and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin....But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt,” declares the Lord, “and will make it desolate forever. I will bring on that land all the things I have spoken against it, all that are written in this book and prophesied by Jeremiah against all the nations.
- b. Jeremiah 29:10 (597 BC) - This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place.
 - i. Babylon was given 70 years which matches:
 - 1. Fall of Nineveh in 612 BC to the fall of Babylon in 539 = 73 years

2. Rise of King Nebuchadnezer in 605 BC to Babylon's fall 539= 66 years
 - ii. The Jewish captivity which matches:
 1. 605 BC first captivity to the first captives to return in 537 = 68 years
 2. 586 destruction of temple to completion of rebuilt temple 516 = 70 years
3. YHWH stirred Cyrus
 - a. Isaiah 44:26-28 (around 700 BC) – “who says of Jerusalem, ‘It shall be inhabited,’ of the towns of Judah, ‘They shall be rebuilt,’ and of their ruins, ‘I will restore them,’ who says to the watery deep, ‘Be dry, and I will dry up your streams,’ who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, “Let it be rebuilt,” and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.”
 - b. Isaiah 45:1, 4, 13 – “This is what the Lord says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut...For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me. I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God...I will raise up Cyrus[b] in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free, but not for a price or reward, says the Lord Almighty.”
 - c. Also note:
 - i. Jer. 51:11
 - ii. Hag. 1:14
 - iii. 1 Chr. 5:26
 - iv. 2 Chr. 21:16; 36:22
4. This decree would be a public statement and would be written down and preserved in records. Twenty years later in chapter 6 this same decree would be found in the archives to justify the Jews rebuilding their city and their temple.
 - a. Heralds would be sent out into the various Jewish communities
 - b. This decree was most likely personalized for each captive culture being sent back to their home lands with their captive gods (idols) to rebuild their city, religion and temples.

Ezra 1:2-4 - “**Thus says Cyrus king of Persia:**

The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever 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 rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem. And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

430 [e]	3068 [e]		5414 [e]	776 [e]	4467 [e]	3605 [e]	6539 [e]	4428 [e]	3566 [e]	559 [e]	3541 [e]
'ē-lō-hē	Yah-weh	lī,	nā-tan	hā-'ā-reš,	mam-le-ḵō-wt	kōl	pā-ras,	me-leḵ	kō-reš	'ā-mar,	kōh
אֱלֹהֵי	יְהוָה	לִי	נָתַן	הָאָרֶץ	מִמְלָכוֹת	כָּל	פָּרַס	מֶלֶךְ	כִּרְשׁ	אָמַר	כֹּה
God	Yahweh	me	has given	of the earth	the kingdoms	all	of Persia	king	Cyrus	says	thus
N-mpc	N-proper-ms	Prep 1cs	V-Qal-Perf-3ms	Art N-fs	N-fpc	N-msc	N-proper-fs	N-msc	N-proper-ms	V-Qal-Perf-3ms	Adv

3063 [e]	834 [e]	3389 [e]	1004 [e]		1129 [e]	5921 [e]	6485 [e]	1931 [e]	8064 [e]
bî-hū-dāh.	'ā-šer	bî-rū-šā-lim	ba-yit,	lōw	lib-nō-wt-	'ā-lay	pā-qad	wē-hū-	haš-šā-mā-yim;
בֵּיהוּדָה:	אֲשֶׁר	בִּירוּשָׁלַם	בַּיִת	לוֹ	לְבָנוֹת-	עָלַי	פָּקַד	וְהוּא-	הַשָּׁמַיִם
in Judah	which [is]	at Jerusalem	a house	Him	to build	me	has commanded	and He	of heaven
Prep-b N-proper-fs	Pro-r	Prep-b N-proper-fs	N-ms	Prep 3ms	Prep-l V-Qal-Inf	Prep 1cs	V-Qal-Perf-3ms	Conj-w Pro-3ms	Art N-mp

1. This is what the Cyrus cylinder says:

“I returned to these sacred cities..., the sanctuaries of which have been in ruins for a long time, the images which used to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I also gathered all their former inhabitants and returned to them their habitations

...May all the gods whom I have resettled in their sacred cities ask daily Bel and Nebo for a long life for me. . . ; to Marduk, my lord, may they say this: “Cyrus, the king who worships you, and Cambyses, his son...”

- a. Jews were granted money to worship (by Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes) and the vessels from their temple since they did not have any gods or idols
- b. In Egypt Cambyses and Darius I took Egyptian throne-names to honor the god Re
- c. Cambyses destroyed some Egyptian temples for a suspected priestly plot against him, but he spared others including the Jewish temple. Cambyses also paid honor to the Egyptian gods
- d. Darius gave money and manpower to the Egyptian religion in order to “uphold the name of all the gods, their temples, their revenues and the ordinances of their feasts”
- e. The Greek island of Delos fled the Persian fleet in 490 BC but were given assurance of Darius’s promise to honor the sacred spot for it was the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis. The Persian general Datis made offerings there.
- f. Darius I rebukes one of his officials named Gadatas for failing to uphold the long-standing royal policy of exemption for certain cult-servants and the gardeners of Apollo from paying taxes
- g. In Ezra 7:24 the same privilege is given to all Jewish temple officials by Artaxerxes in his letter appointing Ezra.
- h. The Elephantine papyrus show in a letter dated 419 BC from a Jewish official named Hananiah reporting to Jewish leaders of an order from Darius II that the local governor should authorize them to hold a festival of unleavened bread