

## EZRA

Written around 450 BC (likely by Ezra)

Describes the return of the Jewish exiles after more than a half-century of captivity in Babylon,

-and restoration of Jerusalem, its Temple and its walls.

Ezra and Nehemiah originally written as one book

-Haggai and Zechariah were written in the same time period

-It is believed that Ezra wrote 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Psalm 119

-also believed that he led council of the 120 men who formed the Old Testament Canon

Ezra began his ministry in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes (458BCE)

-Nehemiah appeared on the scene roughly 13 years later in 445BCE

Begins with Cyrus as king

-He lets Zerubbabel lead the 1<sup>st</sup> group of exiles back

-This fulfills the prophecy of Jeremiah:

**Jer 29:10** "For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.'

You're probably thinking that we haven't even gotten to the book of Jeremiah yet.

-not too convincing if he made the prophesy after the event happened

-Although the book of Jeremiah comes after the Book of Ezra in the bible, it was written over 100 years before

Isaiah was also written about 250 years before Ezra

-listen to his prophesy

**Isa 44:28** "It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' And of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.'"

-hundreds of years before a man name Cyrus was born, God calls him by name and said that He would use him to aid in the rebuilding of Jerusalem

-Restoration of the temple begins

-gets hindered by enemies

-the enemies write a letter to king Artaxerxes tattling on them

- the king responds and tells them to put a stop to the rebuilding of the temple by force of arms
- construction stops for 10 years or so

Then Haggai and Zachariah begin to prophesy

- A couple of guys with the support of the prophets begin the work again
- Officials get mad again
- send a letter to the new king, Darius
- Darius looks in the archives to find King Cyrus's original decree
- not only does Darius agree with the original decree of Cyrus, but demands that the temple be rebuilt
- also says that anyone who hinders their progress will be executed

Temple is completed and dedicated

- they celebrate by observing Passover

80 years after the first group of exiles return, Ezra leads another group back

- Ezra finds favor in the sight of King Artaxerxes
- King sends him to Jerusalem to teach and set up a religious education system
- basically gives Ezra a blank check to do whatever seems good to him
- even exempts all the temple workers, Levites and priests from paying taxes

-Ezra finds out that after the exiles returned, they didn't keep to the commands of God

- many of them intermarried with foreign women
- Ezra gets very upset, tears out some of his hair and beard
- he weeps bitterly and prays to the Lord
- while he is praying, a large group begins to form around him
- the children of Israel humbled themselves, told him they sinned greatly and repent

Ezra closes with the people agreeing to leave their foreign wives and kids and recommitting themselves to God

**Jesus Type:**

A little different this time  
Not quite as pronounced  
-but when you think of God's people being in bondage, set free and allowed  
to rebuild their temple, consider this:

**Eph 2:19** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the  
saints, and are of God's household,

**Eph 2:20** having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus  
Himself being the corner *stone*,

**Eph 2:21** in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the  
Lord,

**Eph 2:22** in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.