

***1 Ezra 1 “Introduction to Ezra”**

***2 2 Chronicles 36:22–23 (NASB95)** ²² Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia—in order to fulfill the word of YaHWeH by the mouth of Jeremiah—YaHWeH stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying, ²³ “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘**YaHWeH, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may YaHWeH his God be with him, and let him go up!**’ ”

It’s important as we come to the restoration of Israel to the land after the Babylonian captivity that we look at an overview to understand the chronology of the roughly 100 years covered by the books of the last events of the OT.

***3 – Chart of Chronological Order of OT Books *3a**

***4** Ezra and Nehemiah tell the story of the return to the land and the city, the rebuilding of the temple, and the rebuilding of the walls. The Book of Esther also fits into this period, as do the books of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (see Ezra 5:1ff). Please note that Ezra did not lead the first group of Jews back to Jerusalem; this was done by Zerubbabel and Joshua. Ezra does not come on the scene until chapter 7 of his book, when he led a second company (and a smaller one) to the Holy Land. Ezra remained there to labor, and finally joined hands with Nehemiah (Neh. 8:9; 12:26) ¹

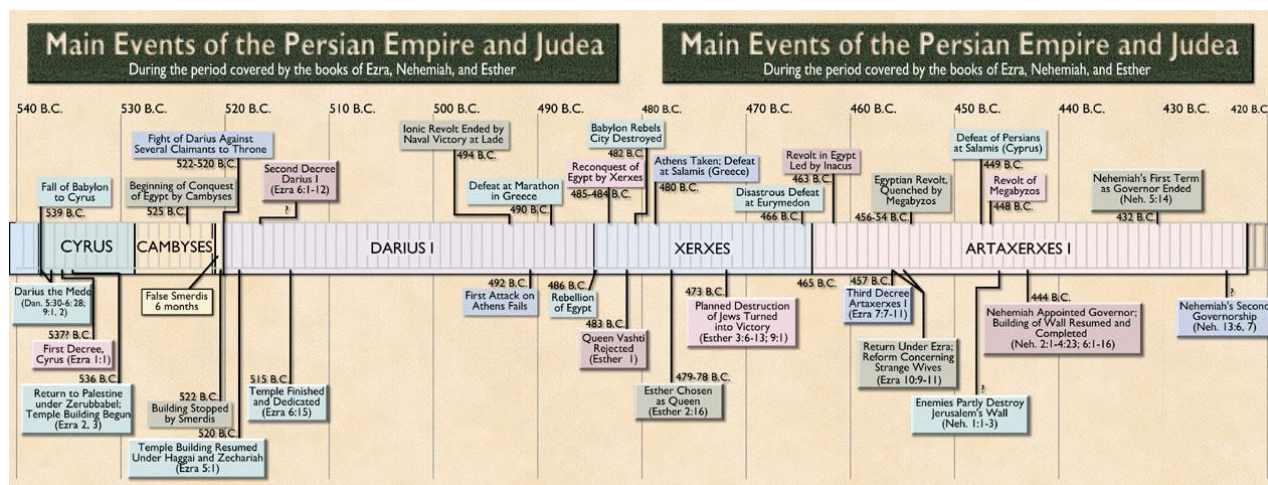
***5 – The Three Returns From Exile Chart**

A passage in the Talmud credits Ezra with the authorship of Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles. (Some people believe Ezra compiled the OT books?) The earliest historical reference in Ezra is to the decree of Cyrus that he issued in his first year on the throne (1:1), 538 B.C. The latest historical reference was just prior to Nehemiah’s first trip to Jerusalem (4:21–23; Neh. 1:1–3), 446 B.C. Therefore this book spans a period of 92 years of history. ***6** However most of the events recorded took place in 538-515 B.C. (chapters 1–6) ***6a** and 458 B.C. (chapters 7–10). Between these two separate series of events the Book of Ezra records nothing. ***6b** The events in the Book of Esther transpired during those years (482-473 B.C.).

***6c – Haggai/Zechariah** Tom Constable

***7 – Timeline continues for Nehemiah *7a**

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, [*Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993), Ezr.



“The Holy City and the house of God are both prominent subjects in Ezra-Nehemiah. Jerusalem occurs eighty-six times, and the phrases ‘temple,’ ‘house of YahWeH,’ and ‘house of God’ appear fifty-three times.” Yamauchi

***8 Ezra 1 (NLT)** ¹ In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, YahWeH fulfilled the prophecy He had given through Jeremiah. He **stirred the heart of Cyrus** to put this proclamation in writing and to send it throughout his kingdom:

***8a** “From east to west, it [the Persian Empire] was as wide as the continental United States.” Howard F. Vos, *Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*, p. 16.²

***9 Ezra 1** ² “This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: “YahWeH, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a Temple at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. ³ **Any of you who are His people may go to Jerusalem in Judah to rebuild this Temple of YahWeH**, the God of Israel, who lives in Jerusalem. And may your God be with you! ⁴ Wherever this Jewish remnant is found, let their neighbors contribute toward their expenses by giving them silver and gold, supplies for the journey, and livestock, as well as a voluntary offering for the Temple of God in Jerusalem.”

Daniel and others knew this is what he would because it was all predicted though the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah:

***10 Isaiah 44:24–45:7 (ESV)** ²⁴ Thus says YahWeH, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: “I am YahWeH, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself...²⁸ **who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose’; saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’ ”** ^{45:1} ¹ Thus says YahWeH to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, **to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed: *11** ² “I will go before you and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces

² Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003).

the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, ³ **I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places,** that you may know that it is I, YaHWeH, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. ⁴ For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me. ⁵ I am YaHWeH, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; **I equip you, though you do not know me,** ⁶ **that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides Me;** I am YaHWeH, and there is no other.