

EZRA

▶▶ THE RETURN

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Ezra 1 & 2: "Return to God's Purposes"

How is it all going to work out? → Chin quote → How is it all going to work out? → Ezra 1:1-11 & 2:1-70

Ez. 1:1-3 → God is sovereign over history. → God stirred the heart of Cyrus...

- **Theology:** God is sovereign. = God has power & authority over all of history. → History is HIS story.
- **Prophecy:** Isaiah mentions Cyrus by name 44:28 & 45:1, Isaiah mentions articles returning 52:12, Exile prophesied to end after 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10-14) = 606 - 536 (captives) / 609 - 539 (Babylonian Rule) / 586 - 516 (Temple destroyed / rebuilt) = 70 years → **LEADERS:** ...our boss, landlord, or business competitor.
- **Temple** → **CROSS** → Do we know that history doesn't revolve around us but includes us? → HIS story is OUR story.
- We are all apart of a meta narrative in OC, SoCal, USA & the world. → **THEATRE:** God, Cosmos, & players.
- It can be disillusioning when I view history in light of ME vs. God's big picture. → God has invited us into HIS story.

Ez. 1:4-11 & 2:68-69 → God stirs people to fulfill his purposes. → Egypt, Babylon, Cyrus, Israelites in common?

- **TO GIVE:** Contributions from neighbors (1:4), Cyrus: Gold basins: silver basins, silver incense burners, gold bowls, silver bowls, & other items (1:7)
- **TO GO:** 1:5, 2:1-70: THE REMNANT (1), The Leadership (2 - Zerubbabel: grandson of King Jehoiachin, imprisoned // Joshua: grandson of High Priest Seraiah, executed), by Family heads (3-20), by Geography (21-35), The priests, Levites, & Temple workers (36-57) → 603,550 / 800k fighting men = 42,360 → 900 miles = 8 to 10 weeks // LA to Seattle
- **TO GIVE:** (68-69) 565 pounds / gold, 3 tons/silver = \$12,185,084 // \$1,966,125 → 6 mil. / pledges = 3.7 / 2.3 to go
- **PITCHER:** When God stirs us up...he has a reason!
 - **RESOURCES:** ...God owns the cattle on a thousand hills and he owns every yacht in Newport beach.
 - **PEOPLE:** If you're here, there is a reason. God is rebuilding our community so more people can come home.
- Letta Teuber → Elizabeth (G.Roy Wood) & Ruth Weidman
- God IS stirring hearts to build His church in OC/USA/GLOBE & He is planning to pour His Spirit. → Will we say no?

How is God stirring your heart? → God is sovereign over our lives and wants to use us.

- Where is God stirring your heart to GIVE / TO POUR OUT RESOURCES? → BE SPECIFIC
- Where is God stirring your heart to GO / SERVE / BE POURED OUT? → BE SPECIFIC
- The WHY must become a HOW. → God is sovereign over the results. → Oswald Chambers Quote

→ When God stirs, we can expect Him to pour us out. → PRAYER: Father, help us respond to your stirring!

TALK ABOUT IT - Questions to GROW through with family, friends, & myself.

1. In my own journey with God, how have others been prompted to give or to serve God's purposes in me?
2. Have I ever felt called to go somewhere or to do something to advance the purposes of God in others?
3. How do I respond to God when he stirs my heart? What are the resources he's placed in my life to further His Kingdom?
4. What are some of the specifics about how God is asking me to "be poured out?" What is the next step for me?
5. **PRAYER:** "Father, help me to respond to your stirrings so that you can pour out goodness all over my family, neigh boyhood, church, & world."

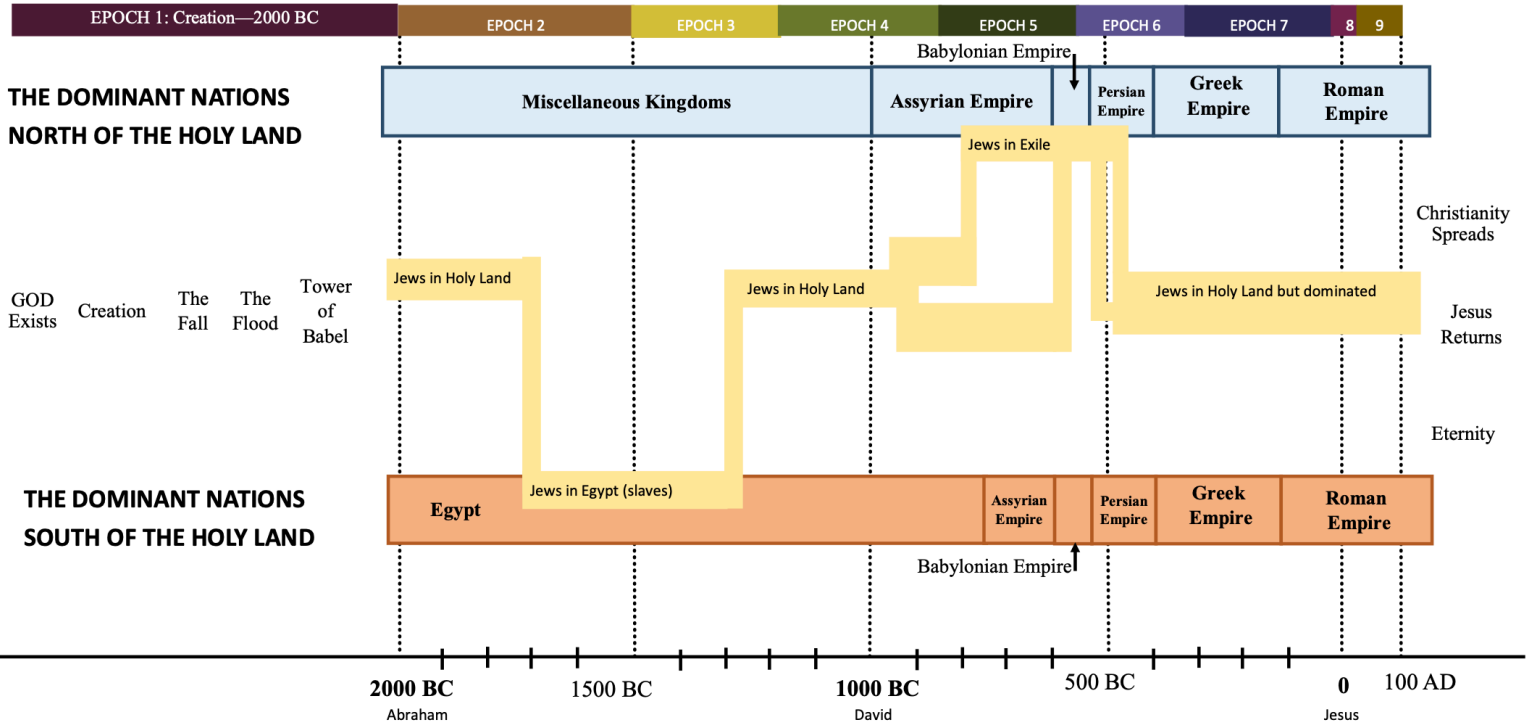
LINKS / RESOURCES:

Bible Project Ezra Video: <https://youtu.be/MkETkRv9tG8>

I've Reached My Breaking Point as a Pastor: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2022/january-web-only/covid-church-pastor-quit-ministry-burnout-breaking-point.html>

A Simplified Timeline of the Events of the Bible

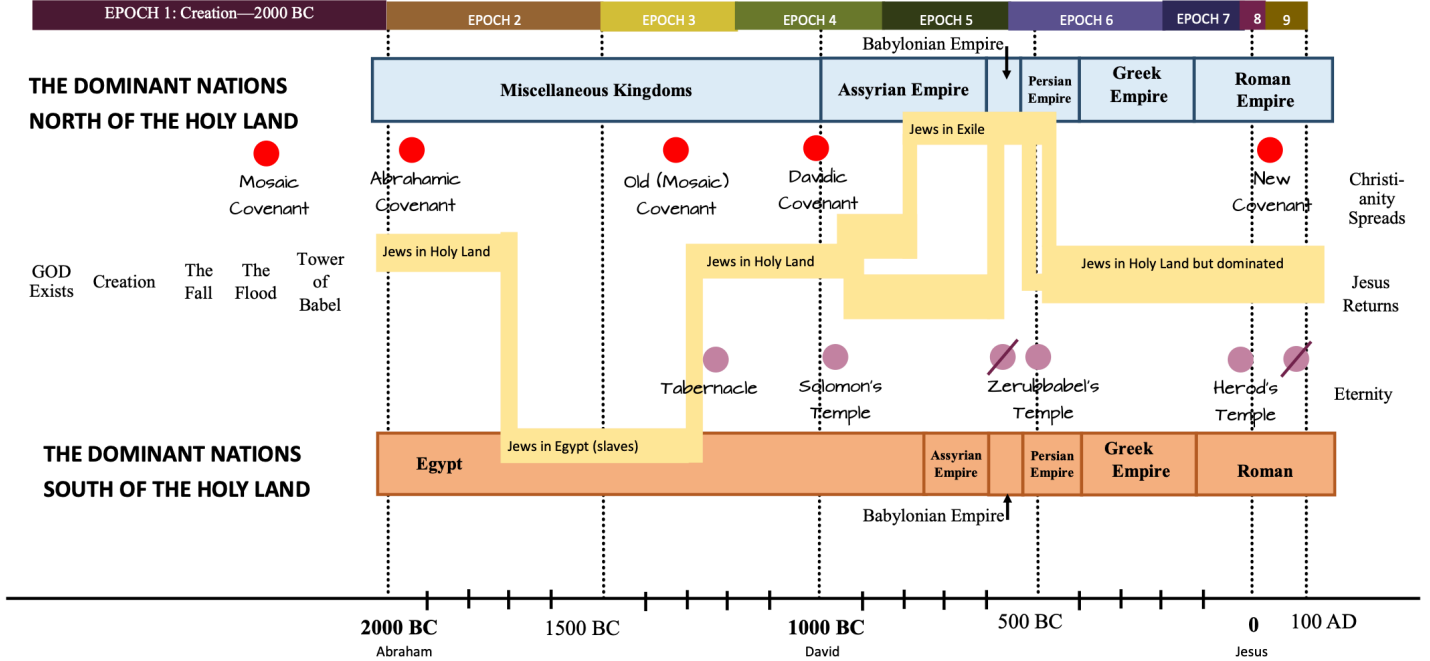
A history of the nation of people whom God chose and prepared (the Nation of Israel) so that he could pay *all* people's debts for *all* time because of His tremendous love for each of us



Lieber, D. (1994). *Bible 101 getting the big picture*. From a class presented at Solana Beach Presbyterian Church in 1994.

Covenants and Temples

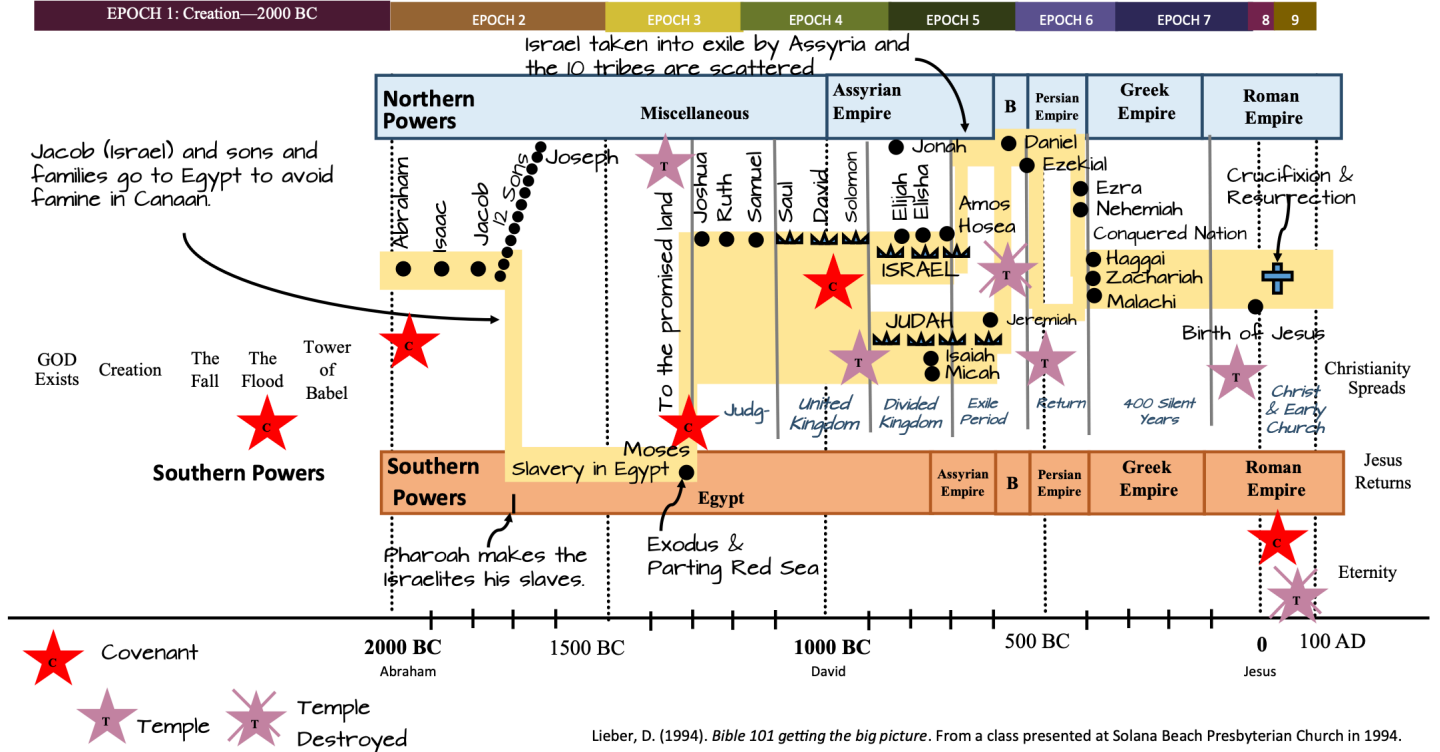
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Events of the Bible Timeline

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The Tabernacle and 3 Temple of Bible History

The Tabernacle

- The Tabernacle was the portable temple built at God's command by Moses and the Israelites at the base of Mount Sinai.
- It was the center of worship and animal sacrifice for the Israelites as they wandered through the "wilderness" (desert) on the way to the Promised Land and for several years after they had settled in the Promised Land.
- It was an earthly replica of the heavenly temple shown to Moses by God. God gave Moses the specifications for the Tabernacle.
- God dwelt among the Israelites in the form of a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night which rested above the Tabernacle over the Ark of the Covenant.
- The Ark of the Covenant represented God's presence among His people.
- The Israelites erected the Tabernacle at the center of their camp. The 12 tribes of Israelites camped in tents around the Tabernacle.
- When God wanted the Israelites to break camp and begin to travel, He (the pillar of cloud) would begin to move in the desired direction.



Solomon's Temple

- Solomon's Temple was the permanent structure built in Jerusalem by King Solomon to replace the portable Tabernacle. The Ark of the Covenant was transferred from the Tabernacle to the Temple.
- The Temple was twice the size of the Tabernacle and lavishly decorated. The wood for the Temple came from the cedars of Lebanon.
- The Bible does not describe God's presence with the Israelites in the form of a pillar of cloud or fire after the dedication of Solomon's temple
- The Temple was the center of worship and animal sacrifice for the entire United Kingdom of Israel.
- All Jewish adult men were required to travel to the Temple in Jerusalem for 3 specific holidays a year.
- The temple was destroyed in 587 BC by the Babylonians who attacked the Southern Kingdom of Judah and carried the Israelites from Judah into exile in Babylon.
- During the exile people began to assemble in groups for worship and instruction. These gatherings were the first synagogues.



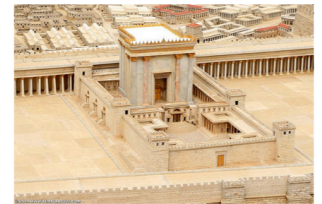
Zerubbabel's Temple

- When Persia conquered Babylon, the King of Persia immediately allowed the Israelites to return to their homeland and rebuild the Temple.
- The first set of returnees was led by Zerubbabel. He oversaw the rebuilding of the Temple.
- This temple was a less lavish version of Solomon's Temple but was the same basic size and design. It is often called the "Second Temple".
- The Ark of the Covenant was never recovered, therefore, there was no Ark of the Covenant in any temple after Solomon's Temple.
- The Temple was still the center of sacrificial worship but many Jews continued to meet for worship and instruction in local synagogues.
- The Israelites who returned to the Promised Land were mostly Israelites from the tribe of Judah and became known as "the Jews".
- The Jews were now a conquered nation and not allowed to have a king or an army. As a result, the priesthood replaced the kingship as the authority in the Jewish community.



Herod's Temple

- Herod attempted to pacify his Jewish subjects by building a bigger and better Temple for them.
- The Temple building (built in 20 BC) was about the same size as Zerubbabel's Temple but the surrounding inner courtyard and the surrounding outer courtyard were HUGE. This entire area became known as "The Temple".
- The outer courtyard was entirely surrounded by patio covers which made delightful shady places for teachers to hold outdoor classes.
- This Temple was the center for sacrificial worship and faithful Jews continued to travel to it for the appointed Feasts.
- This is the Temple to which Jesus was brought after his birth, where Jesus was "found" discussing theology with the rabbis and when he was 12 years old, where Jesus taught and where Jesus drove out the profiteers.
- This is where the Sanhedrin held court and where Paul was arrested.
- The Romans destroyed this Temple in 70 AD. Without the Temple the Jews could no longer perform animal sacrifices.



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QUOTES / SONGS:

"Never before had I considered health protocols in the context of the church. But today, being too strict with health guidelines might damage the well-being of the church, while being too lax might take the life of a congregant. Pastors like me have to deal with the never-ending conversation about in-person versus online services—and how to serve churchgoers without leaving behind the immunocompromised or disabled.

All of this has injected a paralyzing degree of complexity and controversy into every single situation I face, every decision I make. And to make things worse, it feels as if everyone is on a hair trigger, ready to walk away at the merest hint that the church does not line up with their political or personal perspectives." - Peter Chin

God's training is for now, not later. His purpose is for this very minute, not for sometime in the future. We have nothing to do with what will follow our obedience, and we are wrong to concern ourselves with it. What people call preparation, God sees as the goal itself.

God's purpose is to enable me to see that He can walk on the storms of my life right now. If we have a further goal in mind, we are not paying enough attention to the present time. However, if we realize that moment-by-moment obedience is the goal, then each moment as it comes is precious. - Oswald Chambers

SCRIPTURES: New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.

Psalm 33:11

But the LORD's plans stand firm forever; his intentions can never be shaken.

Romans 8:28

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Ezra 1:1-11 & 2:1-70

1 In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, the Lord 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:

2 “This is what King Cyrus of Persia says:

“The Lord, 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 the Lord, 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.”

5 Then God stirred the hearts of the priests and Levites and the leaders of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple of the Lord. 6 And all their neighbors assisted by giving them articles of silver and gold, supplies for the journey, and livestock. They gave them many valuable gifts in addition to all the voluntary offerings.

7 King Cyrus himself brought out the articles that King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Lord’s Temple in Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of his own gods. 8 Cyrus directed Mithredath, the treasurer of Persia, to count these items and present them to Sheshbazzar, the leader of the exiles returning to Judah. 9 This is a list of the items that were returned:

gold basins:	30
silver basins:	1,000
silver incense burners:	29
10gold bowls:	30
silver bowls:	410
other items:	1,000

11 In all, there were 5,400 articles of gold and silver. Sheshbazzar brought all of these along when the exiles went from Babylon to Jerusalem.

2:1 Here is the list of the Jewish exiles of the provinces who returned from their captivity. King Nebuchadnezzar had deported them to Babylon, but now they returned to Jerusalem and the other towns in Judah where they originally lived. 2 Their leaders were Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah.

This is the number of the men of Israel who returned from exile: 3 The family of Parosh 2,172 4 The family of Shephatiah 372 5 The family of Arah 775 6 The family of Pahath-moab (descendants of Jeshua and Joab) 2,812 7 The family of Elam 1,254 8 The family of Zattu 945 9 The family of Zaccai 760 10 The family of Bani 642 11 The family of Bebai 623 12 The family of Azgad 1,222 13 The family of Adonikam 666 14 The family of Bigvai 2,056 15 The family of Adin 454 16 The family of Ater (descendants of Hezekiah) 98 17 The family of Bezai 323 18 The family of Jorah 112 19 The family of Hashum 223 20 The family of Gibbar 95

21 The people of Bethlehem 123 22 The people of Netophah 56 23 The people of Anathoth 128 24 The people of Bethazmaveth 42 25 The people of Kiriath-jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth 743 26 The people of Ramah and Geba 621 27 The people of Micmash 122 28 The people of Bethel and Ai 223 29 The citizens of Nebo 52 30 The citizens of Magbish 156 31 The citizens of West Elam 1,254 32 The citizens of Harim 320 33 The citizens of Lod, Hadid, and Ono 725 34 The citizens of Jericho 345 35 The citizens of Senaah 3,630

36 These are the priests who returned from exile: The family of Jedaiah (through the line of Jeshua) 973 37 The family of Immer 1,052 38 The family of Pashhur 1,247 39 The family of Harim 1,017 40 These are the Levites who returned from exile: The families of Jeshua and Kadmiel (descendants of Hodaviah) 74 41 The singers of the family of Asaph 128 42 The gatekeepers of the families of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai 139 43 The descendants of the following Temple servants returned from exile: Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth, 44 Keros, Siaha, Padon, 45 Lebanah, Hagabah, Akkub, 46 Hagab, Shalmal, Hanan, 47 Giddel, Gahar, Reaiah, 48 Rezin, Nekoda, Gazzam, 49 Uzza, Paseah, Besai, 50 Asnah, Meunim, Nephusim, 51 Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur, 52 Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha, 53 Barkos, Sisera, Temah, 54 Neziah, and Hatipha. 55 The descendants of these servants of King Solomon returned from exile: Sotai, Hassophereth, Peruda, 56 Jaalah, Darkon, Giddel, 57 Shephatiah, Hattil, Pokereth-hazzebaim, and Ami. 58 In all, the Temple servants and the descendants of Solomon’s servants numbered 392.

59 Another group returned at this time from the towns of Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Kerub, Addan, and Immer. However, they could not prove that they or their families were descendants of Israel. 60 This group included the families of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda—a total of 652 people. 61 Three families of priests—Hobaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai—also returned. (This Barzillai had married a woman who was a descendant of Barzillai of Gilead, and he had taken her family name.) 62 They searched for their names in the genealogical records, but they were not found, so they were disqualified from serving as priests. 63 The governor told them not to eat the priests' share of food from the sacrifices until a priest could consult the LORD about the matter by using the Urim and Thummim—the sacred lots. 64 So a total of 42,360 people returned to Judah, 65 in addition to 7,337 servants and 200 singers, both men and women. 66 They took with them 736 horses, 245 mules, 67 435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

68 When they arrived at the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, some of the family leaders made voluntary offerings toward the rebuilding of God's Temple on its original site, 69 and each leader gave as much as he could. The total of their gifts came to 61,000 gold coins, 6,250 pounds of silver, and 100 robes for the priests.

70 So the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, the Temple servants, and some of the common people settled in villages near Jerusalem. The rest of the people returned to their own towns throughout Israel.