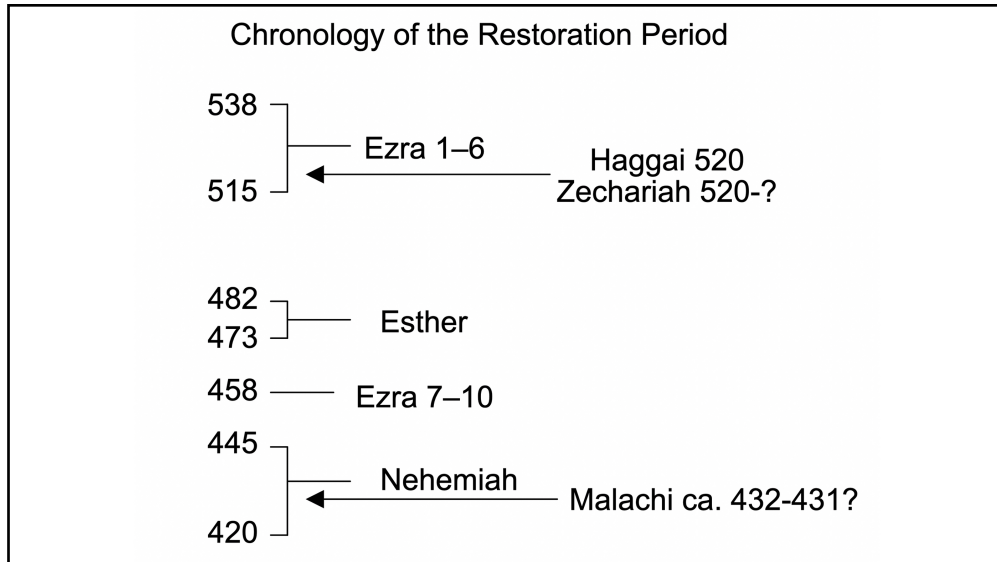


Ezra 1-2
Christ Our Center



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:

Jeremiah 25:11-12 This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste.

1. God's Word is true will happen.

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. 3 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. 4 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."

Ezra 1:5-6 Then rose up the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem. 6 And all who were about them aided them with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, with beasts, and with costly wares, besides all that was freely offered.

2. God works in and through our hearts.

Ezra 1:7-11 Cyrus the king also brought out the vessels of the house of the LORD that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods. 8 Cyrus king of Persia brought these out in the charge of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. 9 And this was the number of them: 30 basins of gold, 1,000 basins of silver, 29 censers, 10 30 bowls of gold, 410 bowls of silver, and 1,000 other vessels; 11 all the vessels of gold and of silver were 5,400. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up, when the exiles were brought up from Babylonia to Jerusalem.

Ezra 2:1-2 Now these were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried captive to Babylonia. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town. 2 They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah.

3. Spiritual genealogy is most important.

Ezra 2:2-35 “The number of the men of the people of Israel:”

4. There is a risk in following God.

Jeremiah 29:10-14 “For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. 13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

Ezra 2:36-39 The Priests

- From the Tribe of Levi and then from the Line of Aaron, Moses’ brother.

Ezra 2:40-42 The Levites

- The Levites were those who were not priests but from the Levi lineage. They assisted the priests in the temple duties.
- 2 specific groups of Levites are mentioned: singers and gatekeepers

Ezra 2:43-58 The Temple servants and the sons of Solomon’s servants

- Those that could prove they were from Israel and desired to return

Ezra 2:59-60 The following were those who came up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addan, and Immer, though they could not prove their fathers’ houses or their descent, whether they belonged to Israel:

- Israelites who could not prove their genealogy but chose to return

Ezra 2:61-63 Also, of the sons of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, and the sons of Barzillai (who had taken a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name). 62 These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but they were not found there, and so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean. 63 The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food, until there should be a priest to consult Urim and Thummim.

5. God uses people according to their gifts and abilities.

Ezra 2:64-67 The whole assembly together was 42,360, 65 besides their male and female servants, of whom there were 7,337, and they had 200 male and female singers. 66 Their horses were 736, their mules were 245, 67 their camels were 435, and their donkeys were 6,720.

- Around 50,000 people returned to Israel from the millions that were displaced

Ezra 2:68-70 Some of the heads of families, when they came to the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem, made freewill offerings for the house of God, to erect it on its site. 69 According to their ability they gave to the treasury of the work 61,000 darics of gold, 5,000 minas of silver, and 100 priests’ garments. 70 Now the priests, the Levites, some of the people, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants lived in their towns, and all the rest of Israel in their towns.

6. We are to give freely to the Lord.

- ➔ **Ourselves**... serving we are to serve from the heart and because we love God
- ➔ **Time**... we are to spend time with the Lord because we love Him and it helps us grow
- ➔ **Money**... we are to give because we love and trust God... not out of guilt or because we are going to get something in return