OLD TESTAMENT · HISTORY · BOOK 15 OF 66

Ezra

The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him (8:22)

10	Ezra	538–457 B.C.	2 Returns
Chapters, 280 Verses	Priest and Scribe	About 80 Years	Zerubbabel and Ezra

STRUCTURE

The Book in Four Parts

Two returns about sixty years apart: **Zerubbabel** rebuilds the temple (1–6), and **Ezra** rebuilds the people by the word of God (7–10).



Each bar shows that part's share of the 280 verses.

I 1–3 · 94 verses

The First Return

Cyrus's decree, the families, the altar and foundation.

II 4–6 · 63 verses

The Temple Finished

Opposition, the prophets, and the dedication.

III 7–8 · 64 verses

Ezra Comes

The scribe, the king's letter, and the journey.

IV 9–10 · 59 verses

Reform

Mixed marriages, confession, and response.

DATES B.C.

From Cyrus to Ezra

Two returns, a finished temple, and a renewed people.

1:1	3:8–10	4:24	5:1–2
538	**536**	**536–520**	**520**
Cyrus's decree; the first return	The temple's foundation laid	The work stopped	Haggai and Zechariah stir the builders

6:15	ESTHER	7:8–9	10:17
516	**483–473**	**458**	**457**
The temple finished in Adar	Esther in Shushan	Ezra arrives in Jerusalem	The people's reform completed

EZRA 1–2

Cyrus's Decree

God moved the heart of a pagan king to fulfil His word by Jeremiah.

> *"The LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom."*
>
> Ezra 1:1 (KJV)

JEREMIAH 29:10	ISAIAH 44:28	1:7–11	2:64–65
70 Years	**Named Ahead**	**5,400 Vessels**	**49,897**
"I will visit you, and perform My good word"	Isaiah named Cyrus about 150 years before	The temple vessels returned	The whole congregation, with servants

Home from Babylon

MAP

Home from Babylon

The two journeys home, about nine hundred miles by the road up the Euphrates. Gold markers belong to the first return, navy to Ezra’s return, and rust to the Persian court. The numbers match the cards below.

EZRA 1–10

Home from Babylon

Two returns to rebuild the house of the LORD

538 and 458 B.C. · About 900 miles · Routes approximate



First return: Zerubbabel
538 B.C., about 50,000 people (1–2)

Second return: Ezra
458 B.C., four months (7:9; 8)

The Persian court
Decrees and letters (4; 6; 7)

“The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him.”

EZRA 8:22 (KJV)

Travellers from Babylon went up the Euphrates and down through Syria rather than across the desert. The river Ahava is approximate.

BibleStudyForAll.com · Map positions approximate · Scripture from the King James Version

1 1:11; 2:1

Babylon

First return. Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel lead the first exiles home with the temple vessels.

2 8:15–31

River Ahava

Ezra’s return. Ezra gathers the people, proclaims a fast, and seeks “a right way.”

3 6:1–12

Achmetha

The Persian court. In the palace a roll is found with Cyrus’s decree to build the house of God.

4 4:9; 7:1, 11–26

Shushan

The Persian court. Seat of the Persian kings; Artaxerxes gives Ezra his letter.

5 4:10, 17

Samaria

The Persian court. The adversaries write to the king to stop the work.

6 3:1–13; 6:15–22; 7:8–9; 10

Jerusalem

First return. The altar and foundation; the temple finished in 516 B.C.; Ezra arrives.

EZRA AT A GLANCE · PART 3 OF 5

Rebuilding the Temple and Ezra the Scribe

EZRA 3–6

Rebuilding the Temple

The altar first, then the foundation, then twenty years of waiting, and at last a finished house.

1 3:2–3

The Altar

Burnt offerings before there was a temple.

2 3:11

The Foundation

“For He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever.”

3 3:12–13

Weeping and Shouting

The old men weep; others shout for joy.

4 4:4–5, 24

Opposition

The adversaries weaken their hands; the work stops.

5 5:1–2

The Prophets

Haggai and Zechariah stir them to build again.

6 6:14–16

Finished

Dedicated “with joy” in the sixth year of Darius.

> *“And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel.”*
>
> Ezra 6:14 (KJV)

EZRA 7–8

Ezra the Scribe

Ezra studied God’s word, obeyed it, and taught it, and God’s good hand was upon him.

7:10

Seek

“Prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD.”

7:10

Do

“And to do it.”

7:10

Teach

“And to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.”

BEFORE THE JOURNEY

A fast at the river Ahava “to seek of Him a right way”

8:21

AFTER THE JOURNEY

“The hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us”

8:31

BEFORE THE JOURNEY

Ashamed to ask the king for soldiers

8:22

AFTER THE JOURNEY

All the silver and gold weighed and delivered

8:33–34

Ezra’s Prayer and Christ in Ezra

EZRA 9–10

Ezra’s Prayer of Confession

When Ezra learned that the people had joined themselves to the idolatrous nations around them, he fell on his knees.

EZRA 9:6

Ashamed and Blush

“O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.”

9:8

A Little Reviving

God has given “a nail in His holy place” and a little reviving in their bondage.

9:13

Less Than We Deserve

“Thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve.”

10:2

Yet There Is Hope

“Yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.”

10:11

Make Confession

The people separate themselves, as the law commanded.

LOOKING FORWARD

Christ in Ezra

The return, the rebuilt temple and the line of David all prepare for the coming of Christ.

3:2 · MATTHEW 1:12–13

Zorobabel

Zerubbabel, who led the return, is named in the genealogy of Jesus.

6:15 · HAGGAI 2:9; JOHN 2:21

The Latter House

Christ came to this rebuilt temple, and He Himself is the true temple.

1:1 · GALATIANS 4:4

God’s Timing

God kept His appointed time for the return, and “when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son.”

9:6 · 1 JOHN 1:9

Confession

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.”

Key Themes and Key Verse

BIG IDEAS

Key Themes

God Keeps His Word
Jeremiah's seventy years fulfilled.
1:1

God Rules Kings
He stirred Cyrus, turned Darius and Artaxerxes.
1:1; 6:22; 7:27

Worship First
The altar before the walls.
3:2–3

Perseverance
Build again when the work has stopped.
5:1–2

The Word of God
Seek it, do it, teach it.
7:10

The Good Hand of God
Upon all them that seek Him.
7:6, 9, 28; 8:22

Prayer and Fasting
Seek of Him a right way.
8:21–23

Holiness
Separate from the idolatry of the nations.
9:1–2; 10:11

Confession
Honest repentance brings hope.
9:6; 10:2

KEY VERSE

"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments."

Ezra 7:10 (KJV)