

Ezra – Background

Some dates are disputed so use the dates as a general timeline.

Date	Event	Ruler
612 BC	Destruction of Nineveh.	
586 BC	Deportation to Babylon. Destruction of temple.	Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (605-562)
539 BC October 12/13	Fall of Babylon.	Cyrus II King of Persia (559-529)
538 BC 1st year of Cyrus	Decree of Cyrus: (Ezra 1:3) "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".	
538 BC	First exiles return to Judah and Jerusalem under leadership of Sheshbazzar. Ezra 1:11	
537 BC 1st Year of Return 7th Month	Sons of Israel were in the towns and they gathered as one man to Jerusalem. Altar of the God of Israel was built. Foundation of the temple was not laid. Money was given to masons and carpenters and food, drink, and oil to Sidonians and the Tyrians to bring cedar trees from Lebanon. Ezra 3:1-7	
536 BC 2nd Year of Return 2nd Month	A beginning was made. Levites, 20 years and up, were appointed to oversee the work of the house of the Lord. The foundation of the temple was laid. Ezra 3:8-13	
	The people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build. Counselors were hired to frustrate their purpose. Ezra 4:1-5	Cambyses II (529-522)
	Work on the house of God stopped until the second year of the reign of Darius. Ezra 4:24	Darius I (521-486)
520 BC	Prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo. Zerubbabel and Jeshua began to rebuild the house of God and the prophets of God were with them, helping them. The work on the temple had bogged down and stopped for about 16 years. Ezra 5:1-2	

Date	Event	Ruler
2nd Year of Darius 6th Month 1st Day	First prophecy of Haggai – GET MOVING!	Darius I (521-486)
2nd Year of Darius 6th Month 24th Day	The people came and worked on the house of the Lord.	
2nd Year of Darius 7th Month 21st Day	Haggai spoke words of encouragement.	
2nd Year of Darius 9th Month 24th Day	Last recorded messages of Haggai – rebuke and reassurance.	
	Letter sent to Darius to stop construction of the temple, but the plot backfired and Darius made a strong decree to aid the finish of the temple's construction. Ezra 5:3-6:14.	
516 BC 6th Year of Darius Month of Adar 3rd Day	Temple is completed about 22 years after decree of Cyrus and 1st exiles return to Judah. Dedication service is conducted with many sacrifices offered. Returned exiles celebrated the dedication with joy. Ezra 6:14-18	
		Xerxes (486-465)
	Letter written to Artaxerxes to stop rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Ezra 4:6-23	Artaxerxes I (465-424)
458/457 BC	Return of exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem with Ezra. Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach his statutes and ordinances in Israel. Ezra 7:1-10	
	Many spiritual reforms are made by Ezra. Marriages to foreign wives dealt with. Ezra 9:1-10:44	
444 BC	Nehemiah is cup-bearer for Artaxerxes. He is catalyst for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Book of Nehemiah	