

EZRA

For proper chronology, the books Ezra and Nehemiah should be read as follows:

Ezra 1-4, Ezra 7-8, Nehemiah 7:72-8:18, Ezra 5-6, Ezra 9:1-6, Nehemiah 9:6-38, Ezra 9:10-44, Nehemiah 9:1-5, 1:1-6:14, 12:27-43, 6:15-19, 7:1-71, 11:1-12:26, 12:44-13:31, 10

- 1) 1:1 -- Cyrus, a Persian, not of royal lineage, in 550 BC rebelled against Astyages, ruler of the Medes since 593, and ascended to the throne. He conquered Babylon from the Chaldeans. This then is the “first year of Cyrus.” The Israelites were therefore in Babylon for 48 years, 586-538. Latin -- Cyrus. Persian -- Kurush. Hebrew -- Koresh. Greek -- Kuros. (Branch Davidian leader named himself Koresh -- for unknown reasons.) /// There were actually four migrations from Babylon: in **538**, under Cyrus, led by Sheshbazzar; in **521**, under Darius I, led by Zerubbabel and Joshua; in **464-463**, under Artaxerxes I, led by Ezra; **404 and 358**, under Artaxerxes II, led twice by Nehemiah.
- 2) 1:11 -- Some Jews remained in Babylon. The few Jews who stayed in Iraq until the end of WW II and the establishment of Israel in 1947, descended from those Judahite tribesmen. (See 8-11 for total temple objects returned)
- 3) 2:2-68 -- Zerubbabel, grandson of Jeconiah (see 1 Chron 3:17-18) was gr-gr-grandson of Josiah and therefore 20th generation descendant of David. He was born in Babylonia; his name means “Child of Babylon.” (Pronounced Zare RUB uh bell) (See vv 64-68 for total people.)
- 4) 4:1 -- Mostly those peasants and unlettered people who had not been transported with the upper classes to Babylon in 586.
- 5) 4:5-7 -- Following Cyrus’ death, his son Cambyses ruled for nine years, until 521, but his rule is overshadowed by Cyrus and Darius and is not even mentioned in the Bible. Darius reigned for 35 years and is best known for his invasion of Asia Minor (Greece) and his defeat at Marathon in 490 BC. He died in 486. Ahasuerus’s throne name was Xerxes. He ruled from 485-464, Artaxerxes from 464-423.
- 6) 4:11-12 -- The temple was already rebuilt, which is clear if you follow the proper order of reading. The objection is to the rebuilding of the walls.
- 7) 7:1 -- Ezra 5 and 6 are out of order, a flashback to the beginning of the work. After 18 years of delay, Haggai and Zechariah incite Zerubbabel and Jeshua to start again. Darius tries to stop them through his local officials, but the Judeans refer him to Cyrus’ original decree, which is found at Ecbatana, once the Median capital and summer residence of Cyrus and Darius. So the temple was complete in 516, 22 years after Cyrus’ decree and 70 years after the destruction of the first temple and transportation of the Judeans to Babylon, which tallies nicely with Jeremiah’s prophecy.
- 8) 8:1-20 -- The total of males was 1,738. Hattush was the gr-gr-grandson of Zerubbabel and therefore of the 24th generation of David.