

Ezra Outline

Introduction: Ezra and Nehemiah form a kind of two-volume history of what took place in Jerusalem after the Jews were freed from Babylon. The book of Ezra focuses on the rebuilding of the temple and the work of the chief priest, Ezra. You will note a much more complicated literary texture in these books- including third person narrative, material from letters, and, for the first time, the appearance of first person narratives.

- Chapter 1: Cyrus frees Israel to rebuild the temple; gifts offered from Neb's treasury
- Chapter 2: List of those returning
- Chapter 3: Worship restored; foundation for new temple laid- mixed emotion
- Chapter 4: Division between "people of the land" and those returned; letter to Artaxerxes and his reply letter ordering the rebuilding stopped
- Chapter 5: Haggai and Zechariah prophesy to the people to continue building; letter to Darius
- Chapter 6: Darius' decree supporting construction; temple finished, dedicated, and Passover celebrated
- Chapter 7: Ezra's entrance in second wave; Ezra's letter from Artaxerxes supporting him
- Chapter 8: List of others returning with Ezra; Shift to first person- Ezra's account of his return
- Chapter 9: Issue of mixed marriages; Ezra's prayer
- Chapter 10: People's response of "unmixing"

Stories to know: Friction between those who stayed and those who returned (4:1-4); Second temple completed (6:13-22); Ezra's decree against mixing (Chapter 9)