

Ezra

First, a timeline help:

721- The Northern kingdom of Israel is taken captive by the Assyrians

612 - Babylon conquers the Assyrians and their capital, Nineveh

605, 597, 586 - The Southern kingdom of Judah is taken captive by Babylon in 3 expeditions.

Finally, the Temple and Jerusalem are taken in 586 BC

539 - Cyrus the Great, (590-529 BC) considered the founder of the Persian empire, conquers the Babylonian empire at the end of the year

538 – considered his first year of total reign

*Something to note before we go to the questions: notice how ch. 1-6 focus on the work of Zerubbabel and 7-10 focus on Ezra. Therefore, the book covers a span of 80 years.

1-1) When does this book begin, chronologically?

1-2) What compelled Cyrus to make a proclamation?

1-3) For what purpose?

1-4) We are told that this is in fulfillment of what God spoke through Jeremiah. Now consider what just happened. Babylon (Land of the Chaldeans) was just toppled by the Medo-Persian Empire (through the hands of Cyrus and Darius). Where in Jeremiah 25 is this spoken of?

1-5) We are also told that Cyrus makes a proclamation that the people of Israel may return to Jerusalem. Where in Jeremiah 29 is this spoken of?

1-6) Is Cyprus called by name anywhere (roughly 200 years beforehand) in Isaiah 44-45? If so, where?

1-7) Where in 2 Chronicles 36 is he mentioned?

1-8) Is Daniel in some sort of office or position of influence still (look at the following chapters of Daniel, and if you find anything, put the verse markings down: Dan 1, 6, 10)?

1-9) The term “The Lord God of Heaven” is used 9 times in this book. Write all the references below and put what it says of Him beside it.

1-10) In this decree, what blessing does Cyrus offer to those who belong to this God?

1-11) What purpose does he grant allowance for people to return? Or, in other words, what were they to return to do?

1-12) What does Cyrus call God?

1-13) So Cyrus gives a command to allow the Jews under his empire to travel the 900 miles back to Jerusalem if they wish. As these Israelites are about to return, what does Cyrus command their current neighbors to do in this proclamation?

1-14) What 3 tribes were first to respond?

1-15) What inspired them to do so?

1-16) What did all those around them do?

1-17) What then did the King of Persia do?

1-18) What had Nebuchadnezzar previously done with these items?

1-19) By whose hands were these things delivered?

1-20) Into whose hands (many believe this is the Chaldean or Persian name for Zerubabel. It means “Worships the fire”)?

1-21) What was this man’s position with regard to Judah?

1-22) So let’s talk inventory of what was returned:

- Gold platters
- Silver platters
- Knives
- Gold basins
- Silver basins
- Other articles
- Total articles of silver and gold

1-23) So, does this Sheshbazzar stay in Persia or return to Jerusalem?

2-1) As we look at ch. 2, one thing is evident: someone took careful note and inventory of everyone that went back. These are people who had been carried away by whom?

2-2) When the people returned to Judah and Jerusalem, where did they go?

2-3) What was the leader’s name?

2-4) First, we have a list of 10 men who came with Zerubbabel, What are their names?

2-5) Next, from vs. 3-20, we have the names of 18 heads of household. What are their names?

2-6) Next, grab a calculator and add up how many came with these men.

2-7) In vs. 20-35, we have 21 villages mentioned. What are they?

2-8) Now, calculate how many people came from them.

2-9) From vs. 36-39, we have 4 priest heads. Name them and how many people came with them.

2-10) Vs. 40-42 show us 10 Levite heads. Who are they and how many came with them?

2-11) Now we have a list of servants by name (vs. 43-58). How many came?

2-12) Then there were those who really couldn't chase their lineage back to their Jewish heritage (vs. 59-60). How many were there?

2-13) Among those who appear to be unable to find their heritage were a group of Priest kids. List the names of the Priestly heads (3).

2-14) What happened to those who could not chase their parentage to the Priestly tribe?

2-15) How did the governor respond to this? What was his decree?

2-16) How many were the whole assembly? (in other words, how many in total returned including servants and singers)?

2-17) List the following inventory:

_____ horses
_____ mules
_____ camels
_____ donkeys

2-18) Some of the heads of their household also gave silver and gold. How much did they give (by the way, that totals 40,000 – 60,000 lbs. of gold and 60,000-75,000 lbs. of silver!)?

2-19) Now, if you are able, go on the web and find out how much gold and silver are selling for per ounce right now. Then multiply it by 16 (to make a pound) and then multiply it by the numbers above to get an idea of the value of the gold and silver they were bringing with them.

2-20) So the people were listed in 6 categories at the end of this chapter. What are they?

2-21) Where did they dwell?

*So, to sum up so far, 49,897 people return from Persia with roughly \$300,000,000 worth of silver and gold (100,000 – 150,000 lbs of it).

3-1) Now we have a time stamp. When did the children of Israel finally get to their cities?

3-2) Now go to the following places behind you in scripture to find out what else happened(s) in the seventh month.

a) Genesis 8:

b) Leviticus 16:

c) Leviticus 23:

d) Leviticus 23:

e) Leviticus 23:

f) Leviticus 25:

g) 1 Kings 8:

h) 2 Chronicles 5:

i) 2 Chronicles 31:

3-3) Once in Jerusalem, where did the people gather?

3-4) Who arose to build the altar (4)?

3-5) For what purpose was the altar built?

3-6) What is Moses called here?

3-7) Why had fear come upon these people?

3-8) Did this fear stop the people? What did they do (2)?

3-9) What feast did they keep? Refer to Leviticus 23:33-43 and describe this feast.

3-10) 4 different reasons for burnt offerings are listed here. What are they (just for fun, check out 2 Chron 8:12-13 and see the similarities)?

3-11) Although the burnt offerings had already been re-instituted, what was the state of the temple?

3-12) What did they do to initiate building, and what did they use as payment?

3-13) Who was allowing this to happen?

3-14) Now we have another time stamp. When did work on the temple begin?

3-15) Who was appointed to oversee the work, and what was the requirement for this position?

3-16) Which 2 heads of household oversaw the building?

3-17) Jeshua/Joshua (Meaning “The Lord is salvation”) sure seems like a busy guy! What have we seen him already involved with in this book?

3-17) Which family is mentioned by name as doing the building?

3-18) Once the foundation was laid, what did the priests and Levites do, and what instruments were they holding?

3-19) What were these instruments for?

3-20) Who ordered such a thing to be done?

3-21) What 2 things were found in their singing?

3-22) Where in I Chronicles 16 is their song found?

3-23) How did the people respond to the praise, and why?

3-24) However, how did those who had seen the first temple respond? Why do you think this is?

3-25) With all the shouting and weeping, the people made quite a racket! Did this sound carry? How do you think the neighboring nations would feel about this cacophony?

And now, a brief history lesson! In 2 Kings 17:5, Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, besieged Samaria. He died during the siege and was succeeded by Sargon II. Sargon took Samaria, carried away the people captive, and repopulated it with the people of many conquered nations (2 Kings 17:24). These foreign people did not fear God, so He sent lions to kill some of them Sargon responded by sending for a priest to teach the mixed nation about the Lord. The people learned of the Lord, but they continued to serve their native gods. What resulted was a mixed pagan version of the sacrificial system, practiced by a mixed group of half-breeds. Thus, the new Samaria is born. Back to Ezra...

4-1) What bit of news did Judah's enemies hear?

4-2) This news leads the Samaritan neighbors to ask something. What is it?

* The practice of integrating foreigners into Samaria appears to have been continued through the reign of Esarhaddon (Sargon's grandson).

4-3) Who replied to their request (3), and what was the reply?

4-4) After their attempt to dilute, what is the next way they attempt to derail the process?

4-5) After discouragement did not work, They attempt another attack. What is it, and how long did this pestering continue?

4-6) After distracting fails, the pests begin a writing campaign. To what 2 Persian kings did they write?

4-7) Which 3 troublemakers were mentioned by name in connection to the Aramaic letter?

4-8) Who wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes, and what were their occupations?

4-9) What 10 people groups did they claim to represent?

4-10) Which Assyrian king is responsible for settling these guys in Samaria?

4-11) What 2 slanderous adjectives do they use in reference to Jerusalem? How does this bode for them in light of Genesis 12:3?

4-12) What 2 building projects do they accuse Judah of? Is this a true accusation (from the text)?

4-13) What will supposedly happen if the city is built, and what would be the result?

4-14) From where do these troublemakers get paid? Would it stand to reason that such a close relationship would lead the king to trust the words of these men?

4-15) What do they urge the king to do?

4-16) What do they predict would be the result of the rebuilding of the city?

4-17) Does the king listen to them? What did he decree?

4-18) What did Rehum, Shimshai, and co. do upon reading the letter (2)?

4-19) As a result, the work on the temple stopped until what time stamp?

5-1) Now, we are introduced to 2 prophets. What are their names, and in Whose Name did they prophesy?

5-2) Flip over to the book of Haggai. What time stamp is given in Haggai 1:1?

5-3) Read Haggai 1:2-4. What was the state of the people (had they appeared to have given up)?

5-4) Judging from Haggai 1:6, 9-11, what was God's reaction to His house being left in ruins?

5-5) What was His command in Haggai 1:8, and for what 2 purposes?

5-6) What was the result of this command, as recorded in Ezra 5:2 and Haggai 1:12-14?

5-7) What specific time stamp is given in Haggai 1:15 for this occasion?

5-8) Back in Ezra, we are introduced to a new character. What is his name, and what is his occupation?

5-9) What does he ask Zerubbabel and Jeshua, and what was their response?

5-10) What prevented Tattenai from making Judah cease building?

5-11) We then get to read Darius' mail (and an extended version of the discourse between Tattenai and the men of Judah). What does Tattenai urge Darius to do?

6-1) Does Darius heed Tattenai's advice? What was found as a result?

6-2) After Darius recaps Cyrus' decree, he makes a few decrees of his own. What did he order for Tattenai and co?

6-3) Where would the money come from for this building project?

6-4) What else was offered besides money?

6-5) What were these objects for?

6-6) What did Darius want in return (see v. 10)?

6-7) What did he decree regarding anyone who alters his edict?

6-8) How does Darius refer to God at the end of his decree?

6-9) How did Tattenai and co. respond?

6-10) What encouragement does the Lord give Zerubbabel in Haggai 2:1-5, and what time stamp do we have for this prophecy?

6-11) Check out Zechariah 3:1. What do we find out about Joshua from this passage (what is his occupation)?

6-12) What promise does the Lord give to Zerubbabel in Zechariah 4:6-10?

6-13) According to whose command was the temple finished (4)?

6-14) What time stamp do we have for the completion of the temple?

6-15) What did the people do with joy after the completion of the temple?

6-16) Let's take stock of the sacrifices that were offered at the dedication:

_____ bulls

_____ rams

_____ lambs

_____ goats

6-17) What then did they do, according to the writings of Moses?

6-18) What happened on the 14th day of the 1st month?

6-19) What allowed them to do this?

6-20) It appears that the children of Israel were not alone in partaking of this feast. Who else joined them?

6-21) How did they keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Who instigated this characteristic?

6:22) What else did God do for them?

*Now, fast-forward roughly 60 years. We have passed the reign of Ahasuares (otherwise known as Xerxes) and the story of Esther within his reign, and are now in the reign of his son Artaxerxes.

7-1) We are now introduced to our new hero. What is his name?

7-2) Now give a rundown of his genealogy. What does his lineage imply about him (what tribe)?

7-3) What was his occupation?

7-4) Why did the king grant his requests?

7-5) Which 7 groups of people came up to Jerusalem?

7-6) What time stamp do we get here for Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem?

7-7) How long did the journey take him from Babylon to Jerusalem?

7-8) What was God's interaction with this trip?

7-9) For what had Ezra prepared his heart (4)?

7-10) We now learn another occupation that Ezra has. What is it?

7-11) What description is given of Ezra here?

7-12) Artaxerxes' letter begins. What does Artaxerxes call God in the beginning of his letter?

7-13) What is the king's first decree, and what 3 groups of people does it apply to?

7-14) About what did the king send Ezra to inquire?

7-15) Who offered the gold and silver to God (2)?

7-16) What are they to buy with the money (5)?

7-17) What are they to do with these purchases, and what is done with the leftover money?

7-18) What else is being brought back to Jerusalem?

7-19) If they need more money for the temple, where would they get the money?

7-20) What does the king decree regarding Ezra?

7-21) Let's take a look at Ezra's allowance:

_____ talents of silver x 75 lbs = _____ lbs of silver (1 talent = approx. 75 lbs)
_____ kors of wheat x 6 bushels = _____ bushels of wheat (1 kor = approx 6 bushels)
_____ baths of oil x 6 gallons = _____ gallons of oil (1 bath = approx 6 gallons)
and salt _____.

7-22) What does the king order regarding the Lord's commands?

7-23) What is the king's reasoning for this decree?

7-24) Who is not to be taxed (6)?

7-25) Who is Ezra to appoint, and according to what is he to choose them?

7-26) What is the requirement for those who are to judge?

7-27) What is Ezra to do if they do not fit this requirement?

7-28) What is to be done to those who does not observe the Law of the Lord, and what 4 means are allowed for this?

7-29) What 2 things does Ezra say that the Lord did in vs. 27-28?

7-30) What was the result for Ezra (2)?

8-1) Now we have a list of heads of households, along with their respective household. Let's first list the name of the head of household (16).

8-2) Now list those notable names who returned from Babylon with Ezra (18).

8-3) Finally, grab a calculator and add up the numbered males listed.

8-4) Where were these men gathered, and how long did they stay there?

8-5) What did Ezra not find among the people?

8-6) What are the names of the leaders that he sent for (8)?

8-7) Who else did he send for, and what was special about those 2 men?

8-8) Ezra then gives them a message. Who was the message for?

8-9) What was the message?

8-11) Where would these servants be coming from?

8-12) Another man of understanding is found! What is his name, and how many men did he bring?

8-13) 2 more men are brought. Who are they, and how many men did they bring?

8-14) What do we learn here about the occupation of the Nethinim?

8-15) How many of them came?

8-16) After these men had come, what did Ezra do?

8-17) Why did he proclaim such a thing (2)?

8-18) What was he ashamed of, and why?

8-19) What happened as they fasted and prayed?

8-20) Ezra then separates out 12 people, 2 of them highlighted here. Who are they?

8-21) What did he give them (3)?

8-22) Time for more inventory!

_____ talents of silver x 75 lbs =	_____ lbs of silver (1 talent = approx. 75 lbs)
_____ talents of silver articles x 75 lbs =	_____ lbs of silver articles
_____ talents of gold x 75 lbs =	_____ lbs of gold)
_____ gold basins worth	_____ drachmas
_____ vessels of fine polished bronze	

8-23) Again, if you are able, go on the web and find out how much gold and silver are selling for per ounce right now. Then multiply it by 16 (to make a pound) and then multiply it by the numbers above to get an idea of the value of the gold and silver they were bringing with them.

8-24) What was declared holy to the Lord (2)?

8-25) What was the silver and gold declared?

8-26) What were they to do with these things (2)?

8-27) Until when?

8-28) When did they leave to go to Jerusalem?

8-29) What did God deliver them from on the journey (2)? Think about what a miracle this is, considering how much treasure they are carrying!

8-30) How long did they rest in Jerusalem before getting to business? Where else in this chapter did they rest for this time period?

8-31) Who did the weighing?

8-32) Who else was with him (4)?

8-33) Now those who had been taken captive do something. What do they do?

8-34) Let's list out the sacrifices:

_____ bulls

_____ rams

_____ lambs

_____ goats

8-35) Where else in this book were these animals sacrificed (what event)?

8-36) Once the orders were delivered, where was support allocated (2)?

9-1) A complaint is raised by the leaders. What is it?

9-2) What nations were also implicated in this (8)?

9-3) They then explain what happened. What was the problem?

9-4) Who was most responsible for this atrocity (2)?

9-5) What was Ezra's response (3)?

9-6) Who gathered to him, and why?

9-7) How long did Ezra sit there?

9-8) What did he do next (2)?

9-9) Notice Ezra's choice of words in his prayer. Does he blame the people (by saying "they have sinned,") or does he include himself?

9-10) What 2 things have risen up?

9-11) How long have they been guilty?

9-12) What was the consequence of this quilt?

9-13) What did the Lord extend to them, and what was the result?

9-14) Why did He do this?

9-15) What condition were they in when all of this was happening?

9-16) In not leaving them in bondage, what did God extend to them this time?

9-17) For what purpose did He do this (4)?

9-18) What is Ezra's confession?

9-19) What was the Lord's command?

9-20) Where in Deuteronomy 7 and 26 is this command stated?

9-21) Does Ezra think their punishment is unjust? Why or why not?

9-22) God's position is juxtaposed against their state in v. 15? What are their respective states?

10-1) What was Ezra doing (4)?

10-2) Where was he doing this?

10-3) What did the people do, and why?

10-4) Who spoke to Ezra (make sure you get his lineage in the answer)?

10-5) What 2 things did he confess on behalf of the people?

10-6) Despite this sin, what optimism did he offer?

10-7) What advice did he offer?

10-8) Who advised this (2)?

10-9) According to what is this act to be done?

10-10) What encouragement/exhortation did he give (3)?

10-11) Who did Ezra make to swear to do this deed (3)?

10-12) Where did Ezra go next?

10-13) What did he not do there?

10-14) Why not?

10-15) What did he order for the people to do?

10-16) What would happen to those who did not obey (2)?

10-17) How many of the men came within the allotted time?

10-18) What time stamp are we given here?

10-19) Where did they gather?

10-20) Why were they trembling (2)?

10-21) What, according to Ezra, have the people added to?

10-22) What did Ezra urge them to do (2)?

10-23) What did God's will entail (2)?

10-24) The people agree to this, but what hindered them from doing this immediately (4)?

10-25) What did they propose?

10-26) Who opposed this idea (2)?

10-27) Who supported the plan (2)?

10-28) When did Ezra and the heads of household begin to examine the matter?

10-29) How much time had passed between when they gathered and when they began to examine the matter (assume a 30 day-month)?

10-30) When did they finish, and how much time had passed (assume a 12 month year)?

10-31) Which high priest kids had taken pagan wives (4)?

10-32) What 2 things did they give (1 physical object, 1 verbal offering)?

10-33) How does this offering compare to Leviticus 5:17-19 (did they follow protocol)?

10-34) Now for a tragic ending to this book: a list of people who had sinned! Let's break it down by household or position:

A) Immer (priests) (2):

B) Harim (priests) (5):

C) Pashhur (preists) (6):

D) the Levites (6):

E) The singers:

F) The gatekeepers (3):

G) Parosh: (7):

H) Elam: (6):

I) Zattu (6):

J) Bebai (4):

K) Bani (6):

L) Pahath-Moab (8):

M) Harim (8):

N) Hashum (7):

O) Bani (27!!!):

P) Nebo (7)

10-35) Besides pagan wives, what else had come from these marriages?

*Note the bookends of this book: returning after forgiveness. Repentance indicates a change in direction. In the beginning of Ezra, the people begin to return to the Promised Land after 70 years of captivity brought on by their idolatry (amongst other sins). This is an outward change of direction following God's forgiveness and allowance to return. At the end of the book, they realize the sin of having pagan wives and vow to put them away. This realization of sin and change of direction is an inward repentance.