


Sabbath Brothers

Post-Captivity Timeframe

<u>Year</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Action</u>	
606-586 BC		Israel Taken into Babylon	
536 BC		50,000 Jews under Zerubbabel return to Jerusalem	1st Return - Zerubbabel
536 BC	7 th Month	They build Altar & Offer Sacrifice	
535 BC	2 nd Month	Work on Temple begins and is stopped	
520 BC	6 th Month (Sept)	1 st Day – Haggai’s call to Build 24 th Day – Building Begins	
	7 th Month (Oct)	21 st Day – Haggai’s Second Appeal	
	8 th Month (Nov)	Zechariah’s opening address	
	9 th Month (Dec)	24 th Day – Haggai’s 3 rd & 4 th Appeals	
	11 th Month (Feb)	24 th Day – Zechariah’s visions	
518 BC	9 th Month (Dec)	4 th Day – Zechariah’s visions	
516 BC	12 th Month (Mar)	3 rd Day – Temple is completed	
457 BC		Ezra comes to Jerusalem and makes Reforms	2nd Return - Ezra
444 BC		Nehemiah rebuilds the Wall Period of Malachi	3rd Return - Nehemiah

**Ezra was a “post-captivity”
Bible (Tanakh) scholar**

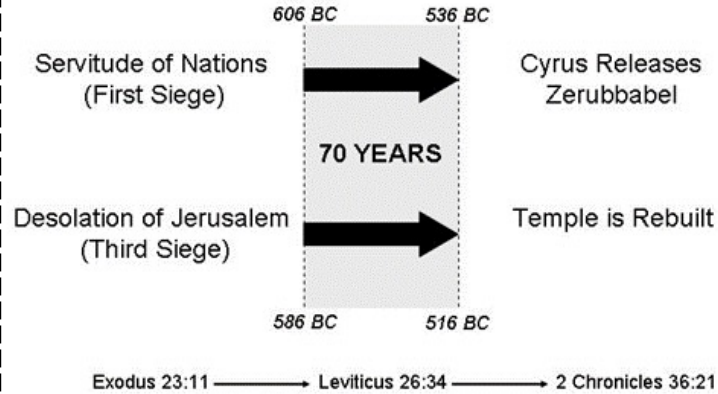
Ezra (meaning “Help”)

**Judah was taken into
Babylon captivity in
Three Sieges**

- 606BC
- 597BC
- 586BC

70 Year Prophecy

Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10



**Judah returns from
Babylon with Three
Jewish Leaders**

- Zerubbabel
- Ezra
- Nehemiah

Ezra is a shortened name of
Azeriah (“*The Lord helps me*”)

Ezra is called the “second Exodus”
because just as Israel had
returned from Egypt, they were
now returning from Babylon.

Babylonian Captivity

Three Deportations of Judah

1.	Nobility	606 BC	Daniel
2.	Tradesmen	597 BC	Ezekiel
3.	Remainder	586 BC	*Jeremiah remained in Judah

Three Returns to Judah

1.	Judah/Benjamin (49,987)	536 BC	Zerubbabel
2.	Priests, Few Levites (1,800)	458 BC	Ezra
3.	Israelites	444 BC	*Nehemiah returned to Persia



Ezra

(15th Book of Scripture)

Ezra and Nehemiah form the final book of the Jewish Tanakh with 1 & 2 Chronicles

Ezra (“Help”) and Nehemiah (“Comfort”) are the same post-captivity story and are a single book in the Hebrew Bible

The Rabbis (as well as Josephus) always regarded Ezra and Nehemiah as one book

The first person to begin the tradition of separating the two books of Ezra and Nehemiah was Origen (250AD) followed by Jerome in the Vulgate (405AD)

Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther all come out of the same general period of Israel's history

The book of Ezra transitions from Zerubbabel (Chapters 1-6) to Ezra (Chapters 7-10)	Post-Captivity Leadership	
	Lead Character	Zerubbabel (Chapters 1-6)
Civil Authority/Governor	Zerubbabel	Nehemiah
Religious Authority/Priest	Joshua	Ezra
Prophet	Haggai/Zechariah	Malachi

Zerubbabel was a descendant of David, and represents the civil authority - the kingly line

During Zerubbabel's lifetime, Joshua the religious authority (Zechariah 3:1; 6:11).

Ezra, was a descendant from Aaron the priest, and represents the religious authority as a priest.

While Ezra was religious leader, Nehemiah was civil authority (Neh 12:26).

The Prophets fell outside of either the Civil or Religious distinction: Haggai/Zechariah during Zerubbabel/Joshua and Malachi during Nehemiah/Ezra's time (Lk 10:24).

Outline of the Book of Ezra		
Ezra 1-3	The Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - King Cyrus sends Israel back - Zerubbabel & Joshua Lead
Ezra 4-6	Opposition to Prophecy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enemies stop work for 15 years - Haggai & Zechariah encourage Israel - Revived work & Completion of Temple in 4 years
Ezra 7-10	Ministry of the Word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 60 years after the completion of the Temple - Ezra arrives with more people to teach

Babylon's Treasures
donated at Exodus

Israel Returns to Jerusalem Post-Captivity (Ezra 1:1-11)

¹ Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying:

² "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to rebuild for Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

³ Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with 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.

⁴ And every survivor, at whatever place he may live, the people of that place are to support him with silver and gold, with equipment and cattle, together with a voluntary offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem."

⁵ Then the heads of fathers' *households* of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and the Levites rose up, **everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem.**

⁶ And all of those around them encouraged them with articles of silver, with gold, with equipment, cattle, and with valuables, aside from everything that was given as a voluntary offering.

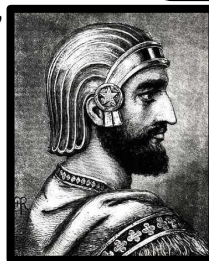
⁷ **Also King Cyrus brought out the articles of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and put in the house of his gods;**

⁸ and Cyrus, king of Persia, had them brought out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and he counted them out to Sheshbazzar, the leader of Judah.

⁹ Now this *was* their number: thirty gold dishes, a thousand silver dishes, twenty nine duplicates;

¹⁰ thirty gold bowls, 410 silver bowls of a second *kind*, and a thousand other articles.

¹¹ All the articles of gold and silver *totaled* 5,400. **Sheshbazzar brought them all up with the exiles who went up from Babylon to Jerusalem.**



Ezra picks up where Chronicles ends, so the same wording is repeated (2 Chronicles 36:22)

The Spirit of God stirred up Cyrus in the same way that the Spirit stirred His people (Ezra 1:5) to return to Jerusalem. God controls the lives of believers and unbelievers to accomplish His purpose.

Two centuries before, Isaiah had spoken of Cyrus by name as being His instrument to rebuild Jerusalem (Isaiah 44:28)

The release was a fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy (Jer 25:11-12, 27:22, 29:10) of 70 years of Babylonian captivity

The "Cyrus cylinder" has been considered as the world's first known charter of human rights, as Cyrus' respects religious tolerance and freedom, and the abolishment of slavery.

As leader of the Persian people in Anshan, Cyrus "the Great" (559BC-530BC) conquered the Medes and unified the two separate Iranian kingdoms into Persia

King Cyrus returned all of the treasures that had been stolen by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar to be reinstated in the Jerusalem Temple. These items had been safely preserved during the destruction of Jerusalem.

Cyrus is the first king whose name was suffixed with the word "Great" (e.g. So-and-So "the Great"). Many ancient historians refer to Cyrus in a positive light (i.e. Herodotus; Plutarch, Cicero)

Sheshbazzar & Zerubbabel may be the same individual or possibly Sheshbazzar was Zerubbabel's uncle (1 Chronicles 3:10)

Babylonians were deep into astrology & horoscopes; they worshipped the heavenlies. Mithredath was a Babylonian name after a false god, Mithra (the disk of the sun). Sheshbazzar was a Babylonian name after a false god, Shemesh (the sun god)

Ezra took a census of the travelers signing up to leave Babylon while Nehemiah's record was a census of those who made it to Jerusalem

Israelite Men who returned to Jerusalem

(Ezra 2:3-41)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Meanings</u>	<u>Descriptor</u>	<u>Ezra 2:3-41</u>			<u>Nehemiah 7:8-44</u>	
1.	Parosh	"A flea"	Descendants	2,172	-	9%	2,172	-
2.	Shephatiah	"God has judged"	Descendants	372	-	1.54%	372	-
3.	Arah	"The way/a traveler"	Descendants	775	+123	3.21%	652	-123
4.	Pahath-moab, Jeshua & Joab	"Ruler of Moab" "Deliverer & "God is His Father"	Descendants	2,812	-6	11.65%	2,818	+6
5.	Elam	"A young man/virgin/secret"	Descendants	1,254	-	5.19%	1,254	-
6.	Zattu	"Seal of the Master"	Descendants	945	+100	3.91%	845	-100
7.	Zaccai	"Pure/Just"	Descendants	760	-	3.15%	760	
8.	Bani/Binnui	"Posterity/Built"	Descendants	642	-6	2.66%	648	+6
9.	Bebai	"Fatherly"	Descendants	623	-5	2.58%	628	+5
10.	Azgad	"A strong army"	Descendants	1,222	-1100	5.06%	2,322	+1100
11.	Adonikam	"The Lord has risen up"	Descendants	666	-1	2.76%	667	+1
12.	Bigvai	"In my body"	Descendants	2,056	-11	8.52%	2,067	+11
13.	Adin	"Adorned"	Descendants	454	-201	1.88%	655	+201
14.	Ater, Hezekiah	"Bound/shut"	Descendants	98	-	.41%	98	-
15.	Bezai	"Eggs/Fertile"	Descendants	323	-1	1.34%	324	+1
16.	Jorah/Hariph	"Harvest born"	Descendants	112	-	.46%	112	
17.	Hashum (<i>order</i>)	"Opulent/Magnificent"	Descendants	223	-105	.92%	328	+105
18.	Gibbar/Gibeon	"Strong/hero"	Descendants	95	-	.39%	95	-
19.	Bethlehem & Netophah	"House of Bread" & "Distillation/Dropping"	People & Men	123 + 56	-9	.74%	188	+9
20.	Anathoth	"Answers"	Men	128	-	.53%	128	-
21.	(Beth-) Azmaveth	"House of strong death (he-goat)"	People	42	-	.17%	42	-
22.	Kiriatharim, Chepirah, Beeroth	"City of thickets"/"A little lioness" "Wells/explaining"	People	743	-	3.08%	743	-
23.	Ramah & Geba	"Elevated/exalted" & "Hill"	People	621	-	2.57%	621	-
24.	Michmas	"Something hidden"	Men	122	-	.51%	122	-
25.	Bethel & Ai	"House of God" & "Ruins"	Men	223	+100	.92%	123	-100
26.	Nebo	"Proclaimer/Prophet"	People	52	-	.22%	52	-
27.	Magbish	"Excelling/Height"	People	156	+156	.65%	Unlisted	-156
28.	Elam	"A young man/virgin/secret"	People	1,254	-	5.19%	1,254	-
29.	Harim	"Destroyed/Dedicated to God"	People	320	-	1.33%	320	-
30.	Lod, Hadid & Ono	"Nativity/Generation", "Pointed", "Grief/Iniquity"	People	725	+4	3%	721	-4
31.	Jericho	"His sweet smell/fragrance"	People	345	-	1.43%	345	-
32.	Senaah	"Bramble/thorny/enemy"	People	3,630	-300	15.03%	3,930	+300
33 Lines in Ezra as Row 19 is Separated.				24,144	-1,262	99.77%	25,406	+1,262

“We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Hebrews 10:10)

The Altar Constructed First (Ezra 3:1-7)

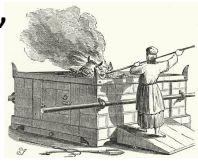
¹ Now when **the seventh month** came, and the sons of Israel *were* in the cities, the people gathered together as one person to Jerusalem.

² Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brothers the priests, and **Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brothers, rose up and built the altar of the God of Israel to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the Law of Moses, the man of God.**



³ So they set up the altar on its foundation, because they were terrified of the peoples of the lands; and **they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, burnt offerings morning and evening.**

⁴ They also celebrated the **Feast of Booths**, as it is written, and *offered* the prescribed number of burnt offerings daily, according to the ordinance, as each day required;



⁵ and **afterward there was a continual burnt offering, also for the new moons and for all the appointed festivals of the LORD that were consecrated, and from everyone who offered a voluntary offering to the LORD.**

⁶ From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, **but the foundation of the temple of the LORD had not been laid.**

⁷ Then they gave money to the masons and carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the Sidonians and the Tyrians to bring cedar wood from Lebanon to the sea at Joppa, according to the permission they had from Cyrus king of Persia.

The Festival of Booths celebrated the care and provision of God’s people as they roamed through the wilderness. (Ex 24:16; Num 19:12-38). God had also sustained His people in the Babylonian Captivity

As with the first Temple’s construction, Sidon and Tyre (1 Kings 5) provided the logistics for the elements of the reconstruction.

Just as Hezekiah had restored the Temple (2 Chronicles 31:7-8), the seventh month had also been the celebration of the opening of Solomon’s Temple (2 Chron 5:3; 7:10) – even after Babylon captivity, the people would resettle in Jerusalem on the seventh month (Tisri – September/October).

Gathering around the altar was the first congregational activity of Israel. The people of Israel gathered in Jerusalem to feast in the first, third and seventh month.

The first item to be rebuilt was the altar; all other worship falls behind the altar of sacrifice.

The two (witness) leaders, Jeshua (“Deliverer” – religious leader) and Zerubbabel (“the seed of Babylon” – civil leader), began to lead the restoration of Jerusalem.

In spite of their fear of men, they faithfully made public offerings to the Lord (Psalm 56:4, 11).

Morning sacrifices were offered at 9:00am and evening offerings were made at 3:00pm (Ex 28:42; Num 28:3-6)

The New Moon brought Rosh Hashanah (Feast of Trumpets – The Last Trump and Resurrection from the Dead) which is only Feast at the beginning of the month with sliver of moon; all other Feasts occur at times of full moon

Offerings could still be made to the Lord (in the Old Testament) although the foundation, Jesus (1 Cor 3:11, 15:14) had not yet come as the Messiah. (Haggai 2:18)

The Foundation of the Temple (Ezra 3:8-13)

⁸ Now in the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the rest of their brothers the priests and the Levites, and all who came from the captivity to Jerusalem, began *the work* and appointed the Levites who were twenty years old and upward to oversee the work of the house of the LORD.

⁹ Then Jeshua *with* his sons and brothers stood united *with* Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah *and* the sons of Henadad *with* their sons and brothers the Levites, to oversee the workmen in the temple of God.



¹⁰ Now when the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD according to the directions of King David of Israel.

¹¹ And they sang, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, *saying*, “For *He is good*, for His favor *is upon Israel forever*.” And all the people shouted with a great shout of joy when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

¹² Yet many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers’ households, the old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, while many shouted aloud for joy,

¹³ so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the shout of joy from the sound of the weeping of the people, because the people were shouting with a loud shout, and the sound was heard far away.

The civil and religious leaders worked together to rebuild the Temple with leaders of the project being older than 20 years of age.

The second month was the exact time that Solomon began his construction of the Temple that he constructed (1 Kings 6:1; 2 Chronicles 3:2)

The Levites supervised the workers over the Temple. Joshua and Kadmiel (from Hodaviah) are listed as Levites in the census (Ezra 2:40).

The sons of Henadad are listed as builders of the wall (Nehemiah 3:18, 24) as well as those who signed a covenant contract (Nehemiah 10:9)

While workers constructed the Temple, Priests played trumpets and Levites played cymbals for praise

Two covenant terms are used in 3:11 with the name Yahweh (represented by “LORD”) as well as the Hebrew term “Hasdow” for lovingkindness (Gen 24:7) which represent God’s covenant being reestablished with the restoration of the Temple.

Seven Tabernacles/Temples are referenced in the Bible		
1.	Tabernacle/Temple	1 Samuel 1:9
2.	Solomon’s Temple	1 Kings 6:5, 7
3.	Nehemiah/Zerubbabel	Ezra 4:1-2
4.	Herod	John 2:20
5.	One Defiled by Anti-Christ	2 Thes 2:4; Daniel 9:27
6.	Millennial	Ezekiel 41:1
7.	Jesus	Revelation 21:3, 22
As this “dwelling place” (Exodus 25:8-9, 26:30) was patterned after the Heavenly Tabernacle (Rev 15:5), so were we created in God’s image		

Believers are referenced as the “Temple of God” Seven Times in the Bible	
1.	1 Corinthians 3:9-17
2.	1 Corinthians 6:19
3.	2 Corinthians 6:16
4.	Ephesians 2:20-21
5.	Hebrews 3:6
6.	1 Peter 2:5
7.	1 Peter 4:17

Although the fallen Temple had begun to be restored, some remembered the glory that had existed at one time – lost opportunity due to sin. (Haggai 2:3)

Letters were used as weapons. News & Awards (Nobel; Pulitzer; Oscars, etc.) are all weaponized by the world

Challenged By The World (Ezra 4:4-16)

⁴ Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah, and frightened them from building,
⁵ and bribed advisers against them to frustrate their advice all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.
⁶ Now in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.
⁷ And in the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of his colleagues wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the text of the letter was written in Aramaic and translated *from* Aramaic.
⁸ Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to King Artaxerxes, as follows—
⁹ Rehum the commander, Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their colleagues, the judges and the lesser governors, the officials, the secretaries, the men of Erech, the Babylonians, the men of Susa, that is, the Elamites,
¹⁰ and the rest of the nations which the great and honorable Osnappar deported and settled in the city of Samaria, and in the rest of the region beyond the *Euphrates* River. And now
¹¹ this is a copy of the letter which they sent to him: “To King Artaxerxes: Your servants, the men of the region beyond the *Euphrates* River; and now
¹² let it be known to the king that the Jews who came up from you have come to us at Jerusalem; they are rebuilding the rebellious and evil city and are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations.
¹³ Now let it be known to the king, that if that city is rebuilt and the walls are finished, they will not pay tribute, custom tax, or toll, and it will be detrimental to the revenue of the kings.
¹⁴ Now because we are in the service of the palace, and it is not fitting for us to see the king’s shame, for this reason we have sent *word* and informed the king,
¹⁵ so that a search may be conducted in the record books of your fathers. And you will discover in the record books and learn that that city is a rebellious city and detrimental to kings and provinces, and that they have revolted within it in past days; for this reason that city was laid waste.
¹⁶ We are informing the king that if that city is rebuilt and the walls finished, then as a result of this you will have no possession in *the province* beyond the *Euphrates* River.”

Israel’s Enemies (Samaritans) wrote the letter in Aramaic which was the global political language.

Instead of Hebrew, Aramaic language is used in Ezra 4:8-6:18 and then again in Ezra 7:12-26.

This Artaxerxes and Ahasuerus reference Darius the Mede who is mentioned in the book of Daniel, but Artaxerxes in the book of Nehemiah is not the same Artaxerxes as in the book of Ezra.

The world aggressively intimidates the workers of the Lord

The Judicial system was used by the world to confine the Lord’s work until the new king commands obedience. (Ezra 6:1-12)

Artaxerxes and Ahasuerus are NOT the names of a king, but instead royal titles. Artaxerxes means “the great king” (“arta” means “great/honored” & “kshershe” means “a king”) while Ahasuerus means “the venerable father.”

The symbolism of the incarnations of Jesus: While King Cyrus provided freedom (Jesus Christ the Messiah), King Darius demanded reward for God’s people (The Lord Jesus’ second coming as King)

Osnappar (Ezra 4:10) is another name of the Assyrian King, Ashurbanipal, who reigned from 668BC to 627BC.

The construction of the post-captivity Temple began around 536BC, but it wasn’t completed until 516BC. Although the Jewish enemies attempted to slow the construction, Haggai blames the slow progress on the apathy of God’s people. (Haggai 1:2-7)

Rehum identifies with the regions that foreigners had been exiled from as Assyria moved them into Samaria which had been the capital city of the northern kingdom.

Persecution of God's People in the Name of "Peace"

Israel's enemies requested that searches be made of the history of God's people which would reveal their rebellious nature. (Ezra 4:15)

This continues today with the tragedies of the Crusades (60,000-80,000 killed), the Spanish Inquisition (32,000 killed) and the Salem Witch Trials (20 killed) being brought to the forefront; it is a common saying that "Religion has caused killed more people in the history of the world than anything else."

However, scholars have calculated (in 2000) that the number of killings since the beginning of man is approximately 300,000,000 with half of those (152,000,000) being killed during the 20th century alone.

Communism accounts for the deaths of 110,000,000 while Nazi Germany and Nationalist China add another 30,000,000 killings. All three of these atheistic associations share a core conviction of being anti-God.

This also does not include the millions fetuses being destroyed every year around the world

Anti-Christian sentiment does indeed fodder the slaughter of the innocent.

Response to Israel's Rebellion (Ezra 4:17-24)

17 Then the king sent a response to Rehum the commander, Shimshai the scribe, and to the rest of their colleagues who live in Samaria and in the rest of *the provinces* beyond the *Euphrates* River: **“Peace. And now,**

18 the document which you sent to us has been translated *and* read before me.

19 And a decree has been issued by me, and a search has been conducted and it has been discovered that that city has risen up against the kings in past days, and that rebellion and revolt have been perpetrated in it,

20 that mighty kings have ruled over Jerusalem, governing all the provinces beyond the *Euphrates* River, and that tribute, custom tax, and toll were paid to them.

21 Now issue a decree to make those men stop work, so that this city will not be rebuilt until a decree is issued by me.

22 And beware of being negligent in carrying out this matter; why should there be great damage, to the detriment of the kings?”

23 Then as soon as the copy of King Artaxerxes’ decree was read before Rehum and Shimshai the scribe and their colleagues, they went in a hurry to Jerusalem to the Jews and stopped them by military force.

24 Then work on the house of God in Jerusalem was discontinued, and it was stopped until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

The letter was written in the Aramaic Semitic language (the dialect of Assyria and Babylon), but it had to be translated into the Persian language.



The two (*witness*) enemies of God, Rehum (*“merciful”*) and Shimshai (*“the shining one”*) received word from the King.

An official Scribe (Shimshai) was assigned to every Satrap (provincial governor - Rehum) as well as related to the King which was one way that the Kings kept the Satraps accountable.

The “king” (an imposter) used Babylonian records (Ezra 6:1) to validate that Jerusalem had revolted in the past. But the faithful men of God, including Jeremiah and Ezekiel had been against the Babylon rebellions.

The False King of Persia

The author of this letter was probably not the true King of Persia, but an imposter. Smerdis (King Artaxerxes) was the younger son of Cyrus the Great who reigned briefly and then died abruptly.

But Smerdis’ death was not known to the public, so in the spring of 522 BC a usurper, Gaumata, pretended to be Smerdis and proclaimed himself king before transferring the seat of government to Media.

However, in a castle in the district of Nisaya, Gaumata was surprised and killed by Darius and six associates in September 522.

Smerdis/Gaumata had reigned as a Persian king over the whole Achaemenid Empire for seven months, before he was killed by Darius I in 522 BC.

The unfaithful Israelites had now brought stain and reproach on the followers of God who had never rebelled against Babylon.

Temple Reconstruction Resumed (Ezra 5:1-10)

1 When the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them,
2 then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, supporting them.

3 At that time Tattenai, the governor of *the province* beyond the *Euphrates* River, and Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues came to them and spoke to them as follows: **“Who issued you a decree to rebuild this temple and to finish this structure?”**

4 Then we told them accordingly what the names of the men were who were reconstructing this building.

5 But the eye of their God was on the elders of the Jews, and they did not stop them until the report could reach Darius, and then the decree concerning it could be sent back.

6 *This is* the copy of the letter that Tattenai, the governor of *the province* beyond the *Euphrates* River, and Shethar-bozenai and his colleagues the officials, who were beyond the River, sent to Darius the king.

7 They sent the report to him in which it was written as follows: **“To Darius the king, all peace.**

8 **May it be known to the king that we have gone to the province of Judah, to the house of the great God which is being built with large stones, and beams are being laid in the walls; and this work is being performed with great care and is succeeding in their hands.**

9 Then we asked those elders and said to them as follows: ‘Who issued you a decree to rebuild this temple and to finish this structure?’

10 We also asked them their names so as to inform you, in order that we might write down the names of the men who were in charge.

From 535BC to 520BC, the Temple went without construction; after 15 years, two prophets (Haggai & Zechariah) (Rev 11) begin to prophesy and re-invigorate the restoration.

Haggai preached about the need to rebuild the Temple circa 519BC, and then Zechariah preached about the same need a year later (520BC).

God’s initiative & Man’s response. The workers were being encouraged, but it was God’s strength in which they were working. (Philippians 2:12-13)

Two civil leaders, Tattenai (“that gives tributes”) and Shethar-bozenai (“empire delivering”), questioned the construction again in a fair and impartial manner.

Zechariah is actually the son of Berechiah and the grandson of Iddo (Zechariah 1:1)



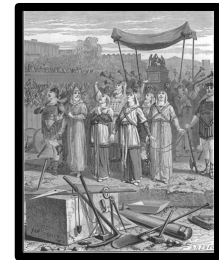
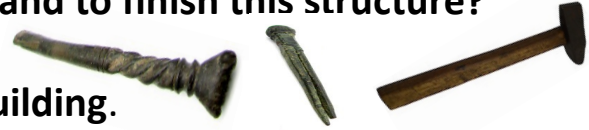
God was watching over the elders, and the elders encouraged God’s work until they heard from King Darius I.

Church elders should also encourage the work of the Lord as the King (Jesus) directs.

The secular report correctly mentions the Lord as the “Great God” and makes reference to the diligence of God’s people.

The names of God’s people are often demanded by the secular world to hold believers accountable for their faith.

The names of God’s people are recorded in the Book of Life (Revelation 20:15)



Not the worthiness of the People, but instead, the command of the King

Whose Authority? (Ezra 5:11-17)

¹¹ So they answered us as follows, saying, **'We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth**, and are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and finished.

¹² But **because our fathers provoked the God of heaven to wrath, He handed them over to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this temple and deported the people to Babylon.**



¹³ However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, **King Cyrus issued a decree to rebuild this house of God.**

¹⁴ Also the gold and silver utensils of the house of God which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem and brought them to the temple of Babylon, **King Cyrus took them from the temple of Babylon and they were given to one whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had appointed governor.**

¹⁵ And he said to him, **"Take these utensils, go and deposit them in the temple in Jerusalem, and have the house of God rebuilt in its place."**



¹⁶ Then that Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the house of God in Jerusalem; and from then until now it has been under construction and it is not yet completed.'

¹⁷ And now, **if it pleases the king, let a search be conducted in the king's treasure house, which is there in Babylon, as to whether a decree was issued by King Cyrus to rebuild this house of God in Jerusalem; and let the king send to us his decision concerning this matter."**



The Jews in Jerusalem identify themselves as the servants of God (without mention of the Persian King).

The Jews were honest of the unfaithfulness of their fathers and the judgment of God via Babylon

The Jewish Temple had been demolished and the holy utensils had been removed and relocated to either the Babylonian Temple of Nabu or Marduk (the chief false gods of Babylon).

Cyrus returned the Jewish utensils to Jerusalem with the decree for the Jews to rebuild the House of God and use the utensils for their worship.

The foundation of the altar was laid prior to the foundation of the Temple (Ezra 3:6), and when the Temple foundation was laid, there was joy and weeping (Ezra 3:10-12)

Unlike the first letter for the King to validate the rebellious nature of God's people (Ezra 4:15), now God's people request validation of the salvation by the King and reinstatement to Jerusalem.

These impoverished and weak Israelites continue to believe that their God is the Sovereign Ruler of heaven and earth (Ezra 1:2).

King Cyrus had not wasted much time, but gave the order in the first year after defeating Babylon

Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel might be the same individual or possible different governors of Judah. (Ezra 1:8). Some scholars believe that Sheshbazzar was Zerubbabel's uncle (1 Chronicles 3:10)

Both Sheshbezzar and Zerubbabel are credited with laying the foundations of the Temple. (Haggai 2:18)

Beyond laying a new foundation, some of the old foundation was being repaired (Ezra 4:12)

The King's Command (Ezra 6:1-12)

1 Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was conducted in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon.

2 And in Ecbatana, in the fortress which is in the province of Media, a scroll was found; and the following was written in it: “Memorandum—

3 In the first year of King Cyrus, Cyrus the king issued a decree: ‘Concerning the house of God in Jerusalem, let the temple, the place where sacrifices are offered, be rebuilt, and let its foundations be repaired, its height *being* sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits,

4 with three layers of large stones and one layer of timber.

And the cost is to be paid from the royal treasury.

5 Also the gold and silver utensils of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, are to be returned and brought to their places in the temple in Jerusalem; and you shall put *them* in the house of God.’

6 “Now as for you, Tattenai, governor of the province beyond the Euphrates River, Shethar-bozenai, and your colleagues, the officials of the provinces beyond the River, stay away from there.

7 Leave that work on the house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews rebuild that house of God on its site.

8 Furthermore, I issue a decree concerning what you are to do for these elders of Judah in the rebuilding of that house of God: the full cost is to be paid to those people from the royal treasury out of the taxes of the provinces beyond the Euphrates River, and that without interruption.

9 And whatever is needed, bulls, rams, and lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine, and anointing oil, as the priests in Jerusalem order, *it is to be given to them daily without fail,*

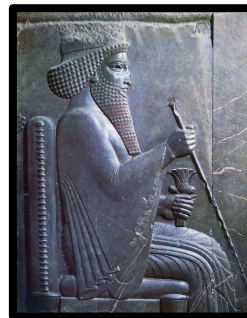
10 so that they may offer acceptable sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the lives of the king and his sons.

11 And I issued a decree that any person who violates this decree, a timber shall be pulled out of his house and he shall be impaled on it; and his house shall be turned into a refuse heap on account of this.

12 May the God who has caused His name to dwell there overthrow any king or people who attempts to change *it*, so as to destroy that house of God in Jerusalem.

I, Darius, have issued *this* decree; *it* is to be carried out with all diligence!”

Darius used the Babylonian library to review the historical precedent



The significant records were not found in Babylon, but in the palace of the King.

The Persian kings spent their winters at Shushan and their summers at Achmetha (Ecbatana) in the provincial Mede palace.

Xenophon's secular document “Cyropaedia” reveals that King Cyrus lived in three locations throughout any given year:

- Babylon in the Winter
- Susa in the Spring
- Ecbatana in the Summer



During the first year of Cyrus reigning over Babylon, he stayed in Ecbatana which was a Median capital situated more north than the other two cities.

The walls were to be slabs of stone with an interior lining of wood. In ancient times, it was a common practice to support cement walls with wooden beams.

This cost of the building of the Temple would be funded by the Lord (royal treasury) until it was “paid in full”

The articles of the Temple had been preserved in Babylon during the destruction of Jerusalem.

“Whatever is needed, bulls, rams, and lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine, and anointing oil, as the priests in Jerusalem order, it is to be given to them daily without fail” (Exodus 6:9)

Items used in Temple service were to be provided without fail.

Seven representative items are listed:

(Ezra 6:9)

1.	Bulls/Ox	Burnt Offering	Servanthood	Ps 144:14; Prov 14:4; Is 1:3; Amos 6:12; 1 Cor 9:9; 1 Tim 5:18
2.	Rams	Burnt Offering	Leader of the Flock	Ex 29:15-24
3.	Lambs	Burnt Offering	Humble Sacrifice	1 Pet 1:19; Jn 1:29, 36, Acts 8:32; Is 40:11, 53:6-7; Rev 5:6
4.	Wheat	Sustenance of Priesthood	Provision & Sacrifice of Christ’s Body and Believers	Job 31:40; Ps 81:16; Mt 3:13, 13:25-30; Jn 12:24; Acts 27:38
5.	Salt	Sustenance of Priesthood	Preservation & Incorruptibility	Lev 2:13; 2 Ki 2:20, 21; Mt 5:13, 9:50; Col 4:6
6.	Wine	Sustenance of Priesthood	Joy	Gen 14:18; Ps 60:3, 104:15; Prov 23:30-31; Jer 51:71; Mt 11:19; Jn 2:3-10; 15:11; Lk 5:37-39; Eph 5:18
7.	Oil	Sustenance of Priesthood	Anointing (of the Spirit)	Lev 2:1-2; Dt 33:24; Ps 23:5; Is 61:1; Lk 4:17; Acts 19:38; 2 Cor 1:21; 1 Jn 2:20, 27

Those who did not know the Word of God were to be taught

The King's Endorses Ezra's Return (Ezra 7:21-28)

²¹ "I myself, King Artaxerxes, issue a decree to all the treasurers who are *in the provinces* beyond the *Euphrates* River, that **whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, may require of you, it shall be done diligently,** ²² up to a hundred talents of silver, a hundred kors of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, a hundred baths of anointing oil, and salt as needed.

²³ **Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, it shall be done with zeal for the house of the God of heaven, so that there will not be wrath against the kingdom of the king and his sons.** ²⁴ We also inform you that it is **not allowed to impose tax, tribute, or toll** on any of the priests, Levites, singers, doorkeepers, temple servants, or *other* servants of this house of God.

²⁵ "And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God which is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges so that they may judge all the people who are *in the province* beyond the *Euphrates* River, that is, all those who know the laws of your God; and you may teach anyone who is ignorant of *them*.

²⁶ And whoever does not comply with the Law of your God and the law of the king, judgment is to be executed upon him strictly, whether for death or for banishment, or for confiscation of property or for imprisonment."

²⁷ Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, who has put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to glorify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem, ²⁸ and has extended favor to me before the king and his counselors and before all the king's mighty officials. **So I was strengthened according to the hand of the LORD my God *that was* upon me, and I gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me.**



The Temple (Church) is exempt from paying taxes

Judicial support for the God's Word

God's Grace
All good things come from the Lord

The King of Persia (Artaxerxes) orders the royal treasures in the Mideast to make funds available to Ezra as he liked.

An amount was to be made available to God's people for five items:
1.Silver (redemption)
2.Wheat 3.Wine 4.Oil
5.Salt (preservative)

Salt would be supplied to God's people without limit. Every offering was made with salt (Leviticus 2:13)

It wasn't Ezra's wisdom, but God's wisdom in him. Judges were to be assigned according to their knowledge of the Word of the Lord instead of personal agendas and subjective opinions.

The civil authority understood that disobedience of God's law brought about "acts of God" and judgment on the nation.

Judgment and punishment would be executed depending on the gravity of the sin; some sins are regarded as more serious by God (James 3:1, Luke 12:48) although all sin is rebellion against God.

Jesus talked about the "greater sin" (John 19:11) and "the least of these commandments" (Matthew 5:19) and "the weightier matters of the law" (Matthew 23:23)