

# Outline of Ezra

Our overview and outline of Ezra is intended to assist in studying God's Word—His letter to us. Look for God's character and discover Him as you journey through the pages of Scripture.

The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther are known as the post-exilic historical books. They describe events after the exile of Judah to Babylon. They are the last of the historical books in the Old Testament. Ezra, a priest, uses the first person in 7:28-9:15 and is therefore thought to be the writer of the book. The close style, approach, and verbal link between Chronicles and Ezra lead many to believe that Ezra wrote Chronicles as well. Ezra records the first and second returns of the Jews to the land of Israel. The first return began with the decree of Cyrus in 538 B.C. In 537 B.C., a group of 42,360 Jews together with 7,337 servants and 200 singers, 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels and 6,720 donkeys traveled to Jerusalem. In 536 B.C., the temple was begun but then was stopped by the order of Artaxerxes. Thereafter, in 520 B.C., Haggai and Zechariah began prophesying and spurred the people to finish the temple (Ezra 5:1). The people did so around 515 B.C. Ezra then returned with a second group of people in 458 B.C.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are extraordinary in that they are the first books, since Genesis, where the term "God" predominates over the term "LORD." In Ezra, "God" is found 97 times and "LORD" 38 times. In Nehemiah, "God" is found 74 times and "LORD" 18 times. Esther mentions neither name of God.

## **Date:**

Events recorded begin in 538 B.C. and continue to around 457 B.C. Ezra journeyed from Babylon to Jerusalem in 458 B.C.

**Divisions:** The book of Ezra may be divided as follows:

## **I. First Return 1-6 (538 B.C. to 515 B.C.)**

- A. Decree of Cyrus 1
- B. List of Returnees 2
- C. Spiritual Service 3
- D. Work on the Temple Stopped 4
- E. Restoration Resumed 5
- F. Decree of Darius 6

## **II. Second Return 7-10**

- A. Decree of Artaxerxes (Artaxerxes I Longimanus) (464-424 B.C.) 7
- B. Journey to Jerusalem 8
- C. Intermarriage with others 9
- D. Dealing with the Wrong Marriages 10

---

**Key Word:** "House of the LORD" (same idea as Chronicles)

69 times in Chronicles; 61 times in Kings, 184 times in all of the Old Testament. The word “house” is found 53 times in Ezra in reference to God’s house.

**Key Passage:** Ezra 7:10

**Key Lesson:** God is Faithful to His people.