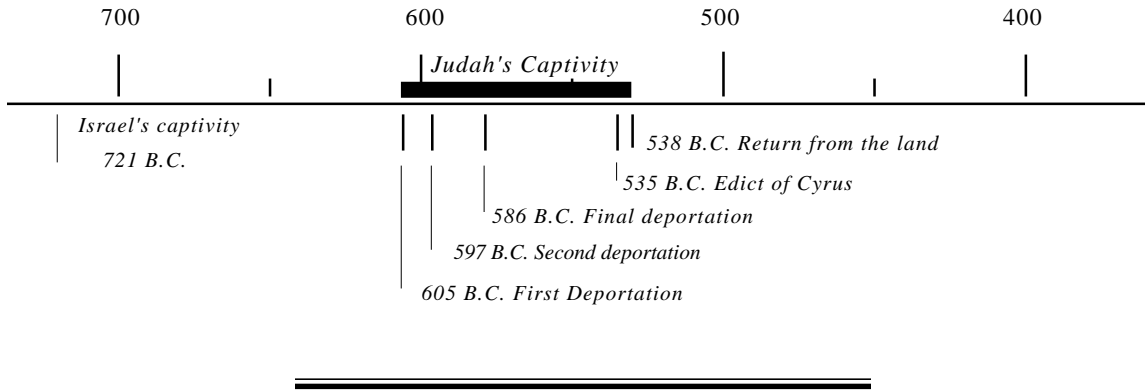


## Bible Synthesis II (Bible Survey)

### Introduction to Ezra

#### TIME LINE OF THE CAPTIVITY:



## EZRA

### *Introduction*

The captivity of Judah took place in three stages:

- In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar took away Jehoiachim and the leading nobles, including Daniel and his three companions (see Daniel 1).
- In 597 B.C. a second invasion by Babylon took place, and Jehoiachin was carried captive along with most of the people of importance, including Ezekiel and the ancestors of Mordecai.
- In 586 B.C. the final destruction of Jerusalem took place when Zedekiah broke his oath of allegiance with Nebuchadnezzar and entered into an alliance with Egypt to break the Babylonian yoke. The city was sacked and burned, and the final deportation took place. All of Israel was again *out of the land*.

Two prophecies had been made affecting the return to the land:

- (1) That Cyrus would reign under God's will, and that he would make the decree to build—Isaiah 44:28—45:13.
- (2) That the captivity would last 70 years—Jeremiah 29:10. This period of 70 years was to fulfill the sabbaths of the land which Israel had neglected to observe for 490 years—II Chronicles 36:21; cf. Leviticus 26:34-43).

**1. Author:**

Ezra —This is uncontested by most scholars.

**2. Addressees:**

Israel of the return —the post-exilic nation.

**3. Date:****(1) Of coverage:**

From the decree of Cyrus, 538 B.C., to the reign of Xerxes (486-465 B.C.). Thus, a period of coverage from 538 B.C. to approximately 465 B.C. or earlier.

**(2) Of writing:**

This is uncertain. However, it is believed that it was completed some time between April of 456 B.C. when the final events of Ezra 10:17-44 took place, and the Summer of 444 B.C. when Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem.

**4. Circumstances:****(1) To record two of the three major movements of the remnant in their return to the land:**

- 1. After the decree of Cyrus in 538 B.C., a small group, led by Zerubbabel (a descendant of David) returned. About 50,000 people were in this return —2:64-65 —42,360 of the congregation plus, 7,337 servants and maids, plus 200 singing men and singing women, a total of 49,879 in all.
- 2. In the 7th year of the reign of Artaxerxes (458 B.C.) another group returned under the leadership of Ezra.
- 3. Then in the 20th year of Artaxerxes (445 B.C.) Nehemiah was given permission to return and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

**(2) To exalt the Word of God in the total life of God's people — religious, social, business and political. The Word of God is exalted in Ezra.****5. Relationship to Other Books:****(1) To Kings and Chronicles:**

It continues the history of Israel following the apostasy and deportation recorded in these books.

**(2) To Exodus:**

Two “exodus” movements are recorded in the Scriptures: The first was the exodus from Egyptian bondage. The second was the return from Babylon. Almost a millennium lies between the two. Both were subjects of prophecy: The first prophesied in Genesis 15:13-14, and the second in Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10.

(3) To Nehemiah:

It records that which precedes the book of Nehemiah.

(4) Haggai and Zechariah wrote during this time (Ezra 5:1).

**6. Theme:**

The Word of the LORD. There are 10 direct references: 1:1; 3:2; 6:14, 18; 7:6, 10, 14; 9:4; 10:3, 5.

**7. Key Passage:**

Ezra 9:4; 10:3 [Memorize Ezra 9:4.]

**Bible Synthesis II**  
(Bible Survey)

**OUTLINE OF EZRA**

- 1. The Return Under Zerubbabel** **—Ezra 1 — 6**
  - (1) The Return of the Exiles — Ezra 1 — 2
  - (2) The Rebuilding of the Temple — Ezra 3 — 6
  
- 2. The Return Under Ezra** **—Ezra 7 — 10**
  - (1) The Return Under Ezra — Ezra 7 — 8
  - (2) The Reformation Under Ezra — Ezra 9 — 10