



Fall of Israel 722	Babylon Ruler Nebuchadnezzar Deportation Judah 1. 587 2. 587 3. 582	Persian Ruler Cyrus II 559-530 Darius I 522-486 Xerxes I (Ahasuerus) 485-465	Artaxerxes I 464-424
	Daniel & Ezekiel	1st Return Zerubbabel (Ezra 1-6) 526 BC	
United Kingdom Saul David Solomon 1040 BC (120 years)	Divided Kingdom Israel – North Judah - South 960 BC	Esther 538 BC	2nd Return Ezra (Ezra 7-10) 457 BC
	70 years exile 606 BC		3rd Return Nehemiah (Neh 1-13) 444 BC

EZRA CHAPTER 1

WELCOME TO PERSIA

God moves History for His people

REFERENCE:
 Trans-Persian Railway ———
 Other Railways ———
 Principal Roads & Tracks ———
 Provincial Boundaries ———
 Lighthouse via lightning ———
 Lighthouse via lightning ———

Miles 0 100 200 300

GOD MOVES HISTORY TO GATHER HIS PEOPLE

Ezra Chapter 1

WELCOME TO PERSIA!

We are in a time in biblical history called the post-exilic period. The last of the Jews were carted off to Babylon in about 586 B.C. But on October 29, 539 B.C., Cyrus came into the city of Babylon and Persia became the Head Knocker of the world.

Persia was very eager to show her people that “the government is for you.” The Persians were ecumenical in their religious policy - they encouraged people to worship in their own way.

Never the less, in the days of Ezra-Nehemiah, Israel was a loser.

Who cares about a postage-stamp size kingdom in the political backwater of the Ancient Near East? Who cares about the people who used to live there?

Answer: The covenant God does! God cares because He has made a promise to gather these losers, and He'll move history on their behalf.

WHOSE MOVING WHO? (1:1)

1. What is driving the Historical events in Ezra 1:1?

2. Does this event (promised in Jer 29:10-14) give us a principle for interpreting events in our own lives (Jer 29:11; Acts 17:24-28)?

TEMPLE BUILDERS - THEN AND NOW (1:2-4)

3. What is the significance of the Temple - Then and Now?

4. Who covers the cost - Then and Now?

GOD’S WILL AND THE DESIRES OF HIS PEOPLE (1:5-6)

Temple worship was at the heart of Jewish life, yet they had to be *stirred up by God* to do it.

 **Discuss** the relationship and harmony between God’s will and our desires.

5. Why are the people gathering?

6. What makes the gathering possible?

THE GOD OF POTS AND PANS (1:7-11)

“Oh, a list of kitchen ware. How pedantic. There’s nothing here for us. Can we please move on?”

But wait. What is the significance of this? Consider:

- Dan 1:1-2 - Nebuchadnezzar pilfers the temple and dedicates them to His god
- Dan 5:1-4 - Belshazzar toasts the supremacy of his gods over our God with our God’s stolen tableware!

 **Discuss** what this inventory of returned goods would say to Israel about their God, and what effect it would have on those whose “house” was robbed.

 God directs history to fulfill His promises. He stirs us, by His word, to gather in joyful obedience. He strengthens our hope by restoring what was ours and He generously provides for our needs through one another.