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Cyrus Decrees: Rebuild the Temple

Ezra 1: 1-11

Compiled by the Chronicler from the Ezra memoirs

(to see link click [Ac](#) - Ezra-Nehemiah From a Jewish Perspective: The Ezra Memoirs).



It had been nearly seventy years since the first deportation of **Jews** by the **Babylonians** to Mesopotamia (see the commentary on [Jeremiah](#), to see link click [Gt](#) - [In the Thirty-Seventh Year of the Exile Jehoiachin was Released from Prison](#)). Though the initial years were surely difficult, the second and third generations of **Jews** born in the exile had adjusted to **their** surroundings. Most had become so comfortable that **they** refused to return to **Judah** when given the opportunity, others prayed for and desired to return.¹² They longed to worship **ADONAI** together and offer sacrifices in **their** own **Temple** according to **their** own **Torah** and traditions. So the chapters of **Ezra** tell the story of the second exodus, one of the most important events in **Jewish** history, and thus in **God's** redemptive plan.¹³

Isaiah prophesied that **Jews** would return and rebuild **the Temple** in **Jerusalem** two-hundred years before **Cyrus** was born (see the commentary on [Isaiah Ia](#) - [The Deliverance by Cyrus the Great](#)). So in 538 BC when **the Babylonian** empire passed from **Belshazzar** to **Cyrus king of Persia**, also known as **Darius the Mede** (see the commentary on [Daniel Ag](#) - [Cyrus and Darius](#)), **the new king's**



first act was to appease **the Jewish population** by reversing the policy of **his** predecessors. The kings of **Babylon** had been in the habit of forcibly removing conquered people and transplanting them in other desolate regions of the empire, or within the walls of **Babylon**. The new policy served the double purpose of removing a dangerous source of hostility from the center of the empire, and dispersing grateful subjects into every quarter of the dominion. **The Jews** were not the only people to benefit, but **they** probably appreciated it more than any other subject nation.