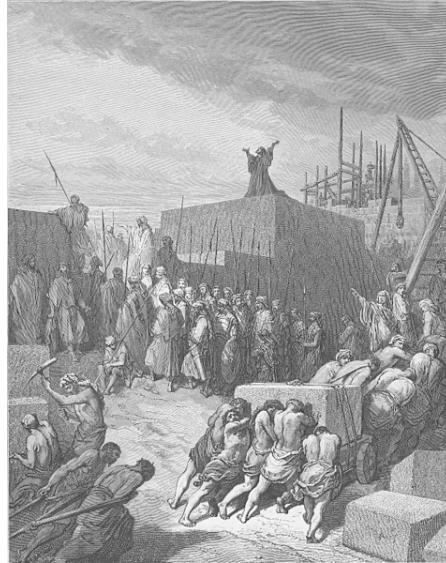


Introduction to the Apocrypha – First Book of Esdras Session Three



The Rebuilding of the Temple is Begun – Doré's English Bible (Gustave Doré – 1866)

The Temple Rebuilt – Part I

A Short History of the Exile

Parallels Between I Esdras and II Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah

The First Book of Esdras (Chapters 5 & 6)

Sources

Short History of the Exile

Many scholars cite 597 BCE as the date of the first deportation, for in that year King Jehoiachin was deposed and apparently sent into exile with his family, his court, and thousands of workers. Others say the first deportation followed the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586; if so, the Jews were held in Babylonian captivity for 48 years. Among those who accept a tradition (Jeremiah 29:10) that the exile lasted 70 years, some choose the dates 608 to 538, others 586 to about 516 (the year when the rebuilt Temple was dedicated in Jerusalem).

Although the Jews suffered greatly and faced powerful cultural pressures in a foreign land, they maintained their national spirit and religious identity. Elders supervised the Jewish communities, and Ezekiel was one of several prophets who kept alive the hope of one day returning home. This was possibly also the period when synagogues were first established, for the Jews observed the Sabbath and religious holidays, practiced circumcision, and substituted prayers for former ritual sacrifices in the Temple. The degree to which the Jews looked upon Cyrus the Great as their benefactor and a servant of their God is reflected at several points in the Hebrew Bible—e.g., at Isaiah 45:1–3, where he is actually called God's anointed.

Sources: *The New Oxford Annotated Apocrypha, New Revised Standard Version, Revised Fourth Edition* – Michael D. Coogan, Marc Z. Brettler, Carol A. Newsom, Editors, Oxford University Press, 2010

Parallels Between I Esdras and II Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah

1 Esdras	Chronicles-Ezra- Nehemiah
1:1 – 33	2 Chronicles 35
1:34 – 58	2 Chronicles 36
2:1 – 15	Ezra 1
2:16 – 30	Ezra 4:7 – 24
3:1 – 5:6	<i>no parallel</i>
5:7 – 46	Ezra 2 (and Nehemiah 7:6 73 ^a)
5:47 – 65	Ezra 3
5:66 – 73	Ezra 4:1 – 5
6:1 – 22	Ezra 4:24 ^b – 5:17
6:23 – 24	Ezra 6:1 – 12
7	Ezra 6:13 – 22
8:1 – 27	Ezra 7
8:28 – 67	Ezra 8
8:68 – 90	Ezra 9
8:91 – 96	Ezra 10:1 – 5
9:1 – 36	Ezra 10:6 – 44
9:37 – 55	Nehemiah 7:73 ^b – 8:13

The First and Second Books of Esdras: The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, Commentary by R.J. Coggins and M. A. Knibb, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne, 1979

Chapter Five

¹After this the heads of ancestral houses were chosen to go up, according to their tribes, with their wives and sons and daughters and their male and female servants and their livestock. ²And Darius sent with them a thousand cavalry to take them back to Jerusalem in safety, with the music of drums and flutes; ³all their kindred were making merry. And he made them go up with them.

⁴ These are the names of the men who went up, according to their ancestral houses in the tribes, over their groups: ⁵ the priests, the descendants of Phinehas son of Aaron; Jeshua son of Jozadak son of Seraiah and Joakim son of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, of the house of David, of the lineage of Phares, of the tribe of Judah, ⁶ who spoke wise words before King Darius of the Persians, in the second year of his reign, in the month of Nisan, the first month.

⁷ These are the Judeans who came up out of their sojourn in exile, whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had carried away to Babylon ⁸ and who returned to Jerusalem and the rest of Judea, each to his own town. They came with Zerubbabel and Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Resaiah, Eneneus, Mordecai, Beelsarus, Aspharasus, Borolias, Rehum, and Baanah, their leaders.

⁹ The number of those of the nation and their leaders: the descendants of Parosh, two thousand one hundred seventy-two. The descendants of Shephatiah, four hundred seventy-two. ¹⁰ The descendants of Arah, seven hundred fifty-six. ¹¹ The descendants of Pahath-moab, of the descendants of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred twelve. ¹² The descendants of Elam, one thousand two hundred fifty-four. The descendants of Zattu, nine hundred forty-five. The descendants of Chorbe, seven hundred five. The descendants of Bani, six hundred forty-eight. ¹³ The descendants of Bebai, six hundred forty-eight. ¹³ The descendants of Bebai, six hundred twenty-three. The descendants of Azgad, one thousand three hundred twenty-two. ¹⁴ The descendants of Adonikam, six hundred sixty-seven. The descendants of Bigvai, two thousand sixty-six. The descendants of Adin, four hundred fifty-four. ¹⁵ The descendants of Ater, namely, of Hezekiah, ninety-two. The descendants of Kilan and Azetas, sixty-seven. The descendants of Azaru, four hundred thirty-two. ¹⁶ The descendants of Annias, one hundred one. The descendants of Arom. The descendants of Bezai, three hundred twenty-three. The descendants of Arsiphurith, one hundred twelve. ¹⁷ The descendants of Baiterus, three thousand five. The descendants of Bethlomon, one hundred twenty-three. ¹⁸ Those from Netophah, fifty-five. Those from Anathoth, one hundred fifty-eight. Those from Bethasmoth, forty-two. ¹⁹ Those from Kiriatharim, twenty-five. Those from Chephirah and Beeroth, seven hundred forty-three. ²⁰ The Chadasans and Ammidians, four hundred twenty-two. Those from Kirama and Geba, six hundred twenty-one. ²¹ Those from Macalon, one hundred twenty-two. Those from Betolio, fifty-two. The descendants of Niphish, one hundred fifty-six. ²² The descendants of the other Calamolalus and Ono, seven hundred twenty-five. The descendants of Jerechus, three hundred forty-five. ²³ The descendants of Senaah, three thousand three hundred thirty.

²⁴ The priests: the descendants of Jedaiah son of Jeshua, of the descendants of Anasib, nine hundred seventy-two. The descendants of Immer, one thousand and fifty-two. ²⁵ The descendants of Pashhur, one thousand two hundred forty-seven. The descendants of Charme, one thousand seventeen.

²⁶ The Levites: the descendants of Jeshua and Kadmiel and Bannas and Sudias, seventy-four. ²⁷ The temple singers: the descendants of Asaph, one hundred twenty-eight. ²⁸ The gatekeepers: the descendants of Shallum, the descendants of Ater, the descendants of Talmon, the descendants of Akkub, the descendants of Hatita, the descendants of Shobai, in all one hundred thirty-nine.

²⁹ The temple servants: the descendants of Esau, the descendants of Hasupha, the descendants of Tabbaoth, the descendants of Keros, the descendants of Sua, the descendants of Padon, the descendants of Lebanah, the descendants of Hagabah, ³⁰ the descendants of Akkub, the descendants of Uthai, the descendants of Ketab, the descendants of Hagab, the descendants of Subai, the descendants of Hana, the descendants of Cathua, the descendants of Geddur, ³¹ the descendants of Jairus, the descendants of Daisan, the descendants of Noeba, the descendants of Chezib, the descendants of Gazera, the descendants of Uzza, the descendants of Phinoe, the descendants of Hasrah, the descendants of Basthai, the descendants of Asnah, the descendants of Maani, the descendants of Nephisim, the descendants of Acuph, the descendants of Hakupha, the descendants of Asur, the descendants of Pharakim, the descendants of Bazluth, ³² the descendants of Mehida, the descendants of Cutha, the descendants of Charea, the descendants of Barkos, the descendants of Serar, the descendants of Temah, the descendants of Neziah, the descendants of Hatipha.

³³ The descendants of Solomon's servants: the descendants of Assaphioth, the descendants of Peruda, the descendants of Jaalah, the descendants of Lozon, the descendants of Isdael, the descendants of Shephatiah, ³⁴ the descendants of Agia, the descendants of Pochereth-hazzebaim, the descendants of Sarothie, the descendants of Masiah, the descendants of Gas, the descendants of Addus, the descendants of Subas, the descendants of Apherra, the descendants of Barodis, the descendants of Shaphat, the descendants of Allon.

³⁵ All the temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants were three hundred seventy-two.

³⁶ The following are those who came up from Tel-melah and Tel-harsha, under the leadership of Cherub, Addan, and Immer, ³⁷ though they could not prove by their ancestral houses or lineage that they belonged to Israel: the descendants of Delaiah son of Tobiah, and the descendants of Nekoda, six hundred fifty-two.

³⁸ Of the priests the following had assumed the priesthood but were not found registered: the descendants of Habaiah, the descendants of Hakkoz, and the descendants of Jaddus who had married Agia, one of the daughters of Barzillai, and was called by his name. ³⁹ When a search was made in the register and the genealogy of these men was not found, they were excluded from serving as priests. ⁴⁰ And Nehemiah and Attharias told them not to share in the holy things until a high priest should appear wearing Urim and Thummim.

⁴¹ All those of Israel, twelve or more years of age, besides male and female servants, were forty-two thousand three hundred sixty; their male and female servants were seven thousand three hundred thirty-seven; there were two hundred forty-five musicians and singers. ⁴² There were four hundred thirty-five camels, seven thousand thirty-six horses, two hundred forty-five mules, and five thousand five hundred twenty-five donkeys.

⁴³ Some of the heads of families, when they came to the temple of God that is in Jerusalem, vowed that, to the best of their ability, they would erect the house on its site ⁴⁴ and that they would give to the sacred treasury for the work a thousand minas of gold, five thousand minas of silver, and one hundred priests' vestments.

⁴⁵ The priests, the Levites, and some of the people settled in Jerusalem and its region and the temple singers, the gatekeepers, and all Israel in their towns.

⁴⁶ When the seventh month came and the Israelites were all in their own homes, they gathered with a single purpose in the square before the first gate toward the east. ⁴⁷ Then Jeshua son of Jozadak, with his fellow priests, and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, with his kinsmen, took their places and prepared the altar of the God of Israel, ⁴⁸ to offer burnt offerings upon it, in accordance with the directions in the book of Moses the man of God. ⁴⁹ And some joined them from the other nations of the land. And they erected the altar in its place, for all the peoples of the land were hostile to them and were stronger than they, and they offered sacrifices at the proper times and burnt offerings to the Lord morning and evening. ⁵⁰ They kept the Festival of Booths, as it is commanded in the law, and offered the proper sacrifices every day ⁵¹ and thereafter the regular offerings and sacrifices on Sabbaths and at new moons and at all the consecrated feasts. ⁵² And all who had made any vow to God began to offer sacrifices to God, from the new moon of the seventh month, though the temple of God was not yet built. ⁵³ They gave money to the masons and the carpenters and food and drink and carts to the Sidonians and the Tyrians to bring cedar logs from Lebanon and convey them in rafts to the harbor of Joppa, according to the decree that they had in writing from King Cyrus of the Persians.

⁵⁴ In the second year after their coming to the temple of God in Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak made a beginning, together with their kindred and the Levitical priests and all who had come back to Jerusalem from exile, ⁵⁵ and they laid the foundation of the temple of God on the new moon of the second month in the second year after they came to Judea and Jerusalem. ⁵⁶ They appointed the Levites who were twenty or more years of age to have charge of the work of the Lord. And Jeshua arose and his sons and kindred and his brother Kadmiel and the sons of Jeshua Emadabun and the sons of Joda son of Iliadun, with their sons and kindred, all the Levites, pressing forward the work on the house of God with a single purpose.

So the builders built the temple of the Lord. ⁵⁷ And the priests stood arrayed in their vestments, with musical instruments and trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of

Asaph, with cymbals, praising the Lord and blessing him, according to the directions of King David of Israel; ⁵⁸ they sang hymns, giving thanks to the Lord, "For his goodness and his glory are forever upon all Israel." ⁵⁹ And all the people sounded trumpets and shouted with a great shout, praising the Lord for the erection of the house of the Lord. ⁶⁰ Some of the Levitical priests and heads of ancestral houses, old men who had seen the former house, came to the building of this one with outcries and loud weeping, ⁶¹ while many came with trumpets and a joyful noise, ⁶² so that the people could not hear the trumpets because of the weeping of the people.

For the multitude sounded the trumpets loudly, so that the sound was heard far away, ⁶³ and when the enemies of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin heard it, they came to find out what the sound of the trumpets meant. ⁶⁴ They learned that those who had returned from exile were building the temple for the Lord God of Israel. ⁶⁵ So they approached Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the heads of the ancestral houses and said to them, "We will build with you. ⁶⁶ For we obey your Lord just as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of King Esar-haddon of the Assyrians, who brought us here." ⁶⁷ But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the heads of the ancestral houses in Israel said to them, "You have nothing to do with us in building the house for the Lord our God, ⁶⁸ for we alone will build it for the Lord of Israel, as Cyrus, the king of the Persians, has commanded us." ⁶⁹ But the nations of the land besieged those in Judea, cut off their supplies, and hindered their building, ⁷⁰ and by plots and demagoguery and uprisings they prevented the completion of the building as long as King Cyrus lived. They were kept from building for two years, until the reign of Darius.

Chapter Six

¹ Now in the second year of the reign of Darius, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo prophesied to the Jews who were in Judea and Jerusalem; they prophesied to them in the name of the Lord God of Israel. ² Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak began to build the house of the Lord that is in Jerusalem, with the help of the prophets of the Lord who were with them.

³ At the same time Sisinnus the governor of Syria and Phoenicia and Sathrabuzanes and their associates came to them and said, ⁴ "By whose order are you building this house and this roof and finishing all the other things? And who are the builders who are finishing these things?" ⁵ Yet the elders of the Jews were dealt with kindly, for the providence of the Lord was over the captives; ⁶ they were not prevented from building until word could be sent to Darius concerning them and a report made.

⁷ A copy of the letter that Sisinnus the governor of Syria and Phoenicia and Sathrabuzanes and their associates the local rulers in Syria and Phoenicia wrote and sent to Darius:

“To King Darius, greetings. ⁸ Let it be fully known to our lord the king that, when we went to the region of Judea and entered the city of Jerusalem, we found the elders of the Jews, who had been in exile, building in the city of Jerusalem a great new house for the Lord, of hewn stone, with costly timber laid in the walls. ⁹ These operations are going on rapidly, and the work is prospering in their hands and being completed with all splendor and care. ¹⁰ Then we asked these elders, ‘At whose command are you building this house and laying the foundations of this structure?’ ¹¹ In order that we might inform you in writing who the leaders are, we questioned them and asked them for a list of the names of those who are instigating the disturbance. ¹² They answered us, ‘We are the servants of the Lord who created the heaven and the earth. ¹³ The house was built many years ago by a king of Israel who was great and strong, and it was finished. ¹⁴ But when our ancestors sinned against the Lord of Israel who is in heaven and provoked him, he gave them over into the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, king of the Chaldeans, ¹⁵ and they pulled down the house and burned it and carried the people away captive to Babylon. ¹⁶ But in the first year that Cyrus reigned over the region of Babylonia, King Cyrus wrote that this house should be rebuilt. ¹⁷ And the holy vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the house in Jerusalem and stored in his own temple, these King Cyrus took out again from the temple in Babylon, and they were delivered to Zerubbabel and Sheshbazzar the governor ¹⁸ with the command that he should take all these vessels back and put them in the temple at Jerusalem and that this temple of the Lord should be rebuilt on its site. ⁹ Then this Sheshbazzar, after coming here, laid the foundations of the house of the Lord that is in Jerusalem. Although it has been in process of construction from that time until now, it has not yet reached completion.’²⁰ Now therefore, O king, if it seems wise to do so, let search be made in the royal archives of our lord the king that are in Babylon; ²¹ if it is found that the building of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem was done with the consent of King Cyrus, and if it is approved by our lord the king, let him send us directions concerning these things.”

²² Then Darius commanded that search be made in the royal archives that were deposited in Babylon. And in Ecbatana, the fortress that is in the region of Media, a scroll was found in which this was recorded: ²³ “In the first year of the reign of King Cyrus, he ordered the building of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, where they sacrifice with fire continuously: ²⁴ its height sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits, with three courses of hewn stone and one course of new native timber; the cost to be paid from the treasury of King Cyrus; ²⁵ and the holy vessels of the house of the Lord, both of gold and of silver, that Nebuchadnezzar took out of the house in Jerusalem and carried away to Babylon to be restored to the house in Jerusalem, to be placed where they had been.”

²⁶ So Darius commanded Sisinnus the governor of Syria and Phoenicia and Sathrabuzanes and their associates and those who were appointed as local rulers in Syria and Phoenicia to keep away from the place and to permit Zerubbabel, the servant of the Lord and governor of Judea, and the elders of the Jews to build this house of the Lord on its site. ²⁷ “And I command that it be built completely and that full effort be made to help those who have returned from the exile of Judea until the house of the Lord is finished ²⁸ and that out of the tribute of Coelestria and Phoenicia a portion be scrupulously given to these men, that is, to Zerubbabel the governor, for sacrifices to the Lord, for bulls and rams and lambs, ²⁹ and likewise wheat and salt and wine and oil, regularly every year, without quibbling, for daily use as the priests in Jerusalem may indicate, ³⁰ in order that libations may be made to the Most High God for the king and his children and prayers be offered for their lives.”

³¹ He commanded that if anyone should transgress or nullify any of the things herein written, a beam should be taken out of the house of the perpetrator, who then should be impaled upon it and all property forfeited to the king.

³² “Therefore may the Lord, whose name is there called upon, destroy every king and nation that shall stretch out their hands to hinder or damage that house of the Lord in Jerusalem.

³³ “I, King Darius, have decreed that it be done with all diligence as here prescribed.”

The First and Second Books of Esdras: The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, Commentary by R.J. Coggins and M. A. Knibb, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne, 1979

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