

Ezra/Nehemiah
Community Presbyterian Church
Lesson One

1 Tanach

Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

Nevi'im (Prophets): Joshua, Judges, I & II Samuel, I & II Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Ketuvim (Writings): Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra/Nehemiah, I & II Chronicles

2. Time Line

Destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians 586 BCE

Cyrus the Great ruled Persia 559- 529 BCE

Persians Conquered Babylonia 539 BCE

First wave of return 538 BCE

Completion of the Temple 516/15 BCE

Other kings ruled Persia 529-464

Artaxerxes I ruled Persia 464-424 BCE

Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in 458 BCE

Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem in 445 BCE

3. Contents of the books

Ezra 1-6 Early waves of return to Jerusalem

Ezra 7- 10 Ezra's narrative

Nehemiah 1-7 Nehemiah's narrative

Nehemiah 8 Ceremony of rededication led by Ezra and Nehemiah

Nehemiah 9 Sacred History

Nehemiah 10 -13 Nehemiah's narrative continues

4. Psalm 137

By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, as we remembered Zion.

² On the willows there, we hung up our lyres.

³ For there our captors required of us songs, and our tormentors, mirth, saying,
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"

⁴ How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?

⁵ If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand lose its cunning!

⁶ Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!

5. Jeremiah 29:10

For thus says the Eternal: When Babylon's seventy years are over, I will take note of you and I will fulfill to you My promise of favor-to bring you back to this place.

6. Home

Oh, baby don't you want to go
Back to the same old place
Sweet home, Chicago

7. George Carlin

In baseball the object is to go home! And to be safe! - I hope I'll be safe at home!

8. Ezra 1: 2-4

Thus said King Cyrus of Persia: The Eternal God of Heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and has charged me with building Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah Anyone of you of all His people –may his God be with you, and let him go up to Jerusalem that is in Judah and build the House of the Eternal God of Israel the God that is in Jerusalem and all that stay behind wherever he may be living, let the people of his place assist him silver, gold, goods and livestock besides the freewill offering to the House of God that is in Jerusalem.

9. Rashi

He (God) commanded me (Cyrus) through Isaiah the prophet to build for Him the Temple in Jerusalem as it says in the book of Isaiah (44:28-45:1) “He is My shepherd /He shall fulfill all my purposes/He shall say of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be rebuilt’/And to the Temple: ‘You shall be founded again’ Thus said The Eternal to Cyrus, His anointed one-/Whose right hand He has grasped” This had already been conveyed through prophecy by Isaiah.

10. Genesis 12:1

Now the Eternal said unto Abram: 'Go forth your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.

11. Exodus 31:12

And Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron in the night and said: 'Up, depart from among my people, you and the Israelites with you! Go, worship the Eternal, as you have said!