

Wycliffe Associates

Bible Translation Reviewers' Guide

Ezra

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1:1-8

Background: The Book of Ezra is about how the people of Israel returned from Babylon and tried to worship Yahweh again as the law required. To do this they needed to rebuild their temple so they could sacrifice to Yahweh.

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ Cyrus king of Persia proclaimed that Yahweh had appointed him to build a house for him in Jerusalem. This fulfilled the word that Yahweh had given through Jeremiah. [1:1-2]
- ☐ Cyrus proclaimed that whoever was from Yahweh's people could go to Jerusalem, which was in Judah. [1:3]
- ☐ Many of God's people arose to go to Jerusalem, and those around them supported those people with silver, gold, goods, livestock, and freewill offerings for God's house. [1:5-6]
- ☐ Cyrus released objects belonging to Yahweh's house that Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem. [1:7]
- ☐ Cyrus had Mithredath, the treasurer, count the objects for Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. [1:8]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. Who did Yahweh appoint to build a house for Yahweh in Jerusalem? [1:2]
Yahweh appointed Cyrus to build a house for Yahweh in Jerusalem.
2. Who would provide the supplies for God's house? [1:4]
God's people living as foreigners would provide them the silver, gold, goods, animals, and freewill offerings.
3. Who from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin who were in Persia went to Jerusalem? [1:5]
The heads of the ancestors' clans of Judah and Benjamin, the priests and Levites and everyone whose spirit God stirred to go went to Jerusalem.
4. Where had Nebuchadnezzar put the objects belonging to Yahweh's house? [1:7]
Nebuchadnezzar put the objects in the houses of his own gods.
5. Who counted the objects that had been with Nebuchadnezzar? [1:8]
Mithredath, the treasurer, counted.

Comment Section:

3:1-6

Background: The priests and Levites, the temple singers and gatekeepers, and those assigned to serve in the temple returned to Judah.

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ Seven months after returning, the people gathered in Jerusalem. [3:1]
- ☐ Jeshua, son of Jozadak, and his brothers the priests, and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his brothers, built the altar of the God of Israel. [3:2-3]
- ☐ The men of Israel were terrified because of the people of the land. [3:3]
- ☐ Jeshua, the priests, and Zerubbabel offered daily and monthly burnt offerings, offerings for all fixed feasts of Yahweh, along with freewill offerings. [3:4-6]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. Why did Jeshua, his brothers the priests, Zerubbabel, and his brothers build the altar of the God of Israel? [3:2]
They built the altar to offer burnt offerings as written in the Law of Moses.
2. Why do you think these men established the altar on its stand? [3:3]
They dreaded the people of the land, and so perhaps they established the altar so they could sacrifice to Yahweh, and he would protect them.
3. How often did Jeshua, his brothers the priests, Zerubbabel, and his brothers offer burnt offerings to Yahweh? [3:3-5]
They offered burnt offerings to Yahweh twice daily, for the new moons, and for all the fixed feasts of Yahweh, and also when people made freewill offerings.
4. Why do you think the altar was not set up in the temple? [3:6]
The temple had not yet been founded.

Comment Section:

3:10-13

Background: In the second month of the second year after the return to Jerusalem, Levites who were twenty years and older began to oversee the building of the house of Yahweh.

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ When the temple foundation had been laid, the priests and Levites were able to stand with their trumpets and cymbals and praise Yahweh. [3:10]
- ☐ When the builders laid a foundation for Yahweh's temple, the priests, Levites, and chief patriarchs wept loudly and all the people cried out with a great shout of joy in praise of Yahweh. [3:11-12]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. When the builders laid a foundation for Yahweh's temple, how did the builders and the Levites praise Yahweh? [3:10-11]
The builders and the Levites praised Yahweh with cymbals and with singing.
2. How did the people respond when the builders laid a foundation for Yahweh's temple? [3:11]
All the people cried out with a great shout of joy in praise of Yahweh because the temple's foundations had been laid.
3. How did those who had seen the first temple respond when this temple's foundations were laid? [3:12]
Those who had seen the first temple wept loudly.
4. Why do you think the sound was heard from far away? [3:13]
Because the people were both shouting joyfully and weeping loudly.

Comment Section:

4:1-5

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ When some enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the people who had been exiled were now building a temple for Yahweh, they asked to help build the temple. [4:1-2]
- ☐ Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the heads of their ancestors' clans refused to let the enemies help build the temple. [4:3]
- ☐ The people of the land made the people of Judah afraid and did other things to oppose the building of the temple. [4:4-5]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. What did some enemies of Judah and Benjamin ask to do? [4:1-2]
The enemies of Judah and Benjamin asked to help build the temple.
2. Why did these enemies say they wanted to help? [4:2]
They said they worshiped the Judeans' God and sacrificed to him since the days when the king of Assyria brought them to that place.
3. Who did Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the heads of their ancestors' clans say would build for Yahweh, the God of Israel? [4:3]
The returning exiles would build the house for their God, just as Cyrus of Persia commanded.
4. How did the enemies interfere with the work on the temple? [4:4-5]
The enemies made the Judeans' hands weak; they made the Judeans afraid to build, and they bribed counselors to frustrate their plans.

Comment Section:

5:1-5

Background: After Artaxerxes became king of Persia, the enemies of Israel sent letters to the king that urged him to stop the building of the temple. The work on the house of God stopped until the second year of Darius, who was the king after Artaxerxes.

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua, son of Jozadak, began to build the house of God in Jerusalem with the prophets who supported them. [5:1-2]
- ☐ The governor of the Province Beyond the River and his associates tried to stop the building of the house of God, but with God's help their enemies did not stop them. [5:3-5]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. Who prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem? [5:1]
The prophets Haggai and Zechariah prophesied.
2. Who rose up and began to build the house of God in Jerusalem? [5:2]
Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua, son of Jozadak, rose up and began to build the house of God in Jerusalem with the prophets who supported them.
3. Why do you think the governor of the Province Beyond the River was not able to stop the building of the house of God in Jerusalem? [5:3-5]
God was watching over the Jewish elders.
4. What were the Jewish elders waiting for? [5:5]
The Jewish elders were waiting for a decree to come from Darius.

Comment Section:

5:11-17

Background: Tattenai, governor of the Province Beyond the River, sent a written report to King Darius, letting him know that work on the house of Yahweh was ongoing.

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ Tattenai, governor of the Province Beyond the River, and his associates reported to King Darius how the Jews answered them when asked who issued a decree to rebuild the house of Yahweh. [5:11-15]
- ☐ The house of God in Jerusalem was being constructed but was not yet complete. [5:16]
- ☐ Tattenai and his associates requested that the king investigate in the house of archives in Babylon if King Cyrus issued a decree to build the house of God in Jerusalem. [5:17]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. Why were the Jews were rebuilding the house of God in Jerusalem? [5:11-12]
Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the first house of God in Jerusalem.
2. When did the God of heaven give the Jewish people into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon? [5:12]
Yahweh did this when their ancestors enraged him.
3. What did Cyrus decree in the first year he was king of Babylon? [5:13]
Cyrus issued a decree to rebuild the house of God.
4. What items did King Cyrus give to Sheshbazzar to put in the temple in Jerusalem? [5:14-15]
The gold and silver objects that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the house of God.
5. What did Tattenai and his associates request of the king? [5:17]
They requested that the king investigate the house of archives in Babylon to see if King Cyrus issued a decree to build the house of God in Jerusalem.

Comment Section:

6:3-4

Background: King Darius issued a decree to search the archives, and a scroll with the decree of King Cyrus was found.

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ King Cyrus had decreed that the house of God in Jerusalem be rebuilt. [6:3]
- ☐ The decree told how the house of God was to be rebuilt and who was to pay for the rebuilding. [6:4]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. How did the scroll of king Cyrus describe how the house of God was to be built? [6:3]
The house of God was to be sixty cubits high and sixty cubits wide.
2. Why did king Cyrus write about the house of God that was to be rebuilt? [6:3]
The house of God was to be rebuilt as a place for sacrifice.
3. Who was to pay the cost of rebuilding the house of God? [6:4]
The king's house was to pay the cost of rebuilding the house of God.

Comment Section:

6:13-15

Background: The decree of King Darius ordered Tattenai and his associates in the Province Beyond the River to keep away from those rebuilding the house of God and leave them alone.

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ Because of the decree sent by Darius the king, Tattenai the governor and his associates did everything that the king had ordered. [6:13]
- ☐ The buildings were completed according to the decrees of the God of Israel and of the kings of Persia. [6:14]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. What were the Jewish elders able to accomplish? [6:14]
They completed their buildings according to the decree of the God of Israel and by the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes the king of Persia.
2. How do you think the prophets Haggai and Zechariah helped the Jewish elders build and prosper? [6:14]
Perhaps their prophesying encouraged the Jewish elders because they knew the decrees of God and the kings.
3. In what year was the house of God completed? [6:15]
It was completed in the sixth year of King Darius' reign.

Comment Section:

6:19-22

Background: The Israelites celebrated the dedication of the house of God, and priests and Levites were assigned to work divisions for the service of God in Jerusalem.

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ The people of Israel who had been in exile joyfully celebrated the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. [6:19-22]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. What did those who had been in exile celebrate on the fourteenth day of the first month? [6:19]
They celebrated the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month.
2. For whom did the priests and Levites slaughter the Passover sacrifices? [6:20]
For all those who had been in exile, including themselves.
3. Who did those who had returned from exile seek? [6:21]
They sought Yahweh, the God of Israel.
4. Why did the Jews joyfully celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread? [6:22]
Yahweh had brought them joy and turned the heart of Assyria's king to strengthen their hands in the work of God's house.

Comment Section:

7:8-10

Background: Ezra was a skilled scribe in the law of Moses that Yahweh had given Israel. He was the descendent of Aaron, who was the first high priest in Israel.

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ Ezra arrived in Jerusalem safely because the good hand of God was with him. [7:8-9]
- ☐ Ezra came to Jerusalem to carry out and teach the statutes and decrees of the law of Yahweh to the Israelites. [7:10]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. Who arrived in Jerusalem in the seventh year of the king of Persia? [7:8]
Ezra arrived in Jerusalem.
2. Why did Ezra arrive in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month? [7:9]
The good hand of God was with him.
3. What do you think Ezra's purpose was for going to Jerusalem? [7:10]
Ezra set in his heart to carry out and teach the Israelites the statutes and decrees of the law of Yahweh.

Comment Section:

9:1-4

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ The officials approached Ezra and told him that the people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites had not separated themselves from the peoples of the land. [9:1]
- ☐ The people of Israel, priests, and Levites had married their daughters and sons to the peoples of other lands. [9:2]
- ☐ Ezra was devastated when he heard the report about the people of Israel. [9:3]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. In what way did the people of Israel not separate themselves from the people of other lands? [9:1-2]
They married some of their daughters and sons to the peoples of other lands.
2. Who were the first ones to be unfaithful? [9:2]
The first ones who were unfaithful were the Jewish leaders and officials.
3. What did Ezra do when he heard that the Jewish leaders and officials had been unfaithful to Yahweh? [9:3]
Ezra tore his clothing and his robe, pulled some hair from his head and beard, and sat down.
4. What did those who trembled at the words of God do? [9:4]
They gathered to Ezra as he sat until the evening offering.

Comment Section:

10:1-4

Background: Ezra knelt down before Yahweh, confessed the guilt of the people, and pleaded for God's mercy.

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ Ezra and the people wept because of the people's sins of unfaithfulness. [10:1-2]
- ☐ Shekariah son of Jehiel said to Ezra that there was still hope for Israel. [10:2]
- ☐ Shekariah said that the people of Israel needed to make a covenant with God to send out all the foreign women and their children. [10:3]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. What did Ezra do as he prayed and confessed? [10:1]
He wept and threw himself down before God's house.
2. How did Shekariah encourage Ezra? [10:2]
Shekariah said that despite Israel's sin of marrying foreign women, there was still hope for Israel.
3. What covenant did Shekariah say the Israelites should make? [10:3]
Shekariah said they should make a covenant with their God to send out all the foreign women and their children according to the law.
4. Who was to carry out the command to send out all the foreign women and their children? [10:4]
Ezra was to arise and carry out this thing, and the people would be with him.

Comment Section: