

timeline and events - Ezra

chapter 1 – Cyrus (king of Persia) gives a decree (**decree #1**), 539-8B.C.

- this was when Cyrus conquered Babylon, and thus was able to release the Jews captive there
 - [the other option was 559B.C. (the first year of Cyrus' rule over Persia, 1:1) but he hadn't conquered Babylon yet, so how could he release the Jews?]

chapter 3 – the Jews, back in Jerusalem, started to build the temple

chapter 4 – local enemies interfered w/ the building around Jerusalem

- this interference lasted from Cyrus even until Darius (4:5)
- they wrote a letters against Jerusalem during King Ahasuerus (4:6) and during Artaxerxes (4:7-8, 11, 23)
 - these are enemies saying the city (Jerusalem) and/or its walls are being built
 - note: **this letter is OUT OF CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER** (Ahasuerus's letter is not in Bible but Artaxerxes is). *We were in the reign of Darius at this point in the Bible, but this letter is interjected into the narrative.*
- but the city is/was being rebuilt (4:12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21)
 - so this building of the city would apply during the time of Artaxerxes, not Cyrus or Darius, as chapter 4 is out of order and Artaxerxes is specifically mentioned here.
 - Artaxerxes actually tells them to STOP the building until he gives the command to proceed (4:21), and the work on the temple was discontinued until 2nd year of Darius (4:24)
- *again, all this chapter 4 stuff with Artaxerxes is happening in a future time (from beyond chapter 4 and in the reign of Artaxerxes).*

chapter 5 – back to Darius

- the Jews were building the temple (5:2)
- Now a letter was sent to Darius (5:5-7)
- the enemies ask for a search in the Babylonian records for Cyrus' decree (5:17)

chapter 6 – more Darius

- Darius responded (6:1) & found Cyrus' decree (v.2-3)

- Darius tells the enemies of the Jews--the interferers--to 'back off' and let them work (**DECREE #2**, 6:6-8,11)
 - he commands the enemies and obstructors of God's work in Jerusalem to actually help pay the Jews' expenses (6:8-9)!
- Jews continue rebuilding (6:14) and the temple was finished (6:15)

chapter 7 – Artaxerxes!

- Artaxerxes (**DECREE #3** 7:12-13) was for funding (chapter 7), but not a decree specifically saying "go and build"
 - but with the evidence in chapter 4, they were already building the city (meanwhile the details of the other 2 decrees were related to building the temple only, not the city: "from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem", Daniel 9:25).

chapter 9 – later...

- Ezra prays saying that God has given "repair the house of our God, to rebuild its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem" (9:9)
 - so the command to rebuild must have already been given by now

Nehemiah chapter 2 – later in Nehemiah

- Nehemiah seeks approval from Artaxerxes (**ANOTHER DECREE**)