

THE BOOK OF EZRA.

INTRODUCTION.

The Book of Ezra, written by the famous priest and scribe whose name it bears, covers a period of about eighty years, namely, that following the exile of the Jews, about 538 to 458 B. C. During this period six kings of Persia occupied the throne and were the sovereigns of the Jews: Cyrus the Great, his son Cambyses, the usurper Pseudo-Smerdis, Darius I, son of Hystaspes, Xerxes I (known also as Ahasuerus), and Artaxerxes Longimanus. The book records the fulfillment of God's promise to bring His people back to Palestine. The book is divided into two distinct parts, the first part, chapters 1 to 6, telling of the return of the exiles under Zerubbabel and Joshua in the year 536, and the second, chapters 7 to 10, relating the coming of the returned exiles, more than 40,000 Jews settled in Palestine once more, especially in and near Jerusalem; under Ezra, eighty years later, a second band returned to the land of their fathers. During the period covered by this book the Temple had been rebuilt and the true worship restored in Jerusalem. The exiles were from this time forth known as Jews. They did not form an independent nation, but their country was a province of Persia, until the entire empire was conquered by Alexander the Great, 331 B. C., when they, of course, passed under the jurisdiction of Macedonia, or Greece. It should be noted, finally, that the captivity of the Jews had at last cured them of their idolatry, for there are few evidences of idolatry or of false worship in Judea after the exile.

[\(Kretzmann's Popular Commentary\)](#)