



The book of Ezra

DESCRIPTON SHEET

Author

According to rabbinic tradition, Ezra is probably the author of this text, which bears his name. It is almost universally accepted that Ezra is the author of a group of books such as 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. Originally, these books formed a single group. It was only later that they were separated as a result of the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek and Latin.

Date

This book belongs to the post-exile period of the people of Israel. According to some, it was written between 460 and 440 BC. Others place it between 350 and 300 B.C. However, despite this difference in date, it is almost unanimously accepted that this text was written during the period following the exile of the people of Israel to Babylon.

Main theme and target audience

This text is addressed to the rest of the people of Israel returning from the Babylonian exile. The author tells the story of the return of the people from captivity. However, the focus is on the rebuilding of the temple, a crucial place for the priestly function as described in the Law of Moses. The priestly component is so important that the author presents a long genealogy in order to establish the long tradition of the priestly function since Aaron. In fact, the rebuilding of the temple was a way of establishing the question of the worship of God and how it was to be done.

Outline of the book

1. The decree of king Cyrus and the first return of the people. (Ez. 1 :1 – 2 :70)
2. Reconstruction and dedication of the Temple. (Ez. 3 :1 – 6 :22)
3. The second return. (Ez. 7:1 – 10:44)