



The Ezra-Nehemiah narrative presents selected events from within two periods of 20 and 30 years respectively, with these two periods separated by almost 60 years. The period of time covered by the story is about 112 years, including narrated events in 23 years and gaps amounting to 89 years.¹

Cyrus (550-530)

Cambyses (530-522)

Darius I (521-486)

Ahasuerus/Xerxes (486-465)

Artaxerxes (464-424)

Darius II (423-404)

Ezra 4:1-5 is set in c. 437 and following (2d year after return 3:8).²

Ezra 4:6 is set sometime in 486 (1st year of Ahasuerus).

Ezra 4:7-23 is set sometime in 464-445 (before the 20th year of the rule of Artaxerxes Neh 1:1; 2:1).

Ezra 4:24-6:13 is set in c. 520 (the 2d year of Darius when Haggai and Zechariah ministered, 5:1; Hag 1:1; Zech 1:1).

Ezra 6:14 is a panoramic retrospective from 539 to 445, especially highlighting the decrees of Cyrus (539, see 1:2ff; 6:3ff), Darius (520, see 6:6ff), and Artaxerxes (445, see Neh 2:7, 8).

Ezra 6:15-18 is set on third of Adar (Feb-March) in the sixth year of the rule of Darius (515)

Ezra 6:19-22 is set in the first month (Nisan/March-April), Passover 515.

¹ For discussion of dating Ezra-Neh as a whole, see Japhet, “Periodization between History and Ideology II,” 416-31, esp. 420-22. Japhet works through some of this in more detail in “Composition and Chronology in the Book of Ezra-Nehemiah,” in *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah*, 245-67. Also see Gary Knoppers, “Periodization in Ancient Israelite Historiography: Three Case Studies,” in *Periodisierung und Epochenbewusstsein im Alten Testament und in seinem Umfeld* (eds. Josef Wiesehöfer and Thomas Krüger; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012), 132-37 (121-45); on the dates cited here, see Knoppers, 133, 134, esp. nn. 40, 41; Knoppers uses the approximate dates 428-426 (133, n. 40) to allow some time for the problems of Neh 13:4-31 to arise after Nehemiah returned to Artaxerxes in 433 (13:6), yet elsewhere he says 430 is the approximate end of the second mission (see 134, n. 41). The symmetry of the two pairs of leaders is appealing, yet it does not account for Sheshbazzar. For a convenient listing of all dates in Ezra-Nehemiah along with summary of the major issues, see Herbert H. Klement, “Rhetorical, Theological, and Chronological Features of Ezra-Nehemiah,” in *A God of Faithfulness: Essays in Honour of J. Gordon McConville on his 60th Birthday* (eds. Jamie A. Grant, Alison Lo, and Gordon J. Wenham; New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 61-78, esp. 62-67, 75-78.

² For discussion of dating Ezra 4 see my “Dischronological Previews to Shape Historical Narrative Continuity in Ezra 4,” <http://www.scriptureworkshop.com/studies/ezra4.pdf>