

“A SECOND MOSES”

The Book of Ezra

Who wrote The Book of Ezra?

This book was written by Ezra, a Scribe and a priest. He was a descendant of Aaron, the brother of Moses. Chapters 7-10 feature Ezra's own writings. These are known as the "Ezra Memoirs."

How did The Book of Ezra get its name and/or what does that name mean?

Ezra is an Aramaic name that means "help."

When did these events take place?

The events in The Book of Ezra happened between 538 B.C. and 457 B.C.

For more about The Book of Ezra:

See page 404 in the [Fireside Catholic Youth Bible](#).

The next time you hear about someone who has experienced a natural disaster, pay close attention to how many ways it changes their lives. A flood, a tornado or a storm of any kind produces new realities in an instant. On the surface, it might look like just property damage. Even in shock, people tend to accept this kind of loss with words like, "This can all be rebuilt again." But some of the most critical damage might be what we cannot see - mainly the loss of a normal life, the loss of routine. Some families never recover from this and sometimes their relationships don't survive. That's why the personal help they get both physically and psychologically, can be the most important help of all.

Ezra, a Scribe and a Priest who was a descendant of Aaron, the brother of Moses provided that very kind of help to the Jewish community upon their return to Jerusalem. During their 70 years of exile, like a tornado, the Babylonians had destroyed Jerusalem. Even the temple, the most holy place, had been burned to the ground. When the Jews were allowed to return home in 535 B.C., they were already weak at heart. Many had scattered or been absorbed into the society that held them captive. What they saw could have destroyed the nation as a whole.

That's why Ezra and Nehemiah are held in such high esteem in Jewish tradition. Nehemiah took care of rebuilding the structures while Ezra reconstructed the Jewish community. Ezra led the Hebrew people back to the Torah, back to their roots in Scripture. With a devotion to God and a love for his people, it was Ezra who also counseled, and comforted the people through this tragedy. It was Ezra who brought the Hebrews back to normal. It was Ezra who saved the day.

Interesting Fact: Ezra and Nehemiah were a single book in the Hebrew Bible. It wasn't until hundreds of years later that Saint Jerome first set them as two separate books in an English Bible.

Bonus Point: What event caused Ezra to pluck his hair out?