

ISRAEL'S RETURN TO THE LAND (Post EXILE Period)

EZRA; NEHMIAH; ESTHER; HAGGAI; ZECHARIAH; MALACHI

EZRA: Return from Captivity and The Rebuilding of the Temple
(No city "Wall") Ezra 7:21-23

EZRA was a priest - the great grandson of Hilkiah the priest, who 160 years earlier directed king Josiah's reformation
2 Kgs 22:1-13

There were 3 Deportations from the Land to Babylon: 605, 597, & 586 BC.

There were 3 Returns back to the Land:

1. led by Zerubbabel in 538 BC
Ezra 2:2; First year of Cyrus - Ezra 1:1-4; 6:1-5
2. led by Ezra in 458 BC
Ezra 7:1; Reign of Artaxerxes
3. led by Nehemiah in 444 BC
Neh 2:1; again Artaxerxes
(Ezra was a priest - main concern - Rebuild the Temple
Nehemiah was a civil governor - concern - the City Walls)

The Book of Esther occurred between Ezra chapters 6 & 7.
(Kings Name: Ahasuerus; Xerxes)

The Book of Malachi was during Nehemiah's time.
Haggai and Zechariah were during Ezra's time.

QUESTION

WHY would Cyrus have desired to return the Jews to their Land?

POSSIBLE ANSWER:

1. Daniel was alive and active during the reign of Cyrus
Dan 10:1
2. Had Daniel showed Cyrus
Jer 25:11-12; 29:10-11
Isa 44:24-28 esp vs 28; 45:1-7, 13

EZRA - CHAPTER 2

The register of those who returned:

The whole assembly numbered 42,360 plus their servants.

Ezra 2:64-65

When the numbers in the list are added together, the total falls 11,000 short.

QUESTION

Who also went? Who is included in the 11,000?

1. Judah was taken captive to Babylon

1 Chron 9:1

2. Levites; the sons of Benjamin, Ephraim (removed in 722 BC) and Manasseh also went back with the Return

1 Chron 9:1-3

3. When the Returnees were told to separate from their foreign wives, "sons of Israel" are mentioned.

Ezra 10:25

4. also note: Ezra 2:70

6:17

8:35

In New Testament times, the Jews were referred to as "Twelve Tribes".

Lk 22:30; Acts 26:7; James 1:1

Today there are still Twelve Tribes. Rev 7:4-8

EZRA - CHAPTER 3

In the seventh month of the first year of their return, they built an altar and began offering burnt offerings. The foundation of the Temple had not yet been laid. Ezra 3:1-7

These are the ones who came with Zerubbabel Ezra 3:2

1. Darius appointed Zerubbabel governor of the Land

Haggai 1:1-15

2. Zerubbabel was a grandson of Jehoikin who had been deported to Babylon.

1 Chron 3:17-19

In the second year the construction of the Temple began. (A smaller Temple than Solomon's - Ezra 3:12)

Ezra 3:8-13

EZRA - CHAPTER 4

The construction stops on the Temple (not on their own houses) for 15 years

until the reign of Darius I.

EZRA - CHAPTERS 5-6

The Temple is completed, being encouraged by the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah (remember Malachi ministered during Nehemiah's time when the reestablishment of Jerusalem, as a city "with Walls" is the focus. Dan 9:24-27)

EZRA - CHAPTERS 7-8

Between chapters 6 and 7 there is a gap of 60 years.

The Temple was completed in 515 BC and Ezra came to Jerusalem in 458 BC to teach the LAW.

Ezra 7:1-10

Artaxerxes I would have been Queen Esther's stepson.

EZRA - CHAPTERS 9-10

MIXED MARRIAGES

HISTORICAL NOTE: Jewish Tradition - EZRA was:

- 1. the originator of Synagogue Worship**
- 2. President of the "Great Synagogue - a Council consisting of 120 members, organized by Nehemiah in 410 BC.**

It's purpose was the rebuilding of the religious life of the returned captives - all the way down to 275 BC.

It was also believed to have played an important role in gathering, grouping, and restoring the Canonical Books of the Old Testament.