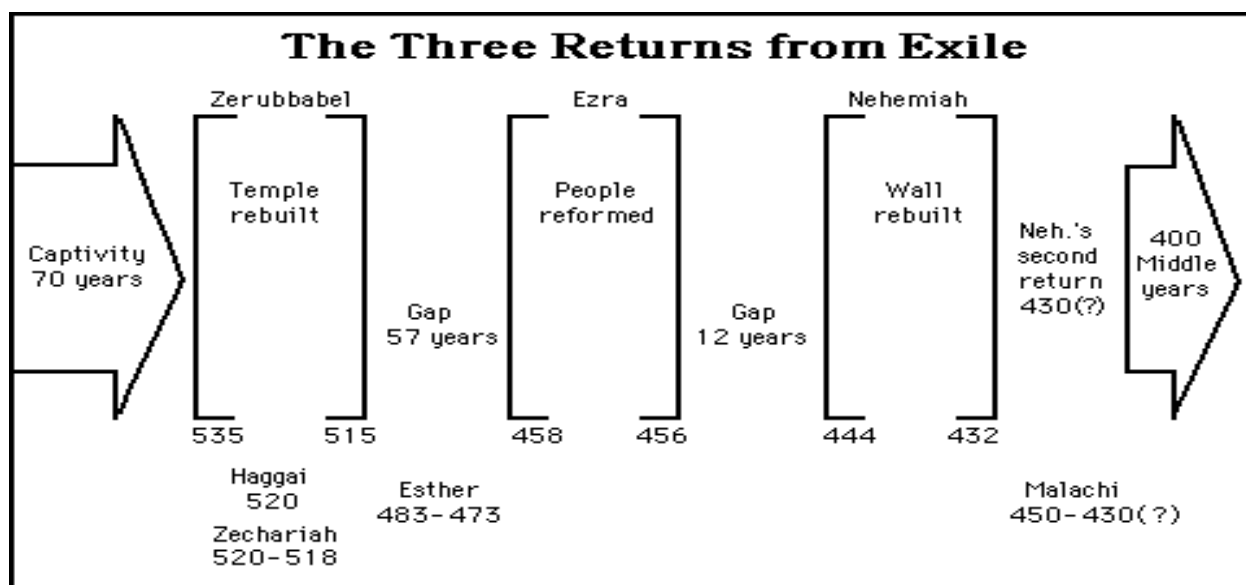


SO WHAT HAPPENED?

What happened to the Jews who returned to Israel?



Chronology of Return

Persian Kings	Biblical Events	Scripture	Dates
Cyrus (559-530) B.C.	Edict of Cyrus for the return. First return of 49,897 exiles, under Zerubbabel (to build the temple). The altar and the temple foundation built	Ezra 1:1-4	538 B.C.
		Ezra 2	538
		Ezra 3:1-4:5	536
Cambyses (530-522)			
Smerdis (522)			
Darius I (521-486)	Haggai prophesied. Zechariah prophesied. The temple completed.	Book of Haggai	520
		Book of Zechariah	520-518
		Ezra 5-6	515
Xerxes (485-465) (Ahasuerus)	Accusation against Judah. Esther became queen.	Ezra 4:6	486
		Esther 2:17	479
Artaxerxes (464-424) I (Artashasta)	Artaxerxes stopped the rebuilding of Jerusalem.	Ezra 4:7-23	ca. 464-458

	<i>Second return</i> of 4,000–5,000 exiles, under Ezra (to beautify the temple and reform the people). <i>Third return</i> of exiles, under Nehemiah (to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem). Nehemiah's second return. Malachi prophesied.	Ezra 7–10	458
		Book of Nehemiah	444
		Nehemiah 13:6	ca. 430
		Book of Malachi	450–430

First Wave: Rebuilding of the Temple

In 538 B.C. the first wave of Jews, numbering about 50,000 Jews, returned to Judah. Their priority was to rebuild the Temple. Within the first seven months they rebuilt the altar and reinstated the sacrificial system. Two years in they laid the Temple's foundation. Then the rebuild stopped.

It stopped because of opposition both without (Ezra 4:4-5) and within (Haggai 1:2-4). Yahweh intervened in two ways. In 520 B.C. King Darius of Persia ended the external persecution and in the same year both prophets, Haggai and Zechariah challenged the people to complete the Temple. The people repented and completed the Temple in 515 B.C. From this first wave of the Return we learn: *Those who seek to serve the Lord will experience opposition from without and from within.*

To overcome opposition from without, take up the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:12-18). To overcome opposition from within, set your mind on things that are above, not on things of earth (Colossians 3:1-4).

Second Wave: Rebuilding the People

The rebuilding of the Temple was not a cure all, however, and the nation of Israel needed to be rebuilt, for they had a serious lack of spiritual maturity and leadership. Into this void of leadership stepped Ezra. He was the Godly leader who YAHWEH would use to bring His people out of idolatry and back into obedience. (Ezra 7:10) He was committed to knowing, obeying, and teaching YAHWEH's Law to the people of Israel. Through his leadership, Israel was indeed set free from her persistent idolatry. However, a different lie grew up in Israel that would slowly but surely draw her away from God, the lie that God's Word was not sufficient. We would be wise to learn from that second wave: *The necessity of Godly leaders who hold to the sufficiency of God's Word.*

Grace News and Needs

VOM Needs for December: Fleece blankets, hairbrushes.

Ramona Pregnancy Care Clinic Adopt-a-Mom: Take an ornament, bless a family.

Family Event: Cookies & Carols, Sunday evening, December 17th, 6:00 – 7:30 PM, Sanctuary.

Christmas Eve Day Schedule: Sunday services at our regularly scheduled times: 8:30 & 10:00 AM.

Office Closed: Monday, December 25th – Friday, December 29th.

Women's Ministry: Journey Thru The Bible starts Jan. 1. See website for details.