

Recap / Overview

Book of Ezra

...ple and the treasures of the
...cials. 19They set fire to God's tem-
...roke down the wall of Jerusalem; they
...all the palaces and destroyed every-
...of value there.
...He carried into exile to Babylon the rem-
...who escaped from the sword, and they

given me all the kingdoms
and he has appointed me to build
ple for him at Jerusalem in Judah.
one of his people among you—may
LORD his God be with him, and let
go up.' ”

Ezra

Cyrus Helps the Exiles to Return

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of the king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing:

...is what Cyrus king of Persia says:
...the LORD, the God of heaven, has
...all the kingdoms of the earth
...appointed me to build a tem-
...Jerusalem in Judah. 3Any-
...among you—may his
...let him go up to

lem. 6All their neighbors assisted them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and stock, and with valuable gifts, in addition to the freewill offerings. 7Moreover, King Cyrus brought out the articles belonging to the temple of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of his god. 8Cyrus king of Persia had them brought by Mithredath the eunuch, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah.

9This was the inventory

gold dishes
silver dishes

Background

- **What were the circumstances that lead to the Book of Ezra?**
 - **II Chronicles 36:15-23**
 - **Jeremiah 25:1-12**
 - **Jeremiah 29:10-15**
 - **Isaiah 44:24-28**
- **Why the Seventy Year Captivity?**
 - **Leviticus 25:2-7**
 - **Leviticus 26:34-45**



Background

■ Timelines

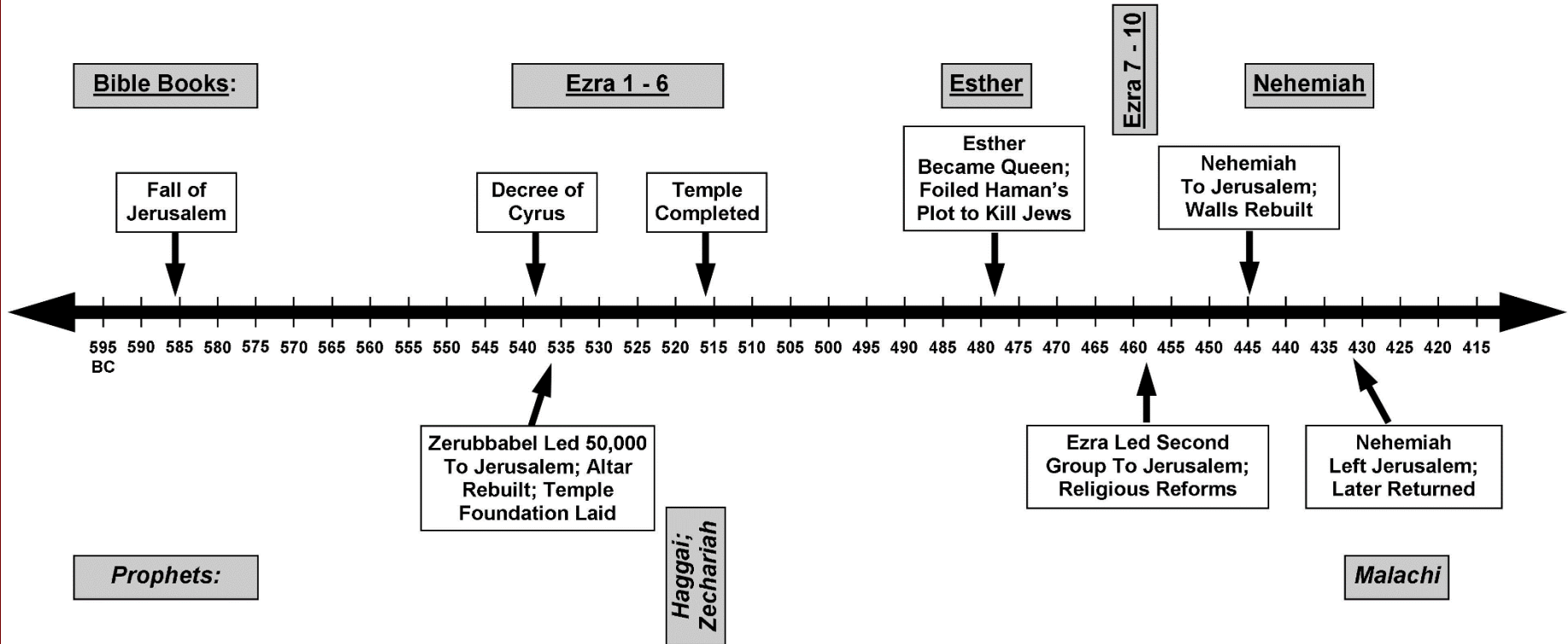
– 3 Waves of Babylonian Captivities

- **605 BC Nebuchadnezzar become King of Babylonian / Babylonians invades Judah**
 - Daniel is taken captive to Babylonian
- **601 BC Judah makes alliance with Egypt and refuses to pay tribute to Babylon**
 - Jeremiah warns Babylonian Invasion to occur
 - Jeremiah is forced to flee to Egypt
- **597 BC Babylon invades Judah**
 - Ezekiel is taken captive to Babylon
- **586 BC Babylon destroys Jerusalem and the Temple**
 - The end of Judah's monarchy
- **539 Babylon falls to the Medes and Persians**
 - King Belshazzar's Feast (Daniel 5) / MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN

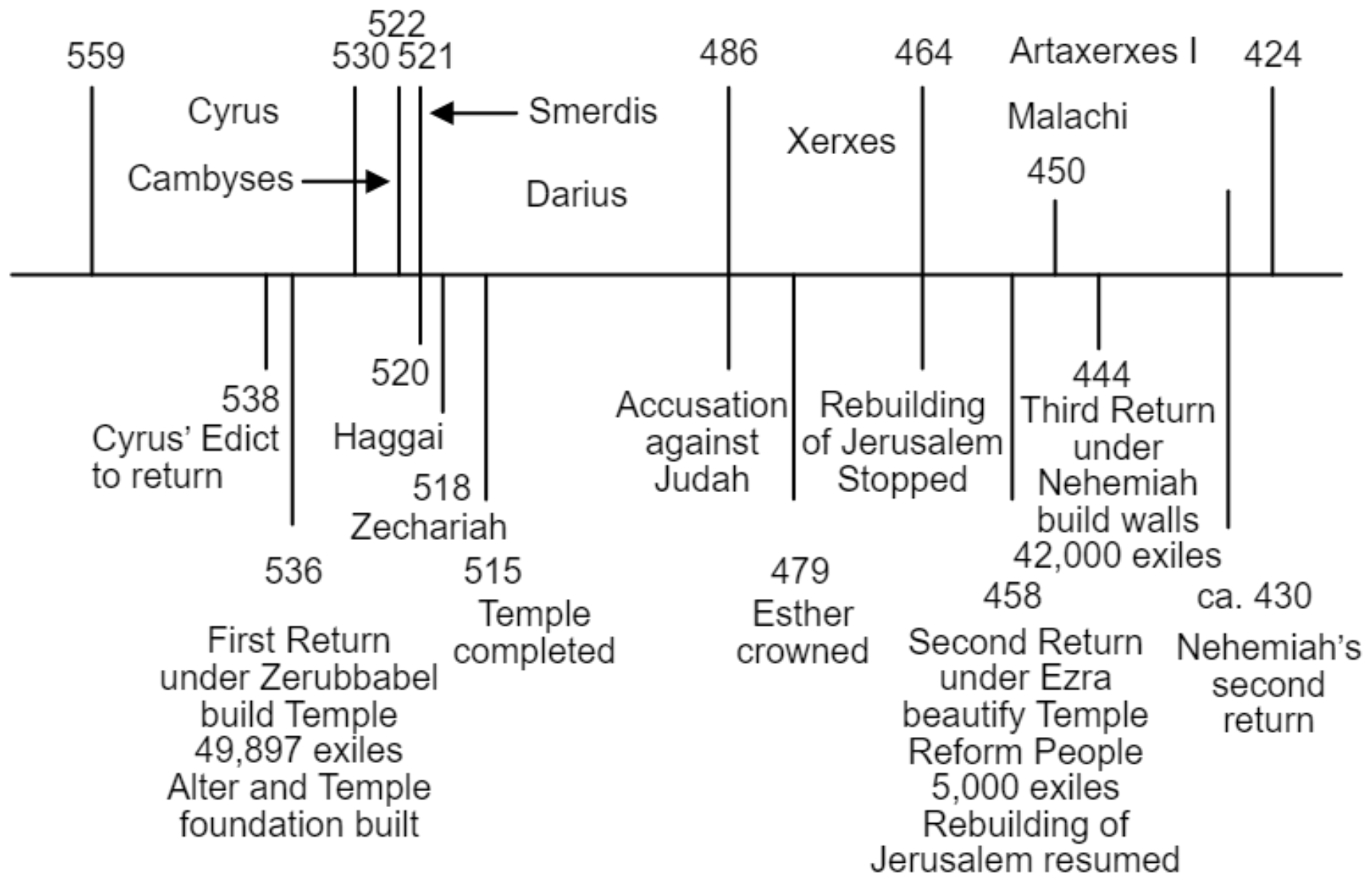
Background

■ Timing

Timeline of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther



The Restoration Period



Background

■ Overview

- **At God's direction, an imperial orders to restore God's worship among the Jews is given after the seventy-year desolation of Jerusalem and the account of the work done, despite obstacles, to achieve this. (Isaiah 44:24-28)**
- **The purpose of the writer was evidently to show how God fulfilled his promises to restore Israel from captivity to Babylon and reestablish true worship in Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 29:10-15)**



Highlights

■ Theme

- **The book of Ezra is an account of how the temple was rebuilt and how God's worship was reestablished despite opposition and the imperfection of God's people. The account is of great interest to us because we too are living in a time of restoration.**
- **The narrative ends with Ezra's taking measures to cleanse those who have defiled themselves with the people of the land.**

Background

■ Who Was Ezra?

- Ezra, as a priest, scribe, scholar, skilled copyist and a man who had “prepared his heart . . . to teach in Israel regulation and justice” and to correct the things regarding the worship of God.



Background

■ Who Was Ezra?

- Ezra is an abbreviation of Azaryahu, which means “Yahweh Helps (God Helps Me)”
- The royal power granted to him by the king of Persia would give him added reason and authority to restore worship of God, in the temple.
- Most scholars are in agreement that the book of Ezra carries on the history at the point where the Chronicles leave off, as a comparison of 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 and Ezra 1:1-3 reveals.

Background

■ Author

- **The Book of Ezra does not specifically name its author. The tradition is that the prophet Ezra wrote the Book of Ezra.**
- **Note: Once Ezra appears on the scene in chapter 7, the author of the Book of Ezra switches from writing in the third person to first person.**
- **This would also lends credibility to Ezra being the author.**

Background

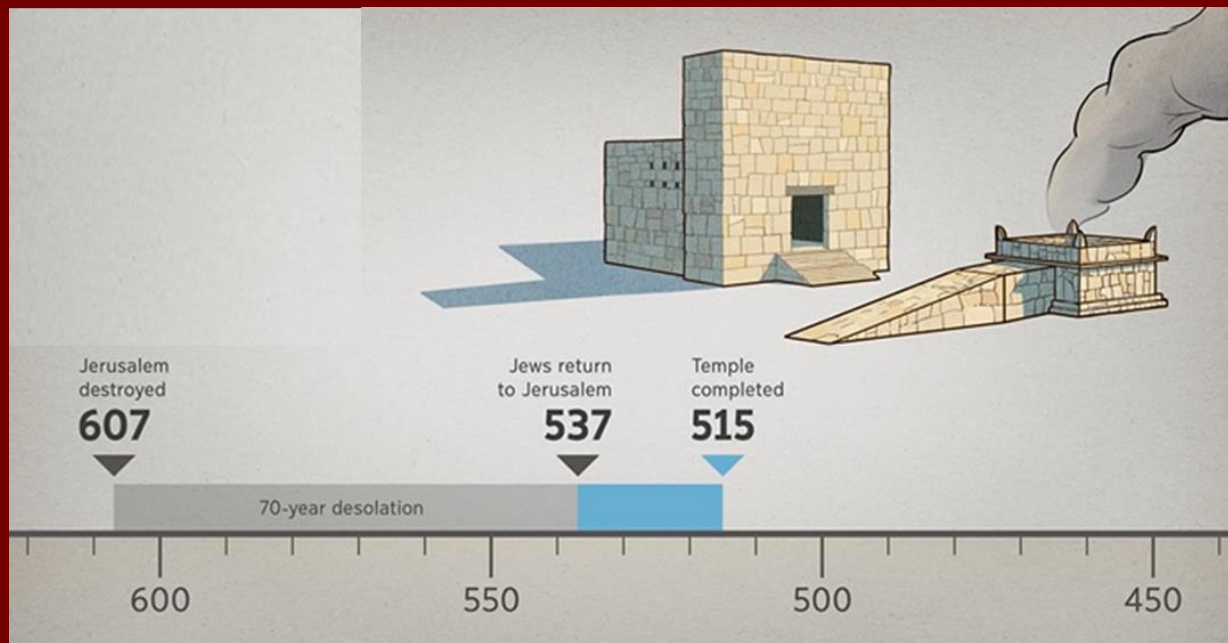
■ Timing

- **Cyrus' decree must have been issued late in 538 B.C. or early in 537 for two reasons.**
- **The desolation had to last until the seventieth year ended.**
- **It was likely issued in the early spring of 537 B.C., in order to give the Jews a chance to travel during the dry season and arrive in Jerusalem and to set up the altar on the first day of the seventh month (Tishri) or the Feast of Trumpets, of the year 537 B.C.—Ezra 3:2-6.**

Background

■ Timing

- After describing the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, that were held after the temple was completed in 515 B.C.,



Background

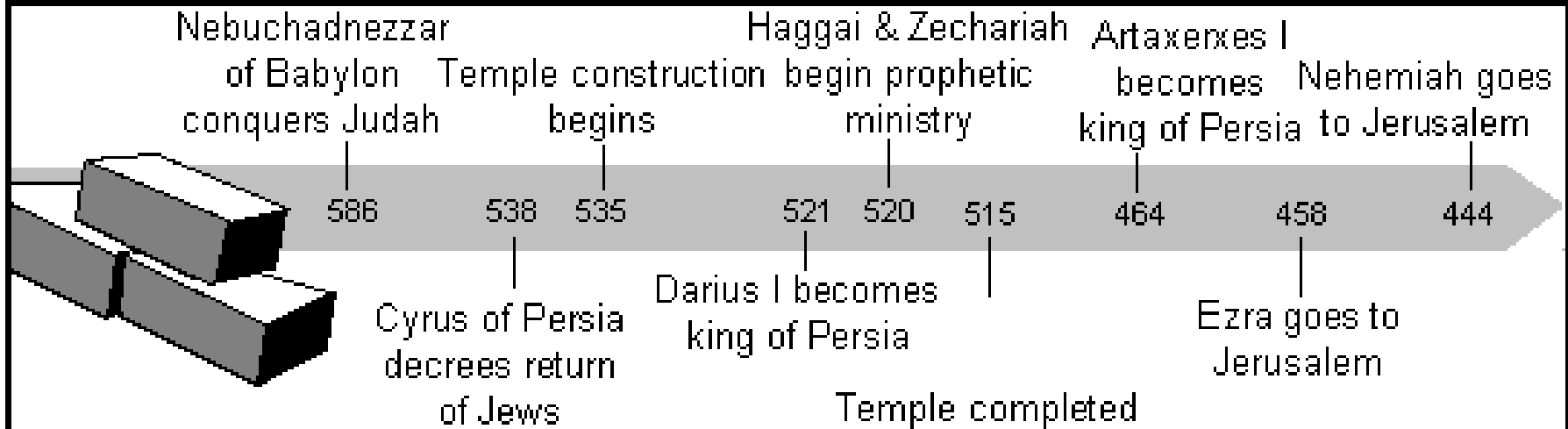
■ Timelines

- **3 Waves of Jewish Returns From Babylon**
 - **537 BC Zerubbabel Led Group of 5,000 to Jerusalem**
 - Altar and Temple Completed
 - **468 BC Ezra Arrives with Second Group in Jerusalem**
 - Religious Reformation
 - **444 BC Nehemiah Arrives with Third Group in Jerusalem**
 - Additional Religious Reformation

Background

■ Timing

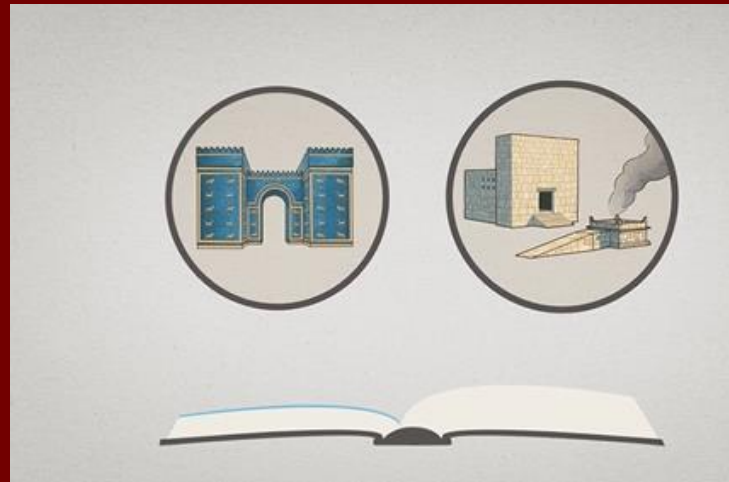
TIMELINE OF EZRA



Background

■ Importance of Ezra

- The emphasis in Ezra is on the rebuilding of the Temple to establish the worship of God, in preparation for the appearance of Jesus Christ.



Background

■ Importance of Ezra

- **Book of Ezra continues the biblical theme of the remnant. National Restoration / Religious Reformation.**
- **The remnant theme is carried into the New Testament where Paul tells us that “at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace” (Romans 11:5).**
- **Book of Ezra is a reminder of hope and God’s restoration.**

Background

■ Importance of Ezra

- **As Christian, though we are scarred by sin and rebellion against God, there is great hope that God forgives, when we seek Him in repentance and brokenness (1 John 1:9).**
- **The return of the remnant to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple can be viewed as a metaphor of Christians, who returns from the captivity of sin and rebellion against God to be part of the spiritual Temple of God (I Corinthians 3:16) and the Royal Priesthood (I Peter 2:9).**