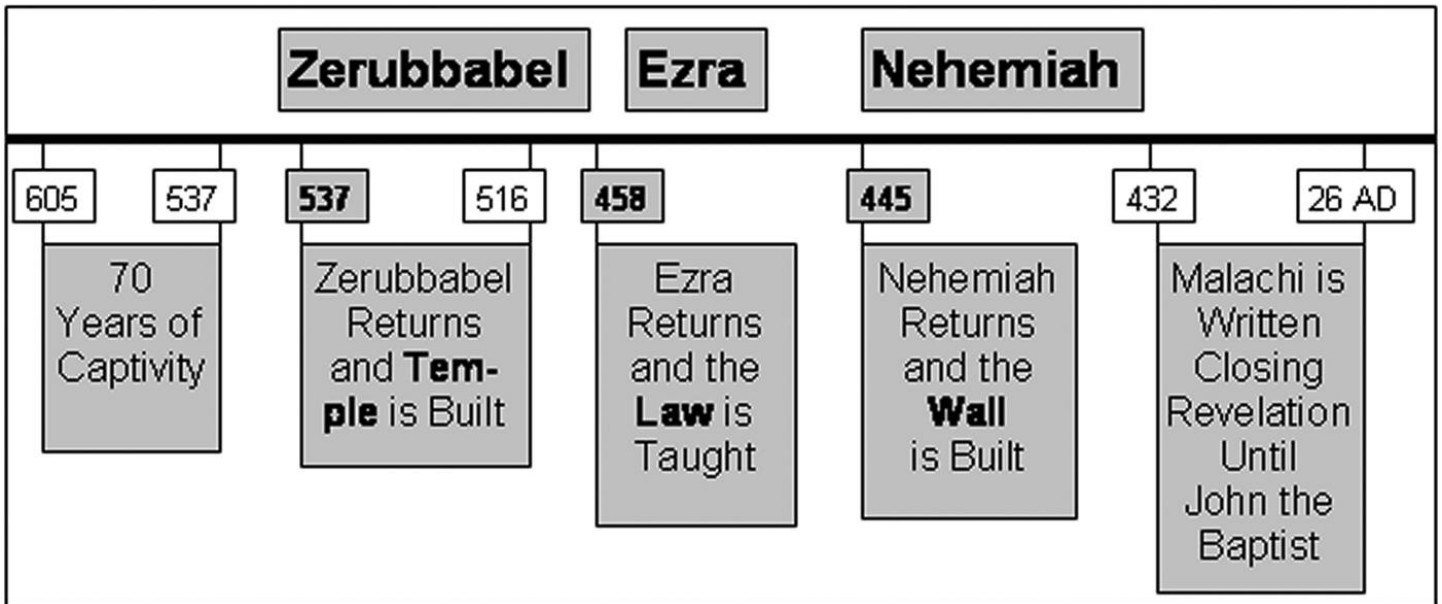


Ezra 4 and 5



PERSIA

CYRUS
the Great

CAMBYSES
534 - CAMBYSES PREPARES INVASION OF EGYPT
525 - EGYPT DEFEATED
520 - DISAPPEARS NEAR MT. CARMEL
ARCHIVE IN BABYLON SEARCHED FOR CYRUS DECREE TO REBUILD TEMPLE

DARIUS I
522 - SHERDIS
521 - HAGGAI 1-2
520 - ZECHARIAH 1:1-6
EZRA 5-6
ZECHARIAH 7:68-519
ZECHARIAH 7-518
EZRA 6:13-18-516
-TEMPLE REBUILT

XERXES I
485 - ESTHER 1
481-479 - XERXES ATTACKS GREECE
-THERMOPYLAE
-SALAMIS
-PLATAEA
446 - XERXES ASSASSINATED
ORDER STOP BUILDING TEMPLE 464 BC
458 - ORDER REBUILD JERUSALEM
446 - NEHEMIAH 1
445 - NEHEMIAH SPEAKS TO ARTAXERXES
-AVOID-BEGIN WALLS
-OCT 2 - WALLS DONE
433 - NEHEMIAH READS LAW AFTER 12 yrs. NEH. 5:14,13,6

ESTHER
478 - ESTHER 2
474 - ESTHER 3:7, 4:74
473 - ESTHER 3:12-14, 4:73

ARTAXERXES I
464 - EZRA 7:28
7:23
7:89
7:12-26
10:9-25

MALACHI
432 - MALACHI 1:1-5
XERXES I 424
SOGDIANUS 423

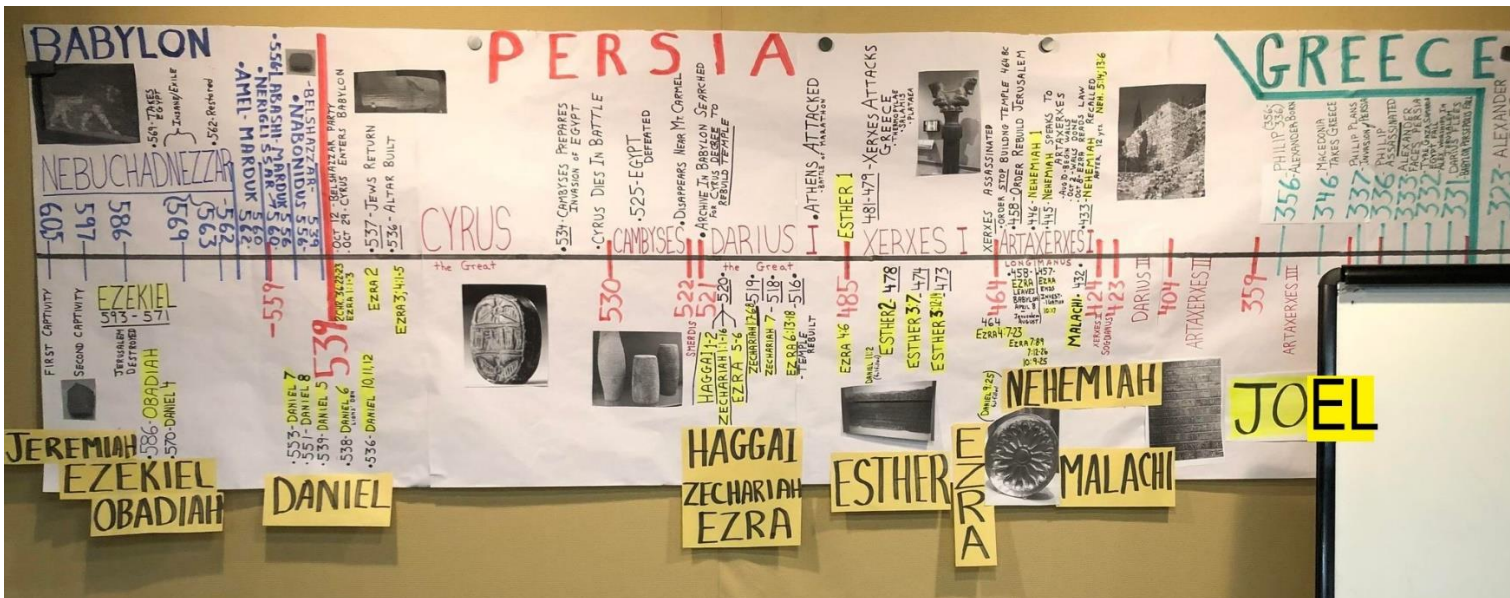
ZECHARIAH
539 - DANIEL 5
538 - DANIEL 6
536 - DANIEL 10, 11, 12
EZRA 3:4, 11-5
EZRA 2

ESTHER
478 - ESTHER 2
474 - ESTHER 3:7, 4:74
473 - ESTHER 3:12-14, 4:73

NEHEMIAH
446 - NEHEMIAH 1
445 - NEHEMIAH SPEAKS TO ARTAXERXES
-AVOID-BEGIN WALLS
-OCT 2 - WALLS DONE
433 - NEHEMIAH READS LAW AFTER 12 yrs. NEH. 5:14,13,6

MALACHI
432 - MALACHI 1:1-5
XERXES I 424
SOGDIANUS 423

The collage contains several small images: a coin with a profile of a king, a vase with a bird on top, a scroll, and a wheel-like object. The text is organized into sections for different kings and events, with dates and biblical references. The word 'PERSIA' is written in large red letters at the top.



537	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darius the Mede dies and Cyrus takes the title of King of Persia A remnant of the Jews return to Jerusalem. It has been 70 years since the first captivity in 605 counting both the year 605 and 537 and the 68 years between 800 mile journey from the Chebar River to Jerusalem Cyrus provided money, orders for people to assist Jews and the temples sacred vessels. The returning Jews left in Mar/Apr and arrived in Jerusalem in Jun/July 	Ezra 2 Jews Return 70 Years After First Captivity
536	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An angel comes to Daniel after he fasted for 3 weeks. Daniel receives his final revelation in Daniel 10, 11 and 12. Chapter 11 will cover the history from the time of Cyrus (536) up through the Macabbean Revolt against Antiochus Epiphanies (168). The prophecy then continues with the rise of the anti-Christ (11:36) Zerubbabel goes to rebuild the temple The altar is built and the foundation for the temple is laid. Samaritan's begin to oppose the Jew's efforts to rebuild the temple (Ez. 4:1-5) 	Daniel 10, 11, 12 Ezra 3 Zerubbabel Altar Rebuilt Ezra 4:1-5 Jews Opposed
534	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cyrus gives his son Cambyses the task of preparing for an expedition against Egypt which will finally be unleashed in 525 BC 	Cambyses
530	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 26, at the New Year's festival Cyrus appoints his son, Cambyses, as his co-regent and successor. Cambyses is given title "King of Babylon" and Cyrus maintains the title "King of Kings." 	
529	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cyrus dies on the battle field verse nomadic barbarians Cyrus was buried in Pasargadae one of the five capital cities (Babylon, Ecbatana, Persepolis, Pasargadae and Susa) Cyrus had built an enormous empire with roads, postal system and legal codes. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambyses secures the throne by murdering his brother Smerdis 	
525	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambyses totally defeats Egypt in the eastern delta of the Nile and captures Memphis. • Cambyses desired to capture the Oasis of Ammon further west in the desert and to march on to Carthage but his 50,000 troops perished in the desert and the Phoenician ships refused to land ships carrying Persian soldiers to attack the Phoenician colony of Carthage. 	Cambyses Defeats Egypt
522	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaumata, a pseudo-Smerdis, claims the throne back in Babylon • Cambyses disappears from history near Mt. Carmel on his return to Babylon 	
521	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darius Hystaspes executes Gaumata and takes the throne of the Persian empire • Darius Hystaspes searches the royal archives in Babylon and finds that Cyrus had ordered the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. Opposition stops. • Within two years Darius Hystaspes stabilizes the empire. 	Darius Hystaspes
520	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, minister in Jerusalem. • August 29, the word of the Lord comes to Haggai and the book of Haggai begins. • October 17, Haggai 2:1-9 the word of the Lord is a message for Zerubbabel, the governor, Joshua, the high priest, and the remnant of people • Oct/Nov Zechariah records his first message from the Lord in Zechariah 1:1-6 • Darius Hystaspes searches the royal archives in Babylon and finds that Cyrus had ordered the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. Opposition stops. • Rebuilding of the temple resumes after opposition had stopped it 16 years earlier. (Ezra 5-6) • December 18, 520, Haggai prophecies blessings on the remnant (Hag. 2:10-23) 	Haggai Zechariah Haggai 1:1-15 Haggai 2:1-9 Zechariah 1:1-6 Ezra 5-6 Haggai 2:10-23
519	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 15, in one night Zechariah is given a series of eight night visions in one night: 	Zechariah 1:7-6:8
518	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 7, Zechariah receives the word of the Lord in the fourth year of Darius Hystaspes (Zech. 7) 	Zechariah 7
516	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The temple is completed by Zerubbabel. It has been 70 years since the temple was destroyed in 586. 	Ezra 6:13-18 Temple Rebuilt 70 Years After It Was Destroyed

Ezra 4:1-5

1. Ezra does not record all the events from 536-515 BC
2. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah focus on the people that had returned, their attitude and their willing, sinful disobedience.

3. Ezra writes of the external pressure the returning exiles faced from the people living in the land.

4:1 – When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were building a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel,

1. The “enemies” (also, “the peoples around them”) were the people living in Israel since the time of the fall of Northern Israel to the Assyrians in 722 BC.
 - a. Assyria deported some of the Israelites into Assyria and their territories
 - b. Assyria also imported Gentiles from conquered nations into northern Israel to intermarry and weaken the national identity

“Until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight, as he had spoken by all his servants the prophets. So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day. And the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the people of Israel. And they took possession of Samaria and lived in its cities.” – 2 Kings 17:24-25

- c. They claimed to worship YHWH, but northern Israel had already corrupted YHWH worship. The influx of Gentiles and their pagan gods reduced their understanding even further.

“But every nation still made gods of its own and put them in the shrines of the high places that the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities in which they lived. The men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, and the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. They also feared the Lord and appointed from among themselves all sorts of people as priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. So they feared the Lord but also served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away. To this day they do according to the former manner. They do not fear the Lord, and they do not follow the statutes or the rules or the law or the commandment that the Lord commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel.” – 2 Kings 17:29-34

2. “The enemies of Judah and Benjamin” should not thought to be of the same mind and purpose of the exiles that had returned.
 - a. Their gesture seems friendly, cooperative and good hearted with good intentions.
 - b. But, if their goal and their purpose is not the same, then they are in opposition.
 - c. The opposition did not begin when Zerubbabel and Joshua rejected their “kindness”, but it began when they thought they could bring their own agenda to the organization. The enemies hope to infiltrate the people of Judah.
 - d. The only way their opposing agenda could be responded to was with rejection
 - e. The alternative would have been compromise, acceptance and the returning exiles would have accepted defeat with this first encounter.
 - f. There will be many more encounters which makes it clear the intention of “the enemies of Judah and Benjamin” were not in the best interests of the Lord or his people.
3. “exiles” is literally “the sons of the captivity” – *bene hagola*

4. Benjamin and Judah were the main two tribes, but besides Levi, the other tribes also had representatives that returned.
5. The enemies had two attacks:
 - a. Infiltration
 - b. Intimidation
 - i. Local opposition
 - ii. Persian empire opposition

4:2 – they came to Zerubbabel and to the heads of the families and said, “Let us help you build because, like you, we seek your God and have been sacrificing to him since the time of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here.”

1. “sacrificing to him since the time of Esarhaddon king of Assyria”
 - a. This began in 2 Kings 17:24 when foreign gentiles were forcefully settled in northern Israel.
 - b. They could not have been sacrificing to the Lord at that time since the Temple was still standing in Jerusalem.
 - c. After their arrival both Hezekiah and Josiah had invited northern Israel to join them in worship at the Temple, so these Gentiles had NOT been worshipping the Lord.
 - d. 2 Kings 17:34 says, “To this day they do according to the former manner. They do not fear the Lord...” (read 2 Kings 17:24-36)
 - e. These people were multi-faith polytheist and had no understanding or intention of serving the Lord
2. Esarhaddon (681-669)
 - a. Very strongly implemented the deportation/importation of peoples to mix their cultures and keep them weak
 - b. Son of Sennacherib (705-681 BC)
 - c. Grandson of Sargon II (722-705 BC)

4:3 - But Zerubbabel, Joshua and the rest of the heads of the families of Israel answered, “You have no part with us in building a temple to our God. We alone will build it for the Lord, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us.”

1. The leaders of Judah knew from the beginning these people:
 - a. did not know what they said they did
 - b. that these people were not willing to change their cultural practices
2. Both the spiritual leaders and the political leaders rejected their offer
3. The returning exiles had a commission from Cyrus to build the temple.
 - a. The commission did not include other peoples joining in the effort
 - b. There was legal paper work justifying the rejection of the offer.

4:4 - Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building.

1. “set out to discourage” does not mean they tried one time or they began, but their efforts faded.
 - a. This was a campaign of harassment.
 - b. The Hebrew indicates “they kept doing these things. These types of words and actions occurred from 537 BC until the prophets Haggai and Zechariah stepped in. And, even then the harassment did not stop.
 - i. “Discourage” – intimidation, mocking, suggesting legal action, etc.

- ii. “make them afraid” – threatening physical violence, physical assault

4:5 - They bribed officials to work against them and frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia and down to the reign of Darius king of Persia.

1. Persian officials under Cyrus that oversaw the operations of the officials in Lebanon and the whole workforce and supply chain to get the material for the temple was complicated.
 - a. There were many politicians and bureaucrats between Cyrus and the local delivery guy that could be bribed or intimidated
 2. Cyrus to Darius was 537 BC until 520 BC
 3. Darius reigned 521-486 BC
-

Haggai 1:1-15

1:1 - In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest:

Ezra 4:6-24

Ezra 4:6 – “And in the reign of Ahasuerus (Xerxes), in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

Ezra 4:7-10 – “In the days of Artaxerxes (Xerxes), Bishlam and Mithredath and Tabeel and the rest of their associates wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia. The letter was written in Aramaic and translated.

4:8 - Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king as follows:

4:9 - Rehum the commander, Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their associates, the judges, the governors, the officials, the Persians, the men of Erech, the Babylonians, the men of Susa, that is, the Elamites,

4:10 - and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnappar deported and settled in the cities of Samaria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River.

4:11-16 – THE LETTER FROM SAMARITANS AROUND 458 (80 years after the events in 4:1-5:

11 - “(This is a copy of the letter that they sent.) “To Artaxerxes the king: Your servants, the men of the province Beyond the River, send greeting. And now 12 be it known to the king that the Jews who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city. They are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations. 13 Now be it known to the king that if this city is rebuilt and the walls finished, they will not pay tribute, custom, or toll, and the royal revenue will be impaired. 14 Now because we eat the salt of the palace and it is not fitting for us to witness the king's dishonor, therefore we send and inform the king, 15 in order that search may be made in the book of the records of your fathers. You will find in the book of the records and learn that this city is a rebellious city,

hurtful to kings and provinces, and that sedition was stirred up in it from of old. That was why this city was laid waste. 16 We make known to the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls finished, you will then have no possession in the province Beyond the River.”

4:17-22 – ARTAXERXES REPLY:

17 – “The king sent an answer: “To Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe and the rest of their associates who live in Samaria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River, greeting. And now 18 the letter that you sent to us has been plainly read before me. 19 And I made a decree, and search has been made, and it has been found that this city from of old has risen against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made in it. 20 And mighty kings have been over Jerusalem, who ruled over the whole province Beyond the River, to whom tribute, custom, and toll were paid. 21 Therefore make a decree that these men be made to cease, and that this city be not rebuilt, until a decree is made by me. 22 And take care not to be slack in this matter. Why should damage grow to the hurt of the king?”

4:23 – ARTAXERXES REPLY TO THE SAMARITAN LETTER IS READ:

“Then, when the copy of King Artaxerxes’ letter was read before Rehum and Shimshai the scribe and their associates, they went in haste to the Jews at Jerusalem and by force and power made them cease.

4:24 – OPPOSITION IN 536 STOPS THE WORK ON THE TEMPLE:

“Then the work on the house of God that is in Jerusalem stopped, and it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.”

Ezra 5

Ezra 5:1-2 – HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH PROPHECY TO INSPIRE THE BUILDING OF TEMPLE:

“Now the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. 2 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak arose and began to rebuild the house of God that is in Jerusalem, and the prophets of God were with them, supporting them.

5:3-5 – TATTENAI THE GOVERNOR INVESTIGATE THE TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION:

“At the same time Tattenai the governor of the province Beyond the River and Shethar-bozenai and their associates came to them and spoke to them thus: “Who gave you a decree to build this house and to finish this structure?” 4 They also asked them this:[a] “What are the names of the men who are building this building?” 5 But the eye of their God was on the elders of the Jews, and they did not stop them until the report should reach Darius and then an answer be returned by letter concerning it.

5:6-17 – TATTENAI’S LETTER TO DARIUS:

This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai the governor of the province Beyond the River and Shethar-bozenai and his associates, the governors who were in the province Beyond the River, sent to Darius the king. 7 They sent him a report, in which was written as follows:

THE LETTER:

“To Darius the king, all peace.

8 Be it known to the king that we went to the province of Judah, to the house of the great God. It is being built with huge stones, and timber is laid in the walls. This work goes on diligently and prospers in their hands.

9 Then we asked those elders and spoke to them thus: ‘Who gave you a decree to build this house and to finish this structure?’ 10 We also asked them their names, for your information, that we might write down the names of their leaders.

11 And this was their reply to us:

‘We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the house that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and finished. 12 But because our fathers had angered the God of heaven, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house and carried away the people to Babylonia. 13 However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, Cyrus the king made a decree that this house of God should be rebuilt. 14 And the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple that was in Jerusalem and brought into the temple of Babylon, these Cyrus the king took out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered to one whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor; 15 and he said to him, “Take these vessels, go and put them in the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its site.” 16 Then this Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the house of God that is in Jerusalem, and from that time until now it has been in building, and it is not yet finished.’

17 Therefore, if it seems good to the king, let search be made in the royal archives there in Babylon, to see whether a decree was issued by Cyrus the king for the rebuilding of this house of God in Jerusalem. And let the king send us his pleasure in this matter.”

- A Babylonian record dated 502 BC has the name Tattenai and his office as governor of Trans-Euphrates
- <https://www.baslibrary.org/biblical-archaeology-review/43/3/6>