

# EZRA + NEHEMIAH

The dawn of a new era for the Jews

- Jews had been removed from their homeland of Judah for about 100 years
- Babylonian Exile: God orchestrated but the judgment was carried out by gentiles
- Ezra would lead only about 5% of the Jews of the Persian Empire back to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple
- The remainder had adapted to their new homes and felt no attachment to Judah

# RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY

( An approximation )

606 - - 536 BC

520 BC Temple Work Resumed

536 BC Temple  
Foundation Laid

516 BC Temple Finished

**BABYLONIAN  
CAPTIVITY**

**EZRA NEHEMIAH**

*Haggai  
Zechariah*

*Malachi*

( Corresponds with )  
( last chapter of Neh. )

**ESTHER** become Queen

- Ezra and Nehemiah deal heavily with politics
- Parts written in Hebrew, parts in Aramaic
- Their concerns then, similar to our concerns today
- Jews had been gone about 100 years, and experienced social upheaval and alterations in how they worshipped God

# 100 YEARS IS A LONG TIME !



- Looking back 100 years from 2014:
- Ottoman Empire still ruled
- WWI had not happened
- Titanic sank
- None of us have a personal “memory” of these things
- Majority of Jewish people in Persia had no attachment to Judah

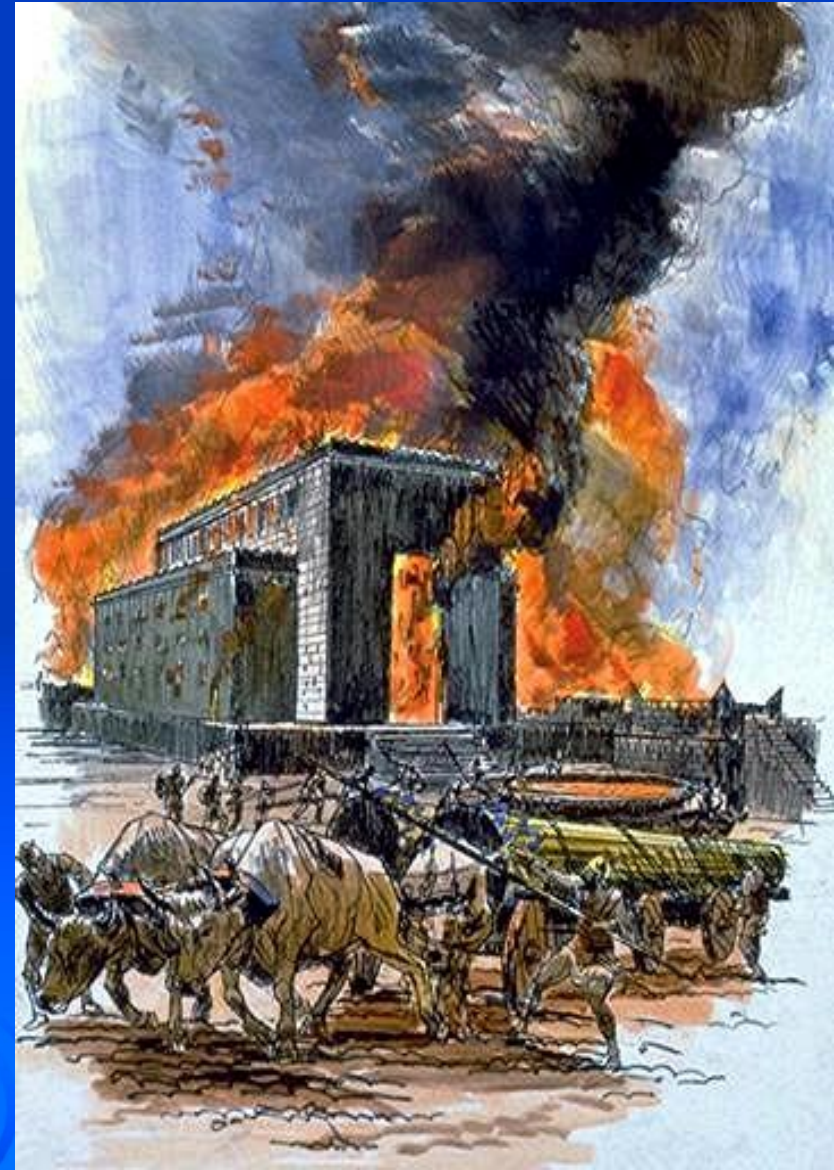
# MEANING OF “JEW” EVOLVED

- When Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah “Jew” meant Judahite....a citizen of Judah
- A national term
- 100 years later at time of Ezra “Jew” still written as *Yehudi*, best translated as Judahite
- But now it was an ill defined combination of religious belief, or ethnicity, or family heritage
- “New Jews” of Persia (Esther’s time) had no Hebrew blood, had no ties to land of Judah
- Jewishness for them had more to do with political affiliation and allegiance based on religion



# WORSHIP OF GOD LOOKED VERY DIFFERENT NOW

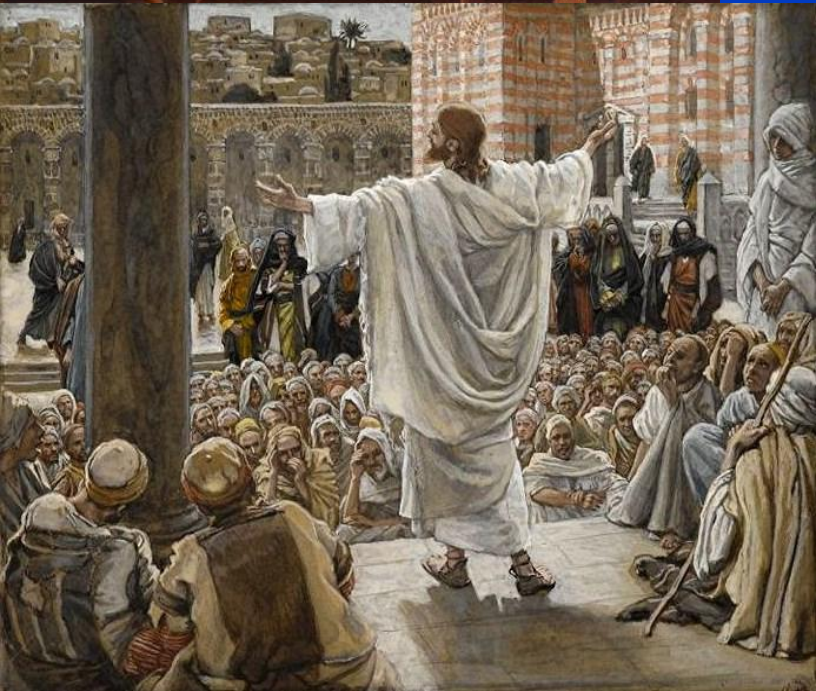
- The center of all worship was the House of Yehoveh
- But the Temple was in ruins and the Priesthood disbanded
- Jews appointed their own religious leaders, devised ways around sacrificial atonement, built houses of worship
- Many new elements added and eventually became known as: Judaism
- Question: Did the Jews do something wrong in modifying the old religion to these new ways?



# THE RELIGION OF JESUS THE JEW



- Christ was NOT the first Christian !
- Yeshua's religion centered on the Torah and the Temple
- Temple did NOT have the Ark in the Holy of Holies
- Yeshua taught in synagogues and at the Temple
- After 70 A.D. gentiles moved "The Way" to foreign lands
- Gentile houses of worship became known as churches



# CHRISTIANITY ADAPTED TO ITS ENVIRONMENT

## ISHTAR & TAMMUZ



- 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. 7<sup>th</sup> day Shabbat was abolished, 1<sup>st</sup> day worship (Sunday) was instituted
- 7 Biblical Feasts abolished
- Christ's resurrection super-imposed upon ancient pagan resurrection myths
- In 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christianity has little connection with Israel, the Jewish Jesus, or His Galilean disciples
- But now, modern worshippers want to recover our Biblical faith roots
- Ezra and his followers were fought against for wanting to do the same

# THE 5 %

- In our time there are those few who want to return to a more true Biblical religion
- Hebrew Roots, Messianic, and others
- Has happened before, as with the passengers of the Mayflower
- Ezra and Nehemiah and Jewish followers were seen as trouble makers, divisive.
- God saw them as doing His will, upholding His principles



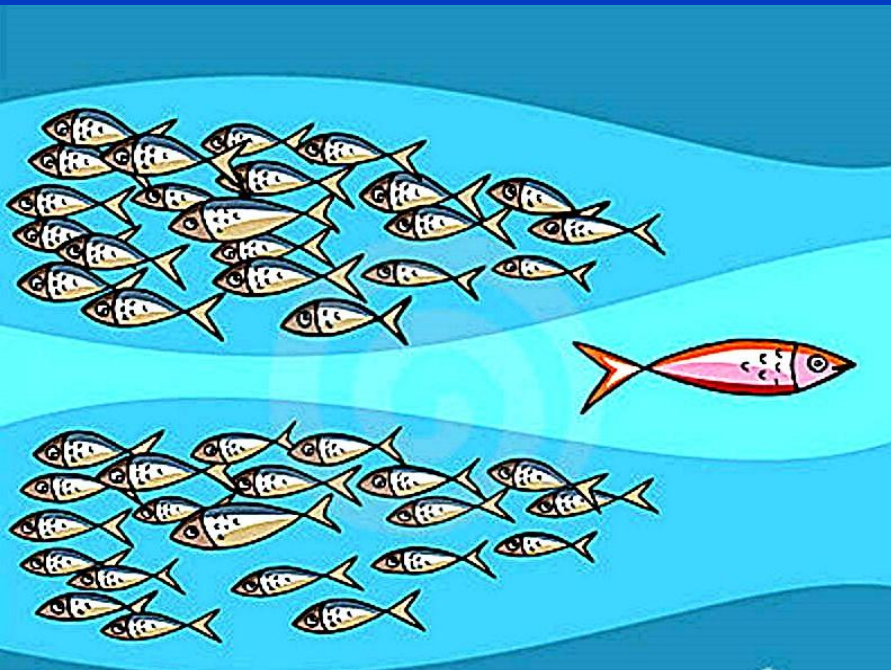


# A PRICE WILL BE PAID



- Many of Ezra's followers were shunned by family and community
- Matthew 10:37
- Luke 14:26
- Biblical love and hate is to accept or reject, not to experience an intense like or dislike
- Had the Diaspora Jews (the 95%) abandoned God? NO!
- Would Ezra and Nehemiah recreate the PERFECT Torah and Temple based Biblical worship? NO !

# GOING AGAINST THE TIDE



**I CAN**  
*and*  
**I WILL.**

- As we work to re-establish the Torah of God with the New Testament of Yeshua we *won't* get it completely right !!
- We must do the best we can, but remember to love our brothers in the Lord who aren't with us on this journey
- God put this desire and spirit into us
- Can we DO ALL of the Torah? Rabbis and Christianity says NO
- James 2:10
- Matthew 5:19

# TWO CATEGORIES OF BELIEVERS



- The least = those who do NOT do the Law
- The greatest = those who DO the Law
- You do NOT lose your salvation for not doing the Law !!!
- No Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies
- High Priest sprinkled blood on the floor where the Ark used to sit
- Since we can't obey all the Law due to circumstances, are we freed from obeying ANY of it?



# THE *Spirit* OF THE Law

- Technically, the minute the Law was given not ALL could be obeyed
- So does that mean that the Law was never valid in all of Israel's history?
- We can obey some laws in full, others partially, and some in spirit and principle only due to circumstances of our times
- Perfection is the goal, we must strive to do our best, but perfection won't happen until Messiah comes again
- Matthew 5:48
- Results are in God's hands. Our failures have already been paid for by Our Savior

