

EZRA INTRO

PART 2



- From the distant view the circumstances of Ezra vs. modern Christianity have parallels
- 50,000 exiles returned with the 1st group, led by Zerubbabel
- Only a small fraction of the total number of Jews in the Persian Empire
- Majority chose to stay behind
- Saw themselves as “Persian” Jews, not as transplanted Judah-ites

WHY DIDN'T MORE JEWS RETURN?

- Persia was now home to most Jews
- Judaism fundamentally drifted away from a Temple and Torah based religion
- Christianity also drifted away from our faith roots
- Puritans on the Mayflower came to re-establish their Biblical faith roots and shun wrong traditions



IF NOT US, THEN WHO?



- Ezra, Nehemiah and supporters set the stage for Christ's advent
- We have been tasked with setting the stage for Messiah's return !
- We will not do it perfectly, but we must try
- In addition to Biblical Ezra, there is also the Apocalypse of Ezra
- Greek version of Ezra is Esdras

FOREIGN INFLUENCE ON THE HEBREW BIBLE



- Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah contains combination of Aramaic, Greek and Hebrew
- Ezra and Nehemiah were once a unity, then divided
- **Different viewpoints:**
- 1) Ezra authored Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles
- 2) Ezra wrote Ezra, and Nehemiah wrote Nehemiah
- 3) The Chronicler was the final editor of Ezra and Nehemiah
- 4) Matthew, Mark, Luke were created in the same way

ZERUBBABEL & SHESHBAZZAR

- Typical in all ages for Author and Editor to collaborate
- In the 1st year of Cyrus he freed the Jews, and they returned in 538 or 539 BC
- **Zerubbabel** an alternate name for **Sheshbazzar** OR they are 2 different people
- In Judah, exiles faced immediate opposition from residents of Samaria

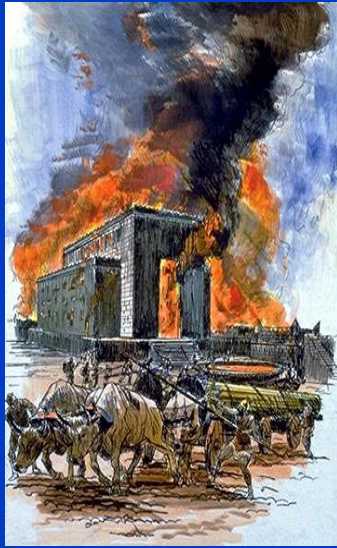


OPPOSITION

- The opposition of the Samaritans and other groups stopped the work on the Temple
- It was finally completed some years later
- Afterwards, Ezra came with a 2nd delegation
- 80 years passed between *Zerubbabel* and Ezra
- 1st group was about 50,000 Jews, many who had lived in Judah, but the majority were born in Babylon
- A series of deportations to Babylon, and a series of returns



586 B.C.



539 B.C. Persia conquers Babylon



480 B.C.



605 B.C.

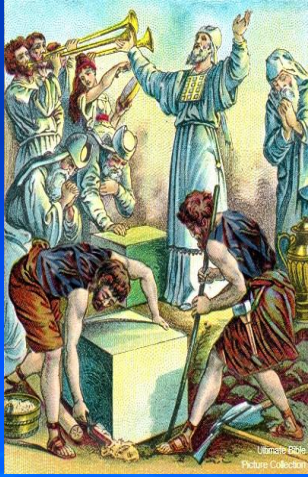
538 B.C.

458 B.C.

445 B.C.

Babylon conquers Judah

1st wave of Jewish exiles returns to Judah



515 B.C.

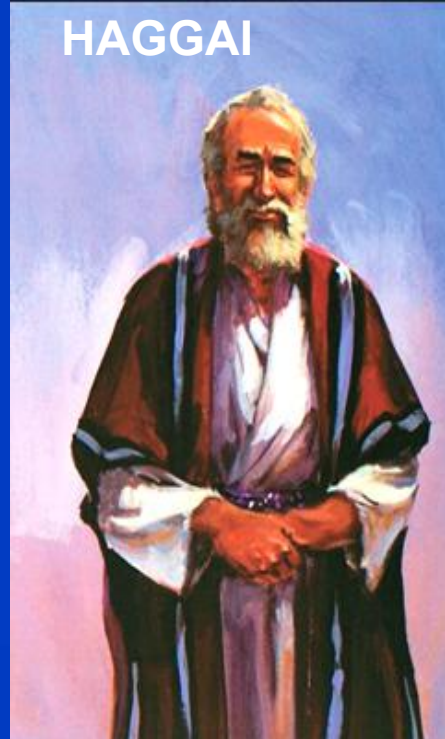
Ezra leads another wave of Jews to Judah

Nehemiah comes to Judah

PROPHETS OF THE ERA

- In time of Ezra and Nehemiah, Prophets Haggai and Zechariah spoke about restoration
- Prophet Jeremiah spoke on the importance of God's covenant relationship with Israel (died 586 B.C.)
- Ezra recognized that a Temple wasn't enough
- God's people **MUST** live the redeemed life in accordance with God's Torah

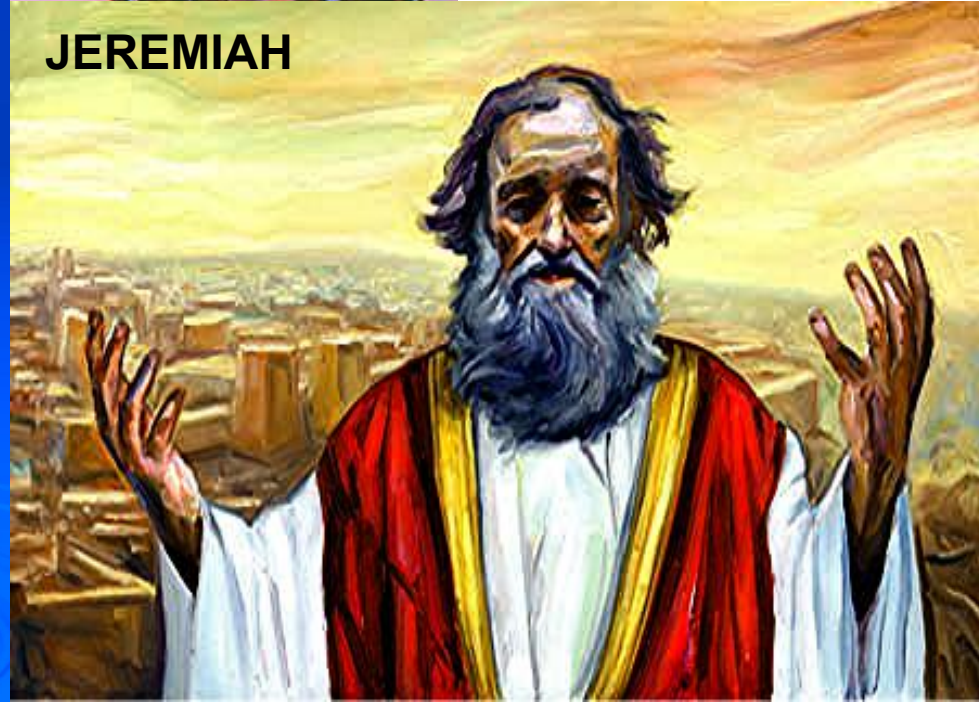
HAGGAI



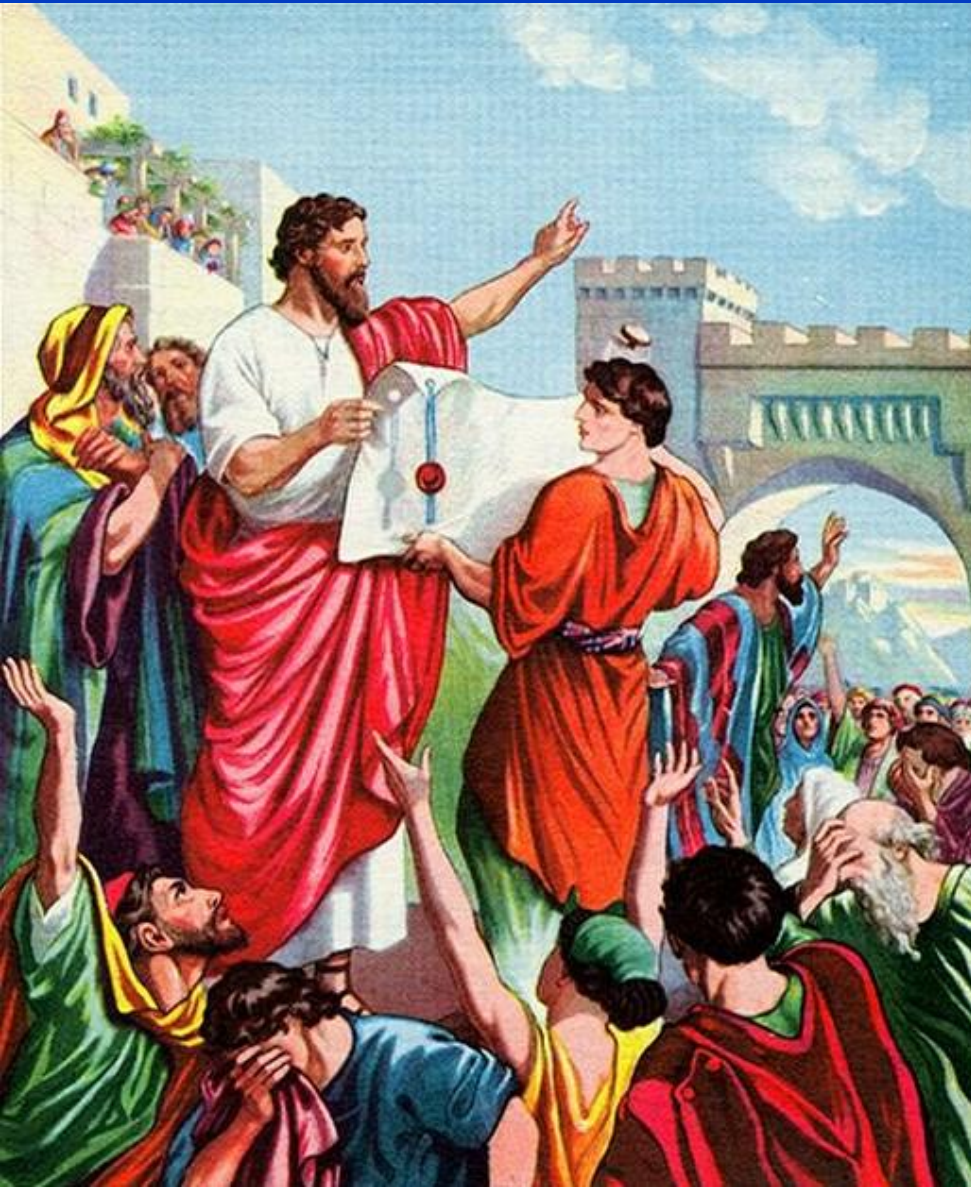
ZECHARIAH



JEREMIAH



EZRA CAME TO JUDAH TO INSTITUTE REFORM



- Goal was to “complete” the Temple in the sense of perfecting it’s services
- In Ezra’s day early Judaism was what the people and Priesthood knew
- “Judaism” was brought back to Judah from Babylon
- Synagogue would work alongside the Temple

BEYOND THE RIVER

- Judah a district in a Satrapy
- Satrap of “Beyond the River”
- 1 Persian Empire > 20 Satraps > 127 districts
- USA > States > Counties
- Judah and Samaria play prominent roles in our story

