

A PANORAMIC VIEW OF EZRA



- Judah's exile is over and many Jews have returned
- Ezra consists of two divisions:
 - 1) Chapters 1 – 6 took place before Ezra and involves Temple reconstruction
 - 2) Chapter 7 to end concerned with Ezra and took place after the Temple was completed

CYRUS

DARIUS

XERXES

ARTAXERXES

539 B.C. Persia conquers Babylon



458 B.C.



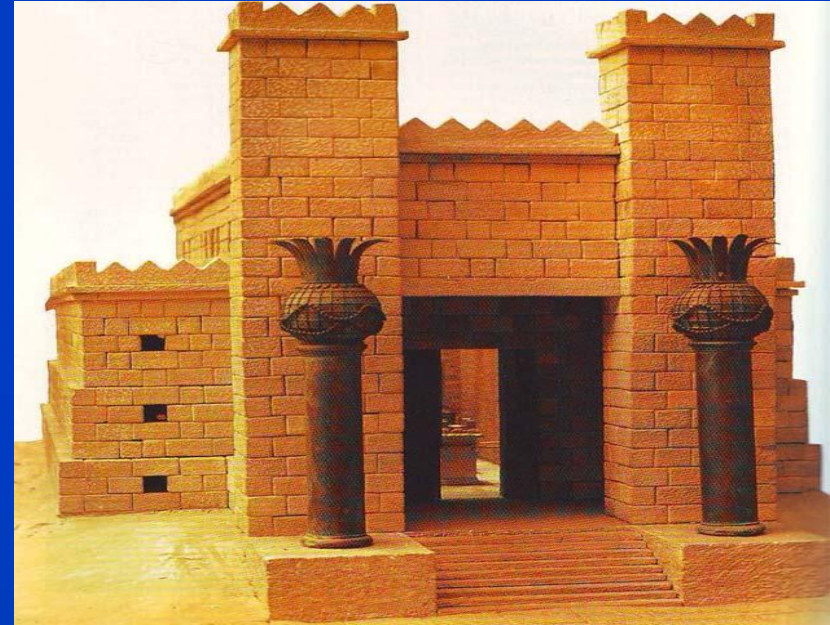
BOOK OF EZRA SPANS 80 YEARS

1st wave of Jewish exiles returns to Judah

Ezra leads another wave of Jews to Judah

FROM GLORY, TO DESTRUCTION, TO RECONSTRUCTION

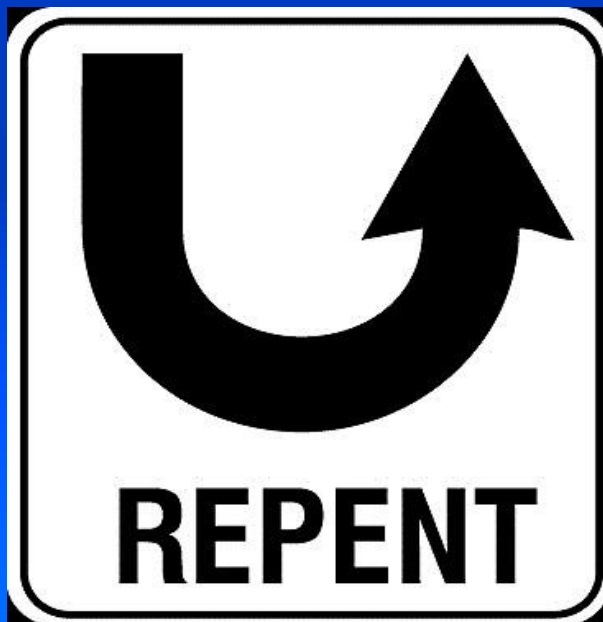
- Only 5% of Jews ever returned to Judah
- Most Jews were born in captivity and Persia was home
- Many now elderly Jews saw Solomon's Temple and were anxious to rebuild a new one
- Younger generations never knew of the Temple, never sacrificed, immersed in a Mikveh, and so were less inclined to go to Judah
- In Babylon, knowledge of Torah nearly vanished and was replaced with new traditions and customs



RETURN TO ME, I'LL RETURN TO YOU



- Zerubbabel's efforts to rebuild the Temple opposed by the Samaritans
- God not pleased with the Jews' lack of sincerity and perseverance
- God-Principle: When we distance ourselves from God, it is our responsibility to turn back

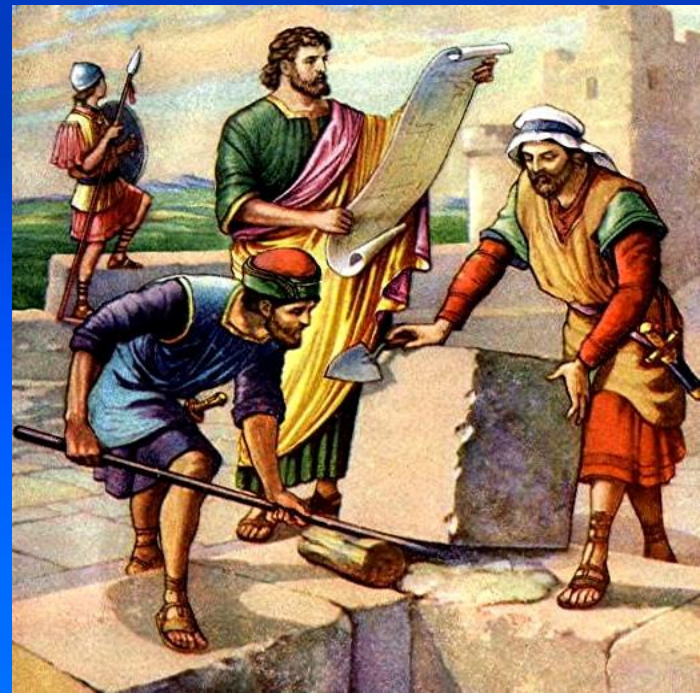
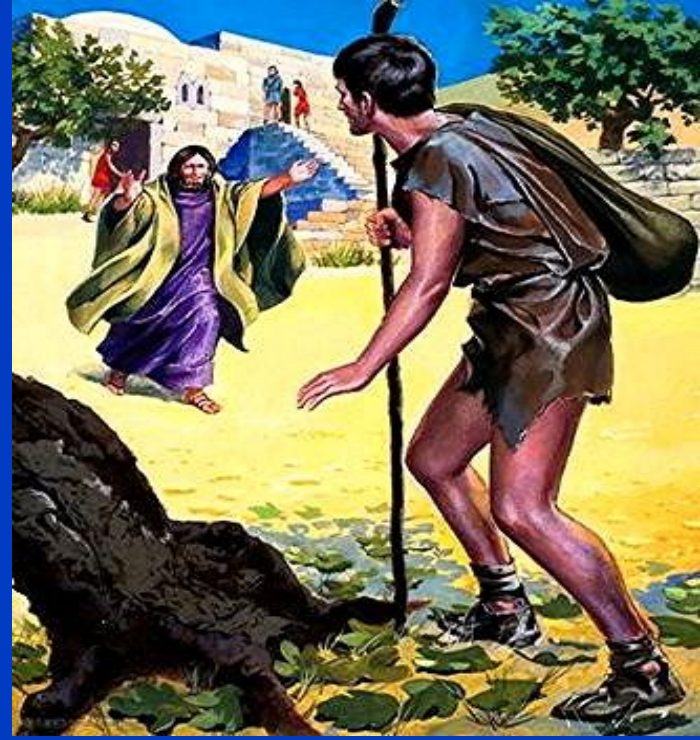


Repent and turn to God, so that
your sins may be wiped out.

Acts 3:19

THE PRODIGAL SON

- All New Testament principles are first established in the Tanakh (the OT)
- Luke 15:11 – 32
- Son was NOT chased down by his frantic father
- Son had to humble himself and undertake a tough journey home
- God will NOT journey to us, we must journey to Him
- Returning to God means to take action
- In the case of Zerubbabel's Jews it meant completing the Temple in about 515 B.C.



STORY OF ESTHER: 480 B.C.

- About 35-40 years AFTER the Temple was rebuilt
- 95% of Jewish population still living outside of Judah (Diaspora)
- Nowhere in the Book of Esther is there a mention of God
- Story is a comical irony that makes Esther the hero who cleverly defeats Haman
- Purim is established to celebrate the deliverance of the Jews, but it is only a manmade holiday like the 4th of July



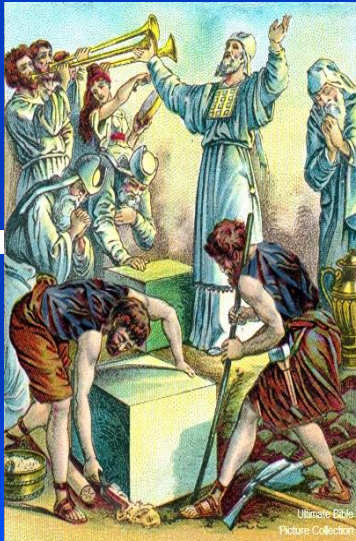
CYRUS

539 B.C. Persia conquers Babylon



DARIUS

515 B.C.



TEMPLE COMPLETED

XERXES



ARTAXERXES

458 B.C.



Ezra leads another wave of Jews to Judah

538 B.C.

1st wave of Jewish exiles returns to Judah

UP THROUGH CHAPTER 6

CHAPTER 7

EZRA

Rebuilding God's House

Restoring God's People

- Ezra a priest with a verifiable heritage to Eleazar
- Religious zealousness motivated most of the 1st wave of Jews who went back to Judah
- 7th year of Artaxerxes Ezra received carte blanche to go to Judah & 1) investigate religious practices, 2) establish Law of Moses on all Jews in the Beyond the River satrapy, 3) appoint judges
- Ezra took a loyal “takeover” team with him
- Zerubbabel wanted to rebuild the Temple
- Ezra wanted to replace manmade doctrines with the Holy Truth

EZRA CHAPTER 8



GOD'S GRACE

**HUMAN
EFFORT**



- God's grace is brought about on this earth by means of a co-operative venture with human beings
- Human beings are to bring the message of God's grace to other humans
- Mysterious sequence: God places His Word inside a person, but another human speaks the Gospel to that person

THE ROLE OF HUMANS IN GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION



- The Father **CHOOSES** to bring salvation by using human beings
- John 1:14 Christ is the ultimate expression of the God / human co-operation
- Matthew 9:35 – 38
- Harvest spiritually prepared, but is to be gathered by human workers



IT'S UP TO US TO RIGHT THE WRONGS

- Matthew 15:1 – 3
- The entire Bible is alive and well, His laws are forever, Israel remains His precious treasure
- Ezra went against the norms of Jewish society and went back to the Torah
- Even with a long dangerous journey ahead, Ezra trusted God enough to not accept an armed escort
- *“ So I took courage since the hand of Adonai my God was upon me..... ”*

REVELATION

Listen, Hear, Obey
Guard the Commands
of ELOHIM

