

Return from Exile

Rebuilding the Temple

Ezra 4-6

Lesson 2

*Trinity Bible Church Sunday School
September 12, 2010*

Background

▶ Nation Israel in captivity

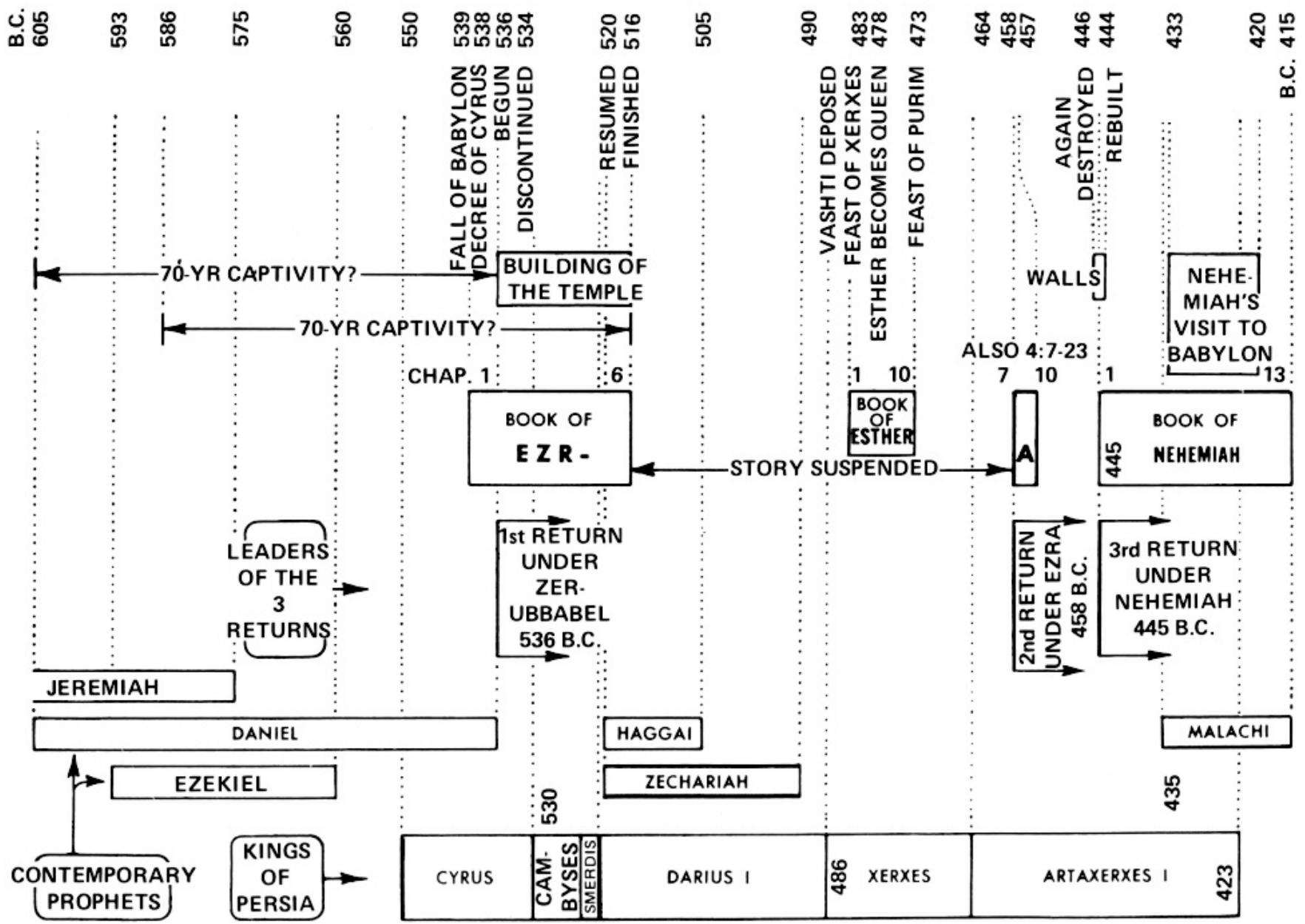
- Assyria – Northern Kingdom of Israel – 722 B.C.
- Babylon – Judah – 586 B.C. (also 605 and 597 B.C.)
- Medo-Persia
- Cyrus the Great, Darius I, Ahasuerus (Xerxes) and Artaxerxes

▶ Promise to Abraham

- Genesis 12:1-3 – blessing, great nation, Gentiles, Seed Promise
- God's wrath displayed
- Jeremiah – 70 years of captivity
- Literal Israel v. Spiritual Israel

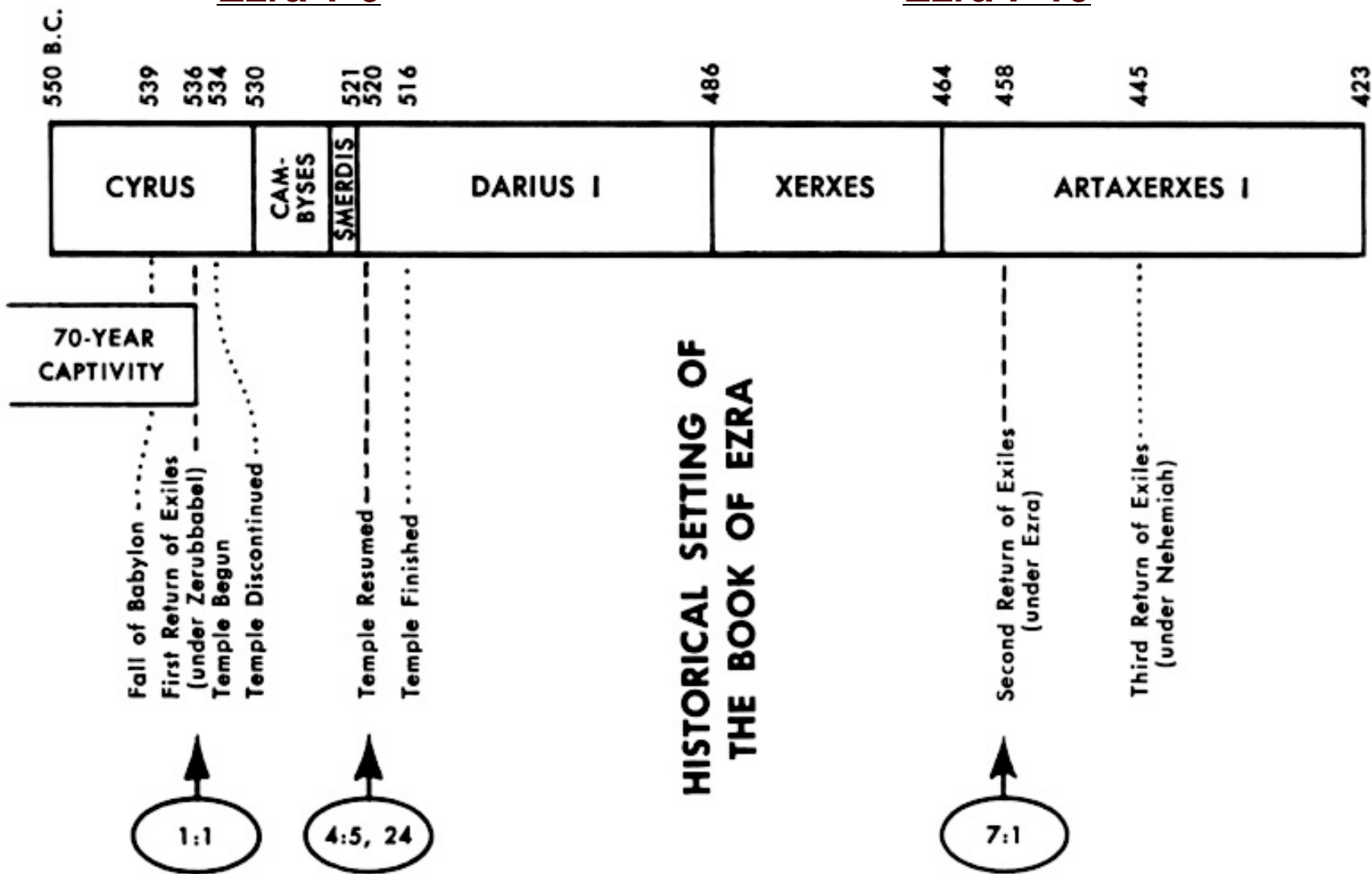
The Final Word

- ▶ 3 history books:
 - Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
- ▶ 3 not-so-minor prophets:
 - Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
- ▶ Faithfulness of God
 - Re-affirms the Promise
 - Preparation for Messiah



Ezra 1-6

Ezra 7-10



Ezra 1-6

- ▶ Decree of Cyrus (1)
- ▶ Remnant who returned (2)
- ▶ Rebuilding begins (3)
- ▶ Adversaries (4:1-23)
 - Passive and active opposition by locals (4:1-5)
 - Accusation to Ahasuerus (Xerxes) in (4:6)
 - Accusation to Artaxerxes in (4:7-23)
- ▶ Rebuilding stopped (4:24)

Ezra 1-6

- ▶ Rebuilding begins (5:1-5)
 - Haggai, Zechariah, Zerubbabel, Jeshua (5:1-5)
- ▶ Appeal to King Darius (5:6-6:12)
- ▶ Temple completed (6:13-22)
 - Temple completed (6:13-15)
 - Temple dedication (6:16-18)
 - Temple service (6:19-22)

Preparing to Build the Temple

- ▶ Altar set up “in its place” – burnt offerings
- ▶ Feast of Booths
- ▶ Daily burnt offerings, regular burnt offerings
- ▶ Purchase cedar trees from Lebanon
- ▶ Laid the foundation in second year
- ▶ Celebration – tears and cheers

“Let us build with you . . .”

- ▶ Adversaries (4:1)
- ▶ Fear (3:3)
- ▶ The danger of cooperation
 - Ezra 9:1-2
 - Ezra 9:11-14
 - 2 Kings 17:33, 41
- ▶ A holy work
 - A spiritual battle
- ▶ A dangerous union

Active opposition

- ▶ Discouraged them
- ▶ Made them afraid
- ▶ Bribed counselors against them

They succeeded! (Ezra 4:24)

- ▶ Proverbs 29:25
- ▶ Romans 11:33
- ▶ 2 Timothy 3:12
- ▶ John 15:18-25

Flash forward

- ▶ A letter to Xerxes (Ahasuerus) – 50 years
 - Ezra 4:6
- ▶ A letter to Artaxerxes – 80 years
 - Ezra 4:7-23
 - Work on the wall ceased (4:23)
- ▶ The work on the temple stopped (4:24)

Construction resumes

- ▶ How to overcome fear?
- ▶ The Word of the LORD by Haggai & Zechariah
 - Ezra 5:1 and 6:14

Haggai

- ▶ Rebuke
- ▶ A promise of future glory for this new Temple
- ▶ A promise of a future world-wide Kingdom

Zechariah

- “Return to Me”
- Zeal for Jerusalem (Zech. 1:15-17)
- Sing and rejoice – I will return and dwell in your midst (Zech 2:10-12)
- A coming Priest/King (Zech. 6:9-14)
- Will dwell in Jerusalem (Zech. 8:1-3)
- Wrath on enemies (Zech. 9)
- A universal King/Kingdom (Zech. 9:9-10)
- Restoration of Israel (Zech. 10)
- The coming Day of the LORD (Zech. 14:1-9)
- Holiness will be the hallmark of that Day (Zech. 14:20)

A demonstration of sanctification

- ▶ John 17:17
- ▶ Proverbs 2
- ▶ Hebrews 4:12

Opposition resumes

- ▶ Intimidation again
- ▶ A different response by the people
- ▶ A letter to King Darius – Was there a decree?
- ▶ A new decree: rebuild this house of God

The Temple is completed

▶ Dedication

- 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats” (1 Kings 8:63)
- 100 bulls, 200 rams, 400 lambs, 12 male goats (Ezra 6:17)

▶ Temple service and religious duty

- Purification of the priests
- Passover
- Feast of Unleavened Bread

▶ Great expectations

Lessons from Ezra 4-6

- ▶ A spiritual warfare
- ▶ The primacy of God's Word
- ▶ The wisdom of God v. the wisdom of man