

## Old Testament Survey

### Session Twenty

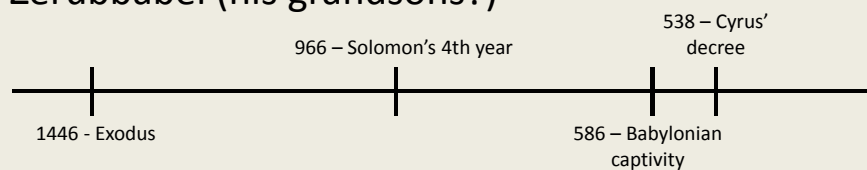
#### The Books of Ezra, Zechariah, Haggai, Esther, & Nehemiah

### The Book of Ezra – General

- The Book of Ezra (שֵׁפֶר עֶזְרָא) *Sefer Ezra*
- “Help”
- Author: Ezra
- Date Covered:
  - Remnant returning to Jerusalem
  - Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, Cyrus
- Covers: 537-458
- Theme: Return

## The Book of Ezra – Author of Chronicles?

- 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 = Ezra 1:1-3a
  - Another argument for Ezra as the author?
  - A *terminus a quo* for the date of writing: 538 BC
- 1 Chronicles 3:24 – Some generations after Zerubbabel (his grandsons?)



Thus, the author is unknown but possibly Ezra, and the date is sometime around the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC

## The Book of Ezra – Ezra/Nehemiah

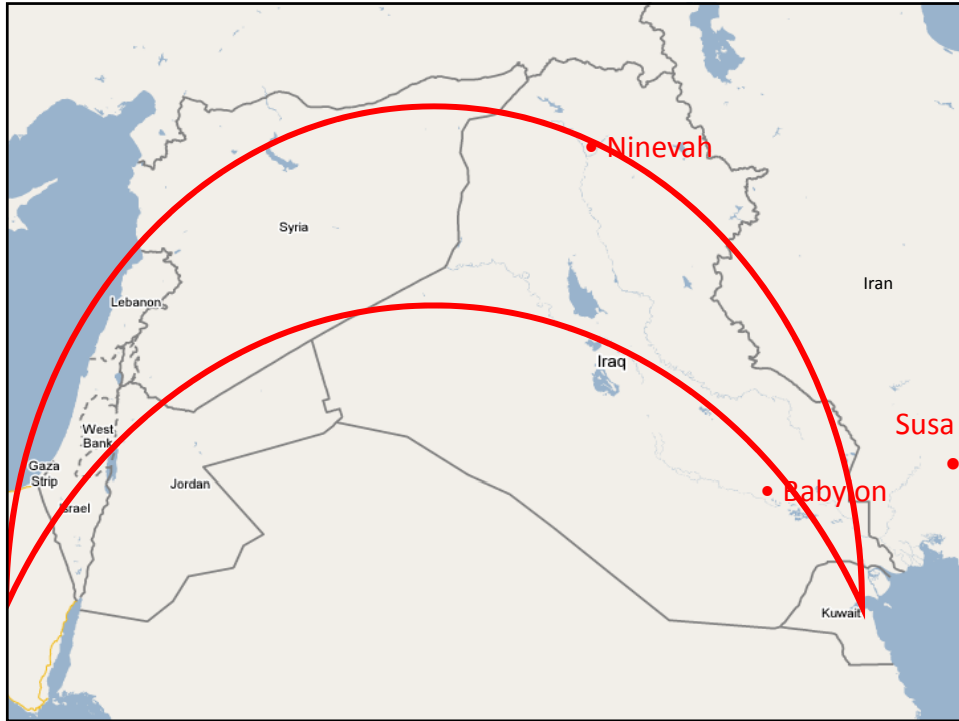
- Modern versions split them
- First Hebrew manuscript to split them: 1448 AD
- Masoretes considered them one: > 600 AD
- Latin Vulgate split them: @ 400 AD
- Origen first split them: @ 225 AD
- Josephus considered them one? @ 100 AD
- Apocrypha considered them one? @ 100 BC
- Septuagint considered them one: @ 250 BC

### **The Book of Ezra/Nehemiah – Time Period**

- Jacob born: 2006 BC (Gen 47:9)
- Jacob enters Egypt: 1876 BC (Exod 12:40-41)
- Exodus from Egypt: 1446 BC (1 Kings 6:1)
- Solomon's Temple Construction Begins: 966 BC
- Northern Kingdom exiled: 722 BC (2 Kgs 17)
- Southern Kingdom exiled: 586 BC (2 Kgs 25)
- Decree of Cyrus: 537 BC (2 Chr 36 = Ezra 1)
- Temple Rebuilt: 516 BC (Ezra 6:15)
- Ezra returns: 458 BC (Ezra 7:7)
- Wall Rebuilt: 445 BC (Neh 2:1; 6:15)
- Nehemiah returns to Susa: 433 BC (Neh 13:6)
- Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem: ??? BC (Neh 13)

### **The Book of Ezra/Nehemiah – Time Period (cont.)**

- Before 1150 BC: Egypt controls Palestine
- 1150 – 1010 BC: Philistines/Israel fight for Palestine
- 1010 – 930 BC: Israel dominates Palestine
- 930 – 850 BC: No major empire in Palestine
- 850 – 612 BC: Assyria the premier power
- 612 – 539 BC: Babylon the premier power
- 539 – 333 BC: Persia the premier power
- Alexander the Great, Maccabean revolt, Rome





## **The Book of Ezra – Kings of Persia**

- **Cyrus the Great (559-530)**
  - Founder of the Persian Empire
  - God’s “Messiah” (Isa 45:1)
  - King when Zerubbabel and company returned
- **Cambyses II (530-522)**
- **Smerdis (522-521)**
- **Darius (521-486)**
  - King when temple was completed (Ezra 5-6)
  - Haggai 1:1, Zechariah 1:1
- **Xerxes = Ahasuerus (486-465) – Ezra 4:6**
  - Esther’s husband
- **Artaxerxes (464-424)**
  - King served by Ezra and Nehemiah

## **The Book of Ezra – Structure**

- **Restoration of Nation’s Religious Center (1-6)**
  - Remnant’s emancipation from Babylon (1-2)
  - Remnant’s occupation of Jerusalem (3-4)

**Books of Zechariah & Haggai**

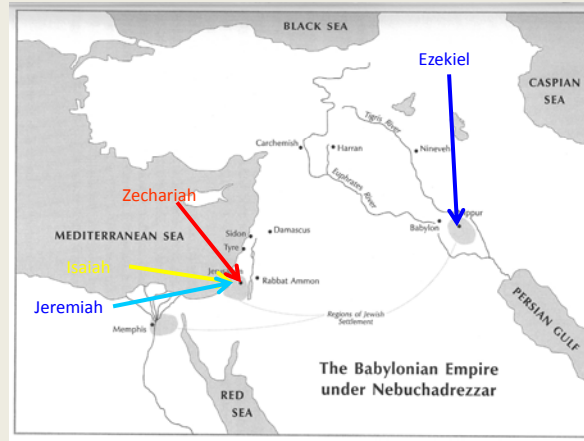
## The Book of Zechariah – General

- Part of the Twelve Prophets (נביאים) *Nevi'im*
- “Remembered by Jehovah”
- Author: Zechariah
- Date:
  - Zerubbabel, Darius , Xerxes
- Covers: 537-470
- Theme: Consummation

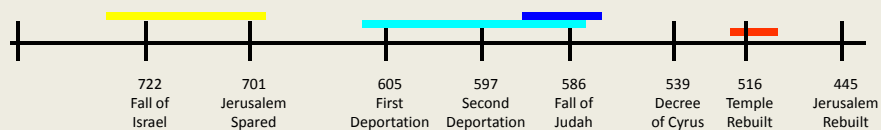
## The Book of Zechariah – Structure

- 1-6 Zion’s Sanctuary: Seven or Eight Visions
  - Question; call to repentance; people obey (1:1-6)
  - Seven (eight?) night visions (1:7-6:8)
    - First and Seventh visions: Four horses patrolling the earth
    - Second and Sixth visions: Israel should leave Babylon; their sin will go there
    - Third and Fifth visions: Sin of priest removed; curse on thieves, sinners
    - Fourth vision: Zerubbabel and Joshua as the Lord’s anointed
  - Crowning of Joshua (6:9-15)
- 7-8 Zion’s Services: Four Messages
  - The people have a question about weeping (7:1-8)
  - Remembrance of the people’s unwillingness to repent and God’s severe judgement (7:8-14)
  - BE STRONG: God is determined to not treat the remnant that way (8:1-19)
  - Future honor for Jewish people (8:20-23)
- 9-11 Zion’s Savior: Two Burdens (First Coming – The Rejected Savior)
  - Coming king will replace wicked shepherds and restore Israel (9-10)
  - Coming shepherd will be rejected and thus give sheep up for slaughter; wicked shepherd will instead be raised up (11)
- 12-14 Zion’s Savior: Two Burdens (Second Coming – The Reigning Savior)
  - Israel’s future repentance and cleansing from sin; Yahweh’s deliverance of Jerusalem and judgment upon nations.

## The Book of Zechariah – Context



Map taken from *Ezekiel*, NICOT, p. xxi



## The Book of Haggai – General

- Part of the Twelve Prophets (נביאים) *Nevi'im*
- “Festal”
- Author: Haggai
- Date Covered:
  - Returned remnant in Jerusalem
  - Zerubbabel, Darius I (Persian)
- Covers: 520
- Theme: Consider

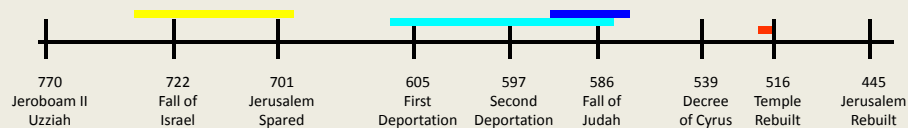
## The Book of Haggai – Structure

- 1:1-12: August 29, 520 BC
  - Message to **Zerubbabel** and **Joshua** (1:1)
  - **People** say it is not time to rebuild (1:2)
  - God has held back agricultural blessings (1:3-11)
  - **Zerubbabel, Joshua, and people** obey (1:12)
- 1:13-15: September 21, 520 BC
  - God says He is with the **people** (1:13)
  - God stirs up spirit of **Zerubbabel, Joshua, and people** to build (1:14-15)
- 2:1-9: October 17, 520 BC
  - Message to **Zerubbabel, Joshua, and people** (2:1-2)
  - **BE STRONG Zerubbabel, Joshua, and people** (2:3-5)
  - Because, God will make latter temple more glorious (2:6-9)
- 2:10-19: December 18, 520 BC
  - Unclean makes clean unclean; clean doesn't make unclean clean (2:10-13)
  - **People** are unclean, so is their work (2:14)
  - God will restore their agricultural blessings (2:15-19)
- 2:20-23: December 18, 520 BC
  - Message to **Zerubbabel** (2:20-21)
  - **Zerubbabel** will be God's chosen ruler (2:22-23)

## The Book of Haggai – Context



Map taken from *Ezekiel*, NICOT, p. xxi



## The Book of Ezra – Structure (cont.)

- Restoration of Nation's Religious Center (1-6)
  - Remnant's emancipation from Babylon (1-2)
  - Remnant's occupation of Jerusalem (3-4)
  - Remnant's completion of the Temple (5-6)

60 year gap  
Book of Esther

## The Book of Esther – General

- The Book of Esther (שֵׁפֶר אֶסְתֵּר) *Sefer Esther*
- "Star"
- Author: Unknown (Ezra, Nehemiah, Mordecai)
- Date:
  - Jews in captivity
  - Ahasuerus / Xerxes
- Covers: 473
- Theme: Protection

## The Book of Esther – Structure

- The Grave Danger to the Jews (1-4)
  - The Vices of Ahasuerus (1)
  - The Virtues of Esther (2)
  - The Vilification of the Jews (3)
  - The Vision of Mordecai (4)
- The Great Deliverance of the Jews (5-10)
  - The Venture of Esther (5)
  - The Vengeance of Haman (6-7)
  - The Vindication of the Jews (8)
  - The Victory of the Jews (9-10)

## Reversal

3:1-2 King Ahasuerus promoted Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite. He advanced him in rank and gave him precedence over all his other nobles. And all the king's officials at court bowed down and did obeisance to Haman, for so the king had commanded.

3:10 Then the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews

4:1 Mordecai...tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, went out into the city, and raised a loud and bitter cry.

9:3-4 [Mordecai] had come to occupy a position of great power in the palace, while his fame was spreading through all the provinces...Mordecai was growing more and more powerful.

10:3 Mordecai the Jew was second in rank only to King Ahasuerus himself and was preeminent among the Jews.

8:2a Then the king took off his signet ring which he had taken from Haman and gave it to Mordecai.

8:15a Then Mordecai went out from the king clad in a royal robe of violet and white, wearing a large gold turban and a purple cloak of fine linen.

## The Book of Ezra – Structure (cont.)

- Restoration of Nation’s Religious Center (1-6)
  - Remnant’s emancipation from Babylon (1-2)
  - Remnant’s occupation of Jerusalem (3-4)
  - Remnant’s completion of the Temple (5-6)
- Reformation of Nation’s religious Life (7-10)
  - Declaration of Artaxerxes (7)
  - Repatriation of the Remnant (8)
  - Intermarriage of Israel & Intercession of Ezra (9)
  - Reformation of the Jews (10)

## The Book of Nehemiah – General

- The Book of Nehemiah (שֵׁפֶר נְהֵמְיָהוּ) *Sefer Nehemiah*
- “Jehovah Comforts”
- Author: Ezra
- Date Covered:
  - Southern Kingdom
  - Artaxerxes
- Covers: 445
- Theme: Restoration

## The Book of Nehemiah – Structure

- Rebuilding the City (1-7)
  - Intercession for the city (1)
  - Investigation of the city (2)
  - Reconstruction of the city (4-5)
  - Completion of the Reconstruction of the city (6-7)
- Revival of the Citizens (8-13)
  - Commandments Read to the People (8)
  - Confession rendered by the People (9)
  - Covenant Renewed with the People (10)
  - City Repossessed by the People (11-12a)
  - City of Jerusalem Rededicated by the People (12b)
  - Civil Reforms Among the People (13)

## A Relook at the Timeline

Date	Major Events	Israel/Judah's Kings & Prophets	Pagan Power & Kings
722	Deportation of Israel to Assyria	Hoshea (I) Hosea, Micah Hezekiah (J) Isaiah, Micah	Assyria
605	Battle of Carchemish – Egypt & Assyria defeated; Daniel and group deported	Jehoakim (J) Jeremiah	Assyria/Babylon
597	Ezekiel & 10,000 captive deported	Jehoachin Zedekiah Jeremiah Daniel, Ezekiel	Babylon Nebuchadnezzar 222-222
586	Fall of Jerusalem – Temple Destroyed; 40,000 deported to Babylon	Zedekiah Jeremiah Daniel, Ezekiel	Babylon Nebuchadnezzar 222-222
538	Babylon surrenders to Cyrus “the Great”	Daniel	Medo-Persia *Cyrus II 550-530

\* Is 44:27-28; 45:1-4; 2Chr 36:22-23; Jer 29:10-11

## A Relook at the Timeline (cont.)

Date	Major Events	Israel/Judah's Kings & Prophets	Pagan Power & Kings
537	First group (50,000) return under Zerubbabel; restore the Altar and worship	Zerubbabel Zechariah	Persia *Cyrus II 550-530
535	Second year of Return - Foundation of the Temple begun and stopped by opposition	Zerubbabel Zechariah	Persia Cambyses 530-522 Smerdis 5223
520	Rebuilding of Temple resumed	Ezra Zechariah Haggai	Persia Darius 521-486
516	Temple finished & dedicated	Ezra	Persia Darius 521-486
473	Esther is made Queen of Persia	Esther	Persia Ahasuerus Xerxes 486-465

## A Relook at the Timeline (cont.)

Date	Major Events	Israel/Judah's Kings & Prophets	Pagan Power & Kings
458	Second group @ 2,000 return to Jerusalem under Ezra; synagogues and scribes founded	Ezra Nehemiah Malachi	Persia Artaxerxes I 464-424
445	Nehemiah rebuilds walls of Jerusalem	Ezra Nehemiah Malachi	Persia Artaxerxes I 464-424 3
433	Nehemiah returns and institutes reforms	Ezra Nehemiah Malachi	Persia Artaxerxes I 464-424
<b>100 YEARS OF SILENCE</b>			
333	Alexander the Great defeats Darius III		Greece A. The Great 222-222

**Old Testament Survey**

**End Session Twenty**

**Question Time!**