

INTRODUCTION TO THE POST-EXILE LITERATURE  
(Ezra 1:1)

- I. Historical Setting
  - A. JERUSALEM had fallen to Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC
  - B. BABYLON fell to Cyrus the Great in 539 BC
    - 1. He permitted people to RETURN to their HOMELANDS (cf. Ezra 1:1-3)
    - 2. He encouraged them to REBUILD their places of WORSHIP
    - 3. He authorized FUNDS to subsidize the COST (Ezra 1:4)
  - C. Cyrus's son Cambyses II conquered EGYPT in 525 BC
  - D. The Persian Empire reached the pinnacle of POWER and ORGANIZATION during the reign of Darius I (522 – 486 BC)
    - 1. He exercised TIGHT CONTROL over the provinces
    - 2. He implemented a multi-layer system of TAXATION
  - E. In 520 BC, God commissioned the prophets HAGGAI and ZECHARIAH to exhort the people to FINISH the TEMPLE
  - F. The Temple was DEDICATED in 515 BC (Ezra 6:16-18)
  - G. Darius was DEFEATED at the Battle of MARATHON in 490 BC
  - H. Ahasuerus/Xerxes invaded mainland GREECE in 480 BC

- I. Artaxerxes I became king in 464 BC
  - 1. In the SEVENTH year of his reign, he sent EZRA to JERUSALEM (457 BC)
  - 2. In the TWENTIETH year of his reign, he sent NEHEMIAH to JERUSALEM (445 BC)

II. Chronology of the Post-Exile Literature

- A. Ezra 1 – 4: the days of CYRUS the Great and Cambyses II (539 – 522 BC)
- B. The prophecies of HAGGAI and ZECHARIAH (520 – 518 BC)
- C. Ezra 5 – 6: the support of DARIUS for rebuilding the TEMPLE (ca. 520 BC)
- D. The life of ESTHER during the reign of Ahasuerus (486 – 465 BC)
- E. Ezra 7 – 10: the ministry of EZRA (ca. 457 BC)
- F. Nehemiah 1 – 13: the work of NEHEMIAH (ca. 445 BC)
- G. The prophecy of MALACHI, during NEHEMIAH'S work in Jerusalem (445 – 433 BC)