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## Daniel

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## 6 God's People Return



### Search the Scriptures

 **Read Isaiah 44:24-28.**

#### KJV Vocabulary

*Use the definitions to enhance your understanding of the passage as you read.*

**frustrateth the tokens of the liars** (v. 25): confuses the signs of false prophets

**maketh diviners mad** (v. 25): makes fortune-tellers powerless

#### Answer the questions.

1. Whom did God say would be His shepherd? \_\_\_\_\_
-  2. Isaiah prophesied about Cyrus about a hundred years before the man was born. What does the Bible tell us about Daniel during the reign of Cyrus? (See Daniel 6:28.)  
\_\_\_\_\_

 **Read Ezra 1:1-8.**

#### KJV Vocabulary

*Use the definitions to enhance your understanding of the passage as you read.*

**whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth** (v. 4): any exiled Jews, wherever they lived

**strengthened their hands** (v. 6): helped them

**Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah** (v. 8) possibly a son of Jehoiachin; perhaps another name for Zerubbabel

#### Answer the questions.

3. Whom did Cyrus, ruler of the Persian Empire, credit as having given him the kingdoms of the earth?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What did the LORD God of Heaven charge Cyrus to do?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What spoils of war had Nebuchadnezzar seized many years earlier that were now returned to Jerusalem?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Repatriation and Reconstruction

Just as prophesied, God ended the seventy-year Captivity by having Cyrus decree the **repatriation** of interested Jews and the reconstruction of the temple at Jerusalem. Under the leadership of King David's descendant Zerubbabel and Aaron's descendant Jeshua, close to 50,000 Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem.

#### Words to Know

**repatriation** (re' pā' trē ā' shən): the return or restoration of a person to his country of origin

Though restoring the temple was the primary mission of these returning exiles, they were unable to get the task done quickly. Sixteen years after the first exiles returned to Jerusalem, God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to help renew the vision for the temple, and construction resumed. Twenty years after the Captivity ended, the Israelites finally finished the temple.

After the temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem, God placed a young Jewess named Esther and her cousin

Mordecai in one of the Persian's imperial headquarters, the palace of King Ahasuerus at Shushan. Esther and Mordecai rose to positions of power, and God used them to protect the Messianic line from destruction. The next lesson tells the story of the Jews left in Persia, even after thousands of them had returned from the Captivity.

## Search the Scriptures

- ① King Darius of Babylon had a son Xerxes, traditionally thought to be King Ahasuerus, who took Esther to be his new queen at Shushan. Xerxes' successor was Artaxerxes, who later encouraged the Jews to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

### Read Ezra 7:11-23.

#### Answer the questions.

6. According to King Artaxerxes in verse 15, where did the God of Israel live? \_\_\_\_\_
7. For what purpose did the king send silver and gold along with Ezra to Jerusalem?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. From verse 23, what can you conclude about the king's motive for his generosity to the Jews?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Ezra and Nehemiah

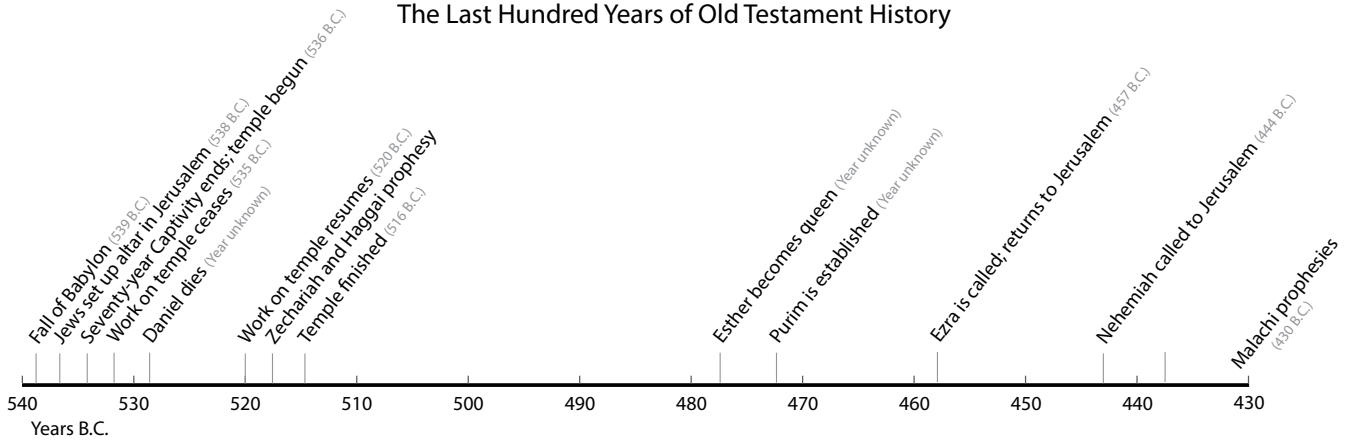
Possibly while Esther was queen of Persia, God called "Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven" (Ezra 7:12) to lead a second group of Jews back to Jerusalem from Babylon. This significantly smaller group included many priests. The mission of these returning exiles seems to have been revival. The teaching and living of the Law of Moses resumed in Israel, bringing spiritual reform to God's people. "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7:10).

About thirteen years after Ezra's return, God sent Nehemiah with a handful of folks to Jerusalem. Their objective was to fortify and secure Jerusalem by rebuilding her walls and gates. Nehemiah encouraged the social and economic reforms begun by Ezra and the priests.

About one hundred years after Zerubbabel's return, God sent the last Old Testament prophet to His people. When Malachi's ministry ended and his book was written, the Old Testament Scriptures were complete.

God had brought His people back to their land, just as He had promised. What a mighty God! He does as He wishes and accomplishes what He chooses. His power knows no limitation. His ability never fails. No one and nothing can stand in His way or thwart His purposes, except as He Himself decides to allow it. There is none like Him in all the earth. His equal or superior cannot be found anywhere in time, space, or eternity. He alone is sovereign. Hallelujah, praise Jehovah!

## The Last Hundred Years of Old Testament History



We see God's sovereignty in using powerful leaders to fulfill His plans. He prompted heathen kings to permit and facilitate the Jews' return to their land and to restore Jerusalem and the temple. Though not openly as with Cyrus, God also governed Ahasuerus. Though God's name doesn't appear in the Book of Esther, His sovereign hand rules unmistakably. What may appear to be coincidence and random chance is

rather God guiding history in the making. Truly Jehovah alone is Sovereign of sovereigns, easily directing kings and emperors.

*"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."*

Proverbs 21:1

### Watching Prophecy Become History

Imagine yourself as a fifteen-year-old returning from Babylon with Zerubbabel. You are among the first Jews being repatriated after the seventy-year Captivity. You will live to hear the LORD's last prophet speak before the four-century silence begins. Watch yourself age . . .

|                                                                     | Age | Year B.C. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------|
| • You arrive at Jerusalem, a place unseen even by your grandfather. | 15  | 538       |
| • The rebuilding of the temple starts and stops.                    | 17  | 536       |
| • You join the team that resumes work on the temple.                | 33  | 520       |
| • You and your people rejoice at the completion of the temple.      | 37  | 516       |
| • A young Jewess becomes queen of the Persian Empire.               | 75  | 478       |
| • You are among the elders that welcome Ezra and his group.         | 95  | 458       |
| • Led by Nehemiah, the last group of Jews arrives from Babylon.     | 108 | 445       |
| • Malachi begins prophesying.                                       | 115 | 438       |

(Dates are approximate.)

## Understanding the Commentary

**Complete the sentences in this brief historical outline.**

9. When the seventy-year Captivity of God's people ended, \_\_\_\_\_ was emperor of Persia.
10. Cyrus decreed the \_\_\_\_\_ of all Jews who were interested in returning to Jerusalem.
11. Cyrus ordered the \_\_\_\_\_ of the temple in Jerusalem.
12. Approximately \_\_\_\_\_ Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem, led by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
13. The rebuilding of the temple took \_\_\_\_\_ years.
14. The \_\_\_\_\_ line was protected from destruction during the time of Esther.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ led a second group of Jews back to Jerusalem to teach the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

**Write the name of each person beside his description.**

|            |        |           |
|------------|--------|-----------|
| Malachi    | Haggai | Zechariah |
| Artaxerxes | Ezra   | Nehemiah  |

16. Two prophets who helped renew the vision for rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem.  
\_\_\_\_\_
17. God sent him to Jerusalem to bring spiritual revival to God's people. \_\_\_\_\_
18. God sent him to Jerusalem to rebuild the city's walls and gates. \_\_\_\_\_
19. The reigning king who urged the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. \_\_\_\_\_
20. Last Old Testament prophet who also wrote the last book of the Old Testament. \_\_\_\_\_

**Circle T if the statement is true and F if it is false.**

21. **T F** God does what He wishes and accomplishes what He chooses.
22. **T F** God's power is limited only by man's choices.
23. **T F** Ungodly rulers sometimes thwart God's purposes.
24. **T F** God prompted heathen kings to allow and help the Jews return to their homeland.
25. **T F** God easily directs the affairs of all rulers.

## Memory Work Focus

Write the memory selection for this section, including the reference.

26. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Review

Circle *T* if the statement is true and *F* if it is false. If the statement is false, correct the italicized part.

27. **T F** The stone that was “cut out without hands” struck the *head* of the image.  
 28. **T F** After the stone destroyed the image, the stone became a *mountain* that filled the earth.  
 29. **T F** *Nebuchadnezzar* was “the stone” in the Scripture Jesus quoted.  
 30. **T F** The *stone that crushed the image* symbolized God shattering the foundation of man’s pride and power.  
 31. **T F** The earth-filling mountain represents *the mountain of Judah’s sins*.  
 32. **T F** When billions gather before the Judge, *God* will have the final say.  
 33. **T F** The final fate of the little horn will be *a place of honor in Hell*.  
 34. **T F** When Jesus receives His rightful dominion, all people and nations will *serve Him*.  
 35. **T F** *God* will always rule in the affairs of men.

Answer the questions.

36. Believers are citizens of what kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_  
 37. Believers are obedient and loyal to what ruler? \_\_\_\_\_