

A Study of the Prophets

O.T. Survey Lesson 196--The Post-exilic Period

Introduction: The defeat of Babylon and the rise of Cyrus the Persian to world rule resulted in a decree for the Israelites to return to their homeland. Three distinct groups of captives were led back home by Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. In this lesson we will examine some of the events of the period that serve as a backdrop for the prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah, and .

Lesson aim: To become familiar with the main events of the post-exilic period.

The first return under Cyrus' rule led by Zerubbabel--Ezra 1:1-6:22

1. Under whose reign were the Jews first allowed to return to their homeland? (v. 1) What had Isaiah said about this nearly two hundred years before? (Is. 44:27-45:7)
2. What did Cyrus send with the captives back to Jerusalem? (v. 7-11) Who was the leader of the group? (v. 8)
3. What did Jeshua and Zerubbabel lead the people in constructing? (3:1) The people began to work on what? (3:7-13) How did the people react to the laying of the foundation?
4. Describe the efforts made by the enemies of Israel to stop the building of the temple (4:1-23).
5. In whose reign was work on the temple renewed? (4:24) What prophets were instrumental in encouraging the completion of the temple? (5:1-2)
6. What inquiry did Tattenai, the governor, make in regard to the construction of the temple? (5:3-

17) What was Darius' response? (6:1-12) When was the temple completed? (6:13-18)

7. What feasts were observed afterward? (6:19-22)

(Historical note: The story of God's preservation of the people through Esther during the reign of Xerxes (Ahasuerus) takes place between the first two returns).

The return under Artaxerxes led by Ezra-- Ezra 7:1-10:44

1. In whose reign did Ezra go to Jerusalem? (7:1) From what city? (7:6) Who returned with him? (7:7)
2. What was Ezra's occupation? (7:6) What was his attitude toward the Lord's word? (7:10)
3. What things did King Artaxerxes grant to be done? (7:11-28)
4. What special problem was presented to Ezra a few months after his arrival? (9:1) What steps were taken to correct this problem? (9:3-10:44)

Another return under Artaxerxes led by Nehemiah--Nehemiah 1-10

1. When did Nehemiah make his request of King Artaxerxes to go to Jerusalem? (Neh. 1:1) What request did Nehemiah make? (2:5)
2. Enumerate some of the highlights of the efforts to rebuild the walls (Neh. 2:11-6:14). How long did it take to complete the work? (6:15)
3. Describe the provisions made to read the Law to the people (8:1-8) How did the people respond? (8:9-18)
4. What things did the people covenant to do in obedience to the Lord? (10:28-39)

5. When did Nehemiah return to the king for a period of time? (Neh. 13:6) Upon returning to Jerusalem, what problems did Nehemiah encounter and how did he correct these? (13:1-31)

6. It is likely that the last O.T. prophet revealed God's message for the Jews at this time or shortly before this. Who was he?