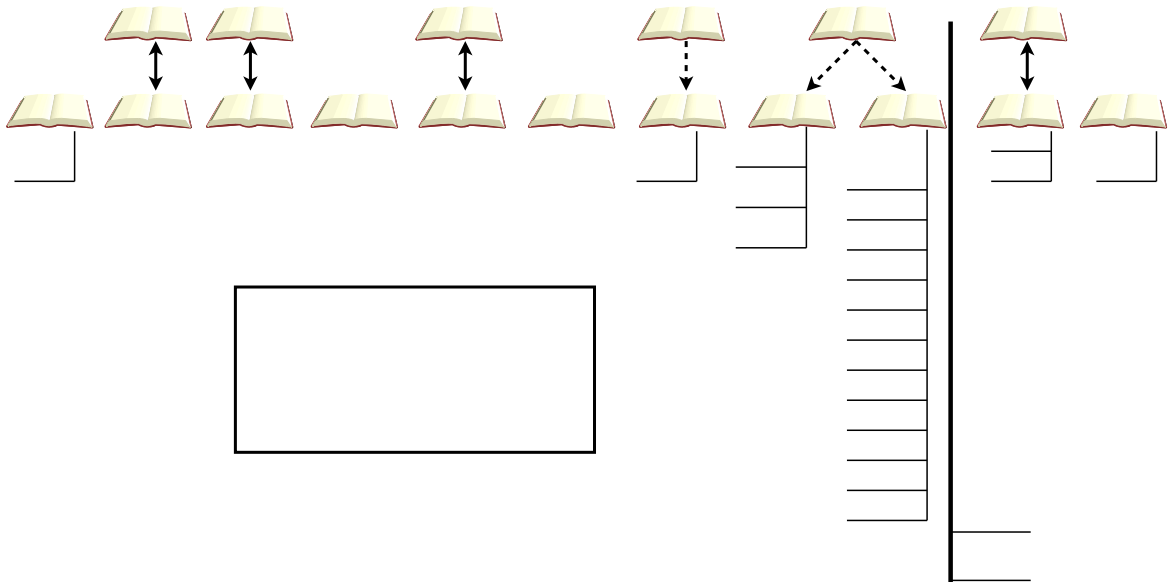
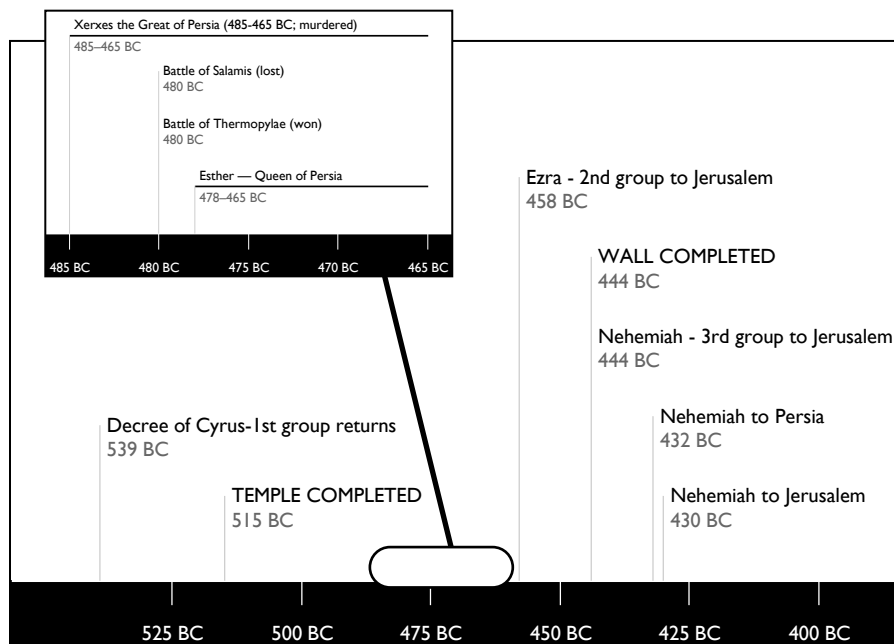


**XXIV. UNIT 24: “Out of the Ashes” – The Birth of Second Temple Judaism - part II**  
**I. LOOKING BACK...One Last Time!**

# THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ORDER



**II. ESTHER: “For Such a Time as This?”**



# GETTING THE BIG PICTURE

## A. The Historical Context

1. Xerxes had most likely just returned from his \_\_\_\_\_ expeditions to conquer Greece.
2. Queen Vashti's insolence was met with royal \_\_\_\_\_ guided by Divine \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Although God's name appears nowhere in Esther, His "\_\_\_\_\_" are everywhere:
  - a. Her parents had *not* \_\_\_\_\_ in the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem.
  - b. She had not \_\_\_\_\_ with Zerubbabel when allowed to.
  - c. She was a \_\_\_\_\_ woman
  - d. Esther's selection for \_\_\_\_\_ to replace Vashti (2:1-18)
  - e. Mordecai's intervention in the assassination \_\_\_\_\_ (2:19-23)
  - f. Esther's life \_\_\_\_\_ in approaching the king (5:1-8)
  - g. Xerxes' discovery of Mordecai's \_\_\_\_\_ on his "sleepless night" (6:1-4)
  - h. Haman's \_\_\_\_\_ reversal (6:7-7:10)
  - i. The \_\_\_\_\_' preservation throughout the Empire (8:3-9:17)

### Key Information

**Key Word:**

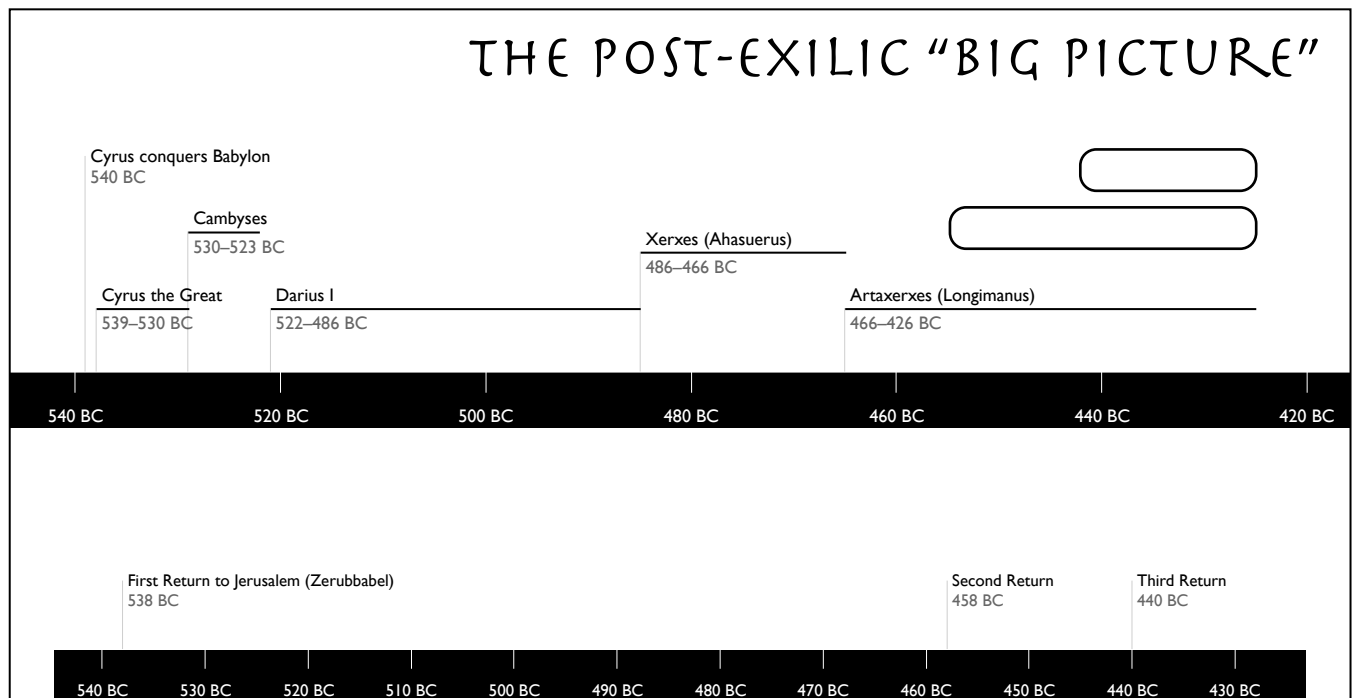
**Key Chapter:**

**Basic Geography:**

**Book summary:**

## III. EZRA & NEHEMIAH: The "Founders" Of New Testament Judaism

### A. The Bigger "Big Picture"



B. Ezra: “*Scribe of the Law of Moses*” (Ezra 7:1-11; Neh 8:2)

*“And there went up also to Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king, some of the people of Israel, and some of the priests and Levites, the singers and gatekeepers, and the temple servants. And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. For on the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylonia, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, for the good hand of his God was on him. For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.”*  
—Ezra 7:7-10

1. Scribes in the ANE

- a. Grew out of the systematic development of \_\_\_\_\_ systems
- b. *Preexilic* scribes were basically “\_\_\_\_\_” to kings, prophets and the public at large (2 Sam 8:16-17; 1 Kg 4:3; Jer 36:18).
- c. Ezra became the \_\_\_\_\_ of the *postexilic* priest-scribe, dedicated to the copying, preservation and exposition of \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. By the time of the New Testament, the priests had abandoned this \_\_\_\_\_ commitment in favor of \_\_\_\_\_ and economic concerns.

C. Nehemiah: “*From Cupbearer to Wall Rebuilder*” (Neh 1:1 - 2:8; 4:15-20)

*“When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall, each to his work. From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah, who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other. And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me. And I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, “The work is great and widely spread, and we are separated on the wall, far from one another. In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.”*  
—Nehemiah 4:15-20

1. Cupbearers in the ANE

- a. Next to the king, the cupbearer was possibly the most \_\_\_\_\_ person in the Persian Empire.
- b. Xenophon tells us that the “cupbearer” tested \_\_\_\_\_ before it reached the king.
- c. He \_\_\_\_\_ the king’s signet ring.
- d. Well-\_\_\_\_\_ in court etiquette
- e. Was a “\_\_\_\_\_ ear” for the king at all times.
- f. Had control over who had \_\_\_\_\_ to the king.
- g. Was supposed to be \_\_\_\_\_, physically fit and of good temperament.

D. Ezra & Nehemiah: Two Men With One Mission

1. Both Ezra and Nehemiah were driven by a deep commitment to the theology of the covenant.
  - a. They both saw covenant \_\_\_\_\_ as a prerequisite to national \_\_\_\_\_ (Neh 9:38 - 10:29).
  - b. They both were committed to a purified and holy \_\_\_\_\_ (Ezra 10:18-44; Neh 13:4-9).
  - c. They both were committed to observing the \_\_\_\_\_ and temple ritual (Neh. 8:13-18; 10:31-13:15-22).
  - d. They both were committed to the reinstatement of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ as the basis of all life within the community of faith (Neh 8:1-12).

- e. Both were committed to the spiritual purity of the covenant community, evidenced by separation from the pagan \_\_\_\_\_ (Ezra 10:1-19; Neh 9:1-5; 13:1-3).
- f. They both were committed to reinstating “\_\_\_\_\_” as the standard for all of life (holy days, holy things, a holy race, the holy city, holy sabbaths, etc.; Ezra 8:28;9:2; Neh 9:14; 10:33; 11:1).

2. Both Ezra and Nehemiah were “wall builders”:

- a. Ezra sought to rebuild the “\_\_\_\_\_” of the Law of Moses as the basis of personal and corporate \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. Nehemiah sought to rebuild the wall of the city to \_\_\_\_\_ and safeguard the covenant \_\_\_\_\_.

E. Ezra & Nehemiah: The “Grandfathers” of New Testament Judaism

- 1. The role of king and state was replaced by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2. The “voice” of God was \_\_\_\_\_ rather than prophet or king.
- 3. The purity of the \_\_\_\_\_ degenerated into a self-righteous exclusivity.
- 4. The *mission* of the nation degenerated to protection \_\_\_\_\_ Gentiles rather than bringing \_\_\_\_\_ to them (cf. Is 42:6; Lk 2:32).
- 5. Their theology of \_\_\_\_\_ was limited to what was *outside* the “\_\_\_\_\_” and blind to what was inside.
- 6. The \_\_\_\_\_ of economic and political concerns separated the priesthood from the spiritual responsibility of \_\_\_\_\_ the covenant community.
- 7. It is impossible to appreciate the Jerusalem and Judaism of \_\_\_\_\_’ day without understanding the effect of Ezra and Nehemiah’s \_\_\_\_\_.

F. Malachi: God’s “Second To The Last” Prophetic Word

- 1. The conditions in Malachi’s day do not “\_\_\_\_\_” the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah.
- 2. Nehemiah’s “leave of absence” (i.e. return to the court of Artaxerxes) most likely \_\_\_\_\_ Malachi’s ministry (13:6).
- 3. The sins that Malachi addresses in his prophecy mirror the conditions described by Nehemiah upon his return:
  - a. Offering God the “\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_” for temple sacrifices (Mal. 1:6-14).
  - b. Corruption within the \_\_\_\_\_ (2:1-9).
  - c. Divorce and remarriage to \_\_\_\_\_ women (2:13-16).
  - d. Withholding of \_\_\_\_\_ and offerings (3:8-12).
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_ injustice and absence of \_\_\_\_\_ compassion (3:5-6).
- 4. Malachi ends with a call to covenant \_\_\_\_\_ and a promise of a \_\_\_\_\_ prophet like Elijah:

*“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.”* —Malachi 4:4

*“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”* —Malachi 4:5-6

- 5. Malachi is Yahweh’s final \_\_\_\_\_ as the “curtain closes” on Act III of His grand Story.

6. During the 400 year “\_\_\_\_\_,” Yahweh will be drastically rearranging the “set” to prepare the way for the final prophet in the Story—John the Baptizer:

*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’” John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”*  
 – Mark 1:1–8

G. The End of Act III and the Christian

1. From \_\_\_\_\_ we learn the vital need to be taught and *re-taught* the true nature of the Story.

*“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.”*  
 – Matthew 24:45–46

2. From Esther we are reminded that all \_\_\_\_\_ are for the Story, *not* for the one possessing them.

*“For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?”*  
 –1 Corinthians 4:7

3. From Nehemiah we are reminded that for those of us in the Story, our most important \_\_\_\_\_ is between holiness and accommodation to \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”* – 1 John 2:15–17

4. From Malachi we are reminded that “\_\_\_\_\_” is judged more by what we keep for ourselves and why, than what we give to Yahweh.

*“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.”*  
 – 2 Corinthians 9:6–8



**The Book of Ezra**

**Key Word:**

**Key Chapter:**

**Basic Geography:**

**Book summary:**

**The Book of Nehemiah**

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