

25. The Post-Exilic Period

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I. The United Kingdom (Monarchy)

- A. The Reign of Saul (reigned: 1052-1011 BC)
- B. The Reign of David (reigned: 1011-971 BC)
- C. The Reign of Solomon (reigned: 971-931 BC)

II. The Divided Kingdom

- A. The Northern Kingdom (19 Kings from 931-722 BC)
 - 1. Jeroboam (931-910 BC)
 - 2. Nadab (910-909 BC)
 - 3. Baasha (909-886 BC)
 - 4. Elah (886-885 BC)
 - 5. Zimri (885 BC)
 - 6. Omri (885-874 BC)
 - 7. Ahab (874-853 BC)
 - 8. Ahaziah (853-852 BC)

9. Johoram [a/k/a Joram] (852-841 BC)
10. Jehu (841-814 BC)
11. Jehoahaz (814-798 BC)
12. Jehoash [Joash] (798-792 BC)
13. Jeroboam II (793-753 BC)
14. Zechariah (753-752 BC)
15. Shallum (752 BC)
16. Menahem (752-742 BC)
17. Pekahiah 742-740 BC)
18. Pekah (752-732 BC)
19. Hosheah (732-722 BC)

NB: The Northern Kingdom ends with the Assyrians invading the north and taking them into exile in 722 BC.

B. The Southern Kingdom (20 Kings from 931-586 BC))

1. Rehoboam (931-913 BC)
2. Abijah/ Abijam (913-911 BC)
3. Asa (911-870 BC)
4. Jehoshaphat (873-848 BC)
5. Jehoram (853-841 BC)
6. Ahaziah (841 BC)
7. Athaliah (841-835 BC)
8. Joash/ Jehoash (835-796 BC)
9. Amaziah (796-767 BC)
10. Azariah/ Uzziah (792-740 BC)
11. Jotham (750-731 BC)
12. Ahaz (735-716 BC)
13. Hezekiah (716-687 BC)
14. Manasseh (697-643 BC)
15. Amon (643-641 BC)
16. Josiah (641-609 BC)
17. Jehoahaz (609 BC)
18. Jehoiakim (609-598 BC)
19. Jehoiachin (598-597 BC)
20. Zedekiah (597-586 BC)

NB: The history of the Southern Kingdom ends with the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar invading the south in 605 BC and taking them into exile in Babylon.

III. The Babylonian Exile

A. The Concluding events of the Southern Kingdom

1. The last 3 Kings of the Southern Kingdom:

a. Jehoiakim (609-598 BC)

- When Pharaoh Neco put Jehoahaz in prison he installed Jehoahaz's son Eliakim as king and changed his name to Jehoiakim.
- Jehoiakim reigned for 11 years and he was an evil king.
- It was during the reign of Jehoiakim that Nebuchadnezzar attacked Judah and took Daniel and some of the Jews captive. This was in 605 BC and marks the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity.

b. Jehoiachin (598-597 BC)

- Jehoiachin became king when his father died. He became king when he was 18 years old and reigned for 3 months.
- He was an evil king.
- During his reign Nebuchadnezzar laid siege against Jerusalem and plundered Jerusalem in 597 BC.

c. Zedekiah (597-586 BC)

- When Jehoiachin was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, he placed Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's Uncle, as King over Judah. He then changed his name to Zedekiah. He became king when he was 21 years old and reigned 11 years
- He was an evil king and the judgment of God is still on Jerusalem and Judah:

II Kings 24:19 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 20 For through the anger of the LORD this came about in Jerusalem and Judah until He cast them out from His presence. And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

- Finally Nebuchadnezzar destroys the Temple in Jerusalem in 586 BC:

2Kings 25:8 Now on the seventh day of the fifth month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 9 And he burned the house of the LORD, the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem; even every great house he burned with fire. 10 So all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls around Jerusalem. 11 Then the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon and the rest of the multitude,

Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away into exile. 12 But the captain of the guard left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and plowmen.

2 Kings 25:13 Now the bronze pillars which were in the house of the LORD, and the stands and the bronze sea which were in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces and carried the bronze to Babylon. 14 And they took away the pots, the shovels, the snuffers, the spoons, and all the bronze vessels which were used in temple service. 15 The captain of the guard also took away the firepans and the basins, what was fine gold and what was fine silver. 16 The two pillars, the one sea, and the stands which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD — the bronze of all these vessels was beyond weight. 17 The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and a bronze capital was on it; the height of the capital was three cubits, with a network and pomegranates on the capital all around, all of bronze. And the second pillar was like these with network.

B. Jeremiah records God's indictment on the Southern kingdom and the reason's for the coming captivity:

1. Jer. 15:1-4

Jer. 15:1 Then the LORD said to me, "Even though Moses and Samuel were to stand before Me, My heart would not be with this people; send them away from My presence and let them go! 2 "And it shall be that when they say to you, 'Where should we go?' then you are to tell them, 'Thus says the LORD: "Those destined for death, to death; And those destined for the sword, to the sword; And those destined for famine, to famine; And those destined for captivity, to captivity."' 3 "And I shall appoint over them four kinds of doom," declares the LORD: "the sword to slay, the dogs to drag off, and the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. 4 "And I shall make them an object of horror among all the kingdoms of the earth *because of Manasseh*, the son of Hezekiah, the king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem.

NB: This reference to the sin of Manasseh very likely refers to his defilement of the Temple recorded in II Kings:

II Kings 21, "4 And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put My name." 5 For he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD."

2. Jer. 15:5-9

Jer. 15:5 "Indeed, who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem, Or who will mourn for you, Or who will turn aside to ask about your welfare? 6 "***You who have forsaken Me,***" declares the LORD, "***You keep going backward. So I will stretch out My hand against you and destroy you; I am tired of relenting!*** 7 "And I will winnow them with a winnowing fork At the gates of the land; I will bereave them of children, I will destroy My people; They did not repent of their ways. 8 "Their widows will be more numerous before Me Than the sand of the seas; I will bring against them, against the mother of a young man, A destroyer at noonday; I will suddenly bring down on her Anguish and dismay. 9 "She who bore seven sons pines away; Her breathing is labored. Her sun has set while it was yet day; She has been shamed and humiliated. So I shall give over their survivors to the sword Before their enemies," declares the LORD.

3. The Babylonian captivity is clearly depicted as a judgment of God:

2Kings 24:1 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years; then he turned and rebelled against him. 2 And the LORD sent against him bands of Chaldeans, bands of Arameans, bands of Moabites, and bands of Ammonites. So He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through His servants the prophets. 3 Surely at the command of the LORD it came upon Judah, to remove them from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, 4 and also for the innocent blood which he shed, for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; and the LORD would not forgive.

II Chronicles 36:15 And the LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; 16 but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy. 17 Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave them all into his hand. 18 And all the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought them all to Babylon. 19 Then they burned the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all its fortified buildings with fire, and destroyed all its valuable articles. 20 And those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, 21 to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.

NB: The reference to “seventy years” seems to correlate the full span of the Babylonian Exile (70 years) with an equivalent number of sabbatical years that Judah had ignored. This produces a total figure of 70 times 7 (since each Sabbatical year was a 7th year of rest) or 490 years dating the violation back to the time of Eli and his sons (c. 1107-1067 BC). “Sabbath rest” for the Land refers to the Mosaic requirement to let the Land rest each seventh year (Lev 25:1-7):

Lev. 25:1 The LORD then spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, saying, 2 “Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, ‘When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a sabbath to the LORD. 3 ‘Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, 4 but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. 5 ‘Your harvest’s aftergrowth you shall not reap, and your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a sabbatical year. 6 ‘And all of you shall have the sabbath products of the land for food; yourself, and your male and female slaves, and your hired man and your foreign resident, those who live as aliens with you. 7 ‘Even your cattle and the animals that are in your land shall have all its crops to eat.

4. The Mosaic Law warned of the consequences of violating this Law (Lev. 26:27-46)

Lev. 26:1 *'You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a sacred pillar, nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God. 2 'You shall keep My sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; I am the LORD. 3 'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, 4 then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. 5 'Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. 6 'I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and no sword will pass through your land. 7 'But you will chase your enemies, and they will fall before you by the sword; 8 five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword. 9 'So I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant with you. 10 'And you will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new. 11 'Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. 12 'I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. 13 'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you should not be their slaves, and I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.*

Lev. 26:14 *'But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, 15 if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant, 16 'I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that shall waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you shall sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies shall eat it up. 17 'And I will set My face against you so that you shall be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you shall rule over you, and you shall flee when no one is pursuing you. 18 ***'If also after these things, you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.*** 19 'And I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze. 20 'And your strength shall be spent uselessly, for your land shall not yield its produce and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit.*

Lev. 26:21 ****'If then, you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins.*** 22 'And I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which shall bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted.*

Lev. 26:23 ****'And if by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me, 24 then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins. 25 'I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands. 26 'When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will bring back your bread in rationed amounts, so that you will eat and not be satisfied.****

Lev. 26:27 ****'Yet if in spite of this, you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me, 28 then I will act with wrathful hostility against you; and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins. 29 'Further, you shall eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you shall eat. 30 'I then will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols; for My****

soul shall abhor you. 31 'I will lay waste your cities as well, and will make your sanctuaries desolate; and I will not smell your soothing aromas. 32 'And I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled over it. 33 'You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste.

Lev. 26:34 'Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. 35 'All the days of its desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your sabbaths, while you were living on it. 36 'As for those of you who may be left, I will also bring weakness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies. And the sound of a driven leaf will chase them and even when no one is pursuing, they will flee as though from the sword, and they will fall. 37 'They will therefore stumble over each other as if running from the sword, although no one is pursuing; and you will have no strength to stand up before your enemies. 38 'But you will perish among the nations, and your enemies' land will consume you. 39 'So those of you who may be left will rot away because of their iniquity in the lands of your enemies; and also because of the iniquities of their forefathers they will rot away with them.

Lev. 26:40 'If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me — 41 'I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies — or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, 42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land. 43 'For the land shall be abandoned by them, and shall make up for its sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, shall be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes. 44 'Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God. 45 'But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD.'"

Lev. 26:46 These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which the LORD established between Himself and the sons of Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai.

C. The Prophets of the Babylonian Exile:

1. Jeremiah

- a. Jeremiah is the last speaking and writing prophet to warn the people of Judah of the impending judgment of God coming in the form of the Babylonian Exile. Early in his ministry (Jer. 1-14) his message indicates that Judah could still avoid the coming judgment if they repented. This principle of the "changing of God's mind" is described in Jer. 18. However, there is a change at one point (Jer. 15) and God decrees that the coming judgment was unavoidable

- b. Jeremiah very likely wrote Lamentations also which describes the last days of Jerusalem before it is destroyed and burnt in 586 BC. The book is a *lament* concerning the impending judgment.

2. Daniel

- a. Daniel enters the Babylonian Captivity in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim (605 BC) as a young teenager and is an influence for God to Israel in Babylon throughout the entire Bab. Captivity.
- b. He is a contemporary of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.
- c. Daniel is one of the greatest examples of godly character in the midst of temptation and worldly pressure in all the Scriptures.
 - Refusal to eat the King's choice food (Dan. 1)
 - Educated in the pagan ways of Babylon (Dan. 1)
 - Respectfully responds to Neb. When he has his dream of the giant image (Dan. 2)
 - Respectfully responds to Neb.'s 2nd dream (Dan. 4)
 - Explains the vision of the handwriting on the wall to Belshazzar
 - Refuses to compromise when the other Governor's and Satraps get the King Darius to make a decree that all who pray to anyone else but the King for 30 days shall be cast into the Lion's Den (Dan. 6)
 - Daniel's prayer for mercy for Israel towards the end of the 70 years captivity (Dan. 9)

3. Ezekiel

- a. Ezekiel was probably 25 years old when he is taken captive and about 30 years old when called to the ministry in Babylon. He lived in Tel-Abib (Ezek. 3:15) on the banks of the Chebar River, probably SE of Babylon.
- b. Ezekiel is taken captive along with his wife (Ezek. 24:15-27) and 10,000 captives to Babylon in 597 BC.
- c. He ministers to the Jews in captivity until about 560 BC when according to Jewish tradition he is killed by an Israelite prince when he rebuked his idolatry.

IV. The Return from the Babylonian Exile: God brought the People back to the Land in 3 Returns

A. The First Return

1. 538 BC as described in Ezra 1-6
2. The Leaders were Zerubbabel, Sheshbazzar, and Jeshua along with about 50,000 people.
3. They were assisted by the decree of Cyrus the Persian:

a. Ezra 1:1 “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,

2 “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 ‘Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem. 4 ‘And every survivor, at whatever place he may live, let the men of that place support him with silver and gold, with goods and cattle, together with a freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.’”

- NB: a. Jeremiah had indicated that the Captivity would be 70 years (Jer. 25:11). Jeremiah further prophesied a *return* after the 70 years were completed:

Jer. 29:10 “**For thus says the LORD, ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.** 11 ‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. 12 ‘Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 ‘And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 ‘And I will be found by you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.’”

- b. The decree from Cyrus itself was prophesied by the prophet Isaiah 200 years earlier:

Is. 44:24 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, “I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, Stretching out the heavens by Myself, And spreading out the earth all alone, 25 Causing the omens of boasters to fail, Making fools out of diviners, Causing wise men to draw back, And turning their knowledge into foolishness, 26 Confirming the word of His servant, And performing the purpose of His messengers. It is I who says of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be inhabited!’ And of the cities of Judah, ‘They shall be built.’ And I will raise up her ruins again. 27 “It is I who says

to the depth of the sea, 'Be dried up!' And I will make your rivers dry. **28 "It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' And of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.'"**

- c. Cyrus the Persian evidently had a habit of returning conquered peoples to their land—perhaps in an attempt to curry favor from them. This is evident from the Cyrus Cylinder which records just such a decree by Cyrus. This is no the decree mentioned by Ezra relating to the 1st Return of the Hebrew people following their captivity in Babylon.

- 4. The rebuilding of the Temple is begun in 536 BC and the foundation of the Temple is laid:

Ezra 3: 10 Now when the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD according to the directions of King David of Israel. 11 And they sang, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, saying, "For He is good, for His lovingkindness is upon Israel forever." And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. 12 Yet many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' households, the old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, while many shouted aloud for joy; 13 so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the shout of joy from the sound of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard far away.

- 5. Trouble experienced by the Samaritans; Temple work stalled for 16 years due to the fear and selfishness of the people; Temple construction resumed in 520 BC due to the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah and completed in 516 BC.

Ezra 6: 14 And the elders of the Jews were successful in building through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they finished building according to the command of the God of Israel and the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. 15 And this temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar; it was the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

NB: Between the 1st Return (under Zerubbabel) and the 2nd Return (under Ezra) from the Babylonian Captivity the Book of Esther takes place. It is during the Persian era under the Persian King Ahasuerus (aka Xerxes) who reigned from 486-465 BC. Esther covers the period from 483-473 BC.

B. The Second Return

1. 458 BC as described in Ezra 7-10
2. This return led by Ezra including 1,758 people
3. Assisted by the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus the Persian
4. Ezra is forced to deal with the serious problem of intermarriage of the people with non-Jews (Neh. 9-10).

C. The Third Return

1. 444 BC as described in Nehemiah 1-13
2. This return led by Nehemiah
3. Assisted by the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus the Persian
4. Nehemiah leads the people to rebuild the Wall of Jerusalem in 52 days despite the opposition of scoffers (Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem)

V. Concluding Events of the Old Testament

A. The Last of the Writing Prophets

1. Ezra, Nehemiah and Malachi

- Ezra and Nehemiah are contemporaries and each lead a Return to the Land and Reforms
- Malachi is also a contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah; He rebukes the people for their continued sin and compromise of the divine standards of the Law. He communicates God's promise that one day in the future the Jews would repent and their Messiah would be revealed.
- 400 years of Silence follows the last voice of the Old Testament.
- The first prophetic voice of the New Testament is from John the Baptist:

“Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” (Matt. 3:2)