

The time of the Exile changed things forever for Israel

- Israel would never have another time of sovereignty in Biblical history.
- The Monarchy would never be re-established until the arrival of the Messiah.
- The Synagogue would become the gathering place for scattered Jews.
- The Scribes would become the “keepers of the religion” rather than the Priests and Prophets.
 - Four books, written by one author, give a spiritual and historical review of this time: 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah.
 - These four books were written by Ezra the Scribe, a descendent of the last High Priest of the pre-exilic period who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar.
 - Ezra is prominent among Jewish writers, rabbis, and historians like Josephus.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah give the history of the return of the exiles

- Ezra covers 536 – 445 BC, Nehemiah from 445 to 432 BC.
- Ezra covers the rebuilding of the Temple, Nehemiah the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

The date of the return

- The exile took place in three phases:
 - 605 BC – the best young men, including Daniel.
 - 597 BC – 10,000 of the leaders of Israel, including Ezekiel.
 - 586 BC – the final destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of all but the poorest Jews.
- Jeremiah the prophet had prophesied 70 years of captivity (Jeremiah 29:10-11).
- Daniel the prophet asked God for insight on the 70 years, and received the most important chronological prophecy of all the Bible: Daniel 9:24-27.

- Seventy “weeks” would **bring in everlasting righteousness** – v. 24.
 - Literally “seventy sevens,” and can only be determined by context.
 - Context is time, specifically years, thus $70 \times 7 = 490$ years.
 - A period of 490 years was **determined** (lit.: imposed) for **thy people and thy holy city** (thus the Jews and Jerusalem).
- The 490 years would begin with **the going forth of a commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem** (v. 25).
 - At Daniel’s time, this commandment had not yet been given.
 - Ezra 1:1-2 (536BC) records this command, by Cyrus, King of Persia (who had conquered Babylon in 538BC).
- The 490 years was divided into segments –
 - Seven weeks – 49 years – the time to rebuild and restore.
 - Sixty-two additional weeks – 434 years – **Shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.**
 - **The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city** – v. 26
 - A prophetic reference to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman people.
 - The remaining seven years is given to **the prince that shall come** (v. 26) who will **confirm the covenant with many for one week** (v. 27).
- After Messiah was **cut off**, God paused the clock, leaving a remaining period of seven years, which we call the Tribulation period.

The Return and its implications

- During the siege of Jerusalem, Jeremiah the prophet purchased land and sealed the deed in an earthenware jar so that the title would be there when the exiles returned.
- 2 Corinthians 4:7 speaks of the **treasure in earthenware vessels**. Today the “title deed” is being stored in the church, but in the end, Israel will return to the Lord and the Kingdom will be established.