

Backdrop: The Babylonian Empire

Opening Discussion:



1. What comes to mind when you hear about the Middle East? Iran?
2. With most of the world's power and wealth concentrated in the western world for the past several centuries, what part has the Middle East played?
3. How is that changing now?
4. How did the Middle East generally and Iran specifically intersect the story of the gospel?

The Persian Empire was used by God to restore the Jews to the _____ and prepare the way for the _____.

1. _____ and _____



2. _____ importance

- Persia was an ancient empire that ruled the Mediterranean world and the ancient near east from 550 B.C. until 330 B.C.
- Persia continued the power and wealth of Babylon, but less is known about their culture.
- Two historically important rulers: Cyrus the Great, Darius the Great
- Alexander the Great defeated Darius III in 331 AD to end the Persian empire.

3. _____ significance

- The rebuilding of the Temple was decreed by Cyrus the Great
- Isaiah prophesied about the Decree of Cyrus 150 years before it happened:

Who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose'; saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.' " Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him.

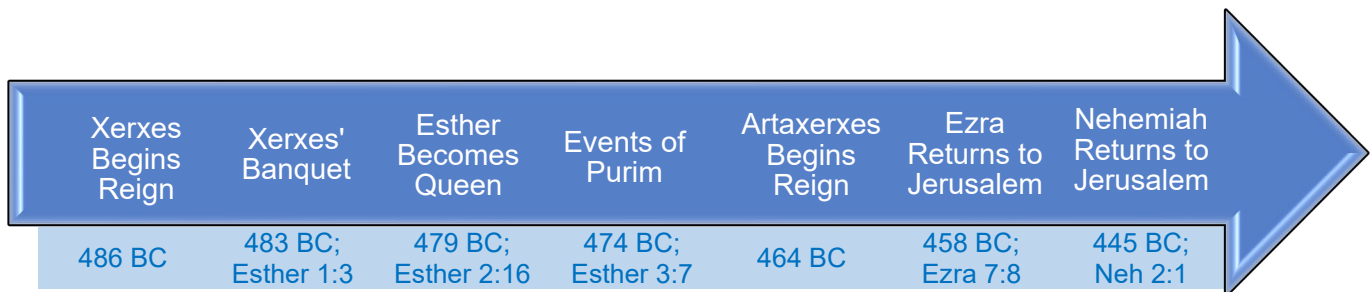
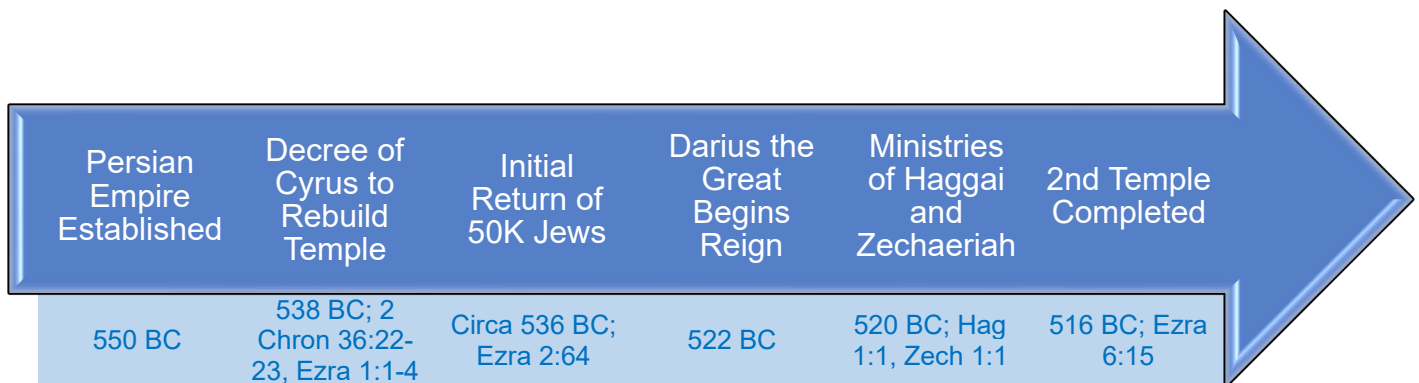
Isaiah 44:28-45:1

- Darius the Great searched the archives to find the decree of Cyrus
- Ezra and Nehemiah were both commissioned by Artaxerxes

Nehemiah 2:1-8

1 In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him . . . the king said to me, "What are you requesting?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. **5** And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it." . . . And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me. **Nehemiah 2:1-8**

Timeline of Biblical Events and the Persian Empire



Fill in the Blank Answers

The Persian Empire was used by God to restore the Jews to the Promised Land and prepare the way for the Messiah.

1. Geography, location
2. Historical
3. Biblical