

BIBLE HISTORY IV
REMNANT'S RETURN TO JOHN THE BAPTIST

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. This Period Of History Concludes The Old Testament Era Of The Bible And Leads To The Coming Of The Prophesied Messiah, Jesus The Son Of God.
- B. This Lesson Will Deal With Two Major Categories Of This Historical Period:
 - 1. *The Return of the Exiles to Jerusalem (539-444 B.C.).*
 - 2. *The Inter-Testamental Time (i.e. "The Silent Years") Until the Coming of John the Baptist (444-4 B.C.).*

II. AIM.

- A. To Continue Our Learning Of The Historical Development Of God's Plan And Promise Throughout This Period Of Time. The Following Books Deal With This Period:
 - 1. *Ezra, Esther, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.*
 - 2. *Daniel 2, 7 - 12.*
 - 3. *Mark 1 - 6.*
- B. To Inform The Student Of The Bible In An Overview Approach:
 - 1. Of a period of history which is not very familiar to the average student.
 - 2. Of the post-exilic period with the great world powers and their relation to the unfolding of God's plan of redemption.
 - 3. Of the times prior to the coming of Jesus the Christ and His life and ministry on earth.

III. OUTLINE.

A. HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RETURN FROM EXILE.

1. *The decree of Cyrus, king of Persia: 539 B.C. (Ezra 1:1-4; 2 Chron. 36:22-23 cf. Isaiah's prophecy 44:24 - 45:4)*
2. *The first arrival to Jerusalem under the leadership of Sheshbazzar (i.e. Zerubbabel) and Jeshua: 536 B.C. (Ezra 1:1 - 6:22)*
 - a. *Between Ezra 6 and 7 there is a fifty-eight year gap: Chapter 6 ends in 516 B.C. and chapter 7 begins in 458 B.C. (The events of Esther took place in between these two chapters.)*
 - b. *The foundation and building of the Temple was completed in 516 B.C. (See Haggai, Zechariah and Ezra 6)*
3. *The second arrival to Jerusalem under Ezra involving a revival of the people and a restoration of the priestly functions: 458 B.C. (Ezra 7 - 10)*
4. *The third arrival to Jerusalem under Nehemiah; the building of the walls: 445 B.C. (Neh. 1 - 13; see also Malachi which was written during this time.)*

NOTE: (1) With the return and restoration of Israel and Judah back into the land of Palestine, the seventy years of desolation and Babylonian captivity are fulfilled.

(2) We turn now to those years known as the "four hundred silent years." Babylon has passed from the scene; Persia, Greece and Rome are the great political powers during this time. (See Dan. 2, 7 - 12)

B. HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE INTER-TESTAMENTAL PERIOD.

1. *The Medo-Persian Empire: (539-331 B.C.).*
 - a. *>Cyrus the Great (Ezra 1:1ff): 539-530 B.C.*
 - b. *Cambyses: 530-522 B.C.*

- c. Darius I Hystaspis: 522-486 B.C.
 - d. >Xerxes (Ahasuerus) (*Esther 1:1ff*): 486-465 B.C.
 - e. >Artaxerxes I Longimanus (*Neh. 1:1ff*): 465-423 B.C.
 - f. Darius II (Nothus): 423-404 B.C.
 - g. Artaxerxes II (Mnemon): 404-359 B.C.
 - h. Artaxerxes III (Ochus): 359-338 B.C.
 - i. Arses: 338-335 B.C.
 - j. Darius III Codomanus: 335-331 B.C.
2. The Grecian Empire: (333-142 B.C.).
- a. *Philip of Macedon* united Greek city-states into one military force desiring to conquer Asia.
 - b. *Alexander the Great* (the notable horn of the goat in *Dan. 8:5-8*), son of Philip of Macedon, took up the ruling-of-the-world ambition of his father:
 - 1) He conquered the Medo-Persian Empire in 334 B.C.
 - 2) He went on "to conquer the world" and finally died at the early age of 33 from disease and dissipation in 323 B.C.

NOTE: After Alexander's death, the great empire that he had built began to fall apart. In the power-struggle that followed, the empire was finally divided among four of his many generals.
 - c. The successors of Alexander the Great: (323-31 B.C.).
 - 1) The four horns of *Dan. 8*: Four generals of Alexander.
 - a) *Cassander* - Ruled Macedonia.

- b) *Lysimachus* - Ruled Thracia.
- c) *>Seleucus I Nicator* - Ruled Syria.
- d) *>Ptolemy I Soter* - Ruled Egypt.

2) The empire that was left by Alexander, ultimately being divided into four kingdoms as world powers upon the stage of history, and significantly from the Biblical record, are the dynasties founded by Seleucus I Nicator: *The Seleucids*, and Ptolemy I Soter: *The Ptolemies*.

- a) *The Seleucid Dynasty* (Syria) lasted from 312 to 64 B.C.

NOTE: The Maccabean revolt occurred during this period in Jerusalem.

- b) *The Ptolemy Dynasty* (Egypt) lasted from 323 to 31 B.C.

NOTE: Daniel the prophet gives much detail concerning these two powers, during this period of time, as they affected the land and people of Palestine. (See Dan. 7 - 8, 10 - 11)

3. The Roman Empire: (64 B.C. and after).

- a. Rome took over the *Ptolemies* in 168 B.C. and Pompey, a Roman general, brought the *Seleucids* to an end in 64 B.C.
- b. Pompey entered Jerusalem in 63 B.C. and made Hycrannus II, of the Hasmonean (Maccabeans) family, governor of Jerusalem.

NOTE: At this time Rome was ruled by Pompey, Crassus, and Julius Caesar. (This period is known as "the period of the republic.")

- c. The Romans elected Augustus Caesar (Octavian) as emperor in 27 B.C.: "*The Roman Empire*" with its long line of emperors began.
- d. The period of time during Roman conquest and stabilization is noteworthy as it relates to

Bible history because:

- 1) It is the rise of the fourth kingdom (Rome) of Dan. 2 and 7. (See also Dan. 11:36ff)
- 2) It is the rise of the Herodians (descendants of Esau) which followed the Has-monean family: Herod the Great (Matt. 2:1) became "king of Judea" in 37 B.C.
- 3) It is the "fulness of the times": The Messiah's appearance and His "forerunner" is nigh at hand. (Mark 1 - 6)

NOTE: For a full list of all the kings of Medo-Persia, Greece (the Ptolemies and Seleucids), the Has-moneans, the Herods, rulers of Judea and the Roman emperors during this period of history, see F. F. Bruce's, Israel Among The Nations, pp. 231-240.

IV. CONCLUSION.

- A. The Period Of History Called The "Four Hundred Silent Years" Is Filled With Voluminous Facts Of History.
 1. This lesson has merely been an attempt to present a brief skeleton outline of this period.
 2. This was done in order that the student:
 - a. May get a clear concept of the progression of history without boggling the mind with scores and scores of names and places.
 - b. May be encouraged to dig deeper into this period that was prophesied by Daniel (7 - 8, 9 - 12) and was the providential work of God in human history leading up to Jesus Christ, the focal point of all history, in the fulness of the times.
- B. This Period Of History Brings Us To What The Word Of God Calls "The Fulness Of The Times." (Gal. 4:4)