



**Rebuild
& Renew**

**INTRODUCTION TO
THE POST-EXILIC
PERIOD**

THE POST-EXILIC BOOKS
EZRA - NEHEMIAH,
HAGGAI - ZECHARIAH - MALACHI

Introduction to the Post-Exilic Period

- The Post-Exilic period is the 100+ years that follows the return from exile in Babylon that began in 537 BC.
- Old Testament history centers around two main events: the Exodus from Egypt & the Exile to Babylon.
- The five books in this study were written in Judah during the Post-Exilic period.

Introduction to the Post-Exilic Period

1. Patriarchs (1800 – 1500 BC)
2. Exodus (1400 BC)
3. Conquest & Judges (1400 – 950 BC)
4. Monarchy (950 – 587 BC)
5. Exile (604 – 537 BC)
6. **Post – Exilic Period (537 – 430 BC)**
7. Intertestamental Period (430 – 6 BC)
8. Life of Jesus (6 BC – 27 AD)
9. The Early Church (27 AD – 95 AD)

Introduction to the Post-Exilic Period

Chronical overview of the books in this study:

1. Returning to Build the Temple (**Ezra 1-6**)
2. Realigning Priorities (**Haggai 1-2**)
3. Encouragement for the Builders (**Zechariah 1-6**)
4. Prophecies of the Messiah (**Zechariah 7-14**)
5. Confession and Repentance (**Ezra 7-10**)
6. Nehemiah's Prayer (**Nehemiah 1:1 – 2:8**)
7. Restoring the Wall (**Nehemiah 2:9 – 7:73**)
8. Repentance and Revival (**Nehemiah 8-13**)
9. Love, Worship and Marriage (**Malachi 1-2**)
10. Justice, Tithing, Purifying & Judgement (**Malachi 3-4**)

Introduction to the Post-Exilic Period

The Exiles of Israel & Judah.

- The countries that conquered Israel & Judah during this period are the Assyrians & the Babylonians.
- They destroyed their cities and deported thousands of their leaders and leading families to other empires.
- This left local populations poor and leaderless.

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The Assyrian Captivity (740-722 BC)

- Assyria conquers many cities in Judah & Israel, but not Jerusalem.
- They begin to deport people from the northern kingdom of Israel into exile about 740 BC.
- Most exiled Jews assimilate into the peoples of the lands where they are taken and never return in any large number.

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The Assyrian Captivity (740-722 BC) - Continued

- Those Israelites that remained mixed their worship of God with the worship of other pagan gods from the outsiders that are brought in to Israel by the Assyrians.
- Those outsiders would be known as the Samaritans. They would eventually oppose the Jews who would return from the exile in Babylon.

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The Babylonian Captivity (604 – 587 BC)

- The Babylonians succeeded the Assyrians as a superpower and conquered Judah through three deportations.
 - These deportations occurred in 604, 597 & 587 BC)
- In 587 BC Jerusalem is destroyed and its leaders were exiled leaving only the poorest people in the land.

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The Babylonian Captivity (604 – 587 BC) - Continued

- **The Jewish faith would see a revival while in exile as well as a return to the Mosaic law.**
- **Some Jews grew prosperous during the exile and had no desire to return, however many did long to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.**
- **They wanted to center their faith and return to the sacrificial system that remits their sins.**

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The Fall of Babylon

- **Nabonidus rules Babylon from 556-539 BC. He was not interested in governing or commanding the army.**
- **He leaves his son Belshazzar to command the army and rule Babylon as a co-regent.**
- **The Babylon empire that was once strong under Nebuchadnezzar is growing weaker.**

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The Fall of Babylon - Continued

- During this time the Medo-Persians were united and growing in strength under Cyrus the Great.
- After putting down a rebellion in Assyria, he then turns his attention toward the Babylonian Empire.
- Babylon fell to the Medo-Persians without a fight. Daniel's account of the handwriting on the wall describes the swiftness of the fall.

Introduction to the Post-Exilic Period

Rebuilding the walls under Nehemiah

- Jerusalem's walls still being broken down mad the city defenseless. Any attempts to rebuild the wall were met with sharp opposition from their enemies.
- Nehemiah was the cupbearer to Artaxerxes who appoints him governor over Judah and to complete the walls.
- Nehemiah forms building teams and they complete the wall in a miraculous 52 days!
- He leads them in a great celebration.

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Revival

- While Nehemiah was primarily the civil governor during this time, Ezra (a priest & scribe) was the spiritual leader. Spurred by the scripture readings the peoples hearts were touched and they begin to repent of their sins and pledged themselves to serving God.
- Later the revival would wane as God's people would intermarry with non-Jewish people.
- God would send the prophet Malachi to address this complacency and spiritual drift.