

After 70 years in exile, God allowed the Israelites to return from Babylon, rebuild the Temple, learn His Laws, and begin to worship Him at the place He chose – Jerusalem. The return from exile happened in three waves.

First Wave – The Temple is Rebuilt:

Ezra 1:1-11, 2:1-65 About 50,000 people returned to Jerusalem from Babylon in about 538 BC under Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel the Governor.

Ezra 3:8-13 Rebuilding the Temple begins around 536 BC, and the foundation is laid.

Ezra 4 Adversaries hinder the Temple work. The enemies of Judah and Benjamin discourage and frighten the people from building. The work is stopped from around 529 BC until around 520 BC.

Ezra 5:1-2; Haggai 1:1-2:5; Ezra 6:1-12 God spoke through Haggai and Zechariah telling the people to get back to work. The people obeyed and finished rebuilding the Temple about 516 BC.

Ezra 6:14-18 The rebuilt Temple is dedicated, and Passover is celebrated.

Second Wave – Teaching God’s Laws to the People:

Ezra 7:6-10 Ezra, a man skilled in the Laws of God, set his heart to study, practice, and teach God’s Laws in Israel, and God was with him

Ezra 7:11-26 King Artaxerxes issued a decree supporting and funding Ezra’s return to Jerusalem to teach the people God’s Laws.

Ezra 8:31-36 Ezra arrives in Jerusalem with about 1,500 men plus women and children.

Ezra 9 Separation from the Canaanite wives – repentance in a big way

Third Wave – Jerusalem’s Wall is Rebuilt:

Nehemiah 2:1-11 Nehemiah asks to go and rebuild Jerusalem’s walls. He arrives around 445 BC.

Nehemiah 2:10; 4:1-3, 6-20; 6:1-14 Tobiah, Sanballad, and Geshem oppose Nehemiah and God in the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s wall. Nevertheless, the work continued.

Nehemiah 6:15 The wall was rebuilt in 52 days because the people had a mind to work!

Nehemiah 8:1-8; 9:1-3 Ezra teaches the Law to the people and the people respond with confession of sins, repentance, and worship to Yahweh.

Conclusion:

With God’s help, the people returned and rebuilt the Temple and the wall surrounding Jerusalem. They were taught the Laws of God and began worshipping Yahweh again and obeying His commandments.

Key points we can apply in our lives today:

Yahweh is merciful and forgiving

Yahweh is faithful – He keeps His promises and provides all that we need to finish His work.