

~POSTEXILE - EXILES RETURN FROM BABYLON (132)

- In **607 B.C.E.** the once-prosperous land of Judah was made a desolate waste, without an inhabitant, as Jewish captives were led away to exile in Babylon and a remnant fled to Egypt.
- And I will make Jerusalem piles of stones, the lair of jackals, and the cities of Judah I shall make a desolate waste, without an inhabitant. (**Jeremiah 9:11**)
- The God of loving-kindness, though, would not leave his people in exile forever. He foretold that they would have to serve the king of Babylon seventy years, after which he would deliver a faithful remnant.
- And all this land must become a devastated place, an object of astonishment, and these nations will have to serve the king of Babylon seventy years. (**Jeremiah 25:11**)
- And it must occur that when seventy years have been fulfilled I shall call to account against the king of Babylon and against that nation, is the utterance of Yehowah, their error, even against the land of the Chaldeans, and I will make it desolate wastes to time indefinite. (**Jeremiah 25:12**)
- For this is what Yehowah has said; In accord with the fulfilling of seventy years at Babylon I shall turn my attention to you people, and I will establish toward you my good word in bringing you back to this place. (**Jeremiah 29:10**)
- For I myself well know the thoughts that I am thinking toward you, is the utterance of Yehowah, thoughts of peace, and not of calamity, to give you a future and a hope. (**Jeremiah 29:11**)
- And you will certainly call me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. (**Jeremiah 29:12**)
- And you will actually seek me and find me, for you will search for me with all your heart. (**Jeremiah 29:13**)
- And I will let myself be found by you, is the utterance of Yehowah. And I will gather your body of captives and collect you together out of all the nations and out of all the places to which I

have dispersed you, is the utterance of Yehowah. And I will bring you back to the place from which I caused you to go into exile. (**Jeremiah 29:14**)

- And not even the seemingly impregnable world power of Babylon could thwart God's stated purpose. The return of the Jewish exiles demonstrates the unerring accuracy with which Yehowah's prophecies are fulfilled.
- Even before the end of the 70 years of exile, Babylon fell, in **539 B.C.E.**, to the invading armies of Persian King Cyrus. Then, during his first year as ruler of Babylon, Cyrus issued a decree opening the way for the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem.
- And in the first year of Cyrus the king of Persia, that Yehowah's word from the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, Yehowah roused the spirit of Cyrus the king of Persia so that he caused a cry to pass through all his realm, and also in writing, saying; (**Ezra 1:1**)
- This is what Cyrus the king of Persia has said; All the kingdoms of the earth Yehowah the God of the heavens has given me, and he himself has commissioned me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. (**Ezra 1:2**)
- Whoever there is among you of all his people, may his God prove to be with him. So let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of Yehowah the God of Israel, he is the true God, which was in Jerusalem. (**Ezra 1:3**)
- As for anyone that is left from all the places where he is residing as an alien, let the men of his place assist him with silver and with gold and with goods and with domestic animals along with the voluntary offering for the house of the true God, which was in Jerusalem. (**Ezra 1:4**)
- A remnant that may have numbered 200,000, including men, women, and children, made the journey, arriving in Judah in **537 B.C.E.**
- Then the heads of the fathers of Judah and of Benjamin and the priests and the Levites rose up, even everyone whose spirit the true God had roused, to go up and rebuild the house of Yehowah, which was in Jerusalem. (**Ezra 1:5**)

- When the seventh month arrived the sons of Israel were in their cities. And the people began to gather themselves as one man to Jerusalem. (**Ezra 3:1**)
- When the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the sons of the Exile were building a temple to Yehowah the God of Israel. (**Ezra 4:1**)
- Thus the 70 years desolation ended exactly on time!
- Not all the exiles returned at that time, however. In **468 B.C.E.**, another group of returnees accompanied the priest Ezra, who brought to Jerusalem gifts for the temple.
- And after these things in the reign of Artaxerxes the king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah the son of Azariah the son of Hilkiah (**Ezra 7:1**)
- So we came to Jerusalem and dwelt there three days. (**Ezra 8:32**)
- Then in **455 B.C.E.**, Nehemiah traveled from Shushan to rebuild Jerusalem's walls.
- After that I said to the king; If to the king it does seem good, and if your servant seems good before you, that you would send me to Judah, to the city of the burial places of my forefathers, that I may rebuild it. (**Nehemiah 2:5**)
- At this the king said to me, as his queenly consort was sitting beside him; How long will your journey come to be and when will you return? So it seemed good before the king that he should send me, when I gave him the appointed time. (**Nehemiah 2:6**)
- At length I came to Jerusalem, and I continued there for three days. (**Nehemiah 2:11**)
- As to the exact route followed by the returnees, the Scriptures are silent. Some reasonable possibilities are shown on the map.