

## The Time Between Testaments



## Judaism Begins during Restoration Period

### The Rise of the New Religion of Judaism from the Restoration of Jerusalem onward

The origins and character of *Judaism* create a religion distinct from “OT Israelite Faith.”

The wide historical picture of the world from about 500 BC to about 200 BC begins the story. We will leave what’s known as the “Second Jewish Commonwealth” to begin our journey into the NT in Sept., 2019

**There is a** shift in religious point of view during this period.

The institutions of *Judaism* distinguish this new form of religion from the OT institutions.

**There is also a new literature** that arises during this period. This literature is fascinating and mysterious. It’s downright *Apocryphal!* Some of it is found in the “Apocrypha” section of the Catholic Bible. Much more literature is not included.

### **REVIEW: The flow of biblical history.**

Exodus, Conquest, Judges, Kings → Saul, David and Solomon

Division of the Kingdom

North—Jeroboam, Ahab, Golden Age – Jeroboam II, Destruction and dispersion of Samaria

South—Rehoboam, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Josiah

Exile 586 BC—538 Return of the first wave

During Exile: **Daniel and Esther** give us examples of the way the exiled people maintained their identity.

Reliance on **Torah**

Prophecy dwindled, **teaching scribes** increased, prophecy disappeared replaced by Bat’ Qol—“The Echo.” This became known as **The Teaching of the Elders** or the **Tradition**.

Only some exiles returned. Babylon retained strong orthodox Jewish element.

Synagogues developed around the reading of the Torah though we have scant evidence.

## Next 70 years – No information

Obadiah? Malachi

Disappearance of Zerubbabel and Davidic line meant **no re-establishment of Jewish nation** along old lines –not even in modified form.

The Jews 515-450 – not much positive information but clear that no Davidic kingdom was about to emerge and therefore, no major rush to return from exile to Jerusalem.

- Babylon remained a center for Jewish life; prospered; promoted like Nehemiah;
- Jewish community found at Sardis
- Egypt – lower Egypt
- Elephantine – highly syncretistic religion – no urge to return to Judea

## Restoration Jews

Groups drifted back, population may have doubled by mid-5<sup>th</sup> century – list of Ezra 2/ Neh 7 makes population a little under 50,000 – many arriving since the reconstruction of the temple.

Neh 3 shows many towns now inhabited. Jerusalem still had few inhabitants.

Insecurity from Samaria – accused of sedition during the time of Xerxes when Egypt was in revolt

Edomites moving into land under pressure from Arabs – Petra etc overrun by Arabs, Edomites move into southern Palestine AND become Idumeans – Obadiah

Jews tried to rebuild walls but Samaritans get orders from Xerxes stopping the work by force of arms.—intention to keep Jews permanently defenseless. Ezra 4

**Completion of Temple gave Jews a rallying place** and status as a worshipping community --- regarded themselves as the true remnant of Israel.

But Morale still low –

Priests offered sick and injured animals on altar – Mal 1.6-14

Partiality in law – Mal 2.1-9

Sabbath neglected – Neh 13.14-22

Nonpayment of tithes – Mal 3. 7-10

Forced Levites to leave duties to make their own living

Divorce a public scandal – Mal 3.5

Cheating of employees for wages – Mal 3.5

Poor reduced to servitude – Neh 5.1-5

Lines separating Jews from pagan environment break down with intermarriage – Mal 2.11ff and Ezra 9

Some new path would have to be found if Israel was to survive.

## AS THE WORLD TURNS: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS BEYOND JUDEA

**Back to Persia** – later kings full of family intrigue and almost killed themselves by poisoning each other.

**Re-conquers Egypt** – burns Sidon to the ground 342 Egypt is now vassal of Persia again.

Again, note the armies marching across Israel.

How do you think these turns of events of conquest happened geographically? --THROUGH the hub of world--Palestine

The Persian Empire

Darius 522-486 – Persia reached its zenith under Darius! -- His only failure? – He failed to conquer Greece. He attacked Greece in 490.

But the Greeks defeated the Persians at Marathon. 490 BC

A revolt in Egypt took Darius away from fighting Greeks and he dies even before he defeats the Egyptians.

Darius is succeeded by Xerxes I (Esther's Ahasuerus) - 486-465 –  
put down rebellion at Babylon

Attacked and overwhelmed Sparta at **Thermopylae**, 480  
captured Athens, torched the Acropolis 480 BC (Bright, HI, p. 374)



But later in 480 BC he produced a Fiasco at Salamis; Xerxes saw 1/3 of the Persian fleet destroyed at Salamis by the Greeks, and eventually lost all of Greece and retreated from Europe.

Assassinated and succeeded by a younger son Artaxerxes I

Artaxerxes I 465-424 further retrenched under Greek pressure and lost much of Egypt.  
Finally Egypt totally throws off Persian rule – 401 BC

Persians again subdue the Greeks by bribery and trickery (aka “diplomacy”) with the King’s Peace of 386

**Egypt** fomented revolt of the Western Satrapies [Satrapy is a regional subsection governed by a Satrap]—west of Euphrates

Pharaoh Tachos joins rebels

But has to return home to put down a *coup d’état*.

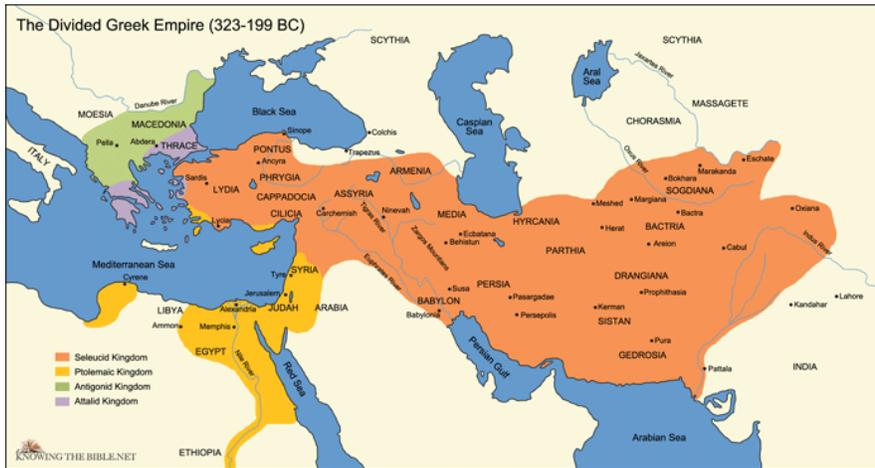
Rebellion collapses and Persia, now on last legs survives

New Persian Artaxerxes III revives Persia momentarily.

### **Macedonia is rising:**

- Greeks destroy Greece in the Peloponnesian War 404 BC—Athens v. Sparta
- Demosthenes warns in his famous *Philippics* about the rise of **Macedon’s** king Philip
- Philip of Macedon reunites Greece (Hellas) in 338 by force.
- 336 Alexander takes his murdered father’s throne. And “the handwriting is on the wall”
- Now the civilization will be called “Hellenistic” rather than “Greek” because the high Greek culture of Plato, Socrates, etc was succeeded by the Macedonian military prowess.

See ancient world map.



### The Jews in the late Persian Period

We know almost nothing

Elephantine disappears beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> Century

We can read back from second century to guess that some outside Judah – in Galilee & Transjordan, perhaps because of Ezra’s reforms, reckoned themselves Yahwists.

Split with Samaritans which we see in Ezra and Nehemiah continues to widen

Samaritans have their own Scriptures in archaic textual form by 1<sup>st</sup> Cent. BC.

#### *Samaritan Pentateuch*

The Chronicles make it clear that the restored remnant of Judah is now all that’s left of “true Israel”.

**BIBLE FORMS:** Jerusalem has by this time accepted the Prophets and Writings (along with Torah/Pentateuch) as canonical whereas the Samaritans only accept the Pentateuch.

By Mid fourth century – division between Jews and Samaritan is so great as to be unbridgeable.

Sometime after 350 -- 335 BC Samaritans built Mt. Gerizim Temple – about the time of Philip of Macedon.

Judah had status of semiautonomous commonwealth under its Priestly Caste (later to become “Sadducees”)

- All the marching armies tended to bring Greek and Persian culture through the land
- Greek style coinage was minted –
- Aramaic became the ordinary language
- The way Hebrew was written changed from rounded into squared
- Phoenician ports along the Mediterranean received all kinds of imports that then passed along the trade routes to Arabia, affecting everyone along the way – changing Jewish culture with every pot and coin that entered the land.

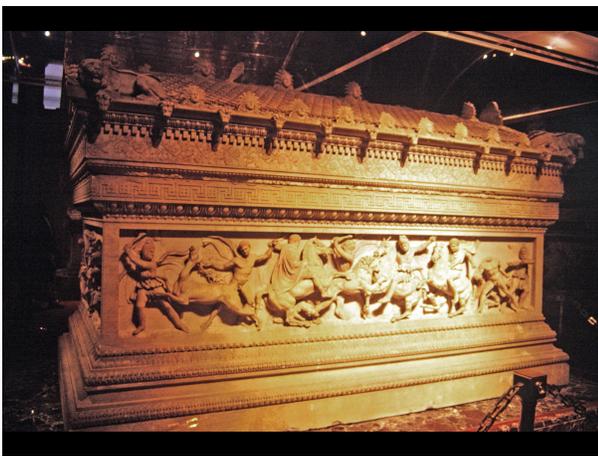


**Alexander the Great** came on the scene 336 BC

- Took Asia Minor—Turkey
- Crossed through the Cilician Gates— north of Tarsus and defeated the armies of Persia at Issus 333BC

- Alexander entered Palestine
    - All Phoenician cities except Tyre capitulated – Tyre reduced w/ 7 months’ siege
    - Rest of Palestine did not resist
    - Alex. Entered Egypt with acclamation as liberator – proclaimed him legitimate Pharaoh
- THUS ALL PALESTINE AND JUDAH CAME UNDER ALEXANDER’S CONTROL  
*[another army marches through Israel’s land]*  
 Subsequently there seems to have been some rebellion at Samaria [Mt Gerazim]  
 Macedonian Colony established at Samaria after Samaria is destroyed.  
 Shechem is rebuilt because Samaritans restarted.

**Persians made their last stand** with their backs to the Iranian mountains at Arbela and were cut to pieces by Alexander’s army at the battle of ***Gaugamela 331 BC***. Alexander then finished up the Persian Empire and died of “unspecified” causes (malaria, poison, venereal infection?) at age 33 [323] in Babylon. His sarcophagus is preserved in the museum at Istanbul.

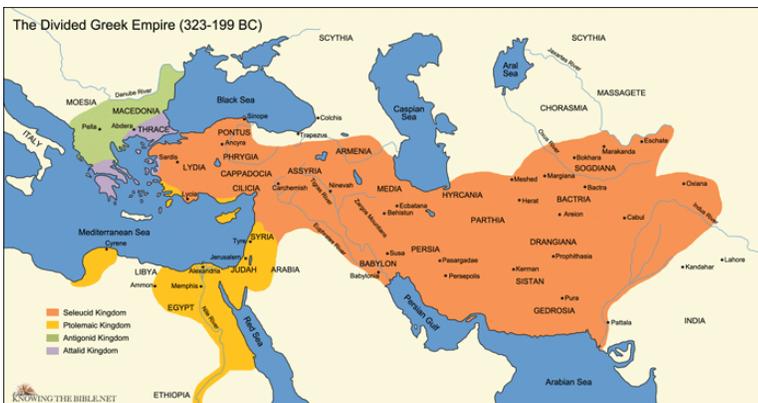


Istanbul Archeological Museum

Alexander represented a change of ***phenomenal proportions***, for it was with his language, ideas and culture that he conquered the world, not his political control. It’s like today, American language, movies, clothing and money rule the world. HELLENISM.

Alexander’s political empire falls apart immediately after he dies.

- Cassander – Macedonia
- Lysimachus – Thrace
- Antigonus – Asia Minor and Syria
- Ptolemy – Egypt
- Seleucus – Babylonia



Palestine was bone of contention among Antigonus, Ptolemy and Seleucus and it bounced back and forth

Until Antigonus was killed at battle of Ipsus (Phrygia, Asia Minor)

**Ptolemy takes Palestine and Syria** – Seleucus takes Asia Minor – builds Antioch

## PALESTINE IS BUFFER ZONE OF CONTENTION



198 BC Seleucid (Syrian) King – Antiochus III conquers Ptolemy’s descendants at **Panias/Banyas/Caesaria Philippi** and that starts the next era of the aggressive Hellenization of Palestine which produces the Maccabean Revolt.



*Panias—Caesarea Philippi in NT times*

## **II. MEANWHILE WHAT’S HAPPENING ON THE RELIGIOUS FRONT?**

### **Dispersion of Jews**

Began with deportations of 722 and Exile of 586

By Roman era even Roman writers are noting that there is hardly a city in the world without a population of Jews.

Babylonia – Obviously many taken there. Others joined later. Little is actually known until that colony of Jews produces the orthodox TALMUD about 500 AD – 1000 years later.

Antioch – a new city founded by Antiochus after the dissolving of Alexander’s empire.

EGYPT – Alexandria– eventually recognized as center of dispersed Jews.

Elephantine as seen above – dissident and highly syncretistic Judaism worshipping even the mother goddess, as a “consort” to Yahweh – *Anatyahu*.

**Imagine the crisis that occurs when the Temple is destroyed**, Kings are killed and taken captive, never to emerge again, and the people are removed from the land that God had promised them.

Did their God exist any more? If he did was he worth following?  
And if they wanted to follow him, how could they with the very substance of their faith in tatters?  
So what emerges is a forced adaptation that has to account for the lack of temple and its sacrifices for atonement, loss of King and therefore the assurance of stability in their land ideals, and the attendant loss of prophets and a living adaptation of the presence and word of God.

### **What caused dispersion and growth of world Jewry?**

WAR

Persecution

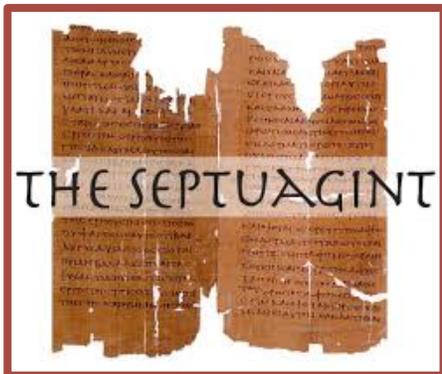
Refusal to be absorbed

Refusal to expose their offspring like that rest of the world

Missionary zeal – lots of that kind of polemic literature emerged

Privileged treatment and religious toleration granted by Greeks and Romans

**SEPTUAGINT – above all – IN ALEXANDRIA** – 285-247 BC **IMMENSE INFLUENCE**



Letter to Aristeas says that Ptolemy II – during the period when Ptolemy controlled Palestine – commissioned it for the great library at Alexandria

72 elders locked up for 70 days and each in his separate cell produced an identical translation of the Torah

Interestingly already also in Palestine, Aramaic was becoming the more common language and translations of the reading in the Synagogue services were taking place, finally to be written down and collected into what have become the *Aramaic Targums* – common paraphrase versions of the OT. (200 BC)

Synagogues and the new practices emerged to become an essentially **different religion** as it emerges from its OT cocoon. – Whether that makes it a butterfly or a moth will remain to be seen.

So faithfulness to the covenant is increasingly interpreted as “obedience to the law.”

Now that is certainly not true of all Jews everywhere. But it is true of the mainstream that eventually survives the final cataclysm of the Roman destruction. Jerusalem is obliterated in 70 and 135 AD Jerusalem. Even the refuges in Egypt at Leontopolis are destroyed and Jerusalem is turned into a Roman city with Jews forbidden on pain of execution from coming within 30 miles of the city.

Already in Ezra, we see the beginning of an administration of the Law—and Ezra is called A READY SCRIBE. Ezra 7.6

The law had the advantage of being at least theoretically applicable everywhere – and there were far more Jews outside Jerusalem than within it. The law must have travelled to Babylon.

Ezra brought it back, but the Jews who went everywhere in the world must have carried their scrolls with them. As their last and portable distinctive, their understanding of the gift of having the Word of the Lord, became most precious.

*The distinguishing mark of a Jew would not be political nationality, nor primarily ethnic background, nor even regular participation in the Temple worship, but adherence to the Law of Moses. The great watershed of Israel's history had been crossed and her future secured for all time to come.—John Bright, Hist, p. 390*

**BIBLE FORMATION:** What emerges in this period then is a list of the books to be included.

In Palestine, by the time the **Septuagint** is written in Egypt a smaller list of Scripture books had emerged. The books added to the OT by the Septuagint which may not have been completed in its totality until 150 BC, is known today as the *Apocrypha*. But those added were not in the list in Judea.

That list and the interpretation and transmission of Scripture is said by the later Mishnah to have been transmitted from Ezra and the Men of the GREAT SYNAGOGUE down to the rabbis of the first century—**Hillel and Shammai**

Its care, study and teaching were first in the province of priestly **scribes and Wise Men** (Sopherim).

But as the times changed, the danger was that interpretation could not adequately apply the Law to the times and there arose a group of lay scribes who *developed a body of teaching around the law* that applied that teaching to everyday life in a practical manner and eventually emerged as the teaching of the Pharisees.

The Mishnah later will claim that the tradition that came down as the oral interpretations came down from Moses alongside the written law and in unbroken succession to those who ended up writing it down in the Mishnah.

That tradition was a **body of case law decisions**, explanatory of written Law and developing alongside it.

For example the commandment about not working on the Sabbath.

What constitutes work?

Custom/tradition described what could and could not be done.

These laws might have no relation to what is written, but are justified according to the Mishnah as a fence for the Torah – a warning that stopped one from coming close to breaking the Law.

Kosher laws – don't boil a kid in its mother's milk—Exodus 23.19

No dairy products can touch even the dishes or table where meat is served.

“How far could you travel on a Sabbath?” Modern legalism: **Eruv**

As traditions emerged certain observances received special stress:

Circumcision

Sabbath observance

Ritual Cleanness

Dietary laws – kosher and especially pork

Bitter hatred of idolatry.

## **TEMPLE**

Temple in Jerusalem, restored as it was, continued during this period to occupy a central place in Judaism – but not so foundational as the TORAH.

Temple tax sent in from around the dispersion

Priests were guardians of ritual and temple, but their authority declined in proportion to the rise of lay scribes were emerging as teachers.

Hereditary office of Zadok in direct line, according to 1 Chron 6.15 back to Aaron.

Chief feature of temple worship was morning and evening sacrifice – Ecclesiasticus 50.11-21

**SYNAGOGUE** arises to supersede Temple

Word means “gathering” or “place of gathering”

May have originated from “assemblies of elders” found in Ezekiel 8.1, 14.1, 20.1

Gatherings likewise mentioned in Ezra 8.15, Neh 8.2

No actual records record a synagogue in Babylon, but Jewish tradition says that one was built in the province by exiled king Jehoiachin from stones taken from Jerusalem temple.

Egyptian remains have been discovered of a synagogue mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

The “Synagogue was a communal institution whose primary function was the reading and study of the Law within a setting praise and prayer.”—JOHN BRIGHT

Place where discussion and argument about the interpretation of the Law could take place.

Scribes loved it.

Synagogues had no paid clergy. The highest officer the archisynagogos was an unpaid lay “head of the assembly.”

Synagogues centered on reading and interpretation and prayer. Great variety. Priests would be recognized when present but were not necessary for the synagogue to operate.

Shema and the 18 benedictions were recited.

Synagogue was an institution devoted to the right interpretation of the law in its every detail.

That meant that legalism began to be developed that eventually became a system by which **favor with God** was gained and by which **atonement** for sins was provided.

## **New RELIGIOUS IDEAS DEVELOP**

### **1. Angels**

Intermediaries between God and world

Part of resolution of problem of evil

List of Archangels from 1 Enoch 20: 1-8

1. Uriel
2. Raphael
3. Raguel
4. Michael
5. Saraqael
6. Gabriel
7. Remiel

### **2. Eschatological expectation**

Apocalyptic writings like last six chapters of Daniel

Troubled times under their persecutors led to hope of retribution and reversal  
Within History and Beyond History.  
Coming Kingdom/Day of the Lord.

*Jubilees divisions of history; relation of history to get to the end by way of pseudonyms for Biblical characters from Adam to Ezra*

Into the mix comes division into an interim kingdom from 1000 or 400 years, either preceded or followed by a judgment

### 3. Messianic hope

Messiah in Greek means anointed: The Messiah is the Anointed King, like David

Messiah and Son of Man – Jesus combines these figures.

Davidic leader who is for the first time called actually the Lord *Messiah* in Psalms of Solomon an “apocryphal” book.

Restoration eventually of the rightful Zadokite priesthood

Son of Man is a transcendent heavenly figure – 1 Enoch, 2 Esdras, Sibylline Oracles

### 4. Resurrection and the life to come

OT life goes to sheol – shades of things that were – no soul separation

Isaiah 24-27 and Dan 12 give OT basis for resurrection

Thy dead shall live. Their bodies shall rise...

Daniel: *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

Some teach partial, some total resurrection -- again 1 Enoch., 2 Esdras. And the whole subject gets a full treatment

## PARTIES WITHIN JUDAISM

Very complex picture. After NT and destruction of Jerusalem only one party survives and takes over the whole picture, so for a long time our view of this period was clouded by the fact that Pharisaical Judaism was the only survivor.

Now we know the situation was very complicated.

Sadducees and Pharisees

**Sadducees** connected with Temple and with political leadership

Maintained that only the 5 books of Moses were authoritative

Those five books were to be interpreted on the basis of what they actually say – no further tradition to clarify or codify.

Often seen as those who were willing to compromise with rulers to maintain their political position.

From their ranks was to be chosen the High Priest.

Their institution was the Temple.

Skeptical of Messianic hope

No resurrection or eschatological hope

**Pharisees**

Largely a lay movement

Oral Tradition had equal authority with written

Heirs of the Ezra Scribal tradition

Missionary work (Mt. 23.15)

Their institution was the Synagogue  
Constructed the *“fence around the law”*  
They were the more genuinely pious ones – may have connections to the Hasidim  
Believed in resurrection  
Believed in Kingdom coming beyond history  
Developed the institution of the ***Rabbis*** – the teachers of the law

Essenes – Qumran – the true separatists who were disgusted by the temple administration

Zealots – those who developed from the model of Judas the Maccabee

Theological inversion: Development of what Paul calls “the Law.” By the time of Jesus and certainly Paul, the *law as a covenant response of God’s people to the grace of God in saving them was replaced by the LAW as the means by which they can achieve divine favor and become worthy of the promises.*

This has an historical expression in the Maccabean Kingdom, called by Josephus “The Second Jewish Commonwealth,” but that story must wait till next September.

### **The new Judaism**

The WRITTEN WORD OF God – LAW – supplants the Davidic institutions of land, temple king as the organizing principle of those who descend from Israel/Judah.

Temple worship continues, but not temple teaching – liturgy is separated from doctrine.

Codification of the Law—replaces adherence to the religious observances.

Those who codify—Scribes and Rabbis – take precedence over those who sacrifice—because Law can be obeyed anywhere, not just in Jerusalem. Now there were more Jews outside Jerusalem.

Synagogues, place where law was read, taught, worked out and applied – supplants temple.

Future hope of kingdom to come—replaces working in kingdom that is Messianic consciousness replaces despair over leadership vacuum.

## Consider reading one of more of the following:

*New Testament History*, F. F. Bruce. Gives a great introduction to the next period beginning at 200 BC and follows through the whole NT. EXCELLENT RESOURCE. Very readable—read a little at a time.

*1 & 2 Maccabees*

*Jewish War*—Josephus

*The Jews from Alexander to Herod*—D. S. Russell; serious reading but well written

Modern Jewish flavor:

*The Chosen*—Chaim Potok Novel

*The Rabbi Mysteries* – Harry Kimmelman

*Conversations with Rabbi David Small*—Harry Kimmelman.



### PROPHECIES FULFILLED BY THE RETURN OF ISRAEL FROM EXILE

God, through his faithful prophets, said that the people of Judah would be taken into captivity because of their sinfulness. But he also promised that they would return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city, the Temple, and the nation.

Reference	Prophecy	Approximate Date	Fulfillment Date	Significance
<b>Isa 44:28</b>	Cyrus would be used by God to guarantee the return of a remnant. Jerusalem would be rebuilt and the Temple restored.	688 B.C.	538 B.C.	As God named Cyrus even before he was born, God knows what will happen—he is in control.
<b>Jer 25:12</b>	Babylon would be punished for destroying Jerusalem and exiling God's people.	605 B.C.	539 B.C.	Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon. God may seem to allow evil to go unpunished, but consequences for wrongdoing are inevitable. God will punish evil.
<b>Jer 29:10</b>	The people would spend 70 years in Babylon; then God would bring them back to their homeland.	594 B.C.	538 B.C.	The 70 years of captivity passed (see the third note on Ezra 1:1, below), and God provided the opportunity for Zerubbabel to lead the first group of captives home. God's plans may allow for hardship, but his desire is for our good.
<b>Dan 5:17-31</b>	God had judged the Babylonian Empire. It would be given to the Medes and the Persians, forming a new world power.	539 B.C.	539 B.C.	Belshazzar was killed and Babylon was conquered the same night. God's judgment is accurate and swift. God knows the point of no return in each of our lives. Until then, he allows us the freedom to repent and seek his forgiveness.