

EZRA

"God is in control
Every little sparrow
Every little king"

- Twila Paris

Bible Survey 2

Ezra Chapters 1-6

dw 2/27/18

“… and He has appointed me to build Him a house …”

Cyrus king of Persia

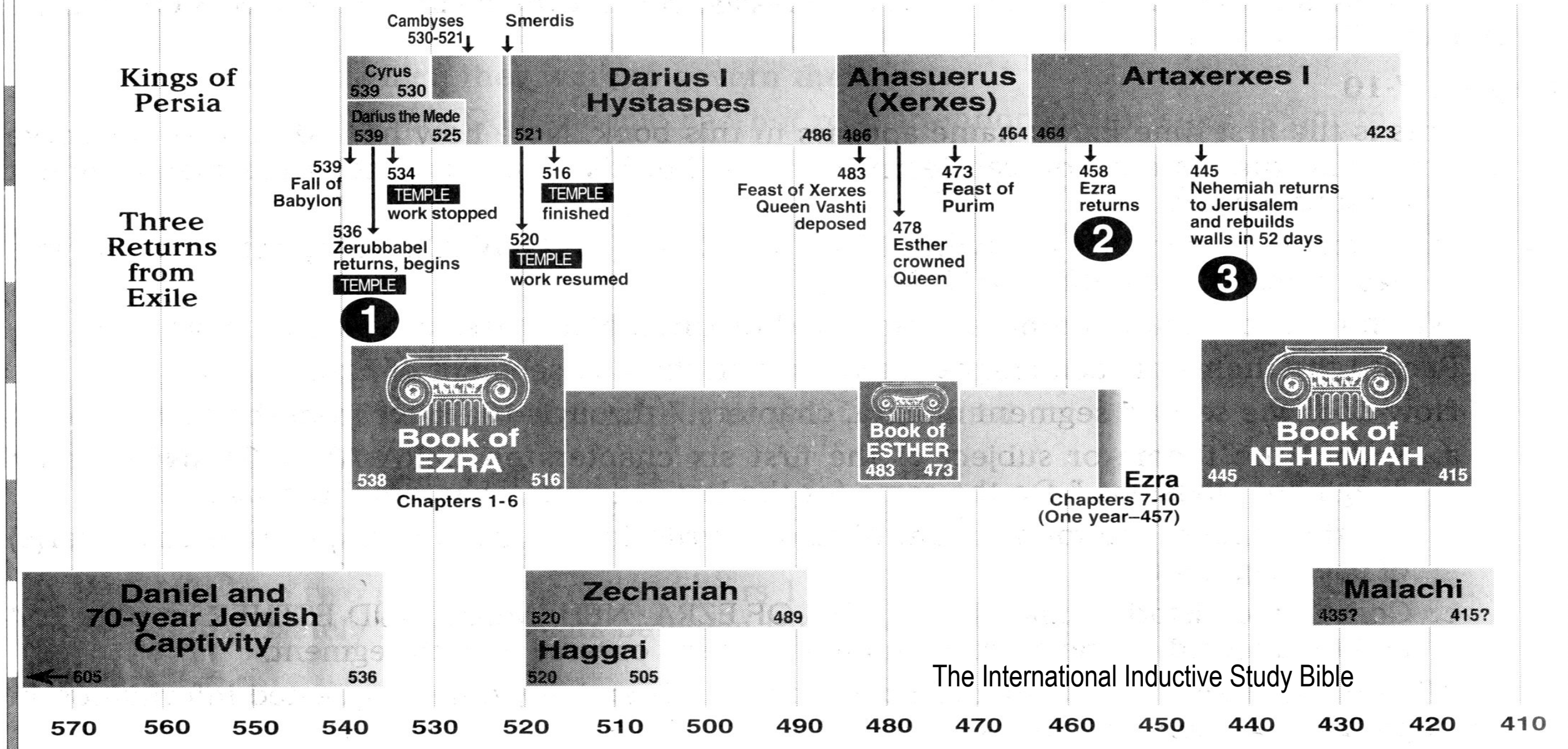
“For thus says the LORD, ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. ‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

(Jer 29:10-11)

“*It is I* who says to the depth of the sea, ‘Be dried up!’ And I will make your rivers dry. “*It is I* who says of Cyrus, ‘*He is* My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.’ And he declares of Jerusalem, ‘She will be built,’ And of the temple, ‘Your foundation will be laid.’”

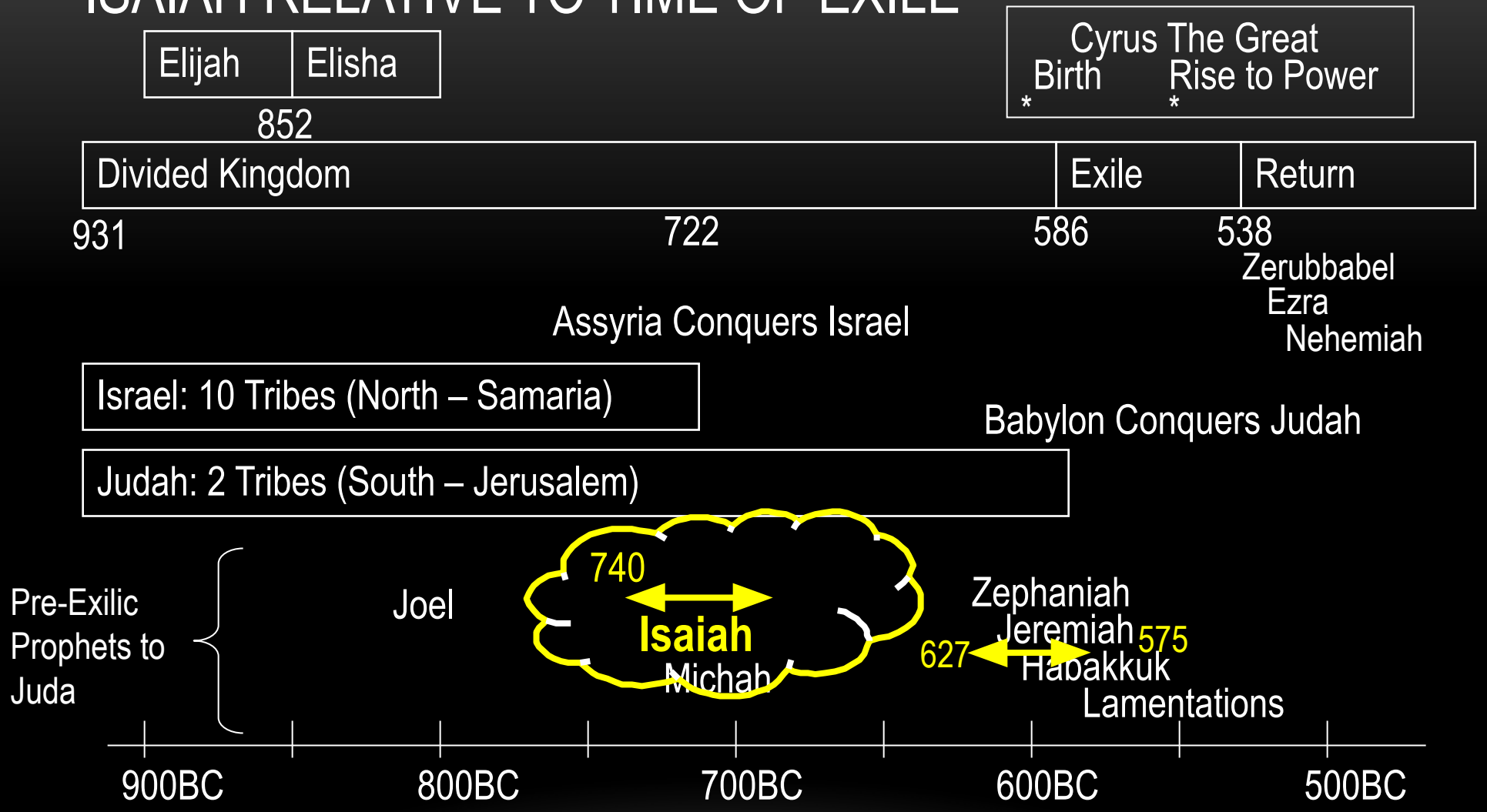
(Isa 44:27-28)

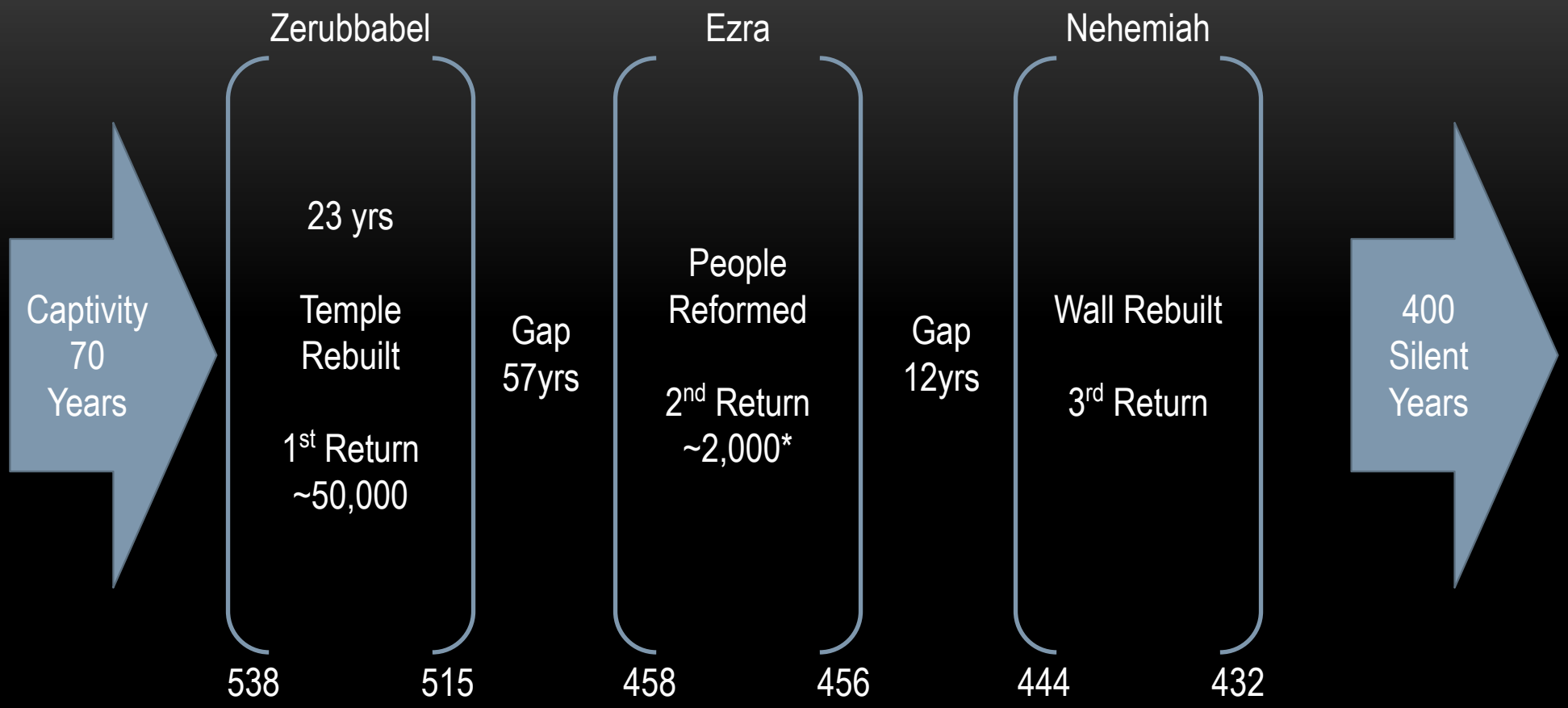
THE TIMES OF EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND ESTER



The International Inductive Study Bible

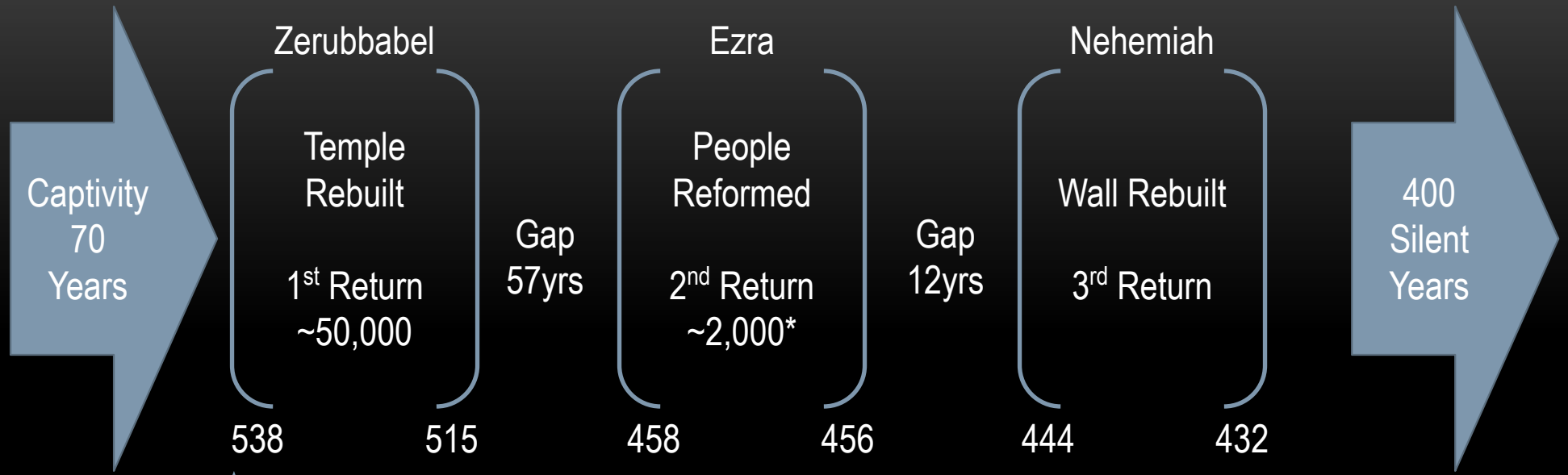
ISAIAH RELATIVE TO TIME OF EXILE





* 4,000 to 5,000 if you include women and children

Adapted from Bible Knowledge Commentary, John Martin, pg 652

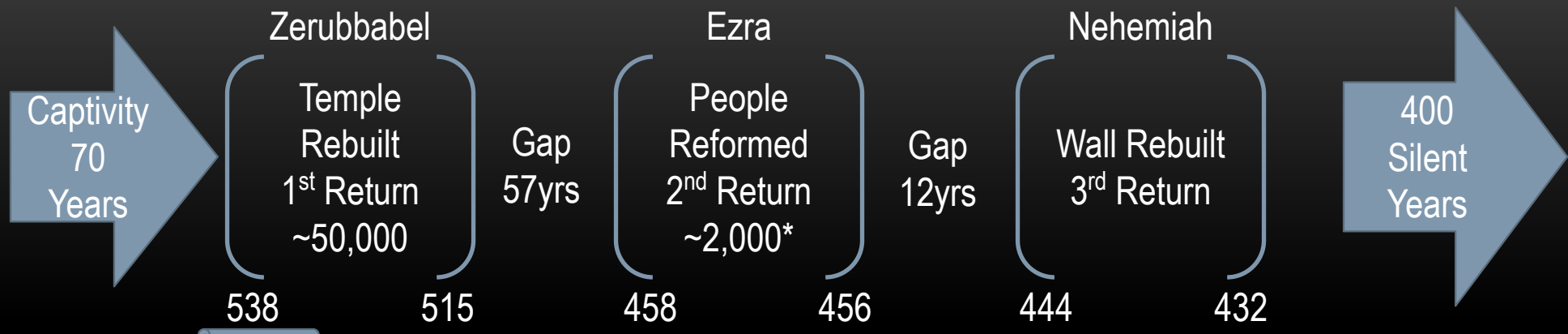


Ezra Scripture Reference

- 538 — 1:1-4 Edict of Cyrus
- 538 — 2:1-70 Exiles return
- 520 — 3:1-4:5 Alter & Temple Foundation built
- 515 — Ch 5-6 Temple Completed
- 486 — 4:6 Accusation against Judah
- 464 — 4:7-23 Artazerxes stopped rebuilding of Jerusalem
- 458 — Ch 7-10 2nd return of exiles under Ezra

Other Books in Bible

- 520 — Haggi / Zachariah
- 479 — Esther
- 444 — Nehemiah



#1 1:1 Proclamation from Cyrus: Go rebuild the house of God

#2 4:6 From Local Officials
To Ahasuerus
letter of "accusation"

#3 4:7-16 From Local Officials
To Artaxerxes: More accusations,
"rebellious and evil"

#4 4:17-22 From Artaxerxes
To Local Officials:
decree to "stop work"

#5 5:6 From Local Officials To Darius:
"search for their paper work, can they do this?!"

#6 6:1 Decree from Darius: let the temple be rebuilt
[To Local Officials: "keep away from there"]

#7 7:11 Decree from Artaxerxes To Ezra: Return

From: King Cyrus <TopDog@PersianEmpire.gov>
Sent: 538 B.C.
To: Entire Kingdom <Persia_list@PersianEmpire.gov>,
Jewish Survivors <Jewish_list@PersianEmpire.gov>
Cc: Treasury.Office <Treasury.Mithredath@PersianEmpire.gov>
Subject: Proclamation: Jews to rebuild house for God

Dear Citizens and Survivors of Jerusalem,

- God of heaven has appointed me Cyrus the Great, to build Him a house in Jerusalem (you might recall that's located in Judah) (1:2)
- You are welcome to go rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel – He resides in Jerusalem (1:3)
- Expenses paid by your neighbors! (come on guys, cough it up) (1:4)
- Free will offering to be collected for house of God before departure (1:4)
- Articles from house of God kept in storage to be returned (1:7)

Sincerely,
Cyrus the Great, the magnificent, ruler of all

PS: *I do what ever the God of Heaven wants*

From: Tattenai <governor@localprovince.gov>, Shethar <official@localprovince.gov>, colleagues <friendsofgovernor@localprovince.gov>
Sent: 520 B.C.
To: King Darius I Hystaspes <King@PersianEmpire.gov>
Subject: Are they allowed to build the house of God in Jerusalem?!

All Peace (5:7),

- This Jewish house of God is HUGE! **Massive stones**, beams, quality craftsmanship (5:8)
- We asked "who said you could do this?", "what are their names?" (5:9-10)
- They said they are servants of "the God of heaven and earth" (5:11)
- Said that Cyrus king of Babylon issued a decree! (5:13)
- You wouldn't believe the loot – gold and silver – these guys have for their temple (5:14-15)
- Can you please check the royal database to see if permits where pulled for this? (5:17)
- Please provide next steps for us (5:17)

Sincerely,
Governor Tattenai and staff

PS: *These guys "Haggai" and "Zechariah" are annoying. They don't seem to fear anybody but the God of heaven! They keep preaching "Build – for it is prophesied!" (5:1-2)*

From: King Darius I Hystaspes <King@PersianEmpire.gov>
Sent: 520 B.C.
To: Tattenai <governor@localprovince.gov>, Shethar <official@localprovince.gov>, colleagues <friendsofgovernor@localprovince.gov>
Subject: Re: Are they allowed to build the house of God in Jerusalem?!

Hey Guys,

- We found the original memo – it was in the fortress in the province of Media (6:2)
- I have 4 words for you "keep away from there" (6:6)
- Leave these guys alone! (6:7)
- Moreover, please pay them out of your local general tax fund (6:8)
- Implement until you hear further notice (6:9)
- If anyone violates this decree: take a piece of 2x4 lumber and stick it through the guys chest – and pin him to his house (minimum of 10 feet off the ground to increase visibility) (6:11)

Sincerely,
Darius the Great

PS: *It makes me feel secure knowing I am helping these poor people. Make sure to remind them to pray for me – my kingdom and health (6:10)*

From: Local Officials <locals@localprovince.gov>
Sent: 486 B.C.
To: King Ahasuerus <AhasuerusXerxes@PersianEmpire.gov>

Subject: They are planning to take over the world!

King Ahasuerus

- We know you have just been inaugurated, but you have to do something (4:6)
- The inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem are planning to take over the government (4:6)

Sincerely,
Concerned local officials

PS: *Our regards to queen Vashti and Prince Haman*

From: King Artaxerxes <KingArt@PersianEmpire.gov>
Sent: 458 B.C.
To: Ezra <EzraPriestScribe@jewishpeople.org>

Subject: It is time

Ezra,

- Have a great trip (7:11)

Sincerely,
King Artaxerxes

From: Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, Colleagues, Commander Rehum, Scribe Shimshai, Rehum, judges, lesser governors, officials, secretaries, men of erech, babylonians, elamites, rest of nations.
Sent: ~450 B.C.
To: King Artaxerxes <KingArt@PersianEmpire.gov>
Subject: The Rebels Are Rebuilding

- Jews are rebuilding the “rebellious and evil city” (4:12)
- If walls are finished, they will not pay tribute and damage kings revenue (4:13)
- Search the records and you will learn that the city is rebellious and they have revolted in the past (4:15)
- Shutdown this operation or you will have no province beyond the river (4:17)

Sincerely,
Local Officials

From: King Artaxerxes <KingArt@PersianEmpire.gov>
Sent: ~450 B.C.
To: Commander Rehum, Scribe Shimshai, Colleagues

Subject: Re: The Rebels Are Rebuilding

Peace (4:17),

- The aramaic document has been translated using google translate (4:18)
- We have completed our search – we agree these Jews have risen up against the kings in past days (4:19)
- Mighty kings have ruled over Jerusalem (4:20)
- Now my decree: make these men stop work that the city may not be rebuilt until a decree is issued by me (4:21)
- Don't neglect this order (4:22)

Sincerely,
King Artaxerxes

Backup material / Incomplete

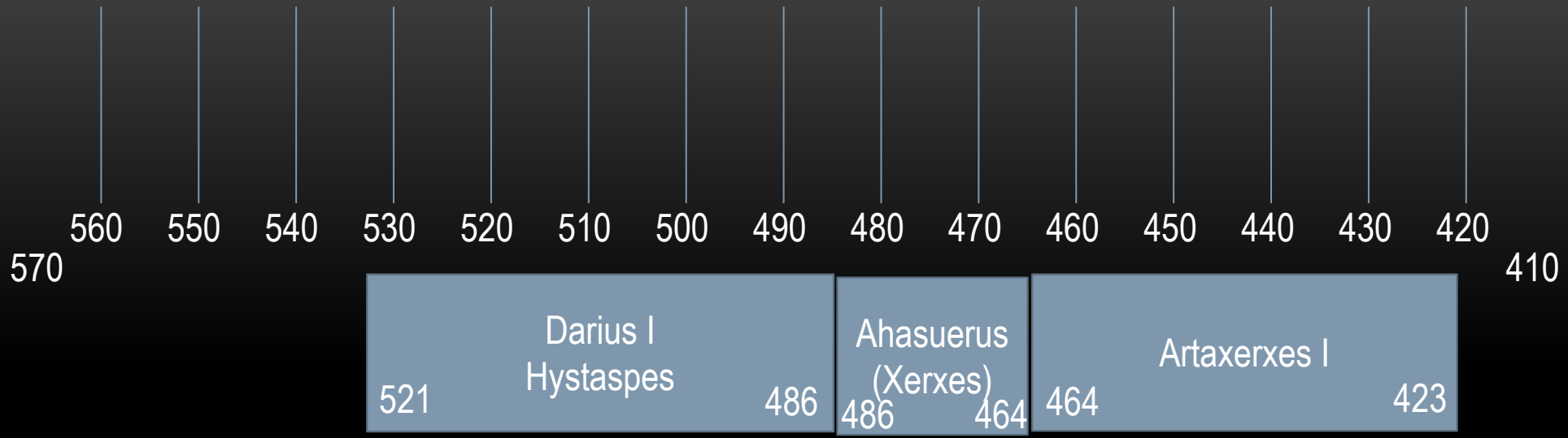
RULE UNDER CYRUS THE GREAT

- Rule based on tolerance and diplomacy
- In 539BC, Cyrus king of Persia becomes king of Babylon in what Historians refer to as a “bloodless victory”.
- Kindness toward conquered people
- For example:

  When Cyrus army marched into a city his generals enforce strict discipline against looting and burning. Unlike other conquerors, Cyrus believed in honoring local customs and religions, Instead of destroying the local temple, Cyrus would kneel there to pray.

- Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to their homeland in 538BC.
- Under Persian rule that Jews rebuilt their city and temple.
- It was during this time that many portions of the old testament first appeared in written form during this period.

Persian King	Dates of their reigns (B.C.)	Biblical event	Scripture Reference	Date
Cyrus	559-530	Edict of Cyrus for the return 1st return of 49,897 exiles under Zerubbabel to build the temple Alter and temple built	Ezra 1:1-4 Ezra 2 Ezra 3:1-4:5	538 538 536
Cambyses	530-522			
Smerdis	522			
Darius I	521-486			
Xerxes (Ahasuerus)	485-465			
Artaxerxes I	464-424			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440
430
420
410
Darius I
Hystaspes
521
486
Ahasuerus
(Xerxes)
486
464
Artaxerxes I
464
423