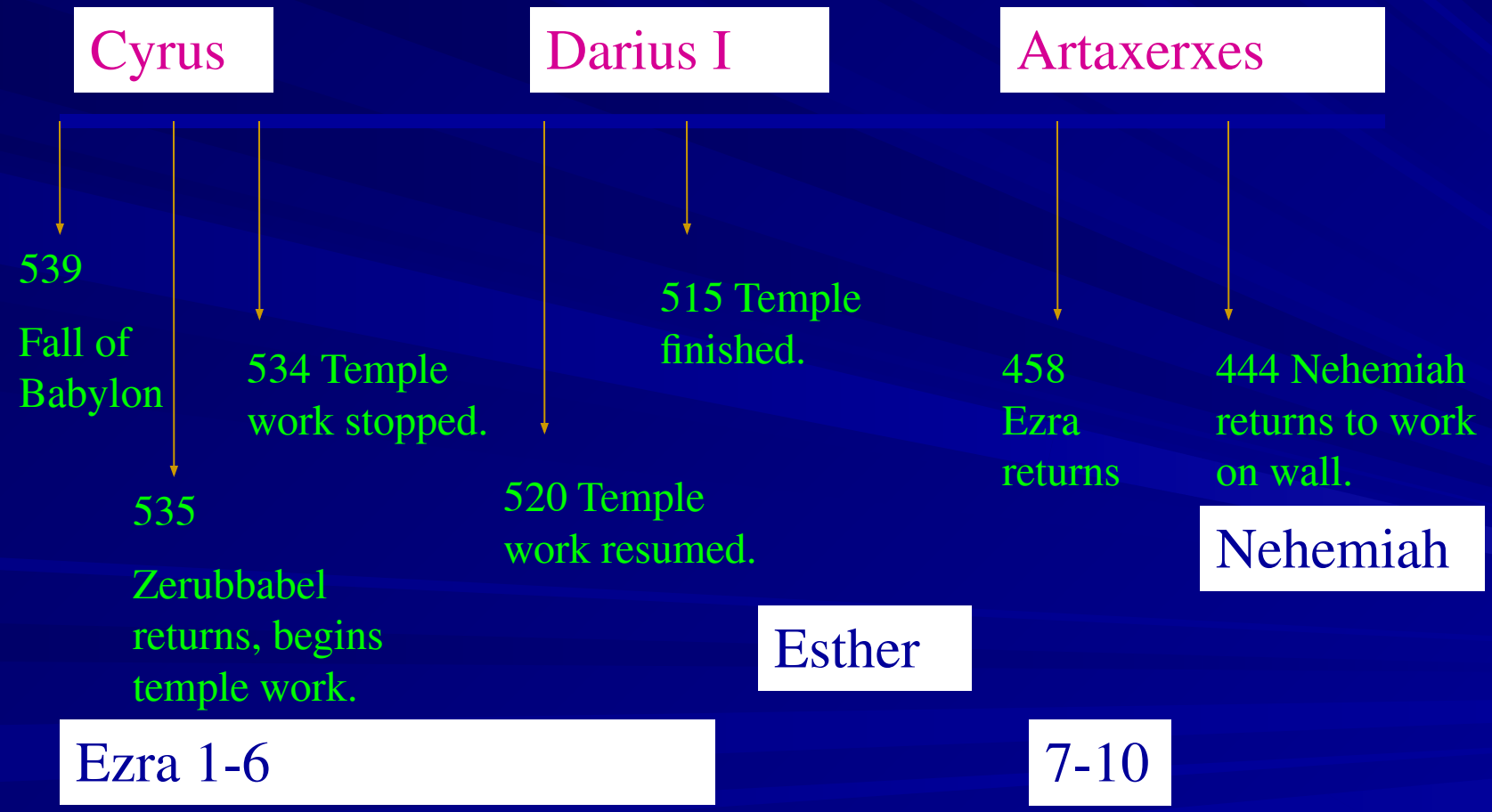
Ezra 7-10

"ISRAEL'S SECOND EXODUS"

Billy Graham honored in Capitol Rotunda



The Return to Jerusalem



Ezra

Chap. 1-6 The Return Under Zerubbabel

Focus: Rebuilding of the Temple

Chap. 7-10 The Return Under Ezra

Focus: Revival of the People

The Return Under Ezra (7-10)

I. Ezra introduced 7:1-10
II. Artaxerxes' letter to Ezra 7:11-26
III. Ezra thanks God 7:27-28
IV. Roll call of those returning 8:1-14
V. Description of the return trip 8:15-36
VI. Ezra's prayer of confession 9:1-15
VII. Peoples' repentance 10:1-44

I. Ezra introduced 7:1-10

A. His pedigree 7:1-5 (Phineas)

B. His profession 7:6-10

"...he was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses"

Ryrie: "Scribes functioned as members of a highly honored profession. They were professional students and defenders of the law... They were also referred to as lawyers because they were entrusted with the administration of the law as judges..."

Psalm 1:1-3

“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.

And he will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.”

7:6b **“and the king granted him all he requested”**

* Why?

“…because the hand of the Lord his God was upon him.”

We see this phrase or something like it 6x’s in Chaps 7 & 8

Vs 9 says, **“because the good hand of his God was upon him.”**

* Do we want to see the hand of the Lord working in our lives?

Ezra 7:10

- **“For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord... (Meditate)**
- **and to practice it...** James 1:22 **(Model)**
- **And to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.” (Mentor)**

II. Artaxerxes' letter to Ezra 7:11-26

1) Authorized Ezra to lead all willing Jews back to Jerusalem (7:13,14).

2) Provided a generous grant to buy supplies, sacrificial animals and temple utensils for temple worship (7:15-20).

3) Ordered the treasurers in the provinces to supplement anything else that Ezra needed.
Up to 3¾ tons of silver, 600 bushels of wheat, 600 gallons of wine, 600 gallons of olive oil, and salt without limit (7:21-22)!

II. Artaxerxes' letter to Ezra 7:11-26

4) "Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done with zeal for the house of the God of heaven, lest there be wrath against the kingdom of the king and his sons" (7:23).

5) All priests, Levites, temple singers and workers were given a tax exemption (7:24)!

6) Ezra was authorized to set up a judicial system for the Jews living west of the Euphrates River. Jewish judges and magistrates were to teach and enforce the laws of God (7:25-26).

II. Artaxerxes' letter to Ezra 7:11-26

- What motivated the king to do all this for the Jews?
  Political expediency?
  Was he a God-fearing man?

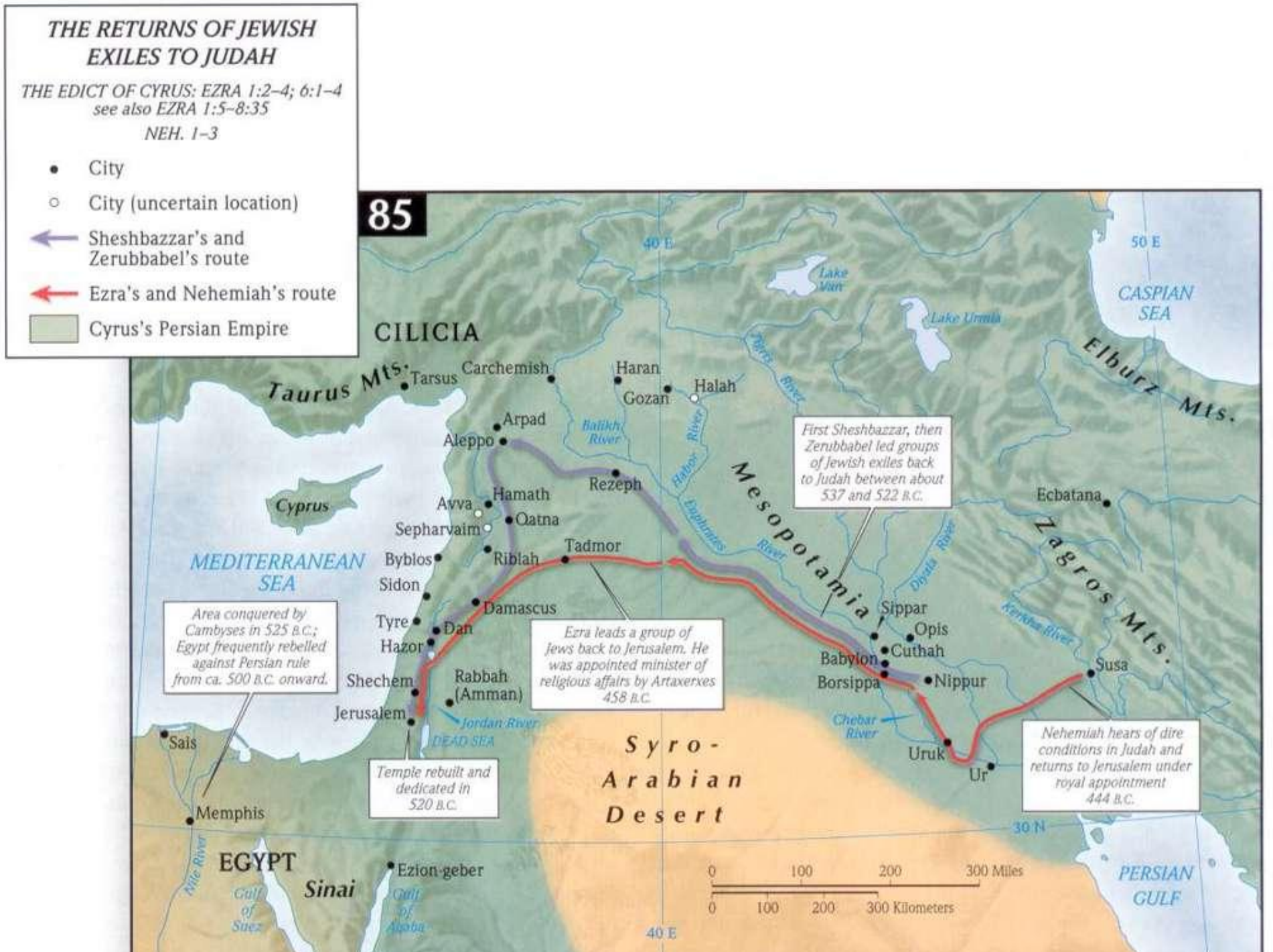
- Proverbs 21:1 "The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes."

III. Ezra thanks God 7:27-28

“Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, who has put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to adorn the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem, and has extended lovingkindness to me...”

IV. Roll call of those returning 8:1-14

V. Description of the return trip 8:15-36


THE RETURNS OF JEWISH EXILES TO JUDAH
THE EDICT OF CYRUS: EZRA 1:2–4; 6:1–4
see also EZRA 1:5–8:35
NEH. 1–3
City
City (uncertain location)
Sheshbazzar's and Zerubbabel's route
Ezra's and Nehemiah's route
Cyrus's Persian Empire
85
CILICIA
Taurus Mts.
Tarsus
Carchemish
Haran
Gozan
Halah
Arpad
Aleppo
Batikh River
Habor River
Euphrates River
Tigris River
Lake Van
Lake Urmia
CASPIAN SEA
Elburz Mts.
Rezeph
Hamath
Avva
Qatna
Sepharvaim
Cyprus
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Byblos
Riblah
Tadmor
Sidon
Damascus
Tyre
Dan
Hazor
Shechem
Rabbah (Amman)
Jerusalem
Jordan River
DEAD SEA
Sais
Memphis
EGYPT
Sinai
Nile River
Gulf of Suez
Ezion-geber
Gulf of Aqaba
Area conquered by Cambyses in 525 B.C.; Egypt frequently rebelled against Persian rule from ca. 500 B.C. onward.
Temple rebuilt and dedicated in 520 B.C.
Ezra leads a group of Jews back to Jerusalem. He was appointed minister of religious affairs by Artaxerxes 458 B.C.
First Sheshbazzar, then Zerubbabel led groups of Jewish exiles back to Judah between about 537 and 522 B.C.
Nehemiah hears of dire conditions in Judah and returns to Jerusalem under royal appointment 444 B.C.
Mesopotamia
Ecbatana
Zagros Mts.
Diyala River
Kerkha River
Chebar River
Sippar
Opis
Babylon
Cuthah
Borsippa
Nippur
Susa
Uruk
Ur
Syro-Arabian Desert
PERSIAN GULF
30 N
40 E
50 E
0 100 200 300 Miles
0 100 200 300 Kilometers

V. Description of the return trip 8:15-36

8:21 Before the Jews started their 900-mile journey Ezra proclaimed a fast. Why?

"That we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from Him a safe journey for us, our little ones and all our possessions"

Cf. Isa 58:3-12 regarding principles of fasting

V. Description of the return trip 8:15-36

8:22 “For I was ashamed to request from the king troops and horsemen to protect us from the enemy on the way, because we had said to the king, "The hand of our God is favorably disposed to all those who seek Him…"

* Why was Ezra ashamed to ask the king for protection?

* How does God want us to deal with the challenges that we face, especially those that can cause fear and anxiety?

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Phil 4:6,7

VI. Ezra's prayer of confession 9:1-15 Why?

Ezra 9:10-12 "And now, our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Thy commandments, which Thou hast commanded by Thy servants the prophets, saying, 'The land which you are entering to possess is an unclean land with the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from end to end and with their impurity. So now do not give your daughters to their sons nor take their daughters to your sons, and never seek their peace or their prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it as an inheritance to your sons forever.'"

VI. Ezra's prayer of confession 9:1-15

Marrying idolatrous spouses was forbidden:

Ex. 34:15,16: "lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they play the harlot with their gods, and sacrifice to their gods, and someone invite you to eat of his sacrifice; and you take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods, and cause your sons *also* to play the harlot with their gods."

VI. Ezra's prayer of confession 9:1-15

9:2 "The hands of the princes and the rulers have been foremost in this unfaithfulness." The rulers led the people into sin. Leaders need to be careful about the influence that their actions have on others.

9:6 and I said, "O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to Thee, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads, and our guilt has grown even to the heavens."

VII. Peoples' repentance 10:1-44

vs 1-17 Confession and a covenant to put away their foreign wives and children.

vs 1 "Now while Ezra was praying and making confession, weeping and prostrating himself before the house of God, a very large assembly, men, women, and children, gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept bitterly."

Vs 2-5 Shecaniah, a spokesman for the people, confessed their sin as his own and suggested a covenant to put away their foreign wives.

VII. Peoples' repentance 10:1-44

vs 6-8 All the exiles were summoned to gather at Jerusalem for a solemn time of public confession. Those who refused to come within three days were threatened with loss of property and excommunication.

vs 9-11 Despite heavy rains, all the men of Judah and Benjamin came to Jerusalem where Ezra called them to confession.

VII. Peoples' repentance 10:1-44

10:12–17 The people acknowledged that they had disobeyed God's law. But because of the bad weather and large number of cases involved, they suggested that the individual cases be examined city by city. Judges were appointed and completed the investigation within 3 months.

vs 18-44 Lists those who had married foreign wives including:
17 sons of priests, 10 Levites, and 86 Israelites.

- As the leadership goes, so goes the people.

What about unequal yokes today?

- They are still forbidden. 2Cor. 6:14–18:

“Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. ‘And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,’ Says the Lord Almighty.”

An unequal yoke is any relationship where you would be unduly influenced or bound by the decisions/actions of another. Not just in the area of marriage, but in other close relationships, such as friendships and business partnerships.

What about people who are already married when they become a Christian?

1 Corinthians 7:12,13 says that a believer should not divorce an unbelieving spouse.

What brings revival?

- “When believers read the Word of God and apply its truths to their lives,
- when there is confession and separation from known sin,
- when intercessory prayers flow for the saints,
- there will be power in the church to do great things for God.”

William MacDonald