### A Brief History of the Kingdom of Heaven in the Earth

WEEK FOUR: THE AGE OF EMPIRES (Pt.1)

While God's people are in exile, He prepares the world for their only HOPE

### The exile and captivity of God's Chosen

Even in times of distress, God still speaks through and to His chosen ones

### Kings of Judah (following the fall of Israel in 722BC)

Only Hezekiah and Josiah rule well; both are warned that judgment cannot be avoided.

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716 - 687	Hezekiah (Son)	Good/Good		2 Ki 18-20 2 Ch 29-32 Is 36-39
687 - 642	Manasseh (Son)	Evil / Good		2 Ki 21 2 Ch 33
642 - 640	Amon (Son)	Evil / Evil		2 Ki 21 2 Ch 33
640 - 608	Josiah (Son)	Good/Good		2 Ki 22-23 2 Ch 34-35
608	Jehoahaz (Son)	Evil / Evil		2 Ki 23 2 Ch 36
608 - 597	Jehoiakim (Son of Josiah)	Evil / Evil	Habakkuk Zephaniah Jeremiah	2 Ki 23-24 2 Ch 36
597	Jehoiachin (Son)	Evil / Evil	Ezekiel (Lamentations)	2 Ki 24-25 2 Ch 36
597 - 586	Zedekiah (Son of Josiah)	Evil / Evil		2 Ki 24-25 2 Ch 36
	Judah into Re	hylonian cant	ivity - EQC BC	

### The Ministry of Zephaniah & Habakkuk

- <u>Zeph 1:7-17</u> Warning about the "day of the Lord" (also in Joel)
- Refers to God's day of judgment to remove evil from the land so that righteousness can thrive once again.
- When earthly kings fail in their Godgiven assignment, God uses the "sword" of other nations to do justice.

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## The reign of Josiah (2Chr 34-35/ 2Kin 23-24) Raised by righteous sages (Jeremiah began ministry during his reign) ■ Most complete reformation of Israel since David ■ Passover – best since Samuel's day: ■When a nation forgets its godly heritage. it loses its divine purpose Killed during invasion of Egypt, sons and all who followed returned to idolatry The Ministry of Ezekiel Prophesied before and during the exile Similar words as Jeremiah "prophets crying" "peace" when there is none. Chiefly spoke to leaders (Shepherds) ■Saw vision of the restored temple – its eternal supernatural purpose: 47:8-9 "These waters go toward the sea, ...It will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. ...for these waters go there and the others become fresh... **The Ministry of Jeremiah** (the weeping prophet) Prophesied 41 years, through the full captivity of Judah (629-588BC) ■Vilified/ arrested by kings and prophets for prophesying judgment and captivity. ■Treated kindly by Nebuchadnezzar, who freed him from prison Prophesied a New Covenant following captivity (ch.31) "I will write my laws upon their hearts..."

### The Ministry of Jeremiah

- ► Foretold the length of the exile (70 yrs)
- Nebuchadnezzar, my servant (25:9) to remove Israel from the land in order to:
- ■Give the land 70 years of rest (until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths)
- Remove Israel long enough from their "gods" – they never worshipped them again upon their return!

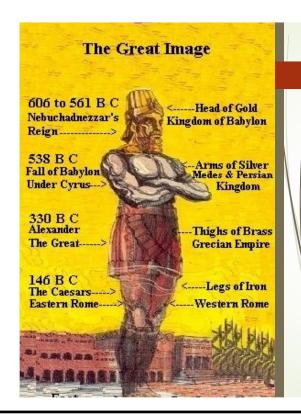
### Judah falls to Babylon (606-586 BC)

- 2 Kings 23-25; 2 Chron 36
- ■Pharaoh Neco deposes Josiah's son
- Judah caught between Babylon and Egypt at war.
- 606 Neb takes best & brightest of Judah to Babylon, takes Temple furnishings
- ■When kings rebel (Jeremiah & Ezekiel counseled them not to!) Neb destroys Jerusalem

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# Assyrian/ Babylonian empires

- **■** Dominant 745 538BC
- Assyrians captured
   Northern Tribes in 721
- ■Babylon captured
  Judah 3x from 606 588
- Practice remove best & brightest from land
  - Daniel, etc. taken in 606



# Daniel's revelation of the age of empires

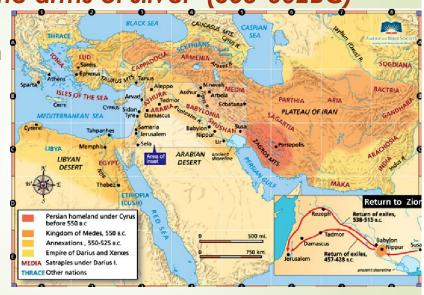
Neb's dream: Dan 2:31-44

Daniel 2:44 "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

## Persian Empire: the arms of silver (538-332BC)

538 Cyrus conquers Babylon

- Expanded to borders of India, Egypt, inroads into Greece.
- Ruled similar to Babylon, but friendlier (in general) to Israel



# God's people under Persian Rule 538 Darius conquers Babylon, succeeded by Cyrus 536 **Zerubbabel** sent to Jerusalem to govern & rebuild temple 515 **Temple dedicated** after 21 years thanks to ministry of Haggai & Zechariah 458 Ezra sent to re-establish priesthood. 450's? God saves Jews through Esther 445 Nehemiah sent to rebuild Jerusalem God still speaks through his prophets Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing Unless He reveals His secret counsel To His servants the prophets. **■ Daniel** – astounding prophetic accuracy Likely the reason the "wise men from the east" knew to look for a sign in the heavens Prophesied the rise and fall of 4 empires Prophesied the year of Jesus' crucifixion The 70 weeks of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27) 70 "Weeks" or "Sevens" > Prophetic language for a full Sabbath cycle (7 years) >(v.25) from the...command...until Messiah...7+62 ≥457 Artaxerxes decree – Ezra 7:13 >70th "week begins 27AD (Jesus baptized) "in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice" 30AD - Jesus crucified

Daniel 9:24 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.

Artaxerves (Persia) issues decree (Ezra 7)

BC

Application of the prophecy and to anoint the gins public ministry

AD

457

Q

27

2000

# Preparing the World for the Chosen Seed

- Among the Greeks
- •In the Far east
- •In the diaspora
- •In exile: Daniel's prophecies

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# God among The Greeks

Socrates, Plato, Great Philosophers and playwrights taught during this time period:

- Higher morality, deeper questioning of meaning of life
- ■Spoke of one supreme God (unnamed)
- Epimenides (known & quoted by both) --
- ■The Great Plague



# God among The Burmese

#### The People of the Lost Book

- The "<u>Karen</u>" people worshipped "Y'wa"
- Waiting for a "white brother" to bring back a lost book,
- Buddhists could not reach them – fiercely independent.
- Adoniram Judson (1817) his disciples reached millions in just a decade.


### The "Diaspora"

### Synagogues:

gathering places in nearly every major city of empires

- ► Must have 10 men to form -- Elect a ruler
- Still travel to

  Jerusalem for feasts
- First converts to Christ were Jews!
  Jesus/ Paul
  ministered here first



# The Return of God's people to their land

Ezra, Esther, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and the time between the testaments

<ul> <li>The exiles return to the Land:</li> <li>Ezra - (Restores Temple and Priesthood</li> <li>Cyrus sends Zerubabbel Immediately built an altar, began sacrifices and feasts</li> <li>Temple foundation: 2 years later. Not finished for 21 years! (Ch.3)</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Sent out scribes to instruct people in the Law of Moses ("Ezra the scribe")</li> <li>Reformation begins with a restoration of God's people to their first ministry!</li> </ul>	
The exiles rebuilding the Temple:	
Haggai & Zechariah	
Sent to encourage them to complete the temple.	
Zech 4:10 "For who has despised the day	
of small things?  Hag 2:9 'The latter glory of this house will	
be greater than the formerin this place I will give peace	
I will give peace	
The enemies of God attempt to stop the restoration of Jerusalem	
Esther:	
Events occur while Ezra was still in Persia	
<ul> <li>he was there while letters were being sent to stop the work.</li> </ul>	
►After Esther's courageous victory, the	
way was now open for Ezra to come restore the Law of Moses to the Jews.	

#### The exiles return to the Land:

Nehemiah – rebuilt Jerusalem

- Worked together with Ezra after temple was finished to rebuild the city around it
- An administrator/ governor; not Davidic king.
- ■God's people need His biblical <u>order</u> to build HIS Kingdom in the earth
- Malachi final prophet of OT 10 years after Nehemiah

### The Empire of Alexander the Great (Thighs of brass) 332 – 146BC)



### **Under Alexander the Great's empire**

- A common language now spoken throughout the known world (Greek)
- A connection made between eastern & western culture.
- Universities, Olympics, philosophy with high moral ethic
- ■The Septuagint Greek translation of the Hebrew bible

# Israel under the Greeks: (311-63BC) ■311 – 166BC Israel caught between 2 warring factions of Alexander's empire ■ 166BC Israel revolts (1,2 Maccabees). Under local rule – (not Davidic kings) ■Israel accepts status as Roman protectorate. (Rome still a Republic) ■67-63BC Civil war in Israel ■ 63BC Rome invades Israel to restore order, Israel now under Roman Rule. Without Prophets and Davidic Kings... Other structures fill the void: ► Hasmoneans (self-appointed, not from Judah), then Herods – (appointed by Rome) ► High Priest –appointed by "king" Priesthood: Pharisees & Sadducees "The Council" (Sanhedrin) Scribes/lawyers - experts in the Word All conspired to crucify their Messiah! When God's own people conspire to build another Kingdom... Psalm 8 Following Peter & John's first arrest, the church recognized it was Israel being addressed: Acts 4:23-28 Only by remaining pliable and humble under the living presence of the Anointed One can we avoid the mistakes of Israel!