



Return From Exile

The kingdom history of the Israelites is a history of exodus, exile and return. A unique people, the Jews made their faith in Yahweh the focus of their lives after the exile.

The exile did not last too long. After King Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylonia, he allowed the Israelites to return to their homeland and rebuild their lives. The first exiles who came back found Jerusalem and the surrounding countryside in ruins.



They began rebuilding the Temple the year after their arrival but it took many years to complete as the non-Jews were hostile toward the returning exiles. Despite their opposition and many other hurdles, the Jewish people completed the Temple under the guidance of their leaders. Their next task was repairing the walls of Jerusalem, which had been blocked by the Persian authorities after the death of King Cyrus. The man who helped restore them was Nehemiah.

Nehemiah had remained in Babylonia and rose to prominence in the Persian Empire. He was permitted by the Persian king to travel to Jerusalem and posted his armed men to protect the workers repairing the walls.

Another person who played an important role in restoring the religious traditions of the Jews was Ezra. A Jewish priest and scholar who too had returned from Babylonia, he read the Book of Law or Torah to make people aware of the Laws of God. Ezra also led the people to celebrate the harvest festival, the Feast of the Tabernacles and other popular traditions to revive their roots.

Thus the Jews began to grow as a truly chosen people of Yahweh.



Word of God

Ezra 9: 5 – 9

When the time came for the evening sacrifice, I got up from where I had been grieving, and still wearing my torn clothes, I knelt in prayer and stretched out my hands to the Lord my God. I said, "O God, I am too ashamed to raise my head in your presence. Our sins pile up higher than our heads; they reach as high as the heavens. From the days of our ancestors until now, we, your people, have sinned greatly. Because of our sins we, our kings, and our priests have fallen into the hands of foreign kings, and we have been slaughtered, robbed, and carried away as prisoners. We have been totally disgraced, as we still are today. Now for a short time, O Lord our God, you have been gracious to us and have let some of us escape from slavery and live in safety in this holy place. You have let us escape from slavery and have given us new life. We were slaves, but you did not leave us in slavery. You made the emperors of Persia favor us and permit us to go on living and to rebuild your Temple, which was in ruins, and to find safety here in Judah and Jerusalem.

Insight



Chandu Borde, Cricketer

Chandu (Chandrakant) is a veteran cricketer and cricket administrator. Born in Pune on 21 July 1934 in a Christian family, Borde was part of the Indian cricket team from 1958 to 1970.

He was captain of the Indian cricket team in a Test match in 1967-68 against Australia. He was chairman of the national selection committee for Indian cricket team for two terms. The government of India has honoured him with Padma Shri and later Padma Bhushan awards.

Notes



BOOK:

Come and See: Exile and Return is a Catholic Bible study that examines the Old Testament books written during and about the exile of the Jews in Babylon and their return to Jerusalem. Authored by Fr. Dr. Joseph Ponessa, S. S. D. and Dr. Laurie Manhardt, this study uses inductive and deductive learning, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the writings of popes and saints to unlock an ancient treasure and show its current application.

my TASK this week

To Watch

To Read

To Do



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Home

Watch the film *Exile, A Myth Unearthed* which looks at exile through the lenses of archaeology, history, myth and religion, and asks what it means for the contemporary struggle over land in the Middle East. Details here: <https://bit.ly/2Kr3Gsl>