

# *Resurrection Life of Jesus Church*

## THE ORIGIN STORY OF JESUS

RLJ-1875

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### PART 80: THE RETURN TO ISRAEL

#### **70 YEARS LATER**

The Godhead paused the virtual time run at the 70-year mark after the fall of Jerusalem. The first group of Jews were taken to Babylon in 597 B.C., meaning the prophecy given to Jeremiah about the Jews remaining in Babylon for 70 years would last until 527 B.C.

**Jeremiah 29:10**

The Godhead moved upon King Cyrus during his first year after conquering Babylon and planted thoughts in his head about allowing the Jews to return back to Jerusalem. This event took place in 559 B.C., some 38 years after the first exile. **Ezra 1:1-4**

The Godhead wanted to give the Jews time to prepare for their homecoming, so from the time of the Cyrus' decree, until the first group returned in 527 B.C., a total of 70 years would have elapsed since the first of two groups were carried away to Babylon.

As the Godhead looked upon the Jews living in the Persian Empire, they realized that the people from the southern kingdom had done very well for themselves. They were involved in banking, commerce, manufacturing and many had risen to high positions within the government and the military. They purchased land and built nice houses. Because of their success, the Godhead realized that only a small percentage would return to Jerusalem.

The Godhead realized with sadness that the descendants of Abraham did not love Them; the Hebrews were more interested in enjoying a good life on earth. Many were secret Kabbalists who rejected the future Redeemer from the Godhead, preferring the messiah (holy serpent) offered by Lucifer. The Godhead were resigned to the fact that few of Abraham's offspring cherished Them and just went through the motions of loving Them. **Isaiah 29:13; Mark 7:6**

#### **THE FIRST RETURN**

King Cyrus started to reign in 559 B.C. and continued for 29 years until 530. He issued a decree that Jews could return to Jerusalem the first year of his reign. According to secular sources, the first group did not return until around 538-520 B.C. Jesus had specified there would be 70 years of captivity, and according to the Bible, the first group returned in 527 B.C. **Ezra 1:1-4**

King Cyrus released gold, silver and the temple vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple. **verses 5-11**

There was a period of 32 years before the first group left under the leadership of Zerubbabel. **Ezra 2:1-2**

I would estimate there were around 150,000 Jews living in Babylon at this time, but the Bible only records 42,360 men, women and children making the decision to return to



Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> Most of the returning adults had been born and raised in Babylon. They had grown rich during their time in exile and brought with them a total of 7,337 servants and maids. **verses 64-65**

Traveling from Babylon to Jerusalem was not easy since there was a desert east of the Jordan River. The 1,678 mile journey was made by going northwest through Syria and then turning south to get to Jerusalem. The long caravan of 49,697 persons that included wagons, luggage, animals, food, along with silver and gold for the temple, must have stretched out for miles.

According to the Bible, they had 736 horses and 245 mules to pull the wagons. In addition, they had 435 camels and 6,720 donkeys for people to ride upon. **verses 66-67**

It is estimated that it took about four to five months to make the trip, which meant that they also carried the necessary food supplies. Since they were going through areas that contained robbers, a large group of the men must have been tasked to protect the caravan.

This project was different from when the Israelites left Egypt under the leadership of Moses. At that time Jesus was in charge of the food, water, and security. This time the people had to do it all; they were in God's will, but they were not given one bit of supernatural help.

Some of the rich leaders gave of their wealth to build and furnish the new house of the Lord. **verses 68-69**

Most of the people did not settle in Jerusalem, but they chose to live in the different cities of Israel.<sup>2</sup> **verse 70**

## **REBUILDING THE TEMPLE**

Zerubbabel called for all the Jews to assemble in Jerusalem seven months after they arrived. They had left Babylon with the express purpose of rebuilding the temple and it would not go well for them if they neglected this assignment. **Ezra 3:1-6**

It would take skilled labor to rebuild the house of the Lord and people gave money for this purpose, but Zerubbabel was also able to use the written grant from King Cyrus to procure timber from Lebanon. **verse 7**

The reconstruction of the temple commenced three months later. **verses 8-11**

Many of the older men in their 80s who had lived in Jerusalem as boys before the temple was destroyed in 587 B.C. wept when they saw the new house of the Lord. **verses 12-13**

## **LUCIFER HALTED THE PROJECT**

The news that a remnant of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi were rebuilding the house of the Lord in Jerusalem caused quite a stir and the rulers of the different people

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of Christ, the Jewish population in Babylon was around one million. Few Christians have picked up on the fact that this was the reason the apostle Peter went to Babylon and spent a number of years to establish a Christian church. 1 Peter 5:12-14

<sup>2</sup> Nethinim were servants (janitors) who performed menial service in the temple.

groups in Syria and the land of Israel wanted to join them. They were idolaters who worshiped the old Canaanite gods and the Jewish leadership correctly did not allow them to be part of the building project. **Ezra 4:1-3**

The pagans started a form of guerilla warfare since the Jews lived among them in different areas and the work in Jerusalem slowed down. **verse 4**

When this did not work, the pagan leadership hired attorneys, who filed petitions with the kings of Persia during the reign of Cyrus II, Bardiya, Darius I and Ahasuerus. **verses 5-6**

## **DIRTY POLITICS**

It had been 41 years since Zerubbabel arrived to Jerusalem and the pagans decided to file a new appeal with Artaxerxes I. They formed a coalition representing the different people groups in the land of Israel and Syria and their attorneys crafted a letter to the king. **verses 7-11**

They reminded Artaxerxes I that the Jews had been rebellious in the past. **verses 12-14**

The attorneys asked the king to order a historical search of the archives in Babylon to verify their claims of sedition. **verse 15-16**

King Artaxerxes I read the historical records and issued a cease-and-desist letter to the Jews that the rebuilding was to be halted. Zerubbabel and his people had no choice but to stop the work until permission was restored by Darius II. **verses 17-24**

## **HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH**

The Godhead were not happy with the situation. They were actively working to bring Jesus to the earth and redeem the human race. Their problem was that they needed the temple in Jerusalem for that purpose. They activated the prophet Haggai in 520 B.C. during the reign of Darius II. He was given a fiery word from the Godhead. **Haggai 1:1-15**

The Godhead wanted to make sure that Zerubbabel and the Jewish leadership understood the Lord wanted the temple rebuilt and they activated Zechariah to that end. **Zechariah 1:1-21**

Once the prophecies were delivered to Zerubbabel and his leadership, there was a renewed fire in their bones, and they resumed the construction despite the moratorium by Artaxerxes I. **Ezra 5:1-5**

## **SUMMARY**

No one can stop the Godhead. Whatever They want will be done. Lucifer is no match for the God. He can be likened to an irritating mosquito that is eventually swatted. Zerubbabel and his leadership did not know that the rebuilt temple would be used for the Messiah (Jesus).

Zerubbabel and his leadership can be credited with carrying out God's instructions regardless of the construction suspension issued by Artaxerxes I. They did not care about the moratorium because they considered God to be supreme.

When the Godhead commences a project, work on it and expect miracles because with God all things are possible. **Matthew 19:26**

***Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!***

***Do you have an ear to hear with?***

# Appendix A

## KINGS OF BABYLON

**Nebuchadnezzar II** reigned from 605-562 BC.

**Amel-Marduk (Evil-Merodach)** ruled from 562-560 BC until he was overthrown and killed by Neriglissar.

**Neriglissar** reigned from 560-556 BC. He was married to one of Nebuchadnezzar's daughters.

**Labashi-Marduk** was the son of Neriglissar. He was overthrown within one to three months when he began to reign in 556 BC.

**Nabonidus** ruled from 556 BC until 539 BC when the Babylonian were conquered by Cyrus II.

**Belshazzar** served as co-regent with his father, Nabonidus, who went on a pilgrimage.

## KINGS OF PERSIA

**Cyrus II** reigned from 550-530 BC.

**Cambyses II** inherited the throne and reigned for 8 years from 530-522 BC.

**Bardiya** replaced his brother in 522 BC. but reigned for less than a year until he was overthrown by Darius.

**Darius I** would go on to rule from 522-486 BC.

**Xerxes I (Ahasuerus)** inherited the throne from his father and reigned from 486-465 B.C. He famously invaded Greece with a large army. King Leonidas and his famous 300 Spartans delayed his progress at Thermopylae and then the Persians were soundly defeated by Themistocles at Salamis. Esther was famously chosen to be his queen sometime after he returned home.

**Artaxerxes I** reigned from 465-424 BC.

**Xerxes II** briefly reigned in 424 BC. for 45 days until he was assassinated by his half-brother, Sogdianus.

**Sogdianus** reigned from 424-423 BC. until he was murdered by Darius II six months later.

**Darius II** reigned from 423-404 BC

**Artaxerxes II** was the son of Darius II. He reigned from 404-358 BC.