

4. Chronology of Postexilic Period

In this period fall well-established dates, for the Bible gives many regnal dates for Persian kings whose reigns are accurately established.

RESTORATION FROM CAPTIVITY		KINGS OF PERSIA	
B.C.			B.C.
539	Fall of Babylon to Cyrus (October, Cyrus' accession year)	Cyrus	539-530
538/37	Decree for return of Jews (Cyrus' 1st year)		
536	Return of Jews under Zerubbabel (probable; 70 years, inclusive, from 1st phase of captivity in 605)		
		Cambyzes	530-522
		Smerdis	522
520/19	Temple building resumed (in 2d year of Darius I)	Darius I (the Great)	522-486
520-518	Ministry of Haggai and Zechariah		
515	Completion of Temple (in spring of 6th year of Darius)		
479/78	Esther made queen (7th year of Xerxes)	Xerxes	486-465
473	Jews delivered from death		
		Artaxerxes I	465-423
457	Return of Ezra to Jerusalem, spring and summer		
444	Return of Nehemiah, spring; building of wall of Jerusalem		
432	End of Nehemiah's first term as governor		
		Darius II	423-405/04
		Artaxerxes II	405/04-359/58
		Artaxerxes III	359/58-338/37
		Arses	338/37-336/35
		Darius III	336/35-331
		Alexander the Great (from his recognition in Babylon)	331-323

5. Intertestamental Period—Important Dates

Except for difference of one year in a few instances in the Maccabean period (due to two methods of reckoning the Seleucid Era), these dates are undisputed.

B.C.	
334-323	Alexander's conquest of Persian Empire (Asia Minor to borders of India)
331	Battle of Arbela (Gaugamela); decisive defeat of Persia
323	Alexander's death at Babylon
301	Division of Alexander's Empire into 4 parts (after battle of Ipsus)
281	Four divisions reduced to 3 (Lysimachus conquered by Seleucus I)
200	Palestine transferred from Ptolemies to Seleucids (after battle of Panium)
168	Rome defeats Macedonia; prevents Antiochus IV Epiphanes from taking Egypt
168	Antiochus Epiphanes persecutes Jews, desecrates Temple
165	Maccabees restore Temple after 3 years' profanation
146	Macedonia a Roman province
143-63	Jews independent under Maccabean rulers
63	Syria (Seleucid kingdom) and Palestine annexed by Rome
40	Herod appointed king of Judea in Rome
37	Herod takes Jerusalem from last Maccabean king
30	Egypt made a Roman province