

RE-24 THE BIBLE

Judea under Persian Rule



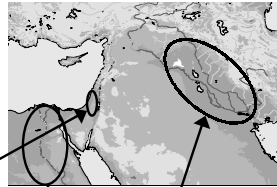
Persian Empire



Persepolis

- 200-year-long rule over entire Near East
- Supported temple restorations
- Legally recognized temple communities

Two kinds of Jewish communities:



- In the land:
 - Jerusalem & Judea
- Outside the land: esp. Egypt & Babylon
 - the *Diaspora*
- Both contribute to Biblical literature and new religious institutions



Diaspora & Empire

- **Problem of minority community**
- **Problem of divided loyalties**
- **Literary models (Esther, Daniel, Joseph):**
 - Serve emperor loyally
 - Serve God/Jewish people loyally

Judea & Empire

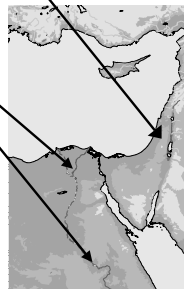
- **Nehemiah, “governor”**
 - Rebuilt Jerusalem’s walls
 - Made Judea politically autonomous within the empire
- **Ezra, “the scribe”**
 - Brought “law of God” from Babylon
 - Reformed Judea’s religion by the book



Jerusalem’s medieval walls

Diaspora & Jerusalem

- **Other Jewish temples (esp. in Egypt) show Deuteronomy not accepted by all Jews**
- **Jerusalem’s economy & authority established slowly in 5th-4th cents.**



Defining the priesthood



- Who controls the Temple?
- Two ranks (*Ezekiel, P, Chronicles*):
 - “Priests” control sacrifices
 - “Levites” are support staff
- Levites’ side not in Bible
- 3 *Isaiah* emphasizes Jerusalem community

Defining the community



- Ezra opposed intermarriage with non-Jews as religiously dangerous
 - *Ezra 10*; cf. *Kings* on Solomon’s marriages
- *Ruth* emphasized foreigners’ contribution
 - Moabite Ruth = David’s great-grandmother
 - Cf. 3 *Isaiah, Esther, Jonah*



Defining Judaism



- Judah, Judea, Judean/Jew, Judaism
- Temple community
 - Owed financial support (Temple tax)
 - Gained legal recognition from empire
- *Torah* (Pentateuch)
 - Law of the temple community
 - Formative for Jewish identity
