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**539 B.C.** – **Persians** gain power. The Jews are promised they can return and rebuild Jerusalem / Temple.

**331 B.C**. – **Greeks** gain power. Alexander the Great emerges as a strong conqueror but dies early at age 32

* Alexander’s empire is divided among 4 generals
	+ Ptolemy
	+ Seleucus
	+ Philip
	+ Antigonus
* The Ptolemy (Egypt) and Seleucid (Syria) empires emerge as dominant forces.
* Constant fighting between the Seleucids in the North and Ptolemy’s in the South while Israel is sandwiched in between.
* 175 B.C. Antiochus IV emerges as a Seleucid king and does much harm to the Jewish people in Jerusalem.
	+ Kills many Jews
	+ Desecrates the Temple
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