

Welcome Back – Part 5 Jerusalem Is Rebuilt

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

“That which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there a thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been long ago, in the ages which were before us” (Ecclesiastes 1:9-10).

- “Black Death” spread across Europe in the years 1346-1353, killing an estimated 60 million.
- Smallpox outbreak of 1520 killed 5 - 8 million people.
- Yellow fever outbreak over the course of spring and summer of 1878 killed an estimated 13,000 - 20,000.
- The “Third Plague” of 1855 ultimately led to more than 12 million deaths in India and China, with about 10 million in India alone.
- The Spanish flu pandemic of 1918-1919 killed millions. Older estimates say it killed 40 - 50 million people while current estimates say 50 - 100 million people worldwide were killed. In the United States alone, about 28% of the population suffered, and 500,000 to 675,000 died.
- Ecclesiastes 7:14 says, *“In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider.”*

Captives Free to Return 536 B.C.

- ◆ Many Israelites stayed where they were
 - ◆ It has been almost 200 years since the first captives have been taken from Israel. 722 BC
 - ◆ The most recent captives have been gone 50 years
 - ◆ They built homes and were content to stay
 - ◆ It was their choice whether to return or not.

Background of Haggai and Nehemiah Ezra 1-6

Captivity

- 606 BC – First captives taken by Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 1:1-2
- 597 BC – Second Group (10,000) taken to Babylon. 2 Kings 24:10-16; Ezekiel 1:1-3
- 586 BC – Jerusalem falls, temple destroyed. 2 Kings 25:1-21
- 539 BC – Babylon falls to Medes and Persians. Daniel 5: 25ff; Isaiah 44:27-45:1-4

Jerusalem Is Rebuilt

- ◆ Permission to go home included all the tribes of the Israelites. Ezra 1:3
 - ◆ Israel (Northern tribes) was scattered throughout the Assyrian empire
 - ◆ Judah (Southern tribes) scattered in Babylon



Jerusalem Is Rebuilt

- ◆ Persia now controls all the territories once held by Assyrian and Babylonian empires



The People of Palestine

- ◆ They profited from the Jews' absence
 - ◆ **Samaritans, Ammonites, Edomites, and Nomadic tribes** moved into and nearer the fertile lands
- ◆ **Adversaries:** Samaritans desired to help build the temple. Ezra 4:1ff; Nehemiah 2:17ff; cf. 2 Kings 17:32.
- ◆ Jews accused of treason. Ezra 4:6ff; 11ff

The "three returns" in Ezra and Nehemiah and Background of Haggai and Nehemiah – Ezra 1-6

Restoration

- 536 BC – **Cyrus** issues a decree (538 BC) for the Jews to go back to Jerusalem; after 70 years.
(cf. Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10-14)
 - Almost 50,000 return under the leadership of Zerubbabel (2 Chronicles 36:21-23; Ezra 1; 2:64-65)
- 1. 520- 516 BC – The temple is completed.
Ezra 6:15; cf. Ezra 3:10ff; cf. Haggai 2:3
- 2. 457 BC – Ezra led a second remnant of 2,058 Jews to Jerusalem. Ezra 8:1-34
- 3. 444 BC – Nehemiah lead a third remnant back.
Nehemiah 2

Persian Kings

These rulers cover the period of restoration during the time of: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

- **Cyrus** (559-529 BC) Conquered Babylon in 539 BC with Darius the Mede. Daniel 5:30-31
- **Cambyses** (529-522 BC) Also called "Artaxerxes" Commanded work on temple to cease.
Ezra 4:7, 11, 23

Persian Kings

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- **Darius I** (522-486 BC) Authorized the completion of temple. Ezra 4:24-6:15, Book of Haggai
- **Xerxes** (485-465 BC) Also called "**Ahasuerus**" – Esther was his queen, Book of Esther.
- **Artaxerxes** (465-425 BC) Authorized Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem, Ezra 7; Book of Nehemiah.

Esther

- ◆ **Takes place approximately between chapters 6 and 7 of the book of Ezra.**

Haggai

- ◆ **"Consider Your Ways"**

Nehemiah

A Man Of Action

Interest In His Brethren

- 1:2 – Asked concerning the condition of his brethren.
- 1:4ff – Prays for the people.
- 1:11 – Prays for himself.
- 2:4 – Prays for the right answer.

Power of prayer. James 5:16

Preliminary Preparation

- 2:3-8 – Petitions the king
- Send ME to Jerusalem.

The Work Of Rebuilding

- 2:9-20 Preparation –
- Views the city, reveals his mission.
 - Ridicule.
 - Chapter 3 – Assignments given for the work.

The Work Of Rebuilding

The Zeal Of The Work.

- 4:1-3 Ridicule.
- **4:6** – “*The people had a mind to work.*” cf. Haggai
- 4:9, 16 Watch.
- 4:17 Worked with one hand and held their weapons with the other hand.
- 4:18 Trumpet blower by Nehemiah ... leadership and cooperation.
- 4:20 Faith in God. “*Our God will fight for us.*”

The Work Of Rebuilding

The Greatest Interference To Their Work Was Internal Strife. 5:1-6

- 5:9 – “*The thing that ye do is not good.*”
 - Ephesians 4:3; Psalms 133:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; **Galatians 5:15**
- 5:12 – People promise to repay.
- 5:14-19 – Example of Nehemiah.

The Work Of Rebuilding

Uncompromising Work.

- First effort to get Nehemiah to compromise: 6:1-9
 - ***"I am doing a great work ... I cannot come ..."***
- Second effort to get Nehemiah to compromise: 6:10-14

The Work Finished. 6:15 Fifty two days.

The Work Of Registering and Educating The People

- 7:1-73 – People registered according to genealogy.
- 8:1-8 – Law read to the people.
- 8:10ff – People react to the reading of the law. cf. Ezra 9 - 10
- 9 – Public confession of sin.
- 10 – People make a covenant to keep the law.

The Work Of Populating The City

- 11 – One out of every ten to dwell in Jerusalem.

Dedication Of The Walls

- 12:27 – A grand occasion. Great celebration!
- 12:31 – The princes of Judah went upon the wall.
- 12:43 – Day of rejoicing, singing, praying, thanksgiving. ***"Heard even afar off."***

"When The Cat Is Away ..." Nehemiah 13:6

- 13:4-5 – Tobiah, given quarters in the temple courts by Eliashib the (high – 13:28) priest.
- 13:10-11 – Levites abandoned their posts in the temple.
- 13:15-17 – People profaned the Sabbath day. (cf. chapter 10)
- 13:23ff – People had engaged in mixed marriages.
- Ezra (9:3) versus Nehemiah.

Conclusion:

➤ We should be like Nehemiah.

- Work or act now, cry later.
 - Develop the mind to work, despising internal strife.
 - Learn to accept the example and zeal of Nehemiah.
- 13:31 – *"Remember me, O my God, for good."***