

Welcome Back – Part 6 Jerusalem Is Rebuilt

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Captives Free to Return **536 BC**

- ◆ 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.

Jerusalem Is Rebuilt

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



Background of Haggai, Ezra, Nehemiah, Zechariah, and Malachi

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
- Ecclesiastes 7:14 says, *“In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider.”*

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

Persian Kings

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

Welcome Back

- ◆ **Esther** – Takes place approximately between chapters 6 and 7 of the book of Ezra.
- ◆ **Haggai** – “**Consider Your Ways**”
- ◆ **Nehemiah** – **A Man Of Action**
- ◆ **Malachi** – **Would He Be Heard Today?**

445-432 BC – Malachi writes about faithfulness to the Lord.

Restoration

- About 100 years after the restoration.
- 2nd and 3rd generation descendants had begun to lose sight of serving the Lord and wholehearted zeal.
- Worship was in decay, priests were careless regarding sacrifices. (1:6-8, 13; 2:9)
- Tithing had been neglected. (3:9-10)
- Indifference and skepticism characterized the nation as a whole. (3:14; 2:17)
- Divorce and intermarriage with the Gentile women was common. (2:11-16)

Similarities of the Writings of Nehemiah and Malachi

1. Marriage of heathen wives. (Malachi 2:11-15 and Nehemiah 13:23-27)
2. Neglect in paying the tithes. (Malachi 3:8-10 and Nehemiah 13:10-14)
3. Disregard of the Sabbath. (Malachi 2:8-9 and Nehemiah 13:15-22)
4. Corruption of the priesthood. (Malachi 1:6-2:9 and Nehemiah 13:7-9)
5. Existence of social wrong. (Malachi 3:5 and Nehemiah 5:1-13)

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Ye say ... *"Wherein hast thou loved us?"*

Malachi 1:2

The Lord's Answer:

- I chose Jacob (descendants) over Esau. 1:2-4; cf. Genesis 25:23
 - In the sure knowledge of being the *"apple of his eye"* (Deuteronomy 32:10; Psalms 17:8)
- NOTE: God restored Israel, but refused to restore Edom. Jeremiah 49:7-22; cf. Obadiah; cf. John 3:16; Ephesians 1:3ff; Romans 9:8-13

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Ye say ... *"Wherein have we despised thy name?"*

Malachi 1:6

Ye say ... *"Wherein have we polluted thee?"*

Malachi 1:7

The Lord's Answer:

- You offer polluted bread; in weariness. 1:7, 13 (cf. Revelation 3:15-17)
 - Faithless priests rebuked. cf. Deuteronomy 15:21
 - Gentiles would give honor and great sacrifices. 1:11; cf. Romans 9:24-26; 10:1-3, 20-21
 - Curse pronounced. 2:1-9
 - Responsibilities: Keep the covenant. Teach the law. Observe sacrifices.
- cf. Elders, preachers, etc. (cf. Ezekiel 34; Acts 20:29-30)

Ye say, *"Wherefore?" (Why is God displeased with us?)* Malachi 2:10-14

The Lord's Answer:

- You divorced your wives and *"married the daughter of a foreign god."* Malachi 2:11, 13, 16; Genesis 2:18; Matthew 19:1-9; Matthew 14:1; Mark 6:16-18

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