

Welcome Back – Part 7 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.
 - ◆ Permission to go home included all the tribes of the Israelites. Ezra 1:3

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
 - ◆ Adversaries: **Samaritans, Ammonites, Edomites** and **Nomadic tribes** moved into and nearer the fertile lands
- ◆ 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

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)

Would Malachi Be Heard Today?

Part 2

9

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

Restoration

- 445-432 BC – Malachi writes about faithfulness to the Lord.
 - About 100 years after the restoration.
 - 2nd and 3rd generation descendants had begun to lose sight of serving the Lord and wholehearted zeal.

Ye say ... “Wherein hast thou loved us?” Malachi 1:2

Ye say ... “Wherein have we despised thy name?” Malachi 1:6

Ye say ... “Wherein have we polluted thee?” Malachi 1:7

Ye say ... “Wherefore?” (Why is God displeased with us?) Malachi 2:10-14

11

Ye say ... “Wherein have we wearied him?” Malachi 2:17

The Lord’s Answer:

- Ye say, “*Evil is good.*” 2:17

Isaiah 5:20, “*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*”

- Proverbs 17:15, “*He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah.*”
- Proverbs 14:34, “*Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people.*”

12

Ye say ... *"Wherein have we wearied him?"*
Malachi 2:17

The Lord's Answer:

- Ye say, *"Where is the God of justice."* 2:17
 - The evil charge against Jehovah is the opposite of His stated opposition to evil. (cf. Deuteronomy 18:19; 25:16)

13

Ye say... *"Wherein have we wearied him?"*
Malachi 2:17

The Lord's Answer:

- Ye say, *"Where is the God of justice?"* 2:17
 - God's justice is coming. But first His messenger. 3:1-5.
 - Malachi 3:1, *"Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me."* Isaiah 40:3-5; John 1:23
 - This forward-looking vision arises in the midst of a nation that was tired of hearing prophetic messages.

14

Ye say... *"Wherein have we wearied him?"*
Malachi 2:17

The Lord's Answer:

- Ye say, *"Where is the God of justice?"* 2:17
 - God's justice is coming. But first His messenger. 3:1-5.
 - Malachi 3:1, ***"and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts."*** (Isaiah 53; Romans 3:23-26; cf. Hebrews 8:8; 9:15; 10:5; 13:20)
 - New refined priesthood. Hebrews 4:14ff; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:5, 9

15

Ye say... *"Wherein have we wearied him?"*
Malachi 2:17

The Lord's Answer:

- Ye say, *"Where is the God of justice?"* 2:17
 - He will punish ALL the wicked and bless the faithful remnant. 3:6; 2 Peter 3:9
 - Principle has always been true. Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Ezekiel 18:23; cf. Habakkuk 1:2-4; Psalms 74:1-14
 - The reward for the righteous is *"reserved in heaven"* and *"ready to be revealed in the last time"* (1 Peter 1:4-5).

16

Ye say ... *"Wherein shall we return?"*
Malachi 3:7

The Lord's Answer:

- ***"Keep my ordinances."*** 3:7
 - Days of Noah. Genesis 6:3; 1 Peter 3:20
 - Moses warned. Deuteronomy 4, 8, 28-30
 - Joshua warned. Joshua 23:14ff
- You have not kept my ordinances. cf. Nehemiah 13; Malachi 1-2; Zechariah 1:3-4; cf. 2 John 9

17

Ye say ... *"Wherein have we robbed thee?"* Malachi 3:8

The Lord's Answer:

- In tithes and offerings. 3:8; cf. Leviticus 27:30-33
 - God is not so destitute that He needs tithes and offerings to maintain Himself (Psalms 50:7-15).
- *"Prove me now ..."* 3:10-12; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 8-9
- Psalms 37:25, *"I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."*

18

Ye say ... "What have we spoken against thee?" Malachi 3:13-14

The Lord's Answer:

- Ye say: 3:14 NOTE: 1:7, 12-13; 2:17
 - It is vain to serve God.
 - What profit is it that we have kept His charge?
 - We have walked mournfully.
 - They tempt God, and escape.
- Remnant: Distinction, makes a difference. 3:16ff; **NOTE: Psalms 37:7-9;**
cf. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18;
1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

19

Conclusion:

- Remember the law of Moses.
cf. Deuteronomy 4:1-9
- Elijah will come. cf. 3:1; Matthew 11:14;
Mark 9:11-13; Luke 1:17

20