

THE RETURN

Week 24: The Return to Jerusalem and Rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra; Haggai; Zechariah; Several Psalms)

The Babylonians fell to the Persians in 539BC. Under the Persians' enlightened policies, exiles were allowed to return to their land. King Cyrus of Persia became God's agent, and under Sheshbazzar's leadership nearly 50,000 committed Jews migrated back to Jerusalem, arriving sometime around 536BC. Their first order of business was to restore the temple. The Gentile inhabitants of the region, however, opposed the rebuilding project, and so it stalled for twenty years.

But God raised up **Haggai** to rekindle their commitment to complete the temple under Zerubbabel's supervision. When Haggai proclaimed God's command to rebuild the temple, giving God's promises that the glory of the second temple would exceed that of the first temple, the people obeyed with a willing heart immediately. And the temple was dedicated in 516BC, 70 years after Solomon's temple was destroyed.

Zechariah predicted the welfare of Jerusalem as God's beloved holy city (both for the near- and distant-future) through night visions and prophetic oracles. It is in these visions that he saw the King, called God's Servant and Branch, entering Jerusalem riding a donkey.

Week Twenty-Four Reading Plan

Ezra 1:1-11; 2:68-4:5	Cyrus Allows the Exiles to Return
Daniel 10:1-12:3	Daniel's Last Vision
Ezra 4:1-24	Opposition to Rebuilding the Temple
Haggai 1:1-2:23	A Call to Rebuild the Temple
Zechariah 1:1-21	A Call to Return to the Lord
Ezra 6:1-22	The Temple's Dedication
Choose a Psalm 120-134	Psalms of a Nation Restored

Timeline *After* the Babylonian Captivity

Persian Kings	Date of Reign	Biblical Events	References	Dates
Cyrus	559-530	Edict by Cyrus that the Israelites/Jews could return to Jerusalem	Ezra 1:1-4	538
		1 st return 50,000 with Zerubbabel to build temple	Ezra 2	538
		Temple foundation laid	Ezra 3:1-4:5	536
Cambyses	530-522			
Smerdis	522			
Darius I	521-486	Haggai prophesied	Haggai	520
		Zechariah prophesied	Zechariah	520-518
		Temple completed	Ezra 5-6	516
Xerex (Ahasuerus)	485-465	Accusations brought against Judah	Ezra 4:6	486
		Esther became queen	Esther 2:17	479
Artaxerxes I (Artashasta)	464-424	Artaxerxes stopped the rebuilding of Jerusalem	Ezra 4:7-23	464-458
		2 nd return of 5,000 exiles with Ezra to teach the law and reform the people	Ezra 7-10	458
		3 rd return under Nehemiah to build the walls of Jerusalem	Nehemiah	444
		Nehemiah's second return	Nehemiah 13:6	430
		Malachi prophesied	Malachi	450-430

HAGGAI – Build God’s Temple

Four Sermons of the Prophet Haggai

Problem: with Priorities Solution: Consider Your Ways Promise: “I am with you” A Call to Commitment 1:1-15	Problem: Disappointments Solution: My Spirit is w/ you Promise: “I will shake the nations”—glory & peace A Call to Work 2:1-9	Problem: with Purity Solution: Consider the Past and Future Promise: “I will bless you” A Call to Cleansing 2:10-19	Problem: Insignificance Solution: I will take... I will make... Promise: “I have chosen you” A Call to Confidence 2:20-23	CHAPTERS
Rebuild the Temple	The Temple Rebuilt			} TOPICS
“Build the House of God...and I will be glorified.”				
Put God first and experience His blessings (Matt. 6:33)				
Jerusalem				} PLACE
4 months in 520BC				} TIME

ZECHARIAH – Build Your Future

} TOPICS	Encouragement & Motivation									Encouragement & Hope				
	Purpose was to motivate those working on the temple to continue in spite of their own crops failures and financial distress. Rather than rebuking, Zechariah inspired the people to work.									Purpose was to give workers hope that a better day was to come. Messiah is revealed as coming, rejected, returning, & victorious!				
	I will live in your midst						You will be My people			I will come				
	Turn away from evil						Provide justice			Worship				
} CHAPTERS	8 Visions									4 Sermons of Obedience			2 Burdens	
	A Call to Repent	Horses & Riders	4 Horns & 4 Craftsmen	Surveyor & a Measuring Line	Joshua (the priest) Clothed	Lampstand & Olive Trees	Flying Scroll & Warning	A Woman in a Basket	4 Chariots & Crowned Priest	In Fasting	In Administering Justice	In Restoration	In Bringing People to God	Against the Nations
} TIME	1	1	1	2	3	4	5	5	6	7-8			9-12	
} PLACE	520-518BC During the rebuilding of the temple									After the completion			480BC	
Jerusalem														