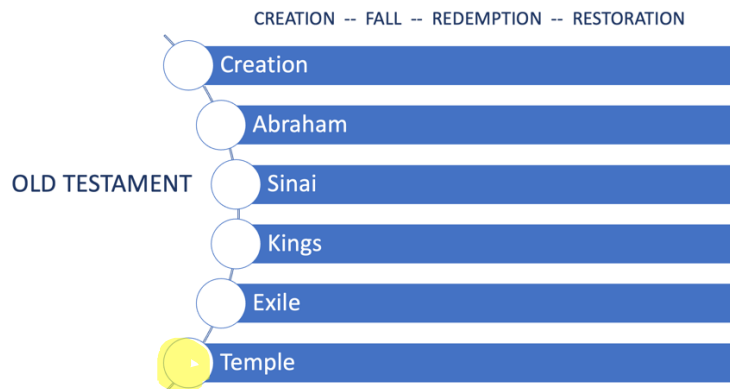


TEMPLE – Return and Rebuild



Backstory: The Prophets and The Promise to Return

Judgment, yet hope...

*"For the Lord will deliver Jacob
and redeem them from the hand of those stronger than they.
They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion;
they will rejoice in the bounty of the Lord—
the grain, the new wine and the olive oil...
"They will return from the land of the enemy.
So there is hope for your descendants," declares the Lord.
"Your children will return to their own land..." Jeremiah 31:10-25*

The Promise of a New Covenant

"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts." Jer 31:31-34

Those same prophets also gave a message of hope even further in the future – a New Covenant. In that same chapter of Jeremiah, in fact, God speaks of a longer-term future hope:

HANDOUT – OCTOBER 24, 2023

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“when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel
and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant
I made with their ancestors...I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.” Jeremiah 31:31-34*

The Return from Exile

Cyrus, King of Persia – God’s “Anointed One”

*“In the first year of Cyrus the King of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken
by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus, King of Persia, to make a proclamation
throughout his realm...” Ezra 1:1*

*“This is what the Lord says to his anointed,
to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of
to subdue nations before him
and to strip kings of their armor,
to open doors before him
so that gates will not be shut:
I will go before you
and will level the mountains^{lel};
I will break down gates of bronze
and cut through bars of iron.
I will give you hidden treasures,*

*riches stored in secret places,
so that you may know that I am the Lord,
the God of Israel, who summons you by
name.
For the sake of Jacob my servant,
of Israel my chosen,
I summon you by name
and bestow on you a title of honor,
though you do not acknowledge me.”
Isaiah 45:1-4*

The Remnant

*Though your people be like the sand by the sea, Israel, only a remnant will return....” Isaiah
10:22 (Also in Jeremiah 23, 31; Micah 2, 4, 5)*

TIMELINE OF THE RETURN

- ☐ 539 BC – 520 BC: Ezra 1-6: start of rebuilding the Temple, but halted
- ☐ 520 BC: Haggai preached over a four month period, telling them to get back to it
- ☐ 520 BC and 518 BC: Zechariah preached about the future glory of Israel
- ☐ 486 BC – 465 BC: The story of Esther, which happened back in Persia
- ☐ 458 BC: Ezra 7-10: Ezra asked to reestablish the Mosaic Law, rebuilding Israel’s spiritual life
- ☐ 445 BC: 52 Days: Nehemiah 1-7: rebuilding the city walls of Jerusalem
- ☐ 445 – 425 BC: Nehemiah 8-13: rebuilding Israel’s spiritual life
- ☐ 430 BC: towards the end of the above time frame, just before Nehemiah came back to Israel, Malachi preached about the hope of future restoration

Phase 1: 539-518 BC: Rebuilding the Temple (Ezra 1-4, Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra 5-6)

Ezra 1-4 (539-538 BC)

Restoring Worship – the downfall of the people of Israel and Judah was idolatry. The hope of rebuilding the Temple was to re-create a people who worshiped God alone.

The Remnant – most Jews stayed in Babylon, comfortable in their lives there. Just by going back to the land at all, the remnant showed faith in God.

The Emotions – great joy mixed with great sorrow. Restoration, reconciliation, and rebuilding can be like this, even when it is orchestrated by God.

Their Enemies – the Samaritans wanted to help build the Temple, but the Jews didn't let them because they had been worshiping other gods along with Yahweh.

HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH

The first verse of Ezra 5 says, "Now Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the prophet prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of God of Israel" so Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people started to rebuild and Haggai and Zechariah were with them (Ezra 5:1-2)

Haggai 1 (520 BC)

Heart of Worship – Building the temple wasn't about building a house for God, as if He needs a place to live. It was about their hearts.

Building Our Own Kingdoms – When we focus on building our own kingdoms, we toil and struggle for success. But when we seek first the kingdom of God, He will provide all we need.

God is With Them – The greatest promise of God throughout all of the covenants, and the whole purpose of the Temple, is God's presence with His people. He is with us; we do not need to be afraid.

Zechariah (520 BC)

Zechariah's name means "Yahweh remembers." The first section (almost half) of the book record night visions. The message of Zechariah is a call to repentance, like the prophets before the exile (Zechariah 1:3-4). God tried to warn the people through the pre-exilic prophets to repent and return to Him, but they didn't listen. So He was trying again with a new generation. Would they listen? Or would they be just like their fathers?

The amazing news is that the people did listen to Haggai and Zechariah and they did start to rebuild!



POINTING TO CHRIST: The last vision of this section in Zechariah 6:9-15 has two levels of fulfillment, as do many of the prophecies of the Old Testament. In the immediate future, God is telling the high priest, Joshua, that he will be the one who will rebuild the Temple. But the long-term fulfillment points ahead to Jesus, which is the Greek version of the Hebrew name Joshua. Joshua would build the current remnant temple, but Jesus would build the New Covenant temple with His own body (John 2:19).

Ezra 5-6 (520 BC)

God is sovereign over all kings; He even provided the money for the Temple from Persia's royal treasury!

Haggai 2 (520 BC)

The Second Temple was not as glorious as the original Temple of Solomon, but the Lord would make the "latter glory" of this exceed the glory of Solomon's Temple, through Zerubbabel, his "signet ring." This points ahead to Christ, who is God's perfect representative to the world and the true Temple.

Phase 2: 485 BC: Rebuilding Judah's Spiritual Life (Ezra 7-10)

When Ezra arrived 80 years later, the second generation had fallen into idolatry again. This just points us ahead to our need for Jesus again. We don't need a new Temple, we need new hearts.

The New Covenant

Jesus, the True Temple

Jesus said, “Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days.” (John 2:19)

We Are the Temple

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Romans 12:1

New Hearts

*The Lord says: “These people come near to me with their mouth
and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*

Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.” Isaiah 29:13