

THE KING IS COMING

Survey of Judah Alone, Captivity, Return, and Years of Silence

LESSON 14: THE RETURN OF ZERUBBABEL AND JOSHUA
... *PROPHECY*

MEMORY. Memorize the dates and leaders of the three waves of the return: (1) 538 BC (Zerubbabel and Joshua), (2) 458 BC (Ezra), and (3) 445 BC (Nehemiah). (Haggai and Zechariah were a part of the first wave, and Malachi was seemingly a part of the second or third wave.)

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READING. Read Ezra 1-6. After doing your reading, in the space below write down something that you found to be interesting or important. It can be something that you have never noticed before or something that you want to remember and apply.

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DISCUSSION.

1. *Proclamation.* Who stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to make an empire-wide proclamation? (Ezra 1:1; cf. Prov 21:1) What proclamation did Cyrus make, and what did he restore to the returning exiles from Judah? (Ezra 1:2-11)

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DISCUSSION.

- 2. *Return.* With whom did the first returnees come? (Ezra 2:1-2a)
What groups does Ezra 2:2b-58 number? (vv. 2b, 36a, 40a, 41a, 42a, 43a, 55a) Why were certain ones excluded from the priesthood? (v. 62; cf. v. 63) For what purpose did the heads of the families give freewill offerings? (v. 68)**

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DISCUSSION.

- 3. *Rebuilding.*** What did Joshua, Zerubbabel, and their kinsmen build first, and why? (Ezra 3:2-3) What did the people do after this project was completed? (vv. 5-7) What did they build next? (vv. 8-10a; cf. vv. 6b, 10b-13) Summarize why the leaders and the people stopped construction, and what motivated them to begin again? (4:1-6:15; cf. Hag 1:12-14)

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DISCUSSION.

4. *Dedication.* How did the people dedicate the temple? (Ezra 6:16-18) What did they observe thereafter? (vv. 19-22)

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CONNECTION. In what ways do Zerubbabel and even Joshua foreshadow Jesus Christ? (Cf. Ezra 3:8-9; Hag 2:20-23; Zech 3:1-10; Matt 1:12-16. You may also want to consider the political/religious positions of Zerubbabel and Joshua and how these may parallel those of Jesus.)

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APPLICATION. Zerubbabel and Joshua allowed the opposition of the Samaritans (and consequently the Persians) to stop them from doing what God had instructed them to do, namely, to rebuild the temple. Regardless of the personal or political ramifications, Zerubbabel and Joshua should have obeyed God rather than man. The prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah motivated the Jewish leaders and people to rebuild (and God protected them from ...

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... further opposition). Is there anything that God wants you to do that you have delayed doing? If so, repent, pray for forgiveness, and then allow the word of God to motivate obedience. If not, prepare your heart for future opposition so that you will choose obedience to God, regardless of the consequences).