

SUPPLEMENT TO THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL STATESMAN FOR THE AGES

Session Thirteen / EZRA
Wednesday, May 16, 2018

EZRA - THE JEWS LEAVE PERSIA TO RETURN HOME TO ISRAEL

1 To assist study of the Word of God, the Holy Bible, scriptures are divided into sections to
2 make the divine story even more understandable. Here is that list of the Old Testament
3 divisions:
4

- 5 1. THE TORAH – Genesis through Deuteronomy
- 6 2. THE HISTORICAL BOOKS - Joshua through Esther
- 7 3. POETICAL BOOKS - Job through Song of Solomon
- 8 4. MAJOR PROPHETS - Isaiah through Daniel
- 9 They are called “major” because of their length, not their content.
- 10 5. MINOR PROPHETS - Hosea through Malachi
- 11

12 Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther are the final three books in the historical section which
13 include:

14 Joshua
15 Judges
16 Ruth
17 I and II Samuel
18 I and II Kings
19 I and II Chronicles
20 Ezra
21 Nehemiah
22 Esther
23

24 Those final three books tell the story of the Jews’ return from Babylonian and Persian
25 exile and the reconstruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem itself, particularly the walls
26 on the southeastern end of the city. These three books cover about 100 years, 536 to 432
27 B.C. The Old Testament prophets at that time were Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

28
29 *536 to 516 B.C. (twenty years) in which Zerubbabel was the Governor in Israel and*
30 *Joshua (not the Jericho Joshua!) was the high priest were the two decades in which the*
31 *Temple was rebuilt (Ezra chs. 3-6) and Jerusalem was restored as a fortified city.*
32 *Malachi was the prophet. Ezra gives an account of this period. Nehemiah gave us the*

1 *history of the Jerusalem wall being reconstructed. Esther lived between these two*
2 *periods.*

THE THREE MAIN RETURNS

5
6 536 B.C. Zerubbabel (who became governor and was positively active in the rebuilding
7 of Solomon's Temple during the return) with 42,000 Jews, 7,337 servants, 200 singers,
8 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, 6,720 asses and 5,400 gold and silver vessels.

9
10 457 B.C. Ezra with 1,754 males, 100 talents of gold, 750 talents of silver. We are not
11 told if there were females who also returned. It was a four-month return.

12
13 444 B.C. Nehemiah, as governor, with an army escort, went to rebuild and fortify Israel
14 at Persian government expense.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE RETURN

- 15
16
17
18 536 B.C. 49,897 Jews return from Babylon to Jerusalem
19 536 B.C. 7th month they build the great altar and offered sacrifice
20 535 B.C. Work on the Temple begun and stopped
21 520 B.C. Work renewed by Haggai and Zechariah
22 516 B.C. Temple completed
23 478 B.C. Esther becomes Queen of Persia
24 457 B.C. Ezra goes from Babylon to Jerusalem
25 444 B.C. Nehemiah rebuilds the Wall
26 432 B.C. Nehemiah returns from Babylon again

THE ROYAL EDICT THAT GAVE JEWS PERMISSION TO RETURN TO ISRAEL

27
28
29
30 Ezra 1:1-8

31 **Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the**
32 **mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of**
33 **Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in**
34 **writing, saying, [2] Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath**
35 **given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an**
36 **house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. [3] Who is there among you of all his people?**
37 **his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build**
38 **the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. [4] And**
39 **whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help**
40 **him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill**

1 offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

2 [5] Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests,
3 and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the
4 house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem. [6] And all they that were about them
5 strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with
6 beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered.

7 [7] Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which
8 Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house
9 of his gods; [8] Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of
10 Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar*, the prince of
11 Judah.

12 * Persian name given to Zerubbabel

13
14 When Babylon fell to the Persians, the new monarch was Cyrus. His heart was much
15 different from his Babylonian predecessors and he not only released Jews to return to
16 their homeland of Jerusalem and Judea, but gave them the resources and protection they
17 needed to start the rebuilding process.

18
19 Try to imagine: 70 years or so earlier, the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar, had
20 swooped down on Israel three times, the last time in 586 B.C., destroying the city of
21 Jerusalem and the nation in general. In all those seven decades the Jewish homeland had
22 lain in ruin, controlled in part by regional leaders hostile to the Jews. Now the people of
23 Israel could go home and start the rebuilding process. To many of the Jews it was not a
24 happy proposal as they had settled in Babylon/Persia, were not being persecuted, and
25 many, in fact, were flourishing. But some remembered and were eager to return:

26
Psalm 137:1-4

**By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we
remembered Zion. [2] We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst
thereof. [3] For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and
they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
[4] How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?**

27 The prophet Isaiah had many years earlier prophesied that God would use Cyrus in this
28 special liberation: Isaiah 44:26-28

29 **That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his**
30 **messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of**
31 **Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: [27] That**

1 saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: [28] That saith of Cyrus, He is
2 my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou
3 shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

4 5 CHAPTER TWO

6
7 This rather amazing chapter inform us of the Jews' families who took advantage of
8 Cyrus' beneficence and returned to their homeland of Israel:

9
10 Ezra 2:1

11 **Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of**
12 **those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had**
13 **carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one**
14 **unto his city;**

15
16 Most, if not all, of these people are not familiar to us, but they are to God. They were
17 brave souls who pulled up stakes in Persia and headed west!

18
19 Ezra 2:70

20 **So the priests, and the Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the**
21 **porters, and the Nethinims (a group of Persians who came along as well), dwelt in**
22 **their cities, and all Israel in their cities.**

23 24 CHAPTER THREE - REBUILDING THE ALTAR IN JERUSALEM

25
26 Ezra 3:1-4

27 **And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the**
28 **cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. [2] Then**
29 **stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel**
30 **the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to**
31 **offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God. [3]**
32 **And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear was upon them because of the people**
33 **of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord, even**
34 **burnt offerings morning and evening. [4] They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as**
35 **it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the**
36 **custom, as the duty of every day required;**

37
38 This was a good start but (verse 6), **"...the foundation of the Lord's Temple had not yet**
39 **been laid."**

1 There was paramount in the minds of those Jews that God's house was priority. While
2 the return was wonderful, while setting up the foundation for the altar was commendable,
3 the Temple was not built - and it had to be done! *This church building, First Assembly*
4 *of God, is certainly not the Jerusalem Temple. But it IS the house of God. We take*
5 *great care with the care of it. My deepest appreciation to all who are helping us*
6 *financially with the re-roof project. Because of you, we are making good progress on*
7 *this large job!*

8
9 We don't have to imagine the joy of those previously-exiled Jews at seeing the rebuilding
10 of the Temple for Ezra reports it:

11
12 Ezra 3:11-13

13 **And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord;**
14 **because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people**
15 **shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of**
16 **the house of the Lord was laid. [12] But many of the priests and Levites and chief of**
17 **the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the**
18 **foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and**
19 **many shouted aloud for joy: [13] So that the people could not discern the noise of**
20 **the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted**
21 **with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.** Yes, the Babylonians had
22 destroyed the great Temple built by Solomon decades earlier; but now, miracle of
23 miracles, the great edifice was being rebuilt!

24
25 TROUBLE BREWS - CHAPTER FOUR

26
27 But the enemies of God's people were not happy. (Reminded me the other day of much
28 of the news media when the US Embassy was located in Jerusalem! How the liberal
29 media complained - about everything!)

30
31 Note the cunning of these enemies: Ezra 4:1-5

32 **Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the**
33 **captivity builded the temple unto the Lord God of Israel; [2] Then they came to**
34 **Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with**
35 **you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of**
36 **Esar-haddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither. [3] But Zerubbabel, and**
37 **Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have**
38 **nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will**
39 **build unto the Lord God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded**
40 **us. [4] Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and**

1 troubled them in building, [5] And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their
2 purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of
3 Persia.

4
5 Where did these enemies come from? 2 Kings 17:24-29

6 And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from
7 Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of
8 Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in
9 the cities thereof. [25] And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that
10 they feared not the Lord: therefore the Lord sent lions among them, which slew
11 some of them. [26] Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations
12 which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner
13 of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they
14 slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land. [27] Then the
15 king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye
16 brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the
17 manner of the God of the land. [28] Then one of the priests whom they had carried
18 away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should
19 fear the Lord. [29] Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in
20 the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their
21 cities wherein they dwelt.

22
23 When the Jews were taken out of Israel years earlier by the Babylonian King
24 Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Assyria brought in foreigners to occupy Samaria (that's part
25 of today's so-called "West Bank.") These people did not know God. In fact, verse 31
26 reports that they even sacrificed their own children to the fires of their pagan gods.
27 These people became known in the New Testament as SAMARITANS. (This makes
28 Jesus' story of "The Good Samaritan" even more remarkable.)

29
30 Bottom line: Any efforts or suggestions from these people to assist the Jews in honoring
31 the true God with the rebuilding of His Temple in Jerusalem were phony! In truth, they
32 wished to disrupt the building program. But Zerubbabel the Jewish governor turned
33 them down flatly! Since the enemies couldn't infiltrate the workers from within, they
34 tried the oldest - and often most successful - tool in Satan's arsenal,
35 DISCOURAGEMENT! AND FAKE NEWS! They sent this letter to King Artaxerxes:

36
37 Ezra 4:12-16

38 Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come
39 unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls
40 thereof, and joined the foundations. [13] Be it known now unto the king, that, if this

1 **city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and**
2 **custom, and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings. [14] Now because we**
3 **have maintenance from the king's palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king's**
4 **dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king; [15] That search may be**
5 **made in the book of the records of thy fathers: so shalt thou find in the book of the**
6 **records, and know that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and**
7 **provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time: for which**
8 **cause was this city destroyed. [16] We certify the king that, if this city be builded**
9 **again, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion on this**
10 **side the river.**

11
12 There are always people who believe rumors and in this case the king was one of them.
13 Ezra 4:21 **Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city**
14 **be not builded, until another commandment shall be given from me.**

15
16 This caused work on the Temple in Jerusalem to be stopped.

17
18 **CHAPTERS 5 AND 6 – THE TEMPLE IS REBUILT, FINISHED AND DEDICATED**

19
20 To the rescue – two great prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, reminded the Jews of God’s
21 promises and commandment to rebuild (which superseded the command of the Persian
22 king).

23
24

Haggai was a down-to-earth man of God while Zechariah was much more emotional. See...God can use all kinds of people!
--

25
26 Once again, here came the enemies. Kind of like being nibbled to death by a duck!
27 Ezra 5:2-4

28 **Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and**
29 **began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the**
30 **prophets of God helping them. [3] At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor**
31 **on this side the river (the Persian governor of Samaria), and Shethar-boznai (some**
32 **other Persian official), and their companions, and said thus unto them, Who hath**
33 **commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall? [4] Then said we unto**
34 **them after this manner, What are the names of the men that make this building?**

35
36 These enemies did not ruffle Zerubbabel. In effect he said, “I don’t see you names on
37 the list of pertinent people here - so buzz off.” They told these kibbitzers the Godly
38 history of the Great Temple of Solomon, the invasion by the Babylonians, the years of

1 captivity, and the decree from Cyrus to rebuild. These enemies did not believe
2 Zerubbabel and wrote to King Darius to see if their report was true. Fantastic result:
3 Ezra 6:1-7

4 **Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the**
5 **rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. [2] And there was found at**
6 **Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was**
7 **a record thus written: [3] In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king**
8 **made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded,**
9 **the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly**
10 **laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits;**
11 **[4] With three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expences**
12 **be given out of the king's house: [5] And also let the golden and silver vessels of the**
13 **house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at**
14 **Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the**
15 **temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of**
16 **God. [6] Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shethar-boznai, and**
17 **your companions the Apharsachites, which are beyond the river, be ye far from**
18 **thence: [7] Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and**
19 **the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place.**

20
21 Facts stop opponents in their tracks! Darius found all the records of the original
22 transaction in place. He not only made the enemies back off – BUT – he made them
23 chip in on the renovation! Ezra 6:9-10 **And that which they have need of, both**
24 **young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven,**
25 **wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which are at**
26 **Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail: [10] That they may offer**
27 **sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king,**
28 **and of his sons.**

29
30 And then the king warned the enemies: Ezra 6:11 **Also I have made a decree, that**
31 **whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being**
32 **set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this.**

33
34 Now the way was cleared for Governor Zerubbabel and his people to complete the
35 building of the post-exile Temple. Ezra 6:15-16

36 **And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the**
37 **sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. [16] And the children of Israel, the**
38 **priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the**
39 **dedication of this house of God with joy...**

1 CHAPTERS SEVEN AND EIGHT: THE RETURN TO ISRAEL UNDER EZRA

2
3 The first six chapters of Ezra recorded the return of the first Jews to return from
4 Babylon/Persia to Israel under Zerubbabel - perhaps 50,000 or so persons. Now we
5 come to the SECOND WAVE of returnees, this time under Ezra.

6
7 Up to this point, Ezra (although he wrote the book) was not a main character in the return,
8 only the recorder of it. But now he leads a major wave of returnees to the glorious land.

9
10 WHO WAS HE?

11
12 Ezra came from an impressive background. One of his forbears had been the initial high
13 priest of Israel and the brother of Moses, Aaron himself. Why wasn't he in the first
14 wave of returnees? I don't know. But since he was a priest with the ministry of
15 teaching God's Word, now that the Temple had been restored (of sorts) he would have a
16 place of ministry in the Holy City.

17
18 Ezra 7:6-8

19 **This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses,**
20 **which the Lord God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request,**
21 **according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him. [7] And there went up some of**
22 **the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the**
23 **porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the**
24 **king. [8] And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year**
25 **of the king.**

26
27 It was quite a journey in those days to go from Iran/Iraq (Persia) to Jerusalem, perhaps
28 requiring at least five months. So Ezra was not making the trip on a "whim." He tells
29 us that he had prepared his heart spiritually to make this pilgrimage:

30
31 Ezra 7:10

32 **For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to**
33 **teach in Israel statutes and judgments.**

34
35 It is one thing to STUDY the Word of God and still another to DO what it says. Verses
36 11-13 tell us that King Artaxerxes made a decree allowing Ezra and the others to leave his
37 area and return to the eternal city of Jerusalem. The king gave him funding and
38 authority to do what was necessary:

39
40 Ezra 7:26

1 **And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let**
2 **judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to**
3 **banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.**

4
5 Ezra added a thought here that I find interesting: Ezra 7:27

6 **Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the**
7 **king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem:**

8
9 While I don't believe God expects us to build churches that look like palaces, I do believe
10 He is honored when we keep His house as nice as possible. Thank you to all who give,
11 work and assist in doing that at First Assembly of God!

12
13 So Ezra started toward Jerusalem on this glorious assignment:

14
15 Ezra 8:31-32

16 **Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month,**
17 **to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us**
18 **from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way. [32] And we came**
19 **to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.**

20
21 CHAPTERS 9-10

22 THE SPIRITUAL REVIVAL IN JERUSALEM UNDER EZRA'S MINISTRY

23
24 While there was physical restoration taking place in Judea, it was not a spiritual move at
25 this point. During the long exile, the people who were taken and even those still
26 remaining in the Land had been subjected to false gods and immorality. Ezra was
27 shocked at the spiritual condition he encountered:

28
29 Ezra 9:1-4

30 **Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of**
31 **Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the**
32 **people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites,**
33 **the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the**
34 **Egyptians, and the Amorites. [2] For they have taken of their daughters for**
35 **themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with**
36 **the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in**
37 **this trespass. [3] And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle,**
38 **and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished. [4]**
39 **Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of**
40 **Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat**
41 **astonied until the evening sacrifice.**

1 Note carefully Ezra's reaction to the wickedness he found when returning to the Land. It
2 is important to note that a number of years had passed since the first 50,000 returnees had
3 come back under Zerubbabel. Probably 75 years had gone by and the people had
4 intermingled and intermarried with non-believing heathen. Ezra did not try to preach
5 prosperity to them or positive thinking.
6

7 Ezra said he was so ashamed of what was happening that he blushed. Someone wrote
8 that human beings are the only creatures God ever made that blush – or need to.
9

10 Note Ezra's prayer: Ezra 9:6-15

11 **And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God:**
12 **for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the**
13 **heavens. [7] Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this**
14 **day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into**
15 **the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to**
16 **confusion of face, as it is this day. [8] And now for a little space grace hath been**
17 **shewed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail**
18 **in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in**
19 **our bondage. [9] For we were bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our**
20 **bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give**
21 **us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof,**
22 **and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem. [10] And now, O our God, what**
23 **shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, [11] Which thou**
24 **hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to**
25 **possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their**
26 **abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness.**
27 **[12] Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their**
28 **daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may**
29 **be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your**
30 **children for ever. [13] And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for**
31 **our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities**
32 **deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this; [14] Should we again break thy**
33 **commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest**
34 **not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no**
35 **remnant nor escaping? [15] O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain**
36 **yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we**
37 **cannot stand before thee because of this.**
38

39 How urgently we need that message in Christianity today – and in America today! We
40 need the mercy and forgiveness of God. I believe that even now God would hear that
41 message and cry today.

GOD SENT REVIVAL TO ISRAEL

Ezra 10:1-4

Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore. [2] And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. [3] Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. [4] Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it.

It would be a good place in this session to warn against spiritually-mixed marriages, that is an unsaved marrying a saved person. Pastors hear it from engaged people so often, "Well, when we're married we'll get this all straightened out." Very rarely! And there are enough challenges in marriage without adding this of believer/non-believer problems.

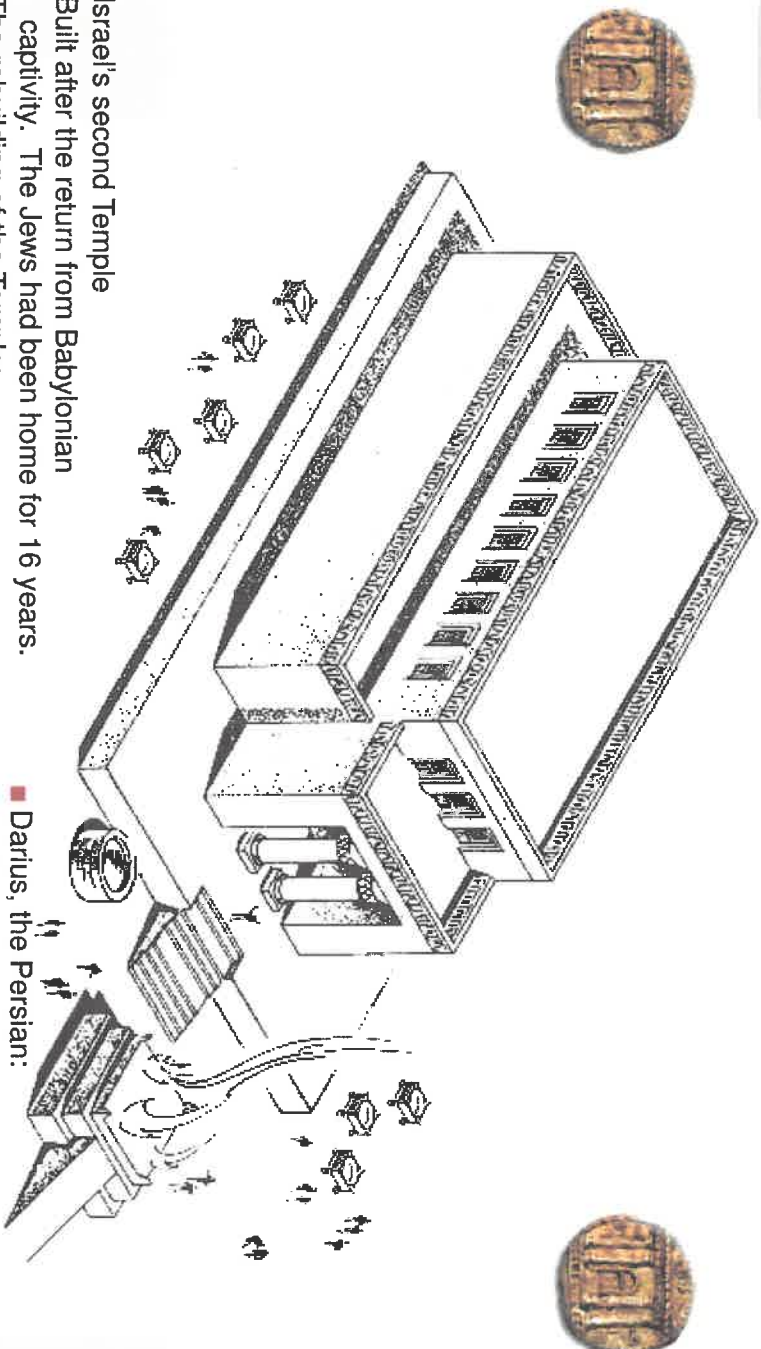
So a "revival meeting" was called for in Jerusalem. Ezra 10:9-12

Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain. [10] And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. [11] Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. [12] Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do.

At least for a time there was a spirit of loving God and keeping His commandments throughout the land. It wasn't the rebuilding of the Temple that brought it about. It was the passionate praying and confession of God's man Ezra that led the nation to the altar. So it was then....and so it will always be.

NEXT WEEK: THE WALL-BUILDER NEHEMIAH

Interesting Facts About Zerubbabel's Temple



- Israel's second Temple
 - Built after the return from Babylonian captivity. The Jews had been home for 16 years.
 - The rebuilding of the Temple:
 - Foundation was laid in 536 B.C.
 - Was discontinued in 534 B.C.
 - Resumed in 520 B.C.
 - Completed in 516 B.C.
 - Dedicated on March 12, 515 B.C.
 - Zerubbabel's temple stood for 500 years.
 - Zerubbabel's temple exceeded the dimensions of Solomon's Temple
 - In magnificence and splendor, Zerubbabel's Temple did not compare with Solomon's Temple.
Ezra 3:12 & Haggai 2:3
 - Zerubbabel's temple did not have the Ark of the
- Darius, the Persian:
 - Authorized the use of the royal treasury for the building of the Temple.
 - Authorized the temple to be completed.
 - The work of restoring Jerusalem went on for some 70 years after the temple was built.
 - The prophets Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the work on the Temple.
 - Ezra focused attention on the decree of Cyrus.
Ezra 6:3-5
 - Haggai stressed the need to rebuild the Temple.
Haggai 1:1-6
 - Zechariah predicted the rebuilding of the temple.
Zechariah 1:16