

Chapter 19

The Story

The Return Home

Key People

- Nebuchadnezzar –
 - King Babylon – destroyed Jerusalem – died mad
- Cyrus – Founded the Persian Empire
- Artaxerxes –
 - King of Persia – Ezra & Nehemiah in his court
 - Ezra & Nehemiah – prophets of God
- Haggai –
 - 1 of 3 prophets ministered after exile [Panelled homes]
- Joshua – HP & contemporary of Zerubbel
- Zerubbel – Govenor

Timeline

Begins 538 BC

Stages of the Return

- Stage # 1
 - Zerubbel Govenor & Joshua High Priest
 - 20 years to rebuild the temple
 - Period covered in Ezra 3 – 6
 - Haggai & Zechariah prophesied
- Stage # 2
 - Zerubbel Govenor & Joshua High Priest
 - 25 years to rebuild the walls
 - Ezra returned for initial word on walls
 - Nehemiah assumes governorship
 - Full support of Persia
 - Malachi prophesied

» Esther prophesied during this time period

•536 BC --- About 50,000 return under Zerubbabel. Joshua, the priest, served as the religious leader of the returned people. Haggai returned with this group Ezra 2.

•457 BC --- A second group, led by Ezra, consisting of about 2058 persons, returns. Several reforms are instituted, including the problem of inter-marriage with the nations Ezra 8-10.

•445 BC --- A third group, led by Nehemiah, returns. Nehemiah serves as the governor of Jerusalem. The walls are rebuilt Nehemiah 2.

Isaiah 44. 24 - 28

²⁴“This is what the Lord says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself, ²⁵who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools of diviners who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense, ²⁶who carries out the words of his servants and fulfills the predictions of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, ‘It shall be inhabited,’ of the towns of Judah, ‘They shall be rebuilt,’ and of their ruins, ‘I will restore them,’ ²⁷who says to the watery deep, ‘Be dry, and I will dry up your streams,’ ²⁸who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please: he will say of Jerusalem, ‘Let it be rebuilt,’ and of the temple, ‘Let its foundations be laid.’”

Chapter 19

- A sign of the Upper Story
- God has chosen to redeem His people
- He has provided a way for them to go home
- 50,000 choose to go

Priority

- A preferential rating; *especially* : one that allocates rights to goods and services usually in limited supply

Cyrus (580-529 BC)

- The first [Achaemenid](#) Emperor
- He founded Persia by uniting the two original Iranian Tribes- the Medes and the Persians
- Known to be a great conqueror, who at one point controlled one of the greatest Empires ever
- He is best remembered for his unprecedented tolerance and magnanimous attitude towards those he defeated

Misplaced Priorities

- This led to their captivity in the first place
- They failed to honor God FIRST in their lives
- Caused many Israelites to remain in Babylon

Haggai

- **Haggai** means "festival, feast, festive"
 - It may be a shortened form of **Haggiah** which means "festival of Jehovah."
 - Some suggest that he may have been born on one of the major festival or feast days of the Jews [Passover]
 - He is referred to as a "prophet":³
 - (Haggai 1:1; Ezra 5:1; 6:14)
 - Little is known of him
 - His father's name is never mentioned
 - It is assumed that he was born in Babylon during the time of the captivity

What is the REAL Problem?

- **Comfort** -
 - Life in Babylon was pretty good
 - People had jobs and homes, families and friends
 - If it's not broken, why fix it?
- **Fear of the unknown** -
 - They only knew Babylon; why leave known for unknown
- **Too much work** -
 - Jerusalem had been destroyed
 - The temple had been razed
 - Those who returned would have to overcome so much
 - Daily living would be difficult
- **Spiritual apathy** -
 - Some exiles failed to learn from past mistakes
 - Continued to undervalue those things that God values
 - The Promised Land and the Temple

Haggai's Message

Get right with the Lord
And
Get back to work!

Haggai's Challenge

Give careful
Thought to
Your Ways

Reset your

Priorities

In other words

Haggai 1. 8

"Go up into the mountain and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored," says the Lord."

Deuteronomy 28. 15-24

¹⁵ However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you:
¹⁶ You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country.
¹⁷ Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed.
¹⁸ The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.
¹⁹ You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out.
²⁰ The Lord will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and perish to sudden ruin because the evil you have done to the Lord your God has brought you to this day.
²¹ You will be cursed with diseases until the hand of the Lord strikes you and you are entering to possess.
²² The Lord will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish.
²³ The sky over your head will be bronze, the ground beneath you iron.
²⁴ The Lord will turn the rain of your country into dust and powder; it will come down from the skies until you are destroyed."

Deuteronomy 28. 38-40

³⁸ You will sow much seed in the field but you will harvest little, because locusts will devour it.
³⁹ You will plant vineyards and cultivate them but you will not drink the wine or gather the grapes, because worms will eat them.
⁴⁰ You will have olive trees throughout your country but you will not use the oil, because the olives will drop off."

