

Coming Home
Ezra 1:1-4

1. God Turns The Heart Of Cyrus Towards The Jews.

“In the first year of Cyrus 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 and to put it in writing: "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: " 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you--may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the Lord, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. And the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem.' " Ezra 1:1-4

2. Why Does God Make Such A Big Deal About His Temple?

The Temple Is A Teaching Tool For God's People.

- God's Presence Among His People.
- The Problem: Sin Separates People From God.
- The Solution: A Blood Sacrifice Makes Access Possible.

“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.” 1 Peter 3:18

“When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns, the people assembled as one man in Jerusalem. Then Jeshua son of Jozadak and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates began to build the altar of the God of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, in accordance with what is written in the Law of Moses the man of God. Despite their fear of the peoples around them, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the Lord, both the morning and evening sacrifices.” Ezra 3:1-3

3. The People Begin To Rebuild The Temple But Lose Focus.

- God's Big Thing Becomes Their Small Thing.
- The People Abandon Building The Temple For 16 Years.

"Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?" Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it." This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored," says the Lord. "You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?" declares the Lord Almighty. "Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house. Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands." Haggai 1:4-11

4. How Does God Respond To Misplaced Priorities?

- Times of Testing. Not All Testing Is The Result of Sin.
- Times of Trial To Wake Us Up And Examine Our Ways.

“Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, gave this message of the Lord to the people: "I am with you," declares the Lord. So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God.” Haggai 1:13-14

“This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Now hear these words, Let your hands be strong so that the temple may be built. This is also what the prophets said who were present when the foundations was laid for the house of the Lord Almighty.” Zechariah 8:9

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:33

Application