

Zechariah - Historical Background

By Kevin E. Hughes

BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

Zechariah is Prophecy, as seen in “the Word of the Lord (of Hosts) came” to Zechariah, 9 times, (Zech 1:1, 1:7, 4:8, 7:1, 7:8, 7:4, 8:1, 8:18) AND "declares the Lord" is found 17 times and 347 times in Old Testament.

Zechariah Prophecy's about the 1st Coming (Zech 9:9, 11:12-13) and 2nd Coming (Zech 9:10) of Christ and of the Battle of Amageddon (Zech 12, 13, 14).

Book of Zechariah, is cited, 41 times, in New Testament Books.

Zechariah contains most prophecies of crucifixion in OT, (Zec 9:9; 11:12, 13; 13:6, 7), except Psalms.

Zechariah speaks of Christ as:

“the Angel of the Lord”, Zech 3:1-2, “the righteous Branch”, Zech 3:8, 6:12-13, 12:8, “King Priest”, Zech 6:13, 9:9, “cornerstone”, Zech 10:4, One sold for 30 pieces of silver, Zech 11:13, One “pierced”, Zech 12:10

ZECHARIAH: THE MAN, PROPHET, AND PRIEST

The postexilic Prophet **Zechariah** was a **Levite** born in **Babylon** (Neh 12:1, 16).

He was the son of **Berekiah** and the grandson of **Iddo** the priest (Zech. 1:1) and “a descendant of **Iddo**” (Ezra 5:1; 6:14; cf. Neh. 12:4, 16).

Zechariah was both a prophet and a priest.

Zechariah's name, means “**Yahweh (the Lord) remembers**”

Zechariah was a contemporary of **Haggai** the prophet, **Zerubbabel** the governor, and **Joshua** the high priest (Ezra 5:1-2, Zech. 3:1, 4:6, 6:11).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The fall of **Northern Kingdom of Israel** (10 tribes) to **Assyrians** was in (722 BC)

The fall of **Southern Kingdom of Judah** (2 tribes) to **Babylonians** in (605 BC + 597 BC + 586 BC)

In 586 BC the 1st Temple was Looted and Destroyed by **Nebuchadnezzar**.

Most **Jews** were deported to **Babylon** for 70 years, as prophesied by **Jeremiah** (Jer 25:11, 29:10).

During the **Exile** the Prophet **Daniel** was told that **Gentile kingdoms** would be dominant over the **Kingdom** of **S. Judah** and **N. Israel**, until **God** would set up **His kingdom** on the earth under the rule of the **Messiah** (Dan 2, Dan 7). This period was referred to by **Jesus** as “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24).

Then **Babylonian Empire** fell to the **Persian Empire** in (539 BC),

Cyrus the Great was stirred by **God** to decree that the **Jews** could return to **Jerusalem** to rebuild their **Temple** in (538 BC), (Ezra 1:1-2, 6, 6:3-5, 2 Chr 36:22, Isa 44:28).

However, only 50,000 **Jews** (including **Haggai** and **Zechariah**) returned under **Zerubbabel** the governor and **Joshua** the high priest (Ezra 2).

Levitical sacrifices were soon reinstated, on a rebuilt altar of burnt offering (Ezra 3:1-6).

In, 536 BC, the foundation of the **Temple** was laid (Ezra 3:8-13; 5:16).

However, external oppression and internal depression halted the rebuilding of the **Temple** for about 16 more years of spiritual apathy, until the rule of the **Persian King Darius I** (522-486 BC).

In the second year of **Darius I** (520 BC) God raised up **Haggai** the prophet to encourage the **Jews** in rebuilding (Ezra 5:1-2, Hag 1:1).

Zechariah began his prophetic ministry (520 BC) (Zech 1:1), encouraging the **Jews** to spiritual renewal and motivating them to rebuild the **Temple** by revealing to them **God's plans** for **Israel's** future.

The people completed the Temple in 515 BC (Ezra 6:15).

The prophecies of **Zechariah 9-14** were written later, about 480BC to 470BC .

From Destruction of 1st Temple to Completion of 2nd Temple and Walls (586BC to 444BC)

586 BC	Nebuchadnezzar Destroys Temple
539 BC	Cyrus I King of Persia conquers Babylon
538 BC	Cyrus I King of Persia Decrees to Rebuild Temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1-8)
536 BC	2 nd Temple Foundation Construction Begins (Ezra 3:10-11) 430 yrs after Solomon Begins 1st Temple in 966 BC (I Kings 6:1)
536 BC	2 nd Temple Construction Halted by Decree of Xerxes King of Persia (Ezra 4:21)
521 BC	Darius I becomes King of Persia

520 BC, Aug 29	Haggai's first sermon (Hag 1:1-11, Ezra 5:1)
520 BC, Oct 17	Haggai's second sermon (Hag 2:1-9)
520 BC, Oct-Nov	Zechariah's ministry begins (Zech 1:1-6)
520 BC, Dec 18	Haggai's third and fourth sermons (Hag 2:10-23)
520 BC	2 nd Temple Construction Resumed, ignore Decree (Hag 1:12-15, Ezra 5:1-2) After, Haggai - Zechariah Prophesied > Work on Temple Began Again
520 BC	Darius I Decrees to search for Cyrus I Previous Decree (Ezra 6:1)
520 BC	Cyrus I Previous Decree was found in Ecbatana, in fortress (Ezra 6:2)
520 BC	Darius I issues Decree to Comply with Cyrus I Previous Decree (Ezra 6:2-5)
520 BC	Cyrus I Previous Decree Explains in Detail work on Temple (Ezra 6:2-5)
520 BC	Darius I Decrees to fund all costs of Rebuilding Temple (Ezra 6:8-12)
519 BC, Feb 15	Zechariah has 8 or 9 Visions in one night (Zech 1:7-6:8)
518 BC, Dec 7	Zechariah Delegation from Bethel (Zech 7:1-2)
515 BC, Mar 12	Temple Completed and Dedicated after 5 years, under Darius I (Ezra 6:15-16)
480 BC – 470 BC	Zechariah 1 st Oracle (Zech 9:1-11:17) and 2 nd Oracle (Zech 12:1-14:21)

444 BC	Artaxerxes I, issues Decree to Rebuild Walls & City (Neh 2:7-9)
444 BC	BEGIN 70/69 WEEKS of Daniel > 490 years - 483 years (Neh 2:1-9, Dan 9:25)
444 BC	Nehemiah Begins to Rebuild Walls and Gates of Jerusalem (Neh 3:1-32)
444 BC	Walls, Gates, and Doors Completed, in 52 days (Neh 6:15, 7:1)
437 BC	Malichi's ministry begins (Mal 1:1)

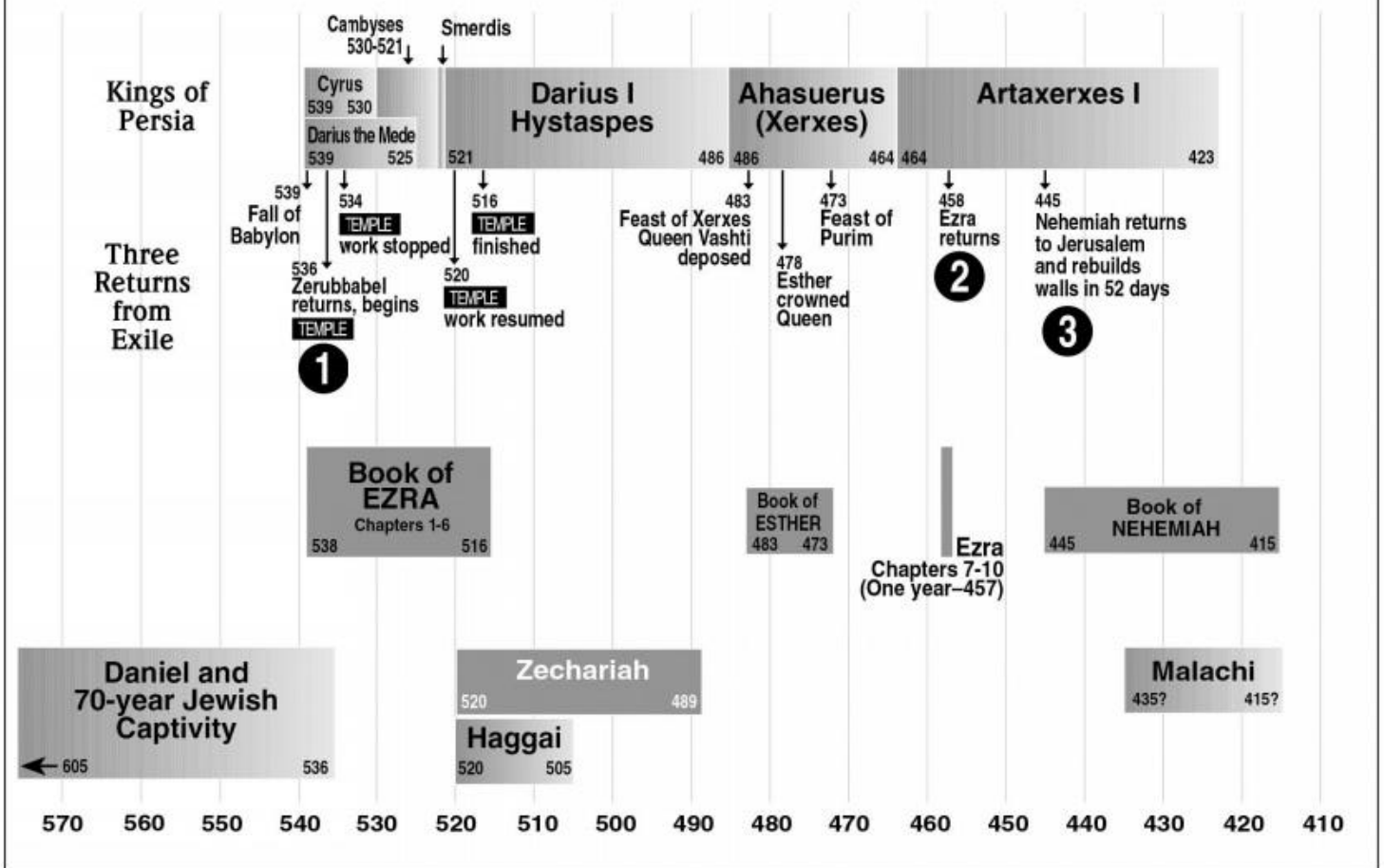
PURPOSE OF BOOK

Zechariah is the most Messianic, Apocalyptic (predicting disaster), and Eschatological in the OT. Primarily, it is prophecy about Jesus Christ, focusing on His coming glory as a means to comfort Israel. Zechariah 1:17

17 “Again, proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts,
“My cities will again overflow with prosperity,
and the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.” ’ ”

While the book is filled with visions, prophecies, signs, celestial visitors, and the voice of God, it is also practical, dealing with issues like repentance, divine care, salvation, and holy living. God used Zechariah to bring a rich, abundant outburst of promise for the future to sustain the faithful remnant of Israel through those silent years until Jesus Comes.

THE RULERS AND PROPHETS OF ZECHARIAH



The Persian Empire: 539BC to 331BC¹

Kings of Persia and Temple Rebuilding

3 Historical Books > Ezra, Esther, and Nehemiah

3 Prophetic Books > Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

2nd Temple Rebuilding > Begun, 536BC

2nd Temple Rebuilding > Stopped, 534BC

2nd Temple Rebuilding > Resumed, 520BC

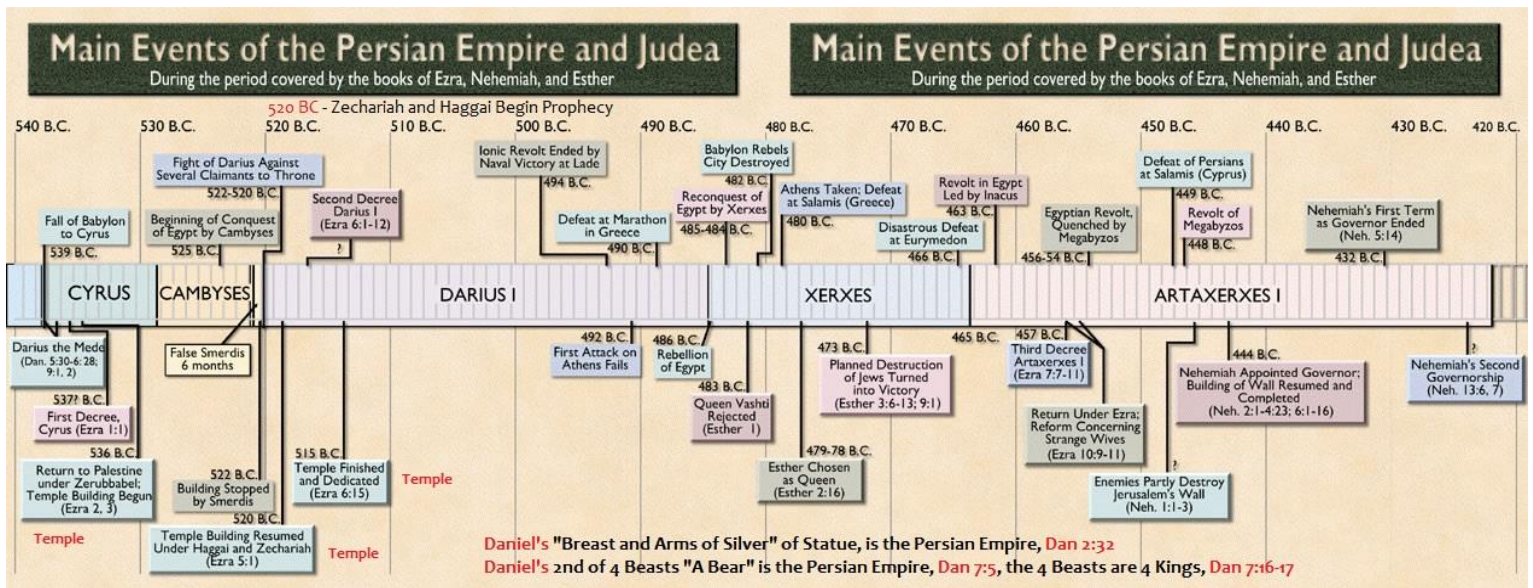
2nd Temple Rebuilding > Finished, 515BC

Began: Sin Offerings, Passover, and Feasts, 515BC

Walls and Gates Rebuilding > (52 days), 444BC

City of Jerusalem Rebuilding > about (49 years), 444BC to 395BC

¹ Chart from Precept Austin Ministries. Some of my dates differ from theirs, K. Hughes



The Persian Empire: from the Fall of Babylonian Empire, in 539 BC, Dan 5:24-31

Solomon's Temple, 1st Temple, Destroyed, in 586 BC, by Babylonian's

1st Decree by King Cyrus, to Build, 2nd Temple, in 538 BC, Ezra 3:10-11

Foundation of the 2nd Temple Laid, Priest and Levites Celebrated, in 536 BC, Ezra 3:10-11

2nd Decree by King Xerxes I, to Stop Work on 2nd Temple in Jerusalem, Ezra 4:21

In the 2nd year of King Darius I, Zechariah and Haggai began Ministries, in 520 BC, Zech 1:1, Hag 1:1

3rd Decree by King Darius I, to Build, 2nd Temple, in 520 BC, Ezra 6:2-5

Ezra's Temple, 2nd Temple, Completed, in 515 BC, Ezra 6:14

4th Decree by King Artaxerxes I, to Build, Walls, Gates, and City of Jerusalem, in 444 BC, Neh 2:7-9

"So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree (Neh 2:7-9) to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, Dan 9:24, (by King Artaxerxes I)

until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks (49 yrs) and sixty-two weeks (434 yrs); 2

it (Jerusalem, Dan 9:25) will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

Nehemiah - Finishes Building Wall and Gates in 52 days, in 444 BC, Neh 6:15, 7:1

Jewish Calendar and Prophetic Years have 360 days, not 365 days. Example: (42 mo = 1260 days or 3.5 x 360 days = 1260 days) in Rev 11:2-3

So 483 years x 360 days = 173,880 days per Jewish Calendar. Then 173,880 days / 365 days = 476.38 years per Gregorian Calendar, Then 476 years x 365 days = 173,740 days

Leap Year Adjustment: 476 years / 4 = 119 Days - 3 Days = 116 Days. Years: 300 BC, 200 BC, 100 BC, are not leap years. So minus 3 Days, Year: 400 BC, is a leap year.

So left in 119 day total. Then from March 5, 444 BC, plus 476 years = March 5, 33 AD is (no year zero), 173,740 days + 116 days = 173,856 days to March 5, 33 AD

Then 173,880 days - 173,856 days = 24 days to add. Then March 5, 33 AD + 24 days = March 30, 33 AD > Triumphant Entry. Jesus Cut off (killed), April 4, 33 AD

Book of Zechariah

Prepared by Kevin E. Hughes

Read Paragraph > Zechariah 1:1-6

Working Outline > Zechariah 1:1-6 (Paragraphs ¶ from NAS Bible)

- I. The word of the Lord came to Zechariah the Prophet, 1:1-6 ¶ (Oct-Nov) (520BC),
 - A. 1 In the eighth month (Oct-Nov) of the second year of (Persian King) Darius (I) (520BC), 1:1
 1. the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet, 1:1
 2. the son of Berechiah (father), the son of Iddo (grandfather, Priest) saying, 1:1
 - B. The Call for Israel to Repent and Return to the Lord, do not be like your fathers, 1:2-5
 1. 2 “The Lord was very angry (wrathful) with your fathers (Israel’s). 1:2
 2. 3 “Therefore (because of that) say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, 1:3
 - a. “Return (turn back) to Me,” declares the Lord of hosts,
 - i. “that I may return (turn back) to you,” says the Lord of hosts.
 3. 4 “Do not be like your (Israel’s) fathers, to whom the former prophets proclaimed, saying, 1:4
 4. ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.”’
 - a. But they (your fathers) did not listen or give heed to Me,” declares the Lord.
 5. 5 “Your fathers, where are they? 1:5
 6. And the prophets, do they live forever? 1:5
 - C. Did not My words and Statutes overtake your fathers? 1:6
 1. 6 “But did not My words and My statutes, 1:6
 - a. which I commanded My servants the prophets, overtake your fathers? 1:6
 2. Then they (your fathers) repented (turned) and said, 1:6
 - a. ‘As the Lord of hosts purposed to do to us, 1:6
 - i. in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so He has dealt with us. 1:6

Questions of the Text: Zechariah 1:1-6

In (Oct-Nov) of the second year of the reign of the (Persian King) Darius I (520BC),

the word of the Lord came to Zechariah the prophet, 1:1.

Two months earlier, the word of the Lord told Haggai to:

“rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified,” Hag 1:8

The Lord was angry with Israel’s fathers, verse 2, and sent them to Exile for 70 years.

Immediate Audience: Zechariah

Intended Audience: Nation of Israel

Immediate Application: Nation of Israel

Personal Application: Don’t You be Like Israel

Verse 2 says: “The Lord was very angry with your (Israel’s) fathers (forefathers).

Q1: What did the Lord want Israel to do in 1:3? A:

Q2: What was the Problem with (Israel’s) fathers in Verse 4? A:

Q3: How did the Lord’s words and statutes, given through His Prophets, overtake (befall or happen to) (Israel’s) fathers, in verse 6? Read Deut 28:15

A:

Q4: In verse 6, Israel repented (turned from their thinking) and admitted what?

A:

Two months earlier, in **520 BC**, **the word of the Lord** came to **Haggai**:

Book of Haggai

Israel consider your ways! Rebuild the **temple**, **My house** Lies Desolate

Read Haggai 1:1–11

- 1 In the **second year** of **Darius** the king, on the **first day** of the **sixth month**, (**Aug 29**) (**520BC**)
the **word of the Lord** came by the **prophet Haggai**
to **Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, **governor of Judah**,
and to **Joshua** the son of **Jehozadak**, the **high priest**, saying,
- 2 “Thus says the **Lord of hosts**,
‘This **people** says, “The time has not come, even the time for the **house** of **the Lord** to be rebuilt.” ’ ”
- 3 Then **the word of the Lord** came by **Haggai the prophet**, saying,
4 “Is it time for **you yourselves** to dwell in **your** paneled houses while **this house** lies desolate?”
5 Now **therefore**, thus says the **Lord of hosts**, “**Consider your ways!**
6 “**You** have sown much, but harvest little; **you** eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied;
you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; **you** put on clothing, but no one is warm enough;
and **he** who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes.”
7 Thus says the **Lord of hosts**, “**Consider your ways!**
8 “Go up to the mountains, bring wood and **rebuild** the **temple**,
that **I** may be pleased with **it** (**Temple**) and be **glorified**,” says **the Lord**.
9 “**You** look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when **you** bring it home, **I** blow it away.
Why?” declares the **Lord of hosts**,
“**Because of My house** (**Temple**) which **lies desolate**, while each of **you** runs to **his own** house.
10 “**Therefore**, **because of you** the sky has **withheld** its **dew** and the earth has **withheld** its **produce**.
11 “**I** (**the Lord**) called for a **drought** on the **land**, on the **mountains**, on the **grain**, on the **new wine**,
on the **oil**, on what the **ground produces**, on **men**, on **cattle**, and on **all the labor** of **your hands**.”

The Governor, the High Priest, and the People Obey the voice of the Lord

Read Haggai 1:12–15

- 12 Then **Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, and **Joshua** the son of **Jehozadak**, the high priest,
with all the **remnant of the people**,
obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and (obeyed) **the words of Haggai the prophet**,
as **the Lord their God** had sent **him**.
And **the people** showed **reverence** for **the Lord**.
13 Then **Haggai, the messenger of the Lord**, spoke by the commission of **the Lord** to **the people** saying,
“**I am with you**,” declares **the Lord**.”
14 So **the Lord stirred up** the **spirit** of **Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, **governor of Judah**,
and (stirred up) the **spirit** of **Joshua** the son of **Jehozadak**, the high priest,
and (stirred up) the **spirit** of all the **remnant of the people**;
and **they (the people)** came and worked on **the house** of the **Lord of hosts, their God**,
15 on the **twenty-fourth day** of the **sixth month** in the **second year** of **Darius** the king. (**Sept 21**) (**520BC**)

Notice in **Verse 12**, that **Everyone Obeyed** > **the voice of the Lord** and (obeyed) **the words of Haggai the prophet** and also that **the Lord Israel’s God** had **sent Haggai the prophet** to **them**.

In **Verse 14**, **the Lord stirred up** the **spirit** of **Everyone** > to work on **the house** (**Temple**) of the **Lord**
Sometimes **God stirs up those** that ARE **His People** to do something. **Read Ezra 1:5**
Sometimes **God stirs up those** NOT **His People** to do something. **Read Ezra 1:1-2**

Q1: What is the **spirit** of **Everyone**, **verse 14** ? **Read Zech 12:1** **A:** **Read Isa 43:1**

Read Haggai 2:1-9

- 1 On the **twenty-first** of the **seventh month**, (**Oct 17**) (**520BC**)
the **word of the Lord** came by **Haggai the prophet** saying,
- 2 “Speak now to **Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, **governor of Judah**,
and to **Joshua** the son of Jehozadak, **the high priest**,
and to **the remnant of the people** saying,
- 3 ‘Who is left among **you (Israel)** who saw this **temple** in **its former glory**?
And how do **you (Israel)** see it now?
Does it not seem to **you (Israel)** like nothing in comparison?
- 4 ‘But now **take courage, Zerubbabel,**’ declares **the Lord**,
‘**take courage** also, **Joshua** son of Jehozadak, the high priest,
and **all you people of the land take courage,**’ declares **the Lord**,
‘and **work**; for **I am** with **you,**’ declares **the Lord of hosts.**
- 5 ‘As for **the promise** which **I made you (Israel)** when **you (Israel)** came out of **Egypt**, (**Isa 63:11-14**)
My Spirit is abiding in **your** midst (**Isa 63:11, Neh 9:20**); do not fear !’
- 6 “For thus says **the Lord of hosts**,
‘Once more **in a little while**, (imminent, it-could-occur-anytime)
I am going to **shake**
(shake) the **heavens** and the **earth**, **Heb 12:26, Hag 2:21, Joel 3:16**
(shake) the **sea** also
and (shake) the **dry land**.
- 7 ‘**I will shake** **all the nations**;
and **they** (all nations) will come with the wealth of **all nations**, **Isa 60:4-9**
and **I will fill this house** (Temple) with **glory,**’ **Ezek 43:18-27**
says **the Lord of hosts.**
- 8 ‘The silver is **Mine** and the gold is **Mine,**’
declares **the Lord of hosts.**
- 9 ‘The **latter glory** of **this house** (Temple) (**Ezekiel’s Temple**): **Ezekiel 40 to Ezekiel 48**
will be greater than **the former** (Solomon’s Temple),
’ says **the Lord of hosts**,
‘and in **this place** (Judah, Jerusalem, and the Temple)
I will give peace,’ declares **the Lord of hosts.**” **Isa 9:6-7, Isa 66:12**

Q1: What was **the promise God** made with **Israel** when **they** came out of **Egypt**, **Verse 5** ?

Read Ex 33:14-17 **A:**

Read Neh 9:20 **A:**

Q2: What “**Things**” is **the Lord** going to **shake** in **verse 6 & 7** ? **A:**

Q3: What will **the nations** come to the Temple with in **Verse 7** ? **A:**

Q4: What will **the Lord** fill **His House** with, in **Verse 7** ? **A:**

Q5: When will this “**latter glory** of the **Temple**” be **Filled** in **Verse 7** ?

Glory of Lord: Left Solomon’s Temple, **Read Ezek 10:4, 11:23**

Glory of Lord: Returns to Ezekiel’s Temple, **Read Ezek 43:1-7**

Ezekiel’s Temple is as described in: **Ezekiel 40 to 48** (9 chapters)

The Glory of the Lord: in the Tabernacle and Temples

Tabernacle (Tent Temple) in the Wilderness

Glory of the Lord Filled the Tabernacle, Exodus 40:34-35

1st Temple: Solomon's Temple

Glory of the Lord Filled the Temple, 1 Kings 8:10-13

from Time of Solomon to Time of 70 year Captivity, Glory of the Lord Filled the Temple.

Glory of the Lord Left the 1st Temple, Ezekiel 9:3, 10:4, 10:18, 11:23

During Time of 70 year Captivity, Glory of the Lord Left the 1st Temple

No Glory of the Lord in the 1st Temple, from Time of 70 year Captivity to Time of Ezekiel's Temple

Time of Ezekiel's Temple is the Millennial Kingdom

when Jesus Comes again and establishes His Kingdom on Earth. Rev 20:4-6

Ezekiel's Temple: Ezekiel 40 to 48

2nd Temple: Ezra's Temple (Temple is refurbished by Jews during Herod's Building)

Glory of the Lord Left the Temple, Ezekiel 9:3, 10:4, 10:18, 11:23

No Glory of the Lord mentioned in (Ezra's 2nd Temple or refurbished 2nd Temple, Herod's Building)

2nd Temple: Ezra's Temple (refurbished 2nd Temple) Destroyed by Romans in 70 AD

No Temple, for last 1950 years (70 AD to 2020 AD),

until Jesus Comes again and builds His Temple and establishes His Kingdom on Earth.

3rd Temple: 70th Week of Daniel Temple or Tribulation Period Temple

Daniel 9:27

27 "And he (Antichrist) will make a firm covenant with the many (Israel) for one week (7 Years), but in the middle of the week (3 ½ Years) he (Antichrist) will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering;

Revelation 11:1-2

1 "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it (the Temple).

2 and they (the nations) will tread underfoot the holy city (Jerusalem) for forty-two months.

Matthew 24:15

15 "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation (Antichrist) which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (the Temple)

4th Temple: Ezekiel's Temple: Ezekiel 40 to 48

Glory of the Lord will Return to Ezekiel's Temple by East Gate, Ezekiel 43:1-12

Time of Ezekiel's Temple is the Millennial Kingdom

when Jesus Comes again and establishes His Kingdom on Earth. Rev 20:4-6

Ezekiel's Temple is destroyed when the Earth passes away, therefore No Temple, Rev 21:1

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. Rev 21:1

5th New Jerusalem out of Heaven from God, with No Temple Building

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, (the City) made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. Rev 21:2

Revelation 21:22

22 I saw no temple in it (the city), for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its (the city's) temple.

No Temple in New Jerusalem, for the Lord God and the Lamb are its Temple !