

Exile and Return

- I. **The Story so Far**
- II. The Return from Exile back to Judah
- III. From Malachi to John the Baptist
- IV. God, Gospel, People, Mission

The Story So Far: The Wheel of Promise

Blessing: 'I will bless you and make your name great' (Genesis 12:2)

Victory: 'He shall bruise your head' (Genesis 3:15)

Glory: 'The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh' (Habakkuk 2:14)

New Covenant: 'I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people' (Jeremiah 31:33)

Land: 'all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever' (Genesis 13:15)

Nations Blessed: 'in you all the families of the earth will be blessed' (Genesis 12:3)

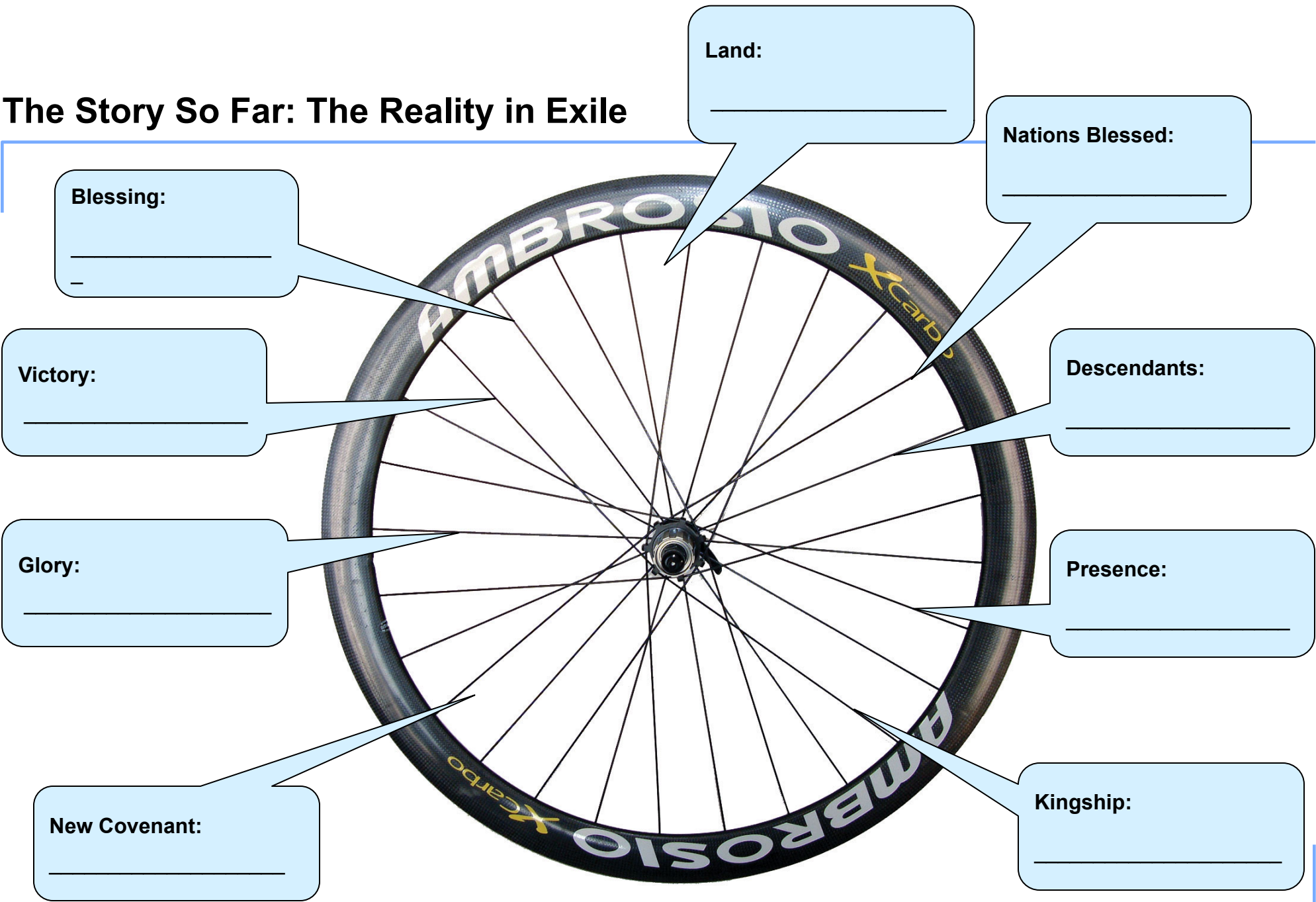
Descendants: 'I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth' (Genesis 13:16)

Presence: 'I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God' (Exodus 6:7)

Kingship: your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me' (2 Samuel 7:16)



The Story So Far: The Reality in Exile



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Kingdoms of the late 6th century BCE



Cyrus the Great

- In the 8th century BC, Yahweh had spoken to Isaiah about a deliverer who would set his people free from the Babylonian captivity
 - “[Yahweh] says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose’; saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid’” (Isaiah 44:28)
- During the 6th century BC, the Persian empire, under the rule of Cyrus the great, quickly became the dominant empire of the day.
 - In 539 BC, Cyrus conquered Babylon and proclaimed himself king of Babylon
 - In contrast to the Babylonian and Assyrian king’s brutal treatment of their conquered nations, Cyrus saw himself as a champion of peace and freedom, claiming that he had freed the inhabitants of Babylon from the oppression of the former king Nabonidus
- As part of imperial policy, the Persians let peoples that had been exiled to Babylon return to their home country
 - “I collected together all of their people and returned them to their settlements, and the gods of the land of Sumer and Akkad which Nabonidus ... had brought into Shuanna, at the command of Marduk, the great lord, I returned them unharmed to their cells, in the sanctuaries that make them happy” (Cyrus Cylinder, lines 32-34; compare Ezra 1:2-4; 6:1-5)
 - The Jewish return from Exile from 538 was a part of this empire-wide policy. The Biblical writers are clear, however, that as far as the Jewish people were concerned, this move was prompted by God (see Isaiah 45; Ezra 1:1-4)

Phases of the return from Babylon

	Wave I	Wave II	Wave III
Focus and Purpose	Building the house of Yahweh	The importance of Torah	Rebuilding the walls
Date	c.538 BC	c.458 BC	445 BC
Persian Ruler(s)	Cyrus the Great; Cambyses; Smerdis; Darius the Great	Artexerxes I	Artexerxes I
Key Jewish leader(s)	Sheshbazzar; Zerubbabel	Ezra the scribe	Nehemiah son of Hacialiah
Key mission	Rebuilding the Temple of Yahweh	Instruct God's people in the Law of Yahweh	Rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem
Prophetic voices	Haggai; Zechariah 1-8	Malachi	
Biblical writings	Ezra 1-6	Ezra 7-10	Nehemiah

Wave I: Building the House of Yahweh

- In about 538 BC, Cyrus issues a decree that the Jewish people should go back to Judah to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple
 - Cyrus' claim that Yahweh had told him to do this (see Ezra 1:1-4) is probably political propaganda; Isaiah claims that Cyrus did not know who Yahweh was (Isaiah 45:4)
 - Many Jews (see the lists in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7) return to Jerusalem under the leadership of Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel, carrying back the Temple utensils which Nebuchadnezzar had taken into Babylon
 - The altar is rebuilt in the seventh month, before work on the Temple has even begun, and the people restore the regular sacrificial offerings and observe the feast of booths. There is clearly a sense in which this return is seen as a new exodus (see Leviticus 23:42-43; Isaiah 40-55)
- The foundation of the temple was laid in the second year after the return (c.536 BC)
 - There is a mix of rejoicing and mourning when the foundation is laid (Ezra 3:10-13). The young men rejoice and the old men, who had seen the former Temple, weep. Clearly, it was obvious that the new Temple was not as great as Solomon's (see Haggai 2:3)
- Due to external pressure, work on the Temple stops for 16 years (!) until the second year of Darius
- In 516 BC, the Second Temple is finished and dedicated
 - The returned exiles celebrate the Passover together: new Exodus motif again
 - There is, however, a conspicuous difference between the accounts of the dedication of the first Temple in 1 Kings 8 and 2 Chronicles 7, and the dedication of the second Temple in Ezra 6:16-18. The glory of Yahweh does not seem to fill the Temple (and we will return to this later)

Group Exercise: Fitting Haggai with History

	Problem	Promise (and conditions, if any)	Details from Ezra 1-6
Haggai 1:1-11			
Haggai 2:1-9			
Haggai 2:10-19			
Haggai 2:20-23			

Esther: Living in the Diaspora

- Esther is the only book in the Old Testament which does not mention God. It tells the story of Esther and Mordecai, two Jews in the Persian diaspora under the rule of the Persian king Xerxes (519-465 BC)
 - Esther, Mordecai's cousin and a Jew, replaces queen Vashti as Xerxes' wife
 - Mordecai, with Esther's help, warns Xerxes of a plot to murder him
 - Haman the Agagite becomes Prime Minister, and because Mordecai refuses to bow to him he plans to kill all the Jews in the Persian empire on a given day. After Esther reveals her Jewish identity to Xerxes, Xerxes has Haman hanged and appoints Mordecai as Prime Minister in his stead
 - King Xerxes grants the Jews the right to defend themselves on the day they are attacked
- Although Esther does not mention God directly (something which the editors of the LXX changed), God's provision is under the surface
 - The three day fast (4:15-17) is clearly understood as the cause of the rescue that follows
 - Mordecai tells Esther that if she refuses to help, “deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place (*maqom aher*)” (4:14): many Jewish commentators see this as a reference to God
 - There are too many “coincidences” in the book to put God out of the picture (cf. particularly chap. 6)
- The book is also a (quite amusing) satire against an ungodly empire
 - King Xerxes comes across as a powerless, emotionally driven, drunken fool
 - Herodotus writes of the Persians: “It is [the Persians'] general practice to deliberate upon affairs of weight when they are drunk; and then on the morrow, when they are sober, the decision to which they came the night before is put before them by the master of the house in which it was made; and if it is then approved of, they act on it; if not, they set it aside. Sometimes, however, they are sober at their first deliberation, but in this case they always reconsider the matter under the influence of wine” (Herodotus, Histories 1.133)

Wave II: The Importance of the Torah

- In c.458 BC, Ezra the scribe returns to Jerusalem from Babylonia
 - Artaxerxes I commissions him to (1) Inquire about Judah and Jerusalem according the Torah, (2) bring more gold and silver to Jerusalem and (3) appoint magistrates and judges in Judah
 - Ezra returns with about 1800 Jews, including about 50 Levites (cf. Ezra 8:1-20)
 - Ezra's concern with the Temple matters is quite prominent (see Ezra 8:15-20, 24-34)
- Ezra's mission mainly focuses on sorting out the problem of intermarriage with the surrounding nations (Ezra 9-10)
 - Many of the returned exiles had married women from the surrounding nations. They "have mixed the holy seed (heb. *zera haqodesh*) with the people of the lands..." (Ezra 9:2)
 - This was already an issue highlighted by Malachi (cf. Malachi 2:10-12; this assumes Malachi's ministry was before Ezra's)
 - Ezra orders the Jews to send away any foreign wives (Ezra 10:10-11)
- Ezra's ministry, here and later during the time of Nehemiah, highlights the central role of the Torah and purity in the post-exilic period
 - Frequent use terms such as "Torah of Moses", "book of Moses" (e.g. Ezra 3:2; 7:6; Neh 1:7-8; 8:1, 14; 9:14; 10:30; 13:1)
 - The author of Ezra-Nehemiah felt it appropriate to include a list of those who married foreign women (Ezra 10:18-44), thus highlighting how seriously this issue was taken

Wave III: Rebuilding the walls

- In 445, Nehemiah, who serves as cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, is sent back to Jerusalem in order to oversee the repairing of Jerusalem's walls, which had not been rebuilt since their destruction in 587/6 BC
 - Nehemiah becomes governor of Judah (cf. Neh 8:9) from 445-433 BC
 - Nehemiah starts by assessing the damage done to the walls of Jerusalem. Then the repairing of the wall begins (Nehemiah 3 is not the most exciting read in Scripture, but it shows that the work on Jerusalem was the effort of a whole group of people, not just Nehemiah)
- The work is opposed by Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite. Before the building started they were frustrated that "some had come to seek the welfare of the people of Israel" (2:10; cf. 2:19)
 - Initially, they mock the Jews for their efforts to build the wall (4:1-6). Then they turn to military threat (4:7-23). Finally, they oppose Nehemiah himself (6:1-14). Yet the work is completed in 52 days!
- After the walls are rebuilt, the Torah is read out and put into practice
 - Ezra the scribe reads and explains the Torah to the whole assembly of the Jews
 - The Feast of Booths is celebrated (again, the return from Exodus theme appears)
 - The people confess their sins and repent, recognising that they are in many ways still in exile in their land (9:36), and make a covenant to live by the Torah (9:38-10:39)
- Then Jerusalem and Judah are repopulated (10% of the people are required to live in Jerusalem to ensure that it is sufficiently populated), and the newly repaired wall is dedicated (12:27-43)
- Finally, in c.433/2 BC, Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem for some final reforms, involving misuse of Temple buildings (13:4-9), Levite wages (13:10-14), work on the Sabbath (13:15-22) and intermarriage (13:23-30)
 - In this sense, the last historical narrative of the Hebrew Bible ends on an anticlimax: Israel's heart has not been circumcised and Nehemiah's reforms had not solved the people's sin

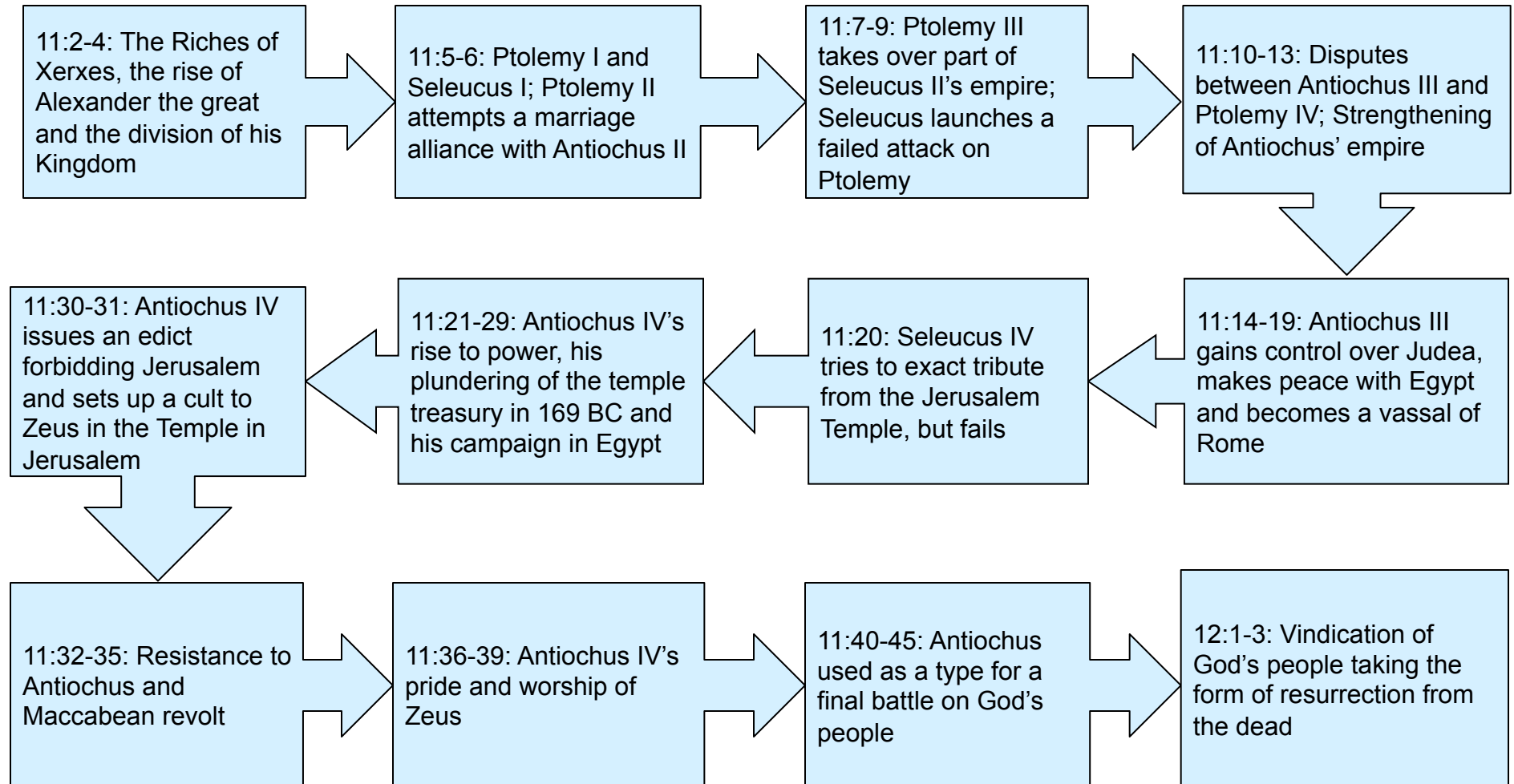
Interlude: The Old Testament Canon

- The growth and consolidation of the Old Testament Canon is more difficult to map out than that of the New Testament, for which we have much more concrete information. There are clear clues, though, that by the time of Jesus, what we consider as the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible was considered authoritative
 - The 2nd century BCE book of Ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) refers to the reading of the “Law and the Prophets”, probably a reference to the Pentateuch, the historical books and the prophetic writings of the OT (the Wisdom books may possibly be included under the large subsection of “the Prophets”)
 - The Dead Sea Scrolls (2nd century BC – 1st Century AD) contain fragments from all books of the Hebrew Bible, with the exception of Esther
 - Jesus refers, in Matthew 23:35, to “the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.” It is likely, despite the uncertainty about his father, that the Zechariah mentioned is a reference to the one mentioned in 2 Chronicles 24 (the last book of the Hebrew Bible)
 - Almost all of the books of the Hebrew Bible are cited or alluded to in the New Testament (with the notable exceptions of Song of Solomon and Esther – although see the similarity of language between Est 5:3, 6; 7.2 and Mark 6.23)
- None of the New Testament writers (nor most Jews, it seems) considered the writings of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha to be authoritative (Jude quoting 1 Enoch 1:9 must be noted and explained, though)
 - Both the Jewish historian Josephus and the writer of 4 Ezra (both late 1st century AD) refer to a collection of authoritative books (presumably the Hebrew Bible) and do not include other writings in this list

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The God Who Controls History (Daniel 11-12)

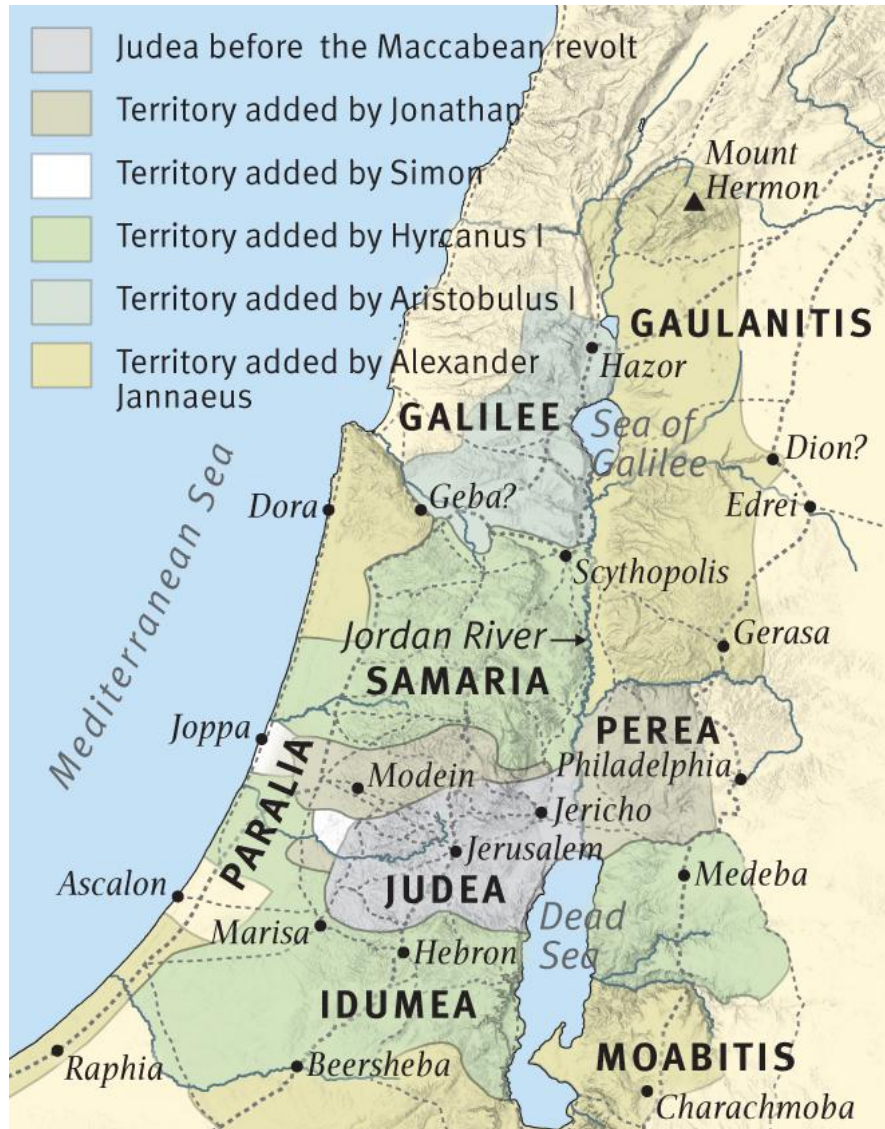


For details, see John Goldingay, *Daniel* (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 293-305.

From Persia to Antiochus IV

- During the reign of the Persian king Artaxerxes V (330-329 BC), Alexander the Great's conquest of the middle east was underway
 - There are references to Alexander in the book of Daniel (7:6; 8:5; 11:3)
 - In 329 BC, Alexander defeats Artaxerxes and the Persian Empire came into his hands, along with Judah
- Alexander has no clear successor at his death (323 BC), so his kingdom divides into four empires (in 301 BC) : Macedonia (Greece), Pergamon (Asia Minor), Seleucid (Syria to Iran), and Ptolemaic (Egypt)
 - During the third century, Judea is under the rule of the Ptolemies (the king of the South in Daniel 11)
 - Judea is taken over by the Seleucid king Antiochus III (king of the North in Daniel 11:15) in 198 BC
 - In 188, Antiochus III is forced by a defeat against Rome to sign the treaty of Apamea. The Romans lay heavy military restrictions upon the Seleucids and require a tribute
 - The following Seleucid king, Seleucus IV, attempts to plunder the Jerusalem Temple treasury to pay the Romans (Daniel 11:20; 2 Maccabees 3)
- Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) starts an intense persecution of the Jews in 167 BC
 - In 169, Antiochus had plundered Jerusalem on his way back from his humiliating defeat in Egypt
 - He issues a decree in 167 forbidding Jewish worship, and then tortures and kills Jews who refuse to conform (see the brutal accounts in 2 Maccabees 6-7)
 - Temple worship is profaned and then stopped: the altar is rededicated to Zeus and a pig is sacrificed on it (Daniel 8:9-12; 11:31; 1 Maccabees 1:41-61; 2 Maccabees 6:1-11; Josephus, *War* 1.31-35)

The Maccabean and Hasmonean dynasty (164-37 BC)



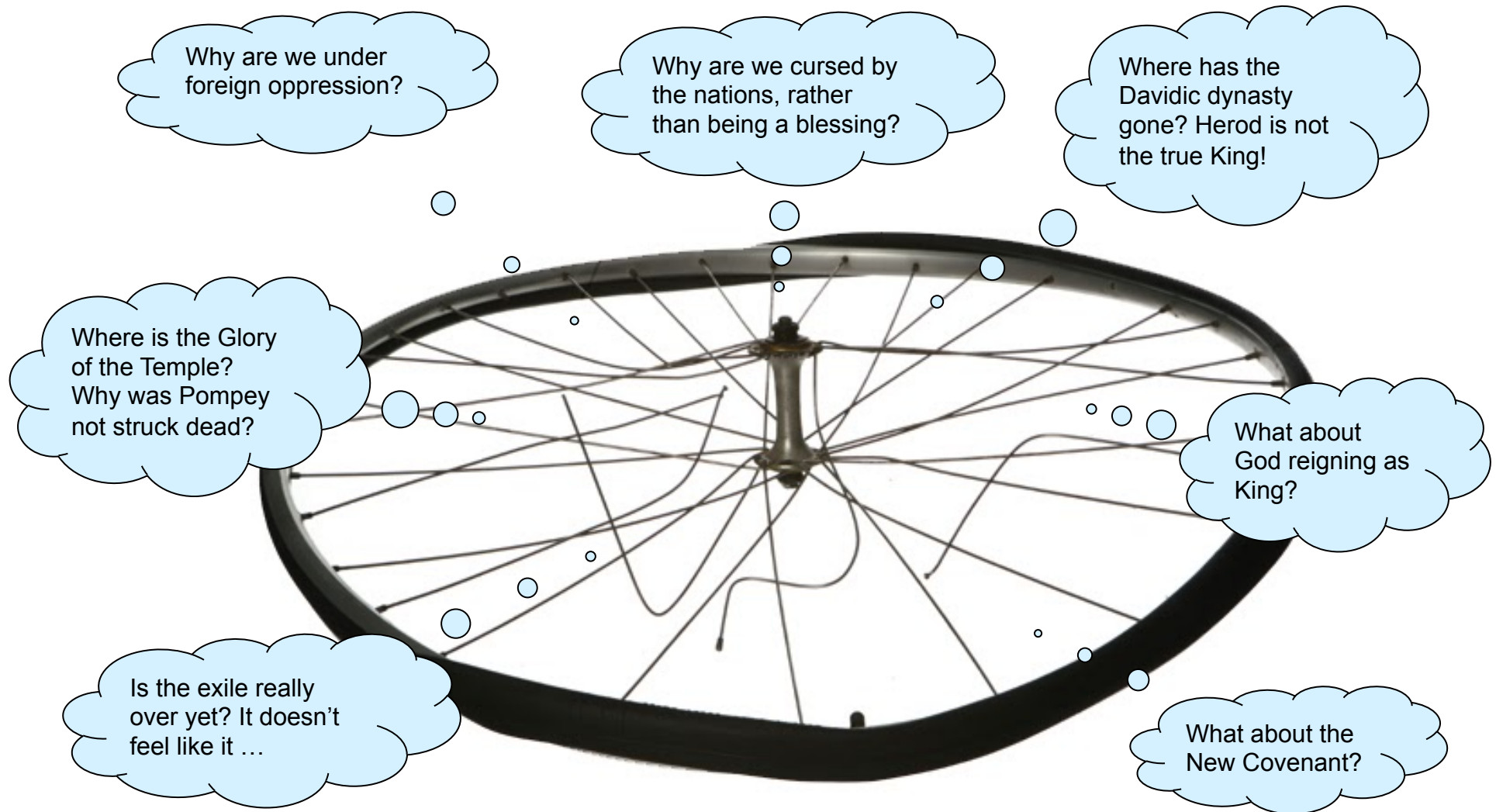
Coin of Antiochus IV (Epiphanes)

On the right hand side is the Greek expression **BASILEUS ANTIOCHOU THEOU EPIPHANOUS NIKEPHOROU** (King Antiochus; God manifest; Bringer of Victory)

The Maccabeans to the Romans

- Antiochus' oppression is eventually lifted by the Maccabeans, a family of priests who repossess Jerusalem and cleanse the Temple in 165 BC. The rededication of the Temple is behind the Jewish festival of Hanukkah
- The Maccabees and their descendents hold power for the next century. They operate both as priests and kings
 - The Hasmoneans (from Simon, Judas' brother) hold the government and the priesthood until 63 BC
 - During John Hyrcanus' reign (134-104 BC), the Jews obtain true political independence from the Seleucids and expand their territory
- However, a dispute between Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II leads to Pompey taking Jerusalem in 63 BC
 - Pompey takes over Jerusalem and enters the most holy place in the Temple. Judea officially comes under Roman dominion here; the Hasmoneans still have influence, but not overarching political power
- Herod the Great begins to reign in 37 BC
 - He is a Roman client king, whose father (Antipater) was an Idumean. Octavian (later Caesar Augustus) makes him king of Judea; Herod captures Jerusalem in 37 BC
 - Herod undertakes massive building works (see Josephus, *War* 1.401-25), including a complete renovation and expansion of the Temple
 - Herod the Great is infamous, both in the New Testament and in Josephus, for being a paranoid, murderous despot. It is not difficult to believe that he would carry out a slaughter like the one in Matthew 2:16-18

What About the Promises?



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God: Divine Faithfulness in Nehemiah 9

Passage	People’s unfaithfulness (if any)	Yahweh’s faithfulness
9:6-8		
9:9-15		
9:16-21		
9:22-25		
9:26-31		

God: Divine Judgment for Edom in Obadiah and Malachi

- At the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC, Edom (Esau's descendants) did not assist the Jewish people, but instead gloated over their defeat. Because they neglected their brotherhood with Jacob, Edom is destined for destruction by God. Obadiah, writing most likely just after 586 BC, promises this divine vengeance
 - “Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you [Edom], and you shall be cut off forever. On the day that you stood aloof, on the day that strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them” (Obad 10-11)
 - “How Esau has been pillaged, his treasures sought out!” (Obad 6)
 - Divine justice is promised: “As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head” (Obad 15)
- Within 100 years, the nation of Edom was completely wiped off the face of the earth. (You never hear someone say, “I’m packing for my trip to Edom.”) Malachi reminds the Jews of God’s vengeance upon Edom
 - ‘Is not Esau Jacob’s brother?’ declares Yahweh. ‘Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert.’ If Edom says, ‘We are shattered but we will rebuilt the ruins,’ Yahweh of hosts says, ‘They may build, but I will tear down, and they will be called “the wicked country,” and “the people with whom Yahweh is angry forever”’ (Malachi 1:2-4)
- The idea of Obadiah – ‘your deeds shall return on your own head’ – is central to God being just. A judge who simply lets people get away with injustice and evil is not a good judge
 - The language of final judgment according to works is present in the New Testament (Matthew 12:36-37; Romans 2:6-11; 8:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 20:13)
 - How does this idea of judgment according to works fit in with justification by faith?

God: Yahweh and the Messiah Cleansing the People

Zechariah 13:7-9

“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,
against the man who stands next to me,”
declares Yahweh of hosts.

“Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered;
I will turn my hand against the little ones.

In the whole land, declares Yahweh,
two thirds shall be cut off and perish,
and one third shall be left alive.

And I will put this third into the fire,
and refine them as one refines silver,
and test them as gold is tested.

They will call upon my name,
and I will answer them.

I will say, ‘They are my people’;
and they will say, ‘Yahweh is my God.’”

Malachi 3:1-4

Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the
way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will
suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of
the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is
coming, says Yahweh of hosts.

But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can
stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire
and like fullers’ soap.

He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will
purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and
silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to
Yahweh.

Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be
pleasing to Yahweh as in the days of old and as in
former years.

Gospel: The True Return from Exile

- It is difficult to read the great end-of-exile prophecies of Isaiah 40-55, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and to see them completely fulfilled in the return from Babylon in the late 6th century BC
 - “Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that you gave to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold we are slaves. And its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins. They rule over our bodies and over our livestock as they please, and we are in great distress” (Nehemiah 9:36-37)
 - Daniel 9:24 clearly states that the exile will not last seventy years, but “seventy weeks” (i.e. 70 times 7 years). In other words, 539 BC is not the end of it
- Jesus brings a true end to the exile!
 - Mark, the first Gospel to have been written, begins by quoting Isaiah 40:3, a prediction of the end of the exile
 - Jesus announces the coming kingdom of God. Isaiah predicts that the end of exile happens when Zion hears “your God reigns” (Isaiah 52:7)
 - Jesus brings about the new exodus, freedom from slavery: “he has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13-14)
 - God’s true enemies, not primarily Babylonia and Persia, are dealt with in Jesus: “he disarmed rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him” (Colossians 2:15)
 - Jesus restores Davidic kingship: he “was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 1:3-4)

Gospel: God Gives the Verdict

Compare Zechariah 3:1-5 and Romans 8:31-34

Who will accuse
God's elect?

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Yahweh, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.

Who is the
condemner?

And Yahweh said to Satan, "Yahweh rebuke you, O Satan! Yahweh who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?"

God is the one who
justifies

Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him."

Christ is the one who
died ...

And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments." And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments.

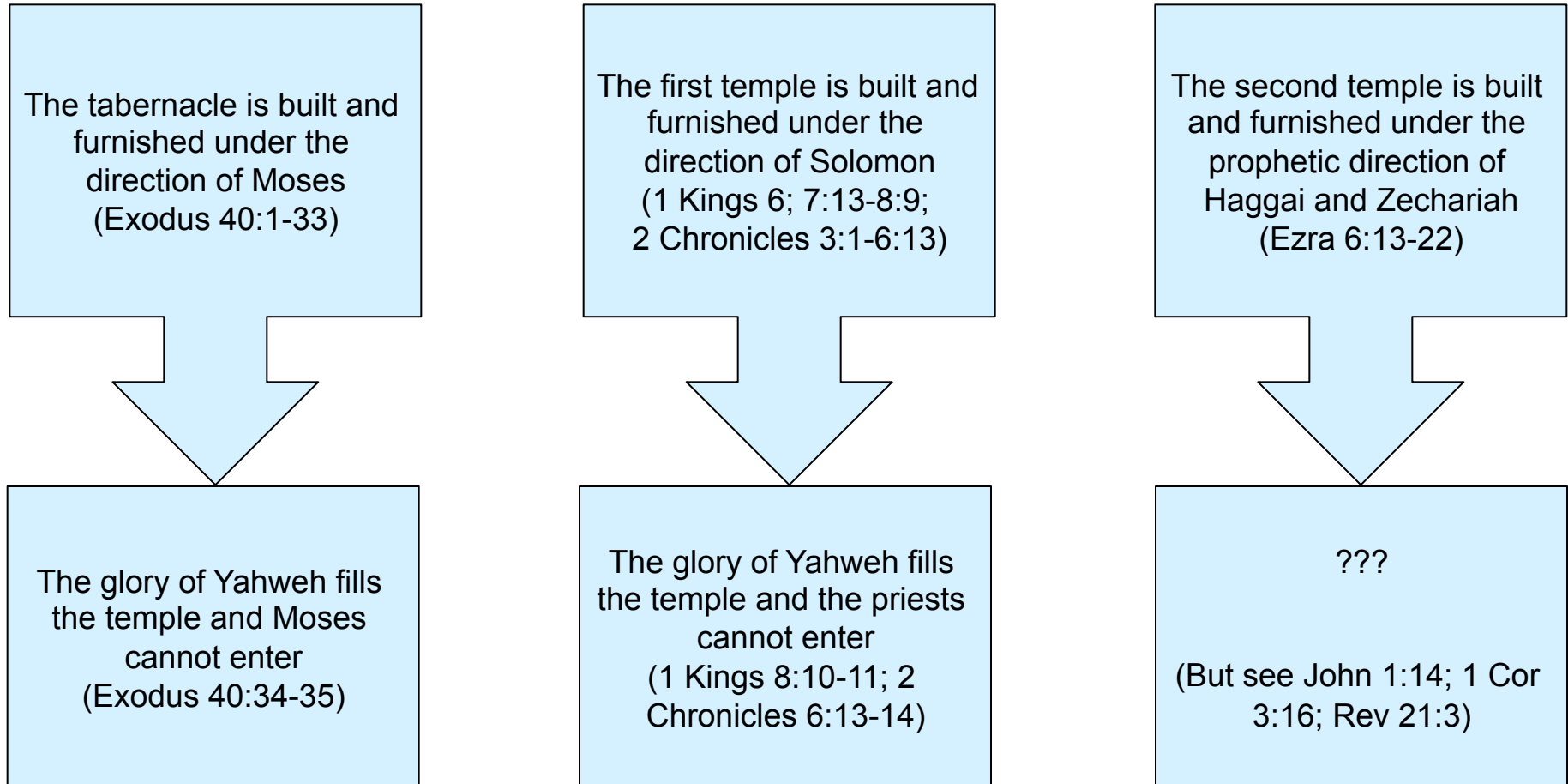
He who did not spare his
own son ... will he not also
grace us with all things?

If God is for us, who is
against us?

And the angel of Yahweh was standing by.

... who is also at the right
hand of God, who is also
interceding for us!

People: “The Latter Glory of this House Shall be Greater than the Former”



People: Purity and the Nations

- One of the main issues brought up in Ezra-Nehemiah is the issue of separation from the nations
 - Zerubbabel forbids the people of the land to help with building the Temple (Ezra 4:1-3)
 - Ezra commands the Jews to put away their foreign wives (Ezra 9-10)
 - The Israelites separate themselves from all foreigners. Presumably, this involved more than just their foreign wives (Nehemiah 9:1-2)
 - Nehemiah says that he “cleansed [the people] from everything foreign” (Nehemiah 13:30)
- Is this idea of separation and purity a mandate for the New Covenant community? How does the New Testament understand purity?
 - Between Jews and Gentiles? (cf. Acts 10; Gal 3:28; Eph 2:11-22)
 - Between the Church and the world? (Jas 1:27; Eph 4:17-24; 2 Cor 6:14-18)
- This brings up the question of how we now work this idea out under the new covenant. How should the church relate to the surrounding culture? (Discuss Mark Driscoll’s four ways)
 - Church as Bombshelter: “Let’s huddle together and never interact with the dirty world”
 - Church as Mirror: “Stuff purity! Let’s just do whatever the culture says”. Are we seeing this with recent debates on gay marriage?
 - Church as Parasite: “Let’s use some fancy ways of communication the culture gives us, but let’s not serve our community or city”
 - Church as City within a City: “We are here to seek the welfare of the city we live in but without compromising our holiness”
 - Something else?

People: Divorce and Intermarriage

Questions on Divorce in Ezra 9-10 and the New Covenant

“My wife is a non-Christian.
She won’t accept Jesus.
Ezra 9-10 suggests I
should divorce, right?”

“How come Ezra
commands divorce
when Jesus said it was
only allowed because of
hardness of heart?”

“Can I go out with this
non-Christian? We’re
under the New
Covenant now, right?”

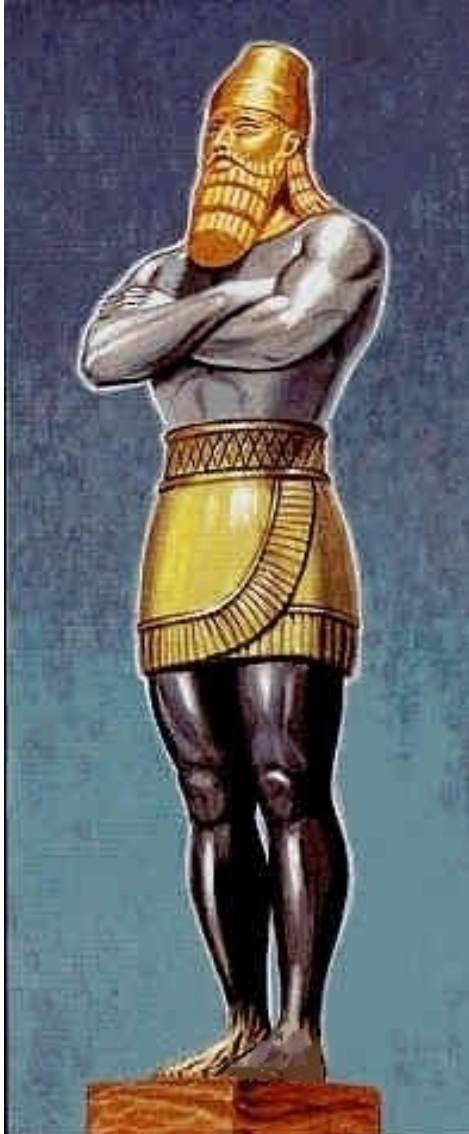
“Can I marry
someone who is of
a different race?”

“Ezra is worried the ‘holy
seed’ will be mixed. How
come Paul speaks about
an unconverted husband
or wife being ‘made
holy?’”

“Mark’s wife has
become a Muslim.
Shouldn’t he
divorce her?”

“Look at Ezra 9-10,
pastor; God blesses my
divorce with my
unbelieving husband”

Mission: The Mountain that Fills the Whole Earth



- Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 is probably the best known prophetic passage from the book of Daniel. It speaks of various kingdoms (or kings) being destroyed, and overtaken by a kingdom which is set up by God himself, and which fills the whole earth
 - Traditionally, the scheme of four kingdoms is understood to refer to the following empires: Gold: Neo-Babylonian (until 539 BC); Silver: Medo-Persian (539-331 BC); Bronze: Greece (331-63 BC) and Iron: Roman (63 BC onwards)
 - Most critical scholars reject this understanding, but this is often because of their assumption that prophecy cannot be predictive (although see Goldingay's commentary on Daniel)
- Whatever precise kings or Empires we assign to the various parts of the statue, the message of the vision is clear: all these empires, despite their wealth (represented by Gold and Silver) and strength (Bronze and Iron – see chapter 7) will come to an end. However, God's kingdom will not
 - Unlike worldly kingdoms, God's kingdom will be everlasting (notice the similarity of ideas with Daniel 7:14)
 - Unlike even the greatest worldly kingdoms, the kingdom of God will be truly worldwide – the ultimate fulfillment of the prophetic burden for the Glory of Yahweh to fill the whole earth
- Jesus, in the parable of the unfaithful tenants (Matthew 21:33-44), seems to identify himself with the stone which crushes the empires
 - He combines a quotation from Psalm 118:22 (speaking of a rejected but vindicated Davidic king) with the idea of a stone crushing someone. Note also the *ben / eben* play on words
 - Rather chillingly, in this passage it is not on the pagan empires that the stone falls on, but rather on the religious leaders of God's people. Anyone who sets himself up against God will be crushed

Mission: The Day of Yahweh and the Return to Zion

- The expression “day of Yahweh” (*Yom Yahweh*) probably appears firstly in book of Amos (8th century), denoting judgment and then restoration, and recurs throughout the prophets (Isa 13; Jer 46:10; Ezek 30:3)
- In Joel 3 and Zechariah 14, we find elaborate and similar depictions of what this day of Yahweh, the day of judgment will look like
 - It is associated with the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem (Joel 3:1, 17-18, 20; Zec 14:1, 10-11, 20-21)
 - It is the nations, and not Judah, that Yahweh enters into judgment with (Joel 3:2-8, 11-12, 16, 21; Zec 14:3, 12)
 - Yahweh is the one who does the fighting/judging (Joel 3:2, 11-12; Zec 14:3-4, 12)
 - Yahweh himself comes with his holy ones (Joel 3:11-12; Zec 14:5; cf. Jude 14)
 - In Zechariah, the remnant of the nations turn to serve Yahweh (Zec 14:16-19)
 - Also in Zechariah, this judgment is associated with Yahweh becoming king over the whole earth (Zec 14:9; cf. Isa 52:7)
- The return of Yahweh to Zion is another related theme, and this is pictured in beautiful terms
 - Mountains flowing with wine, hills flowing with milk, fountains coming to water the deserts (Joel 3:17-18)
 - Old people sitting outside in the city, with boys and girls playing in the streets (Zec 8:3-5)
 - Following the king’s humble entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, weapons will be abolished, and peace will spread throughout the earth (Zec 9:9-12)