

## LESSON

**10** Return and Restoration

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The glorious temple was in ruins, the beauty of Jerusalem had become a blackened circle of earth, and God's people were captives in a foreign land. But the story does not end there!

God judges what He plans to restore. And though the judgment of the Israelites was an inescapable result of their sin, it was only a preliminary step towards their future restoration. Its purpose was to teach and develop them. They had learned and developed through it.

But the seventy years of captivity came to an end, and God's purpose for Israel continued to be fulfilled; He restored His people to their homeland as He had promised. His covenant was eternal. It was an exciting time of new beginnings. Their experience gives us lessons of hope and encouragement today concerning the value of discipline and the possibility of restoration.

Like the Israelites we, too, can be called upon to restore areas of our own lives and ministries for the Lord. Though failure brings discipline, repentance speeds the process of restoration. Let us study these events with this principle in mind, aware of our weaknesses but conscious of His strength.

## ***lesson outline***

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The Purpose of Restoration  
The Progress of Rebuilding  
The Messages to Restorers  
The Last Warning to God's People

## ***lesson objectives***

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When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Explain why it was necessary for the Jews to return to Jerusalem.
- Describe the three expeditions the Jews made to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and the city.
- Distinguish between the messages of Haggai and Zechariah.
- Summarize the message of the book of Malachi.

## ***learning activities***

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1. Read from the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi as the lesson directs you to.
2. Study all parts of the lesson development, answering the study questions and checking your answers. Then take the self-test and check your answers to that also.
3. Complete the lesson and review Unit 3.
4. When you have reviewed Unit 3 (Lessons 9 & 10), complete Unit Student Report 3 and return Answer Sheet to your national GU office if you live outside the United States or to your local church's CED learning center coordinator if you live in the United States.

(If you are currently incarcerated in a jail or prison in the United States, please mark your answers on the scantron answer sheet provided and send to the following address: CED, Global University, 1211 S. Glenstone Ave., Springfield, MO 65804.)

**key words**

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abuses  
decline  
decree

expedition  
preliminary  
preservation

restoration  
scribe  
survive

## *lesson development*

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### **THE PURPOSE OF RESTORATION**

**Objective 1.** *Explain why it was necessary for the Jews to return to Jerusalem.*

God had made an everlasting covenant with Abraham about his family and descendants. He had repeated the promise to David, making it even stronger. God would not allow the people to whom He had made these promises to be lost in the fall and defeat of earthly kingdoms.

Indeed, the time during which the world was controlled by empires of the East came to an end. Persia was the last great eastern empire. Its power was lost to the Macedonian empire, the first great kingdom of the West. Had the Jewish nation continued in captivity in the East it would not have survived the decline of the eastern powers. It would never have influenced the world. God brought His people to their land in just the right time.

He placed them at the center of world events—right between the old and the new. Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, all the old great powers, had ceased to exist. New empires of the West were beginning to rise. The preservation of God’s people amid the war-storms which totally destroyed the great eastern empires is one of His greatest miracles. It shows us that the most powerful nations decay, but God and His cause and those He saves will never be destroyed. As the prophets foretold, the knowledge of God’s spiritual kingdom was destined to cover the earth. Today we can be a living fulfillment of that prophecy.

### ***Application***

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**1** Read Jeremiah 25:11–12; 29:10 and Daniel 9:1–19. Then answer the following questions in your notebook.

- a)** What did Daniel read?
- b)** What did Daniel confess?
- c)** What did Daniel request?

**2** In your notebook, write two or three sentences which explain why it was necessary for the Jews to return to Jerusalem.

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## THE PROGRESS OF REBUILDING

In 538 B.C., Babylon, the mighty empire and strong city, fell to Cyrus of Persia. Cyrus had already subdued several eastern kingdoms, and now he had conquered Babylon. According to ancient records, he reversed the policies of the Assyrians and Babylonians in general, freeing all captive peoples to return to their native lands.

It was Cyrus whom God used to begin the process of return and restoration. He sent out an important decree concerning the rebuilding of the temple. It must have amazed the Jews to hear a non-Jew say that the Lord had made him ruler of the whole earth! It was this decree that marked the beginning of the time of restoration and rebuilding.

### *Application*

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**3** Read Cyrus' decree in Ezra 1:14 and answer the following questions in your notebook.

- a)** What responsibility did Cyrus say that God had given him?
  - b)** In what way did he tell the people of Persia to help the Jews?
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## The Three Expeditions

**Objective 2.** *Describe the three expeditions the Jews made to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and the city.*

The process of return and rebuilding covered a time span of about 100 years total. Beginning with Cyrus, other Persian kings were also involved. During these years there were three major expeditions of Jews from Persia to Israel. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah describe the events that occurred.

Notice the major facts related to each expedition which are summarized in the following chart. After the chart you will find a general description of each of these expeditions.

<b>Biblical Record</b>	<b>First Expedition (538–536 B.C.) <i>Ezra 1–6</i></b>	<b>Second Expedition (458–457 B.C.) <i>Ezra 7–10</i></b>	<b>Third Expedition (445–444 B.C.) <i>Nehemiah 1–13</i></b>
Persian King	Cyrus	Artaxerxes	Artaxerxes
Jewish Leader	Zerubbabel and Jeshua	Ezra	Nehemiah
Total Number	49,697 returned	1,758 returned	An army escort
Events	Temple begun; sacrifices and feasts started. Temple finished in 516 B.C.	Revival of the law and worship	Wall rebuilt and dedicated; law read
Problems	Opposition of the Samaritans	Intermarriage with non-Jews	Opposition of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem
Prophets	Haggai and Zechariah	<b>Pause of 59 years. Persian kings during this time: Kambyases, Darius 1, and Xerxes 1.</b>	
Time Span	Stage 1 20 years 536–516 B.C.		

## **Application**

- 4** Circle the letter of each TRUE statement.
- The wall was rebuilt during the third expedition.
  - Artaxerxes was the Persian king when the first expedition took place.
  - More people returned in the second expedition than the first.
  - Tobiah opposed the building of the wall.



*The First Expedition; Read Ezra 1–6*

The number who are counted as returning with Zerubbabel might well represent only heads of families. Actually there might have been many more people. Nevertheless, the total number was still a small percentage of the Jews remaining in captivity. Many of them were prosperous and settled. They were not anxious to go back to Palestine to form a struggling little nation.

***Application***

**5** Read Ezra 1:5. What did all the people who returned to Jerusalem have in common?

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The journey was difficult and took at least four months. (Later on when Ezra came it took him four months according to Ezra 7:9). They arrived and began rebuilding the temple. The altar was set up and the foundation of the temple was laid (Ezra 3). Stones were available, but the wooden timbers had to be brought from Lebanon.

There was much opposition from enemies, and for 16 years the rebuilding of the temple stopped (Ezra 4). During this time God used the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to inspire the people to begin working again. The people responded, and the temple was completed and dedicated in about 516 B.C. (Ezra 5–6).

*The Second Expedition; Read Ezra 7–10*

Ezra, a scribe and priest, led the second expedition from Babylon to Jerusalem about sixty years after the temple had been completed (Ezra 7). He came with letters from king Artaxerxes which told the neighboring officials to offer protection and material help to God's people.

Ezra, who was a descendant of the house of Aaron, had a mission which was primarily spiritual. He brought along with

him a number of priests. When he arrived he discovered heart-breaking abuses in the worship and practice of the people who had settled in Jerusalem. He stopped these abuses and made many reforms. A short outline of the events of this expedition is as follows:

Permission Granted to Ezra	Ezra 7–8:31
Arrival and Sacrifices	Ezra 8:32–36
Reform, Repentance, and Revival	Ezra 9–10

## Application

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**6** Read Ezra 9–10 and answer the following questions in your notebook.

- a)** In what major way had the people disobeyed God?
  - b)** Why was this disobedience so serious?
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### *The Third Expedition; Read Nehemiah 1–13*

Nehemiah is one of the greatest characters of the Bible. As cupbearer or wine steward to King Artaxerxes he held a high position in the Persian court. Because of his position he had great political power. He was told that conditions in Jerusalem were not good, and he asked permission to go to rebuild the city. Artaxerxes granted his request, and he traveled to Jerusalem accompanied by a group of soldiers the king had sent. His position, along with his godly character, made it possible for him to strengthen the Jews.

In only 52 days the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt in spite of the opposition from the enemies of the Jews. After the walls were rebuilt Nehemiah took steps to bring stability and increase the number of people who lived in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 7:4–5; 11:1–2). He caused the wealthy Jews to stop oppressing the poor (Nehemiah 5:10) and introduced other reforms. But his greatest work was to re-establish the national life of the Jews upon the foundation of the written law (Nehemiah 10:28–39). The following is a brief outline of the book of Nehemiah:

Nehemiah's Arrival and Reforms	Nehemiah 1–7
Revival of Worship and Law	Nehemiah 8–10 Under Ezra
Lists of the Various Families	Nehemiah 11:1–12:26
Dedication of the Wall	Nehemiah 12:27– 13:31

## ***Application***

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**7** Read Nehemiah 4 and 6. In your notebook, write how Nehemiah responded to each way that his enemies tried to stop him.

- a)** Ridicule (4:1–6)
- b)** Plans to attack him (4:7–23)
- c)** The first four messages of Sanballat and Geshem (6:1–4)
- d)** The fifth message of Sanballat (6:5–9)
- e)** The advice of Shemaiah (6:10–14)

**8** According to Nehemiah 6:15–7:1, what was the final result of Nehemiah's efforts?

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**9** Match each sentence (left side) to the expedition it most closely described (right side).

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| ... <b>a</b> The Jews finished the temple.  | 1) The first expedition  |
| ... <b>b</b> Nehemiah received threatening letters from those who opposed the rebuilding. | 2) The second expedition |
| ... <b>c</b> The wall was completed and dedicated.  | 3) The third expedition  |
| ... <b>d</b> Ezra told the people that foreign wives must be put away.                    |                          |
| ... <b>e</b> Cyrus commanded God's people to rebuild the temple.                          |                          |



## THE MESSAGES TO RESTORERS

**Objective 3.** *Distinguish between the messages of Haggai and Zechariah.*

As we have seen, the task of rebuilding and spiritual rebirth had much opposition. There were those on the outside who did not want to see God's work restored, and there were those on the inside who became easily discouraged. But during this time of rebuilding God had a word for His people. Both Haggai and Zechariah prophesied during the years the temple was being rebuilt. Their messages were meaningful to the people at the time they were given and also have marvelous insights into the future.

### Haggai

Work on the rebuilding of the temple had ceased for almost ten years when Haggai gave his first message. He rebuked the people for their lack of concern for God's house. Read Haggai 1–2 before continuing. Make a check mark here when you have completed your reading:

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### ***Application***

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**10** Review Haggai 1:2–11 and answer the following questions.

**a)** What were the people doing instead of finishing the temple?

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**b)** What was the result of their actions?

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The dramatic promises God gave the prophet Haggai stirred the people to begin rebuilding. But soon they became discouraged again, and God had another message for them.

## Application

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**11** Read Haggai 2:1–9. According to this prophecy, God said that the new temple would be

- a)** equal in splendor to the old.
  - b)** greater in splendor than the old.
  - c)** filled with treasures from the nations.
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## Zechariah

The book of Zechariah, though only fourteen chapters long, contains some of the most important prophecies of the Old Testament. The rebuilding which had begun after the people had responded to Haggai's message had been stopped. It was during this time that Zechariah received a series of eight visions concerning the reasons why the rebuilding had stopped (Zechariah 1–8). He was also given glorious promises of the future (Zechariah 9–14). Read Zechariah 1–14 before continuing. Make a check mark here when you have completed your reading:

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The message of the eight visions was received by Zechariah two months after the cornerstone of the temple had been laid. Among the reasons why the rebuilding had stopped were the following:

1. A sense of hopelessness and futility. The Jews saw themselves as unimportant. They felt they were doing something which really did not matter. But God said that He himself would come to Jerusalem and would claim the city as His own (1:17).
2. The results of sin and disobedience. God showed Zechariah that He would overthrow the nations that He had allowed to bring judgment upon His people (1:20–21).
3. A realization of condemnation and guilt. God showed Zechariah the high priest Joshua dressed in dirty garments

being accused by Satan. But Joshua’s garments were replaced by new ones, and God promised to remove the guilt of the land (3:5, 9).

4. A feeling of powerlessness. Zechariah was given a message of encouragement for Zerubbabel and all others: “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit” (Zechariah 4:6).

Besides these visions there were others, such as the man with the measuring line (2:1–5). In this vision, the time when Jerusalem would be fully inhabited was prophesied. Also important in this first part of the book of Zechariah is a prophecy of the righteous “Branch,” of whom Joshua was a picture (6:12–13).

In the second part of the book (chapters 9–14) there are other messages about the Messiah and the future of God’s people. Israel will be cleansed (13:1), and one day all nations will worship the Lord (14:9).

### ***Application***

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**12** Review Zechariah 6:9–13. What would be the work of the man called the “Branch”?

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**13** Review the foregoing summaries of Haggai and Zechariah. Match each sentence or verse (left side) to its corresponding book (right side).

- ... **a** “My people, why should you be living in well-built houses while my Temple lies in ruins?”
- ... **b** “I have taken away your sin and will give you new clothes to wear.”
- ... **c** The descendants of David will be purified by the Lord.
- ... **d** “I sent scorching winds and hail to ruin everything you tried to grow.”
- ... **e** Through a series of eight visions a message of encouragement was given.

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Often we are called upon to restore in our lives things that have been lost. Sometimes we need to begin again to have times of worshipping God together as families. On other occasions we may be called upon to help re-establish the broken ministry of a brother or sister in the Lord. The lessons from this section of the Bible are a great help in those times.

### ***Application***

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**14** Has the Lord been speaking to you about a certain work of restoration or rebuilding that you need to do? If so, write in your notebook a description of what needs to be done.

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## **THE LAST WARNING TO GOD’S PEOPLE**

**Objective 4.** *Summarize the message of the book of Malachi.*

The book of Malachi is sometimes called the “little Old Testament” because it contains in short form several of the major themes of the Old Testament: God’s choice of Israel,

Israel's sins and disobedience, the importance of obeying the law, and the coming of the day of the Lord. It is probable that Malachi wrote his message after many years had passed following the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. Their first enthusiasm had left them. They were again religiously cold and morally loose. Read Malachi 1–4 before continuing. Make a check mark here when you have completed your reading:

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### ***Application***

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**15** Read Malachi 3:6–12. The reason why there was a curse on the nation was because they had

- a)** brought no tithes and offerings to God.
- b)** neglected to come to worship in the temple.
- c)** not brought the full amount of tithes and offering.



Malachi spoke as a reformer, yet he also encouraged the people of God with a vision of the future. He prophesied that “the prophet Elijah” would appear before the coming of the day of the Lord (Malachi 3:1, 4:5). Four centuries of silence passed. But when God’s time came, *the prophet Elijah* appeared to introduce the Messiah, Jesus (Matthew 11:10, 14).

### ***Application***

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**16** According to Malachi 4:1–3, “the day” of the Lord refers to the time when God

- a)** destroys the wicked and heals the righteous.
- b)** sends the prophet Elijah once again.
- c)** gives warnings to those who are evil.

**17** Which of the following are TRUE statements about the message of Malachi?

- a) According to Malachi's message, God did not answer the prayers of the people because they brought Him no offerings.
- b) Malachi's message contained a rebuke of the sins of the Priests and a prophecy that evil people would be destroyed.
- c) In his message, Malachi said that God was displeased because the people showed no respect for His altar.
- d) The message of Malachi was that Jerusalem was going to be destroyed because of the sins of the people



The Old Testament is rich in meaning for us today. I hope this course has helped you to understand its message of trust in the living God. He is still the same today as He was when He walked in the Garden with Adam and Eve, called Abraham to serve Him, brought His people out of Egypt with mighty wonders, talked with Moses face to face, inspired king David to write the Psalms, and spoke through the lives and words of His servants the prophet. As you continue to read and study the Old Testament and its record of the experiences of God's people remember this:

“These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

**self-test**

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- 1** God preserved His people and brought them back to their land because
- a)** Assyria no longer was the ruler of the world.
  - b)** Cyrus gave them instructions to build the temple.
  - c)** they had a message to give to the whole world.
  - d)** the world was controlled by empires of the East.
- 2** Which of the following statements is the best summary of all three stages in the progress of rebuilding?
- a)** In spite of much opposition from outside and discouragement from inside both the temple and the wall of Jerusalem were rebuilt. This took place over about 100 years under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Obedience to the law and worship in the temple were revived.
  - b)** Along with an army escort, Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem with letters from king Artaxerxes. He organized the people, and they were able to rebuild the wall in spite of their enemies who ridiculed them and made plans to stop them. The wall was then dedicated and the law was read.
  - c)** During the reign of Artaxerxes Ezra returned with 1,758 people to Jerusalem. He found that the Jews had married foreign wives. He had them put these wives away and corrected the wrong practices the people were following. There was a revival of worship under his direction.
- 3** In question 2 above, which statement describes the events of the second expedition?
- a)** Statement a
  - b)** Statement b
  - c)** Statement c

**4** Suppose you wanted to encourage a group of people to continue working for the Lord even though they were experiencing opposition. Which of the following would be good to use as an example?

- a)** Ezra's plan for ending marriages with foreign women
- b)** Zechariah's vision of the man with the measuring line
- c)** Ezra's revival of the law and worship during the second expedition
- d)** Nehemiah's experience during the rebuilding of the wall

**5** Match the name of the person (right side) to each phrase which describes him (left side).

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| ... <b>a</b> Wrote the description of the first and second expeditions             | 1) Artaxerxes  |
| ... <b>b</b> Gave the first decree for the Jews to rebuild the temple              | 2) Cyrus       |
| ... <b>c</b> Appeared in one of Zechariah's visions as receiving new garments      | 3) Darius      |
| ... <b>d</b> Was the Persian king during the third expedition                      | 4) Ezra        |
| ... <b>e</b> Told the people they had cheated God of His full tithes and offerings | 5) Haggai      |
| ... <b>f</b> Supervised the rebuilding of the wall                                 | 6) Joshua      |
| ... <b>g</b> Rebuked the people for neglecting the rebuilding of the temple        | 7) Malachi     |
| ... <b>h</b> Was given a series of eight visions concerning the rebuilding         | 8) Nehemiah    |
| ... <b>i</b> Prophesied the coming of "the prophet Elijah"                         | 9) Zechariah   |
| ... <b>j</b> Led the first expedition to Jerusalem                                 | 10) Zerubbabel |
| ... <b>k</b> Was a Persian king who reigned between Cyrus and Artaxerxes           |                |

Be sure to complete your unit student report for Unit 3 and return the answer sheet to your GU instructor.

**answers to study questions**

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- 9 a** 1) The first expedition  
**b** 3) The third expedition  
**c** 3) The third expedition  
**d** 2) The second expedition  
**e** 1) The first expedition
- 1 a)** He read the prophecy God had given to Jeremiah concerning the years of captivity.  
**b)** He confessed the sins of his people,  
**c)** He asked God to restore the temple and to forgive the sins of the people because of His mercy.  
(Your answers should be similar.)
- 10 a)** They were building their own houses.  
**b)** God had caused their harvest to be small and drought to come upon the land.
- 2** God wanted the message concerning His kingdom to reach the entire world. By returning to Jerusalem, the people who had His message were saved from the destruction which came upon the nations who had held them as captives. In this way God kept His covenant with His people and preserved His message for the world.  
(Your answer should be similar.)
- 11 b)** greater in splendor than the old.  
**c)** filled with treasures from the nations.
- 3 a)** To build a temple for the Lord in Jerusalem.  
**b)** To give them supplies for their trip and offerings for the Lord.
- 12** He would build the Lord's temple.
- 4 a)** True  
**b)** False  
**c)** False  
**d)** True

- 13 a** 1) Haggai 1:4  
**b** 2) Zechariah 3:4  
**c** 2) Zechariah 13:1  
**d** 1) Haggai 2:17  
**e** 2) Zechariah 1:7–6:8

**5** God stirred their hearts to return.

**14** Your answer. Remember what God said to Zerubbabel. You, too, can be successful in the work of rebuilding.

- 6 a)** They had married foreign wives.  
**b)** Because it was forbidden by God and would lead the people back into idolatry and sinful practices.  
(Your answers should be similar.)

**15 c)** not brought the full amount of tithes and offerings.

- 7 a)** He prayed and continued working.  
**b)** He told the people to trust in God and gave them weapons.  
**c)** He refused to meet them.  
**d)** He told them they were lying and prayed to God.  
**e)** He recognized that Shemaiah's advice was wrong, and he showed his trust in God.  
(Your answers should be similar.)

**16 a)** destroys the wicked and heals the righteous.

**8** The wall was completely finished and the Levites were assigned to their work (or a similar answer).

- 17 a)** False  
**b)** True  
**c)** True  
**d)** False