

Haggai, Ezra and Nehemiah

Gail Arterburn –2021

Monday, 9:30 – 11:00 am

To be discussed –01/04/21

Introduction – Lesson 1

Historical background: David and then his son Solomon reigned over a united kingdom of Israel. But after Solomon, the kingdom was divided (930 BC) into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The Northern Kingdom fell to Assyria (722-721 BC); Assyria was eventually overcome by Babylon. The Southern Kingdom of Judah continued to exist until Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 586 BC. During these conquests there were many deportations of the Jews by their conquerors. Babylon was then defeated by the Medes and Persians in 539 BC.

1. Read 2 Chronicles 36:1-14. This chapter records the history of Judah after the death of Josiah, the last good king. List the last four kings of Judah and what happened to them. Not only did the kings *do evil in the eyes of the Lord*, what about the rest of the nation? (vv. 11-14).
2. Read 2 Chronicles 36:15-23 & Jeremiah 29:1-14. Ultimately, what brought about the fall of Jerusalem? What happened to the temple, its treasures and the city of Jerusalem?
3. Jeremiah 29:11 is an oft quoted verse of great encouragement, but what is the context in which it was given? What did God's *plans to prosper them* include? For how long? What lessons should we learn from that?
4. Read Isaiah 41:1-4, 44:24-45:1-6. The prophet Isaiah started writing during the rise of the Assyrians and the decline of Israel. Nevertheless, he warned Judah that her sin would bring captivity at the hands of Babylonians. What is more surprising Isaiah prophesied that God would raise up a leader, Cyrus, to subdue the nations and deliver his people, yet Persia was not a power and Cyrus had not been born. What does that tell you about God? History? His sovereignty? His relationship to His people?
5. Read Ezra 1:1-3. How does Ezra begin? Why did Cyrus allow the people to return? What were they to do?
6. Read Ezra 1:4-11. What amazing provision did Cyrus make to enable their success? Why did God have them begin their restoration with the temple?