

## Panorama Bible Study

### *The Plan of the Ages, Study 8*

#### THE DISPENSATION OF LAW

#### FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE END OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. Ezra 1 When God's people were early captives in Babylon, the **PROPHET DANIEL** had given the interpretation of **Babylonian King NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S dream of a STATUE**. The dream confirmed that after the **JEWS' 70-year captivity**, the **MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE** would rise and take over the Babylonian Empire. Just as **Isaiah** had prophesied **150 years BEFORE the birth of GREAT KING CYRUS of PERSIA** and just as the **PROPHET JEREMIAH** had declared about the **length** of the captivity, **KING CYRUS** decreed that all Jews who wanted to return to Jerusalem to build God's Temple could now go. Remember, Daniel (*chapter 2*) was given an astonishing futuristic look at the **four coming world kingdoms** when he interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the **STATUE or IMAGE**. The **HEAD** of the statue was of **GOLD**, which represented **Nebuchadnezzar** and his powerful kingdom of **BABYLON**. The **BREAST and ARMS** were of **SILVER**, which represented the **JOINED Kingdom of the MEDES and PERSIANS**, which would come after **BABYLON**. The **BELLY and THIGHS** were of **BRASS**, which represented the **GREEK EMPIRE**, led by Alexander the Great, which would come after the **PERSIAN EMPIRE**. The **LEGS of IRON and the FEET partly CLAY and IRON** represented the Kingdom which would be in place **at the coming of the MESSIAH, the ROMAN EMPIRE**. (*See attached copy of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream.*) Further in the book of Daniel you will read about Daniel being thrown into the lions' den by **King DARIUS, the Mede**. This was **AFTER** the overthrow of Babylon and the **Great King Cyrus of Persian** placed **King DARIUS the Mede** over the Babylonian area to rule as a **Co-Regent**.
2. Ezra 1 **ZERUBBABEL** is charged by the Great King Cyrus of Persia (*area of present day Iran*) to lead the Jews back to Jerusalem and the province of Judah for the express purpose of **REBUILDING THE TEMPLE**. **KING CYRUS** even furnishes him with the **gold and silver vessels** of the former temple to take with him. (*Quite a load to carry, weight-wise!*) **ZERUBBABEL is the GRANDSON OF KING JEHOICHIN (Jeconiah)**, the king upon whom **JEREMIAH** (*approximately 70 years prior*) had placed the **BLOOD CURSE** which disallowed any of his descendants to ever sit upon the Throne of David again. (*Remember last week we talked about how God was able to still bring about the KING OF KINGS through the lineage of King David by Mary's*

*genealogy!*) Notice that the Hebrew name **ZERUBBABEL** means “born in Babylon” or “winnowed in Babylon.” True to the prophecy given by Jeremiah **BEFORE** the captivity, there would **NOT** be another Davidic King over Judah, for **Zerubbabel** would be placed there as **GOVERNOR**, answerable to the Persian Kingdom. Zerubbabel would take another man who was also named **JOSHUA** with him. This **JOSHUA** was the **HIGH PRIEST**. Remember we learned from the Joshua who succeeded Moses and led the people into the Promised Land hundreds of years prior, that the name in Hebrew is **YEHOSHUA** and means **YAHWEH IS SALVATION**. The translation **in English** is **JESUS**. God is illustrating in the **OLD TESTAMENT** that the **TRUE JOSHUA** is The Lord **JESUS**, who fights for us and leads us into the Promised Land. As with this Joshua, the High Priest who accompanied Zerubbabel, our Lord **Jesus** is the **TRUE ETERNAL HIGH PRIEST** who is **THE TRUE TEMPLE of GOD** and who will make the **believer a TEMPLE of God’s Holy Spirit**. This **FIRST expedition** led by **Zerubbabel** and **High Priest Joshua** back to **REBUILD A SECOND TEMPLE** is a beautiful picture of **Jesus** as both **rightful KING** (*pictured in Zerubbabel, of the Davidic Dynasty*) and **Jesus** as **The True Eternal Priest** (*High Priest Joshua*) who would come through **THE SECOND COVENANT** as **The Temple of God Himself** and to build us, as “lively stones,” **into the Temple of God**. (*1 Peter 2:5*).

**QUESTION:** What would cause 42,360 captives to take a **500-mile** journey through treacherous terrain by foot and on animals, carrying **HEAVY** precious metals to a burned-out, devastated land? (*That’s approximately the distance from here to Nashville, TN, but much worse traveling conditions!*)

**ANSWER:** (See Ezra 1:5) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Ezra 2 Is a careful detailing of the **NAMES of the households** of those returning. **GOD KNOWS YOUR NAME AND HE KNOWS WHAT YOU ARE DOING!!!**

For those who were of the priestly lineage whose genealogy could not be determined, they consulted the **URIM and THUMMIN** for an answer.

**QUESTION:** Do you remember from the Study on The Tabernacle about the **URIM and THUMMIN** used by the High Priest and what the **two names mean**?

**ANSWER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION:** Since the **URIM and THUMMIN** were used to find out the Will of God, how do we consult the **URIM and THUMMIN** today?

**ANSWER:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. Ezra 3 **VERY IMPORTANT!!!**

**QUESTION:** What was the **FIRST** thing the returning captives did when they arrived in Jerusalem? (*Hint: It was the **FIRST** thing Noah did when he got off the ark.*)

**ANSWER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION:** What is the significance in this and how does it relate to us?

**ANSWER:** \_\_\_\_\_

They get the **FOUNDATION of the TEMPLE** laid fairly quickly, **BUT...**

5. Ezra 4 **IMPORTANT: NOTICE WHAT FOLLOWS AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD ATTEMPT A GREAT WORK FOR GOD. IT IS A PATTERN THAT THE CHRISTIAN WILL DEFINITELY ENCOUNTER AS HE/SHE ATTEMPTS TO WORK FOR THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.** (*This is an example of one of the reasons we need to study the Old Testament—it gives us patterns and strategies in our **PERSONAL** spiritual warfare. Solomon said that there is nothing new under the sun. He is saying that the Devil uses the same strategies now that he used then.*)

Zerubbabel and the workers are hardly started on the work when **THE DEVIL'S CROWD** wants to **JOIN THE WORK!!!**

**QUESTION:** Political correctness in this day and age would have said, “Come on. Help us. We all serve the same God, anyway. Just different names for the same God.” **BUT GOD DID NOT ALLOW THIS! WHY?**

**ANSWER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION:** Since the Devil is not always successful in **FIGHTING** the church today, do you think he **STILL** tries to **JOIN IT?** (*Hint: Remember what is said in Revelation 2:20 about **JEZEBEL** being right up in the middle of the church teaching!!!*)

**ANSWER:** \_\_\_\_\_

The **enemies** are **successful** in **STOPPING the WORK** on the Temple by sending letters to the **new Persian King, ARTAXERXES**, and **LYING** on God's people. They tell the King that the **Jews are rebellious** and that the King is going to **lose his TAX MONEY** when they

**REVOLT** after getting the Temple built. King Artaxerxes **HALTS** the work for **15 YEARS!!!** (*One of the Devil's strategies in stopping a work of God is, "It's going to affect your finances."*)

6. Ezra 5 God raises up **TWO PROPHETS** to encourage the people to **START BUILDING AGAIN: HAGGAI and ZECHARIAH**. Zerubbabel is encouraged and begins the work again. The book of Zechariah contains a well-known scripture that **energized Zerubbabel** and still **energizes all Christians** today to get the job done:

"This is the **word of the LORD** unto Zerubbabel, saying, **Not by might, nor by power, but BY MY SPIRIT, saith the LORD of hosts**. Who art thou, O great mountain? **before Zerubbabel** thou shalt become a plain: and he (*Zerubbabel*) shall **bring forth the headstone** thereof with shoutings, **crying, Grace, grace unto it**. Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those **seven**; they are the **eyes of the LORD**, which run to and fro through the whole earth." (*Zechariah 4: 6-10*)

Again, with the **PROPHET HAGGAI** speaking by the Spirit of the Lord to Zerubbabel, we are shown how **ANYTHING** that is **done for GOD** has to be **empowered by the SPIRIT of God**. This was the lesson we learned when Abraham tried to fulfill a **SPIRITUAL PROMISE** from God by raising up **NATURAL** seed in the **strength** of his **flesh, ISHMAEL**, with **HAGAR**, the **EGYPTIAN BONDMAID**. The principle we learn here from what God has called us to do in our life-span is that if we attempt to work for God in **our own strength**, with our own "bright ideas," then **whatever** we "**birth**" out of that, **God is NOT OBLIGATED to SUPPORT IT**. But **whatever God initiates, He provides the strength** and the resources to get it done! Look at what **caused Zerubbabel to respond to HAGGAI'S** anointed words of prophecy:

"And **the Lord STIRRED up the spirit of Zerubbabel...and the spirit of Joshua...the High Priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people**; and they came and **DID WORK** in the **HOUSE** of the Lord of hosts, their God." (*Haggai 1:14*)

7. Ezra 6 **KING DARIUS** comes to the throne and is asked to search for the decree made over 15 years prior by **The Great King Cyrus of PERSIA** to send the Jews back to rebuild their temple. When **KING DARIUS** finds the royal decree, he tells the **enemies** of the Jews that the rebuilding will **go forward**, that anybody who tries to

hinder the Jews will have **their own houses torn down** and **they will be hanged**, and that they are to **use the KING’S own TAX MONEY to fund the project**. Here is the principle again in scripture: God can **turn things around on the enemy** and **MAKE THE ENEMY SUPPORT the PLAN OF GOD**. (*Remember, Moses in Pharaoh’s palace and Elijah sustained in the very homeland of JEZEBEL, Zidon, by a widow woman. Our God is NEVER out-done by the devices of the enemy!!*) The Temple is **finished in 4 years** and they keep the **PASSOVER!!!**

During this time, the **PROPHETS HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH** continually prophesy and encourage the people. Some of their prophesying is futuristic and relates to the **coming of the MESSIAH**.

- 8. Haggai 2:6,9 “For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet **once**, it is a little while, and **I will SHAKE the HEAVENS and the EARTH, and the SEA, and the DRY LAND**; And I will **SHAKE ALL NATIONS**, and **THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS SHALL COME**: and I will **FILL THIS HOUSE with GLORY**, saith the Lord of hosts...The **GLORY of this LATTER HOUSE shall be GREATER than of the FORMER**, saith the Lord of Hosts: and in **THIS PLACE** will I **give PEACE**, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

This **second** Temple **never reached** the **GLORY of SOLOMON’S TEMPLE**, even after **KING HEROD THE GREAT** of the **ROMAN EMPIRE** had refurbished it. For one thing, **IT WAS MISSING THE ARK OF THE COVENANT**, which many think was hidden by Jeremiah and others (*possibly in Egypt where they fled*) in anticipation of the final siege of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. So, clearly, Haggai is prophesying about **ANOTHER HOUSE of GOD’S GLORY** which would supersede **ALL OTHERS**. It would **CAUSE A SPIRITUAL SHAKING THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH**. Then the **DESIRE of ALL NATIONS** shall come and in **THAT PLACE**, God will give **PEACE**.

**QUESTION:** What did **JESUS** say when He spoke of His own body in John 2:19-22?

**ANSWER:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION:** What happened when Jesus was on the Cross in Matthew 27:50-54?

**ANSWER:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION:** What did the angels say when they announced the Birth of Christ to the shepherds in Luke 2:14?

**ANSWER:** \_\_\_\_\_

From these scriptures we see that **PROPHET HAGGAI** was prophesying of **Jesus** who was the **GLORY of GOD INCARNATE**. His Gospel would go out to **ALL NATIONS** for the redemption of **ALL** humanity. The crucifixion **SHOOK UP EVERYTHING!!!** It **SHOOK OFF** the **RULERSHIP** and **DOMINION of sin** upon those who would **BELIEVE upon Jesus**, our **TRUE SAMSON!** He would be the **FULFILLMENT of THE PEACE OFFERING** of the Old Testament sacrifices. As Isaiah had predicted, “the chastisement of **OUR PEACE** was upon Him.” Jesus would **RECONCILE MAN** unto God and bring **TRUE, ETERNAL PEACE with GOD**. **Jesus and only Jesus** is the “**GLORY of the LATTER HOUSE**” about which **Haggai prophesied**.

The **PROPHET ZECHARIAH**, who helped **PROPHET HAGGAI**, was also given **VISIONS** and prophesied about **future events**.

9. Zechariah 3:8-9 “...for, behold, I will bring forth **MY SERVANT** the **BRANCH**. For behold the **STONE** that I have laid before Joshua; upon **ONE STONE** shall be **seven eyes**: behold, I will **ENGRAVE** the **GRAVING** thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will **REMOVE** the **INIQUITY** of that land in **ONE DAY**.”

This is an incredible **prophecy** bringing together what the **PROPHET ISAIAH** (Is. 11:1) had said about the **coming Messiah being the BRANCH** out of the rod of the stem of Jesse (King David’s father); what the **PROPHET JEREMIAH** (Jer. 23:5) had said about **raising unto David a RIGHTEOUS BRANCH**; what the **PROPHET DANIEL** had seen in the **interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the IMAGE** of the **world kingdoms** and how a **STONE from HEAVEN struck the world kingdoms** and the **STONE** became a **KINGDOM THAT FILLED THE EARTH**. This **stone**, according to Zechariah, had **7 EYES**—representing the **PERFECT VISION** of the **OMNISCIENT God** who sees it **ALL**. Furthermore, the **PROPHET ZECHARIAH** associates this **STONE** with being **ENGRAVED**. The **PROPHET ISAIAH** had likened the **CRUCIFIXION** of the **MESSIAH** to an **ENGRAVING** upon the **HANDS**. (*Isaiah 49:16*) **AND...the PROPHET ZECHARIAH says ALL THIS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED IN ONE DAY!!!**

**QUESTION:** What **DAY** was that when the **STONE** from Heaven was **ENGRAVED** and was given to us for **THE REMOVAL** of our **INIQUITY**?

**ANSWER:** \_\_\_\_\_

10. Zechariah 8:12 “...and I will cause the **REMNANT** of **THIS PEOPLE** to **POSSESS** all these things.”

While this prophecy definitely predicts the reestablishment of the Jewish people as a nation, its **GREATER fulfillment** is found in **THE CHURCH—THE REDEEMED—THE BELIEVERS**. We are **God’s TRUE SPIRITUAL REMNANT** and we are made up of **MANY TRIBES, TONGUES, and NATIONS**.

11. Zechariah 9: 9 “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, **THY KING COMETH** unto thee: he is just, and **HAVING SALVATION**; lowly, and **RIDING UPON AN ASS**, and upon a **COLT** the foal of an ass.”

**AMAZINGLY**, the **PROPHET ZECHARIAH** was able to see, through the **TELESCOPE of TIME** over **400 years later**, **JESUS CHRIST**, the **MESSIAH**, coming in the **triumphal entry** to Jerusalem **riding on the colt of an ass**—Jesus was steadfastly focused on **getting to the CROSS** for you and me!

12. When someone asks you where do you get the terminology, “The **BLOOD of the COVENANT**,” tell them to look at Zechariah 9:11:

“As for thee also, by the **BLOOD OF THY COVENANT** I have sent forth thy **prisoners** out of the **pit** wherein is no water.”

It is because of the **BLOOD of JESUS CHRIST** that our sins are washed away and we, as **PRISONERS TO SIN**, are taken **OUT OF THE PIT** which was **DRY** and abundantly given **LIVING WATERS**, flowing from our innermost being!!!

13. **Zechariah**, in prophesying and encouraging the Jews to rebuild the Temple, is also given **prophetic insight** into the **money** used in the **BETRAYAL of JESUS CHRIST**, The **MESSIAH**, and even **associates** it with **the Potter** (*400 years before it happened*). The religious leaders who paid Judas to betray Jesus did not want the **30 pieces of silver** back because it was “blood money,” so they **purchased the POTTER’S FIELD** with it in order to bury strangers there. Look at **ZECHARIAH’S AMAZING PREDICTION** in Zech. 11: 12-13:

“And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for **my price THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER**. And the **LORD** said unto me, Cast it unto

**THE POTTER:** a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the **THIRTY PIECES of SILVER**, and **cast them** to the **POTTER in the HOUSE of the LORD.**”

14. Zechariah 14 is a marvelous **prophecy** of the **LORD’S RETURN** and how He will come back with **ALL HIS SAINTS** (*verse 5*). He will be **KING OVER ALL THE EARTH** (*verse 9*). **ALL EVIL** shall be put away and **ALL WILL BE HOLY!!!** (*verses 20-21*)

15. Ezra 7 About **80 years after Zerubbabel** led the first expedition of captives back to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple, **EZRA** (*who wrote the Book of Ezra*), a **PRIEST**, gains permission from **KING ARTAXERXES of PERSIA** (*son of KING AHASUREUS and stepson of QUEEN ESTHER*) and leads another, smaller expedition of captives back to Jerusalem. As a Priest and the **GRANDSON of HILKIAH**, who was the High Priest when **GOOD KING JOSIAH** rediscovered the **BOOK OF THE LAW** before the captivity, **EZRA** came at that time to **teach the LAW OF GOD** and **restore services** in the **Temple**. Possibly because of Queen Esther’s influence, **KING ARTAXERXES** gave his **personal silver** and **gold** to **PRIEST EZRA**, commanded the **TREASURERS** in the provinces to **aid and fund EZRA’S return**. This King is so accommodating that he won’t even allow for **EZRA** and the people with him **to be taxed!!!**

16. Ezra 9 When **PRIEST EZRA** arrives in Jerusalem he finds that **after 80 years** the people are **falling back** into the lifestyle that brought them captivity: They are **intermarrying with the heathen** nations surrounding them. The people all met in great **repentance** because of **EZRA’S preaching/teaching** and “put away” the foreign wives.

17. Nehemiah 1 About **13 years AFTER** the arrival of **PRIEST EZRA**, who travelled from the Babylonia area of captivity (about 500 miles), **NEHEMIAH**, a descendant of the **tribe of JUDAH** and **CUPBEARER to PERSIAN KING ARTAXERXES** at his palace in **SHUSHAN, PERSIA**, asks permission to **return to JERUSALEM** because he has heard the **walls, etc.**, are in **NEED OF REPAIR**. He travelled much farther than the others for he was in the area we know as **IRAN** of today. Since **KING ARTAXERXES** was **QUEEN ESTHER’S STEP SON**, she was probably still alive at that time. Because God had sovereignly placed her there for the preservation of his people, the **JEWS** now had a position of **FAVOR with the PERSIAN KINGS**.

18. Nehemiah 2 **Nehemiah** arrives in Jerusalem and **WISELY INSPECTS** the structural damage of the city **BY NIGHT**, because there are **ENEMIES** who will oppose his efforts to **FORTIFY the city**. The **enemies** are **SANBALLAT and TOBIAH**. When

**NEHEMIAH** announces to the people that **KING ARTAXERXES** has given them **favor** and even assisted with sending the supplies to rebuild, they are encouraged and rise up to **BUILD, BUT**, the enemies, **SANBALLAT** and **TOBIAH**, **LAUGH THEM TO SCORN AND DESPISE**. *(Remember, as with Abraham's Ishmael who **MOCKED** the **SON OF THE SPIRIT, ISAAC**, we learned that those who are **NOT SPIRITUAL MOCK** that which is of the **SPIRIT**. The **nature of ISHMAEL**, i.e., our **FALLEN FLESH NATURE**, always **OPPOSES** the work of God, whether God is working **IN** us or **THROUGH** us to others.)* **NEHEMIAH** boldly tells them that **as enemies, they have NO PORTION**, nor **RIGHT**, nor **MEMORIAL** in Jerusalem. Spiritually, **NEHEMIAH** is showing us today that we must **NOT "GIVE PLACE TO THE DEVIL."** *(Ephesians 4:27)*

19. Nehemiah 3 **Nehemiah**, who is working with the **PRIEST EZRA**, is now the **GOVERNOR** of Judah. He begins building the **GATES** and he **SANCTIFIES** them. **Spiritually speaking**, this is showing us that we are to **SANCTIFY** whatever we **OPEN ourselves up to**. In other words, **what we OPEN** our lives to must be in line with the **WORD of GOD**, or we will **suffer HARM**. An example of this would be when a man **OPENS the GATE** of viewing **PORNOGRAPHY**, he and his loved ones **SUFFER HARM**. Notice that **NEHEMIAH** put **LOCKS** and **BARS** on these **SANCTIFIED GATES**. **Spiritually speaking**, we must **NOT ALLOW** certain things in our lives. We actually need to leave **NO ROOM** for them getting in to us by putting **LOCKS AND BARS** on those gates! **SIN** has to be **BARRED** out by the **POWER of the indwelling Christ!!!**
20. Nehemiah 4 Now the **enemies** really begin to **MOCK** when they find out the **WALL is going up**. Then, they recruit help and plan an **ALL-OUT ATTACK**, since the **MOCKING** had not stopped anything. We can expect this in **our walk** with the **LORD** when we are **"BUILDING"** something needed spiritually in our lives or when we are **"BUILDING"** something needed spiritually in the lives of others. If **MOCKING by the enemy** doesn't stop us, then the Devil will launch an all-out attack. Nehemiah shows us today what to do in such a circumstance: **PRAY** and **SET A WATCH**, and **WORK with A WEAPON IN YOUR other HAND**.

**QUESTION:** What is the **NEW TESTAMENT** application of **"Work with a weapon in your other hand?"**

**ANSWER:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 21. Nehemiah 6** We need to look at the **TACTICS** of the **ENEMY** against **NEHEMIAH** and his **WALL BUILDING** because **SATAN** will use the **SAME TACTICS** against us as we live for the Lord Jesus Christ. The enemies, **SANBALLAT** and **TOBIAH**, tried to **LURE NEHEMIAH** from the **SAFETY of JERUSALEM** to an **OPEN AREA**. They wanted him to **“COME DOWN”** off the wall but Nehemiah responded that he **COULDN’T COME DOWN** for he was doing a **GREAT WORK**. This pictures the **ENEMIES of JESUS CHRIST**, as He was **REDEEMING us upon the cross**, taunting Him to **“Come down”** off the cross. But Jesus was doing a **“GREAT WORK,”** for the **CROSS** was our **TRUE SPIRITUAL WALL OF PROTECTION** and **JESUS** knew He could **NOT come down**, for the **souls of men** would be **eternally lost** if He did. Regardless of the other strategies of Nehemiah’s enemies, such as writing letters accusing him of insurrection, hiring a **FALSE PROPHETESS** and other **FALSE PROPHETS**; **NEHEMIAH** knew the **VOICE of HIS GOD** and stayed committed to the work on the **WALL**. **INCREDIBLY**, it was **finished** in only **52 DAYS!!!** Know that some of the opposition **NEHEMIAH** encountered was even from **WITHIN Jerusalem**, because the **enemy, TOBIAH**, had **MARRIED into the family of JUDAH**. We learn from Nehemiah that we can be **RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE of GOD’S PERFECT WILL** for our lives and encounter some of the **fiercest opposition of our lives!** We can even encounter it from **within our own HOUSEHOLD!**
- 22. Nehemiah 7** After the **WALL** is finished, Nehemiah sets up the **ORDER OF WORSHIP**. The **spiritual parallel** for us is that **JESUS PURCHASED our WALL of PROTECTION on Calvary’s Cross**. (*As in the computer world, WE HAVE A FIRE WALL! HALLELUJAH!*) Now it is time for us to **WORSHIP** in every detail of our lives!!! Nehemiah made sure the people were **WISE** about the **tactics of the enemy** and that the **GATES** of the **WALL** needed a **WATCH** set there. Jesus tells us to **“WATCH and PRAY.”** The **enemy** will try to **enter** through our **FALLEN FLESH NATURE**. All that Nehemiah did showed them and us to **GUARD OUR HOUSE!!!**
- 23. Nehemiah 8** **Nehemiah** knew that the **STRENGTH of JUDAH** and **JERUSALEM** was **DEPENDENT** upon **KNOWING the WORD of GOD**. Priest Ezra came and **The WORD** was **publicly read aloud** while the people lifted up their hands in worship. It is said that what Ezra and Nehemiah did was to **“CAUSE the people to UNDERSTAND THE LAW.”** When the people **UNDERSTOOD**, the **WORD** did its work—they **REPENTED!** Note that **The WORD of GOD** is good news because then the people had **JOY** and they even became **generous in FEEDING OTHERS**. They celebrated the **FEAST OF BOOTHS or FEAST OF TABERNACLES** like they had never celebrated it before, for

they **UNDERSTOOD** the reading of the **WORD**. The **spiritual FULFILLMENT** of the **FEAST of BOOTHS** is **JESUS CHRIST**, the **TRUE TABERNACLE**, who is our **ETERNAL DWELLING PLACE**.

**24.** Malachi 1-3 The **PROPHET MALACHI** was the **last prophet** of the **Old Testament**. He assisted **PRIEST EZRA** and **GOVERNOR NEHEMIAH** with their reforms because the people had so neglected the **PROPER TEMPLE WORSHIP** as God had given them through Moses. The sacrifices they brought were **BLEMISHED** and the people, as **PRIEST EZRA** had addressed them, had **reverted to MARRYING the HEATHEN** of the land. **PROPHET MALACHI** also addresses the people for **WITHHOLDING their TITHES**.

**25.** Some of the **PROPHET MALACHI'S** writings are **FUTURISTIC**. In Chapter 3:1-2 he is prophetically speaking (*approximately 400 years in advance*) about **JOHN THE BAPTIST** coming to **PREPARE the WAY** for the **MESSIAH, JESUS CHRIST**:

“Behold, I (*God*) will send **my messenger**, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the **LORD**, whom ye seek, shall **SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE**, even the **messenger** of the **COVENANT**, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the **LORD** of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like **fullers' soap**...”

The Lord Jesus Christ **SUDDENLY** came to **His TEMPLE in JERUSALEM** and the people were **not expecting Him**, neither did they recognize Him. The **MISSING ARK OF THE COVENANT had now been REALIZED in the TRUE ARK OF THE COVENANT, JESUS, who had SUDDENLY COME to HIS TEMPLE**. Prophet **Malachi** also **sees JESUS** as being like **FULLER'S SOAP**. Do you remember how Mark in chapter 9:3 described the **TRANSFIGURATION of JESUS**—that his “**raiment** became shining, exceeding **WHITE AS SNOW**; so as no **FULLER** on earth can white them.”

**26.** In the Book of Revelation, at the end of the age, it states that the **books** were opened—that is, **plural BOOKS**. Malachi 3:16-18 lets us know what **one** of those books is:

“Then they that feared the **LORD** spake often one to another: and the **LORD** hearkened, and heard it, and a **BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE** was written before Him **for them that feared the LORD**, and **that thought upon His name**. And they shall be **mine**, saith the **LORD** of

hosts, in **that day when I make up my JEWELS**; and I will **spare them**, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.”

Did you know that **God is WRITING** about **you** and what we are doing here today? Think about that!!! It brings **JOY to His Heart** that we speak “often to one another” about Him! We are so precious to Him that **we are called JEWELS**, which He demonstrated to us way back in the **JEWELS** of the **High Priest’s Breastplate** of Moses’ time!

**27.** Malachi 4 is a tremendous **prophecy** about the **COMING of the LORD JESUS to pay** for our sins and also when **HE comes the SECOND TIME**:

“For, behold, the **DAY** cometh, that shall **BURN AS AN OVEN**; and all the proud, yea, and **ALL** that do **WICKEDLY**, shall be **stubble**: and the day that cometh shall **BURN THEM UP**, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto **YOU (the Christian)** that **fear my name** shall the **SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ARISE (Jesus AROSE from the grave)** with **HEALING IN HIS WINGS**; and **YE** shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And **YE** shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts. Remember ye the Law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I (*God*) will send you **ELIJAH** the **prophet BEFORE the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD**: And he (**ELIJAH**) shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

**28.** Jesus came and through the **FIERY JUDGMENT** of the **CROSS**, the **TRUE BRAZEN ALTAR**, He **CONSUMED WICKEDNESS**. This prophecy is not only about Jesus taking our sins in judgment, but also the **futuristic day** when **ALL WICKEDNESS of unbelieving HUMANITY** will be **judged** and the “kingdoms of this World will become the Kingdoms of our God and His Christ.” **Jesus is the “SUN of RIGHTEOUSNESS”** and **Malachi sees the resurrection** for he sees **JESUS RISING with HEALING in His WINGS**. **Malachi also sees John the Baptist** who **prepared the way** for Jesus’ ministry, for **John came in the “spirit of Elijah.”** In the New Testament the angel told Zacharias as he ministered in the Temple that he would have a son, John the Baptist, who would “go before Him (*Jesus*) in the spirit and power of **ELIJAH**.” Jesus, during his ministry with the disciples, plainly told them after John was brutally beheaded for

a dancing girl, that **John the Baptist** was the **one prophesied** about by Malachi who would come **ministering as Elijah** once did. (*Matthew 11:7-14*)

- 29.** So the **OLD TESTAMENT** ends with God's people **under PERSIAN RULE** and by setting the stage for the **ENTRANCE of THE MESSIAH** and the **NEW COVENANT**, but it will take **400 years!** During that time, many **transitions in world empires** were occurring and **Daniel's interpretation** of the coming world empires in Nebuchadnezzar's dream **HAPPENED EXACTLY AS HE PREDICTED.**
- 30.** Toward the **end of the OLD TESTAMENT**, and just as **Daniel had said** from the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, **GREECE** began to **RISE** under a conquering **20-year-old named Alexander the Great.** He was swift in establishing an **empire that encompassed EGYPT, ASSYRIA, BABYLON, and PERSIA.** In God's **PROVIDENCE**, the **GREEK LANGUAGE** became predominant and would be the **original language** of the **NEW TESTAMENT.** After **ALEXANDER'S DEATH** at a young age, supposedly from a sexually transmitted disease, the **GREEK EMPIRE** was **DIVIDED** among his **4 generals.** During this time the land of **Judah (Judea)** was **FIRST** ruled by the **PTOLEMIES (rulers of EGYPT),** afterwards they were ruled by the **SELEUCIDS (rulers of SYRIA).** Whereas the **JEW**s lived peacefully and maintained their own culture/worship under **the rulers of EGYPT,** it was a **different matter** with the **rulers of SYRIA, the SELEUCIDS.** In an attempt to **STOP the JEWISH PEOPLE** from worshipping **JEHOVAH,** the **SYRIAN RULER, ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES** desecrated the **TEMPLE** by **SACRIFICING A PIG** upon the **HOLY BRAZEN ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING** to the **GREEK GOD, ZEUS.**
- 31.** The act by the **SELEUCID** ruler, **ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES,** sparked a **revolt** of the **JEWISH PEOPLE** led by a pious **JEWISH PRIEST** known as **JUDAS MACCABEUS.** Incredibly **MACCABEUS' rag-tag little army** of noble fighters threw off the oppression of the **SELEUCIDS (SYRIANS).** They **cleansed and rededicated** the **TEMPLE.** They only found **enough OIL for the HOLY LAMPSTAND to last for ONE DAY,** but **miraculously** it lasted the **8 days needed to prepare fresh oil.** This festival is called **HANUKKAH** or **FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS.** The **JEWISH people** still commemorate this event by lighting the candles of a special menorah containing a central shaft with four candle lamps on each side totaling the 8 for the number of days the **OIL burned supernaturally.**

32. The **HOLY LAND** enjoyed **self-rule** for a short period of time until 63 BC when, as **Daniel's interpretation showed us**, the **ROMAN EMPIRE** rises to power.
33. In 63 BC, **Roman General POMPEY** conquered Jerusalem.
34. In 44 BC, **JULIUS CAESAR** (*remember your high school world history lesson and your Shakespeare, "Et Tu Brute," which means "and you, too, Brutus"*) was **ASSASINATED** by **BRUTUS** and **CASSIUS** who then fled.
35. Later, in 42 BC, **OCTAVIAN** and **MARK ANTONY** (*of Cleopatra fame*) defeated **BRUTUS** and **CASSIUS**.
36. In 37 BC, **HEROD THE GREAT** was appointed **KING of JUDEA** by **OCTAVIAN** and **MARK ANTONY**.
37. In 27 BC, **OCTAVIAN** becomes **CAESAR AUGUSTUS**, the **FIRST** **ROMAN EMPEROR** over The Holy Land.
38. During the reign of **EMPEROR OCTAVIAN** (*i.e., CAESAR AUGUSTUS*), the **KING of JUDEA** appointed by him and Mark Antony, **KING HEROD THE GREAT**, began **refurbishing the Temple Zerubbabel** had built.
39. In 6-4 BC, **JESUS, Son of God**, was born in **BETHLEHEM**. At that time **JUDEA** became a **PROVINCE** of **ROME** and was **RULED BY A GOVERNOR**. At the time of Jesus' crucifixion the **GOVERNOR** was **PONTIUS PILATE**.
40. In God's **PROVIDENCE**, the **ROMANS** were extremely skillful **ROAD MAKERS**. Remember reading in World History about the Roman road, "The Appian Way," and hearing the phrase "all roads lead to **ROME**?" At the time of **The Roman Empire** all roads *did* lead to Rome. Again, **by God's design** and **perfect TIMING** in **human history**, the **Romans** had provided the **roads** which would later **facilitate travel** and the **SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL of JESUS CHRIST!!!** The **GREEKS** had brought the **LANGUAGE** of the **NEW TESTAMENT** and the **ROMANS** brought the **ROADS** for traveling with the **GOOD NEWS of The New Testament!!!**