

EZRA-NEHEMIAH

BABYLON →

5 YEARS

21KING 21-25

PARALLEL DESIGN

1. RECALIBRATE KING: KINGED BY GOD TO SEND ALLEGIANCE TO JERUSALEM
 2. LAYERS: FIRST: OPPOSITION TO REBUILDING
 3. STAIRCASE: ANTI-CLIMAX

1-6 EZRA ZERUBBABEL THE TEMPLE

• HADGER WANTS TO RETURN TO JERUSALEM, BUT CAN BE SHIPPED
 • "I AM HERE TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE"
 • "I AM HERE TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE"
 • "I AM HERE TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE"

7-10 EZRA COMMUNITY

• ATTACHED THE COMMUNITY TO THE TEMPLE
 • "I AM HERE TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE"
 • "I AM HERE TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE"

1-7 NEHEMIAH CIVIL WALLS

• ANY OF REBUILD THROUGHOUT WALLS
 • "I AM HERE TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE"
 • "I AM HERE TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE"

8-12 SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

• CONFESSION & SIN
 • COVENANT RENEWAL
 • NON-FOLLOWING TORAH
 • GREAT CELEBRATION
 • "I AM HERE TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE"

PROPHETIC HOPES AFTER EXILE
 • FUTURE MESSIANIC KING (ISAIAH 9)
 • GODS PRESENCE IN A NEW TEMPLE (EZEKIEL 40-48, ZECHARIAH 2)
 • GODS KINGDOM OVER THE NATIONS (ISAIAH 2, ZECHARIAH 9)
 • FULFILL PROMISE TO ABRAHAM (GENESIS 12)



HOPE ... BUT ...
DISAPPOINTMENT ... BUT ...
NEW HEART ... BUT ...
 • THE BOOK OF POINTED THE NEED FOR A...
 • "I AM HERE TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE"

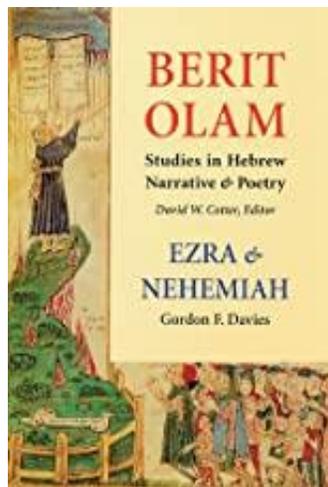
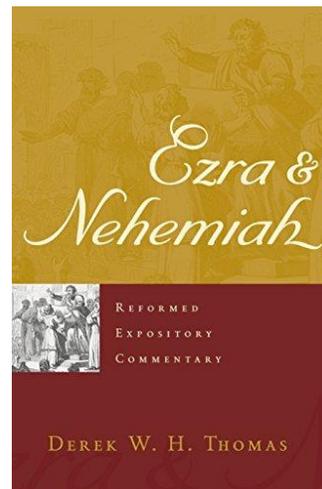
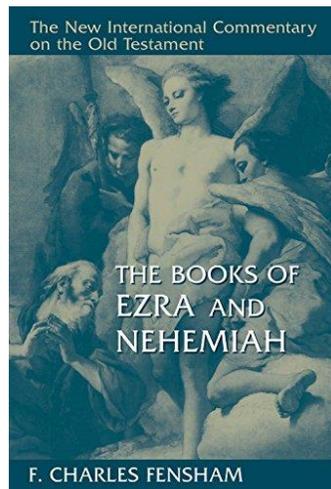
I. Bible Project Videos

www.southshorebible.org/frontline-phase-2

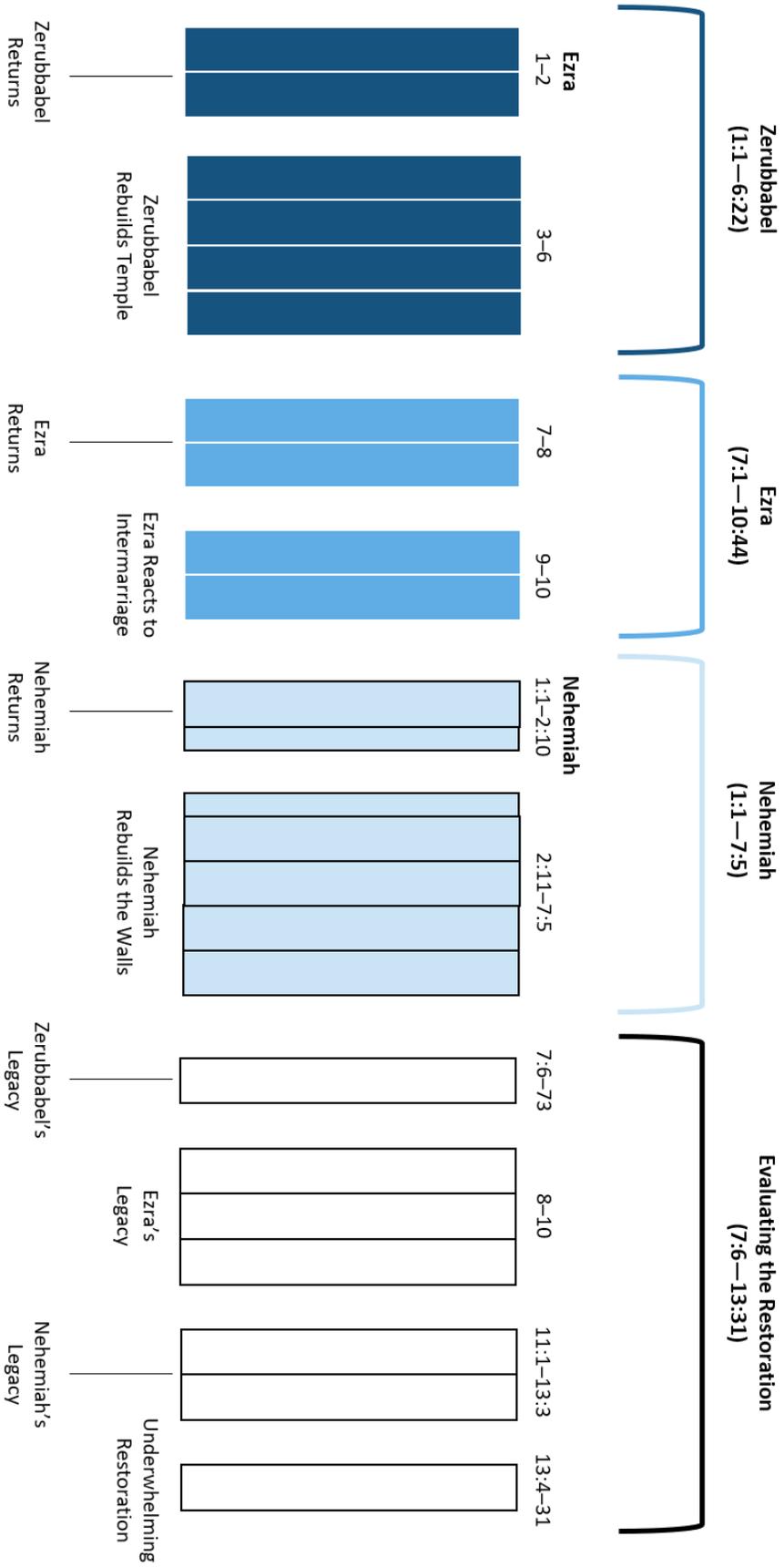
Read Scripture Series

– Ezra-Nehemiah

II. Recommended Books and Commentaries

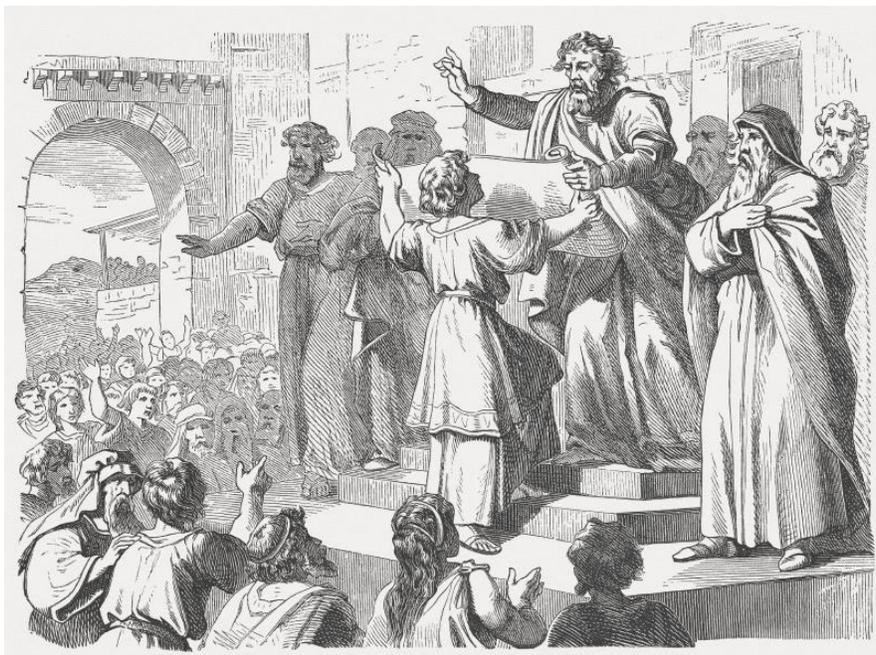


EZRA-NEHEMIAH



III. Major themes of biblical theology in the books of 1 & 2 Kings:

<p>An Underwhelming Restoration</p>	<p>The restoration described in Ezra-Nehemiah falls woefully short of the prophetic expectation. Therefore, we must be waiting for something —someone— greater yet to come.</p>
<p>Davidic King</p>	<p>Whereas the pre-exilic prophets promise the future reign of a Davidic King on the other side of judgment and exile, Zerubbabel —the Davidic heir— disappears from the pages of history after Ezra 5. It is in these realities that Messianic fervour begins to develop in Israel.</p>
<p>New Jerusalem/Zion</p>	<p>Whereas the pre-exilic prophet promise the exaltation of a new Jerusalem in Zion in an era of peace, prosperity, righteousness, immortality, and international ingathering, the restoration under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah is rife with difficulty, opposition, and persisting sin. It is in these realities that apocalyptic hope for the kingdom of God matures.</p>
<p>Historicity</p>	<p>Ezra-Nehemiah is an anthology of primary documents that, together, tell a compelling story about life during the restoration of Jerusalem. Statistical contradictions only strengthen the case for the historicity of the Scriptures.</p>



I. Macro Structure of Ezra-Nehemiah

A. Zerubbabel's Contribution to Restoration (Ezra 1:1—6:22)

A1. Zerubbabel Returns (1:1—2:11)

A2. Zerubbabel Rebuilds the Temple (3:1—6:22)

B. Ezra's Contribution to Restoration (Ezra 7:1—10:44)

B1. Ezra Returns (7:1—8:36)

B2. Ezra Reacts to Intermarriage (9:1—10:44)

C. Nehemiah's Contribution to Restoration (Nehemiah 1:1—7:4)

C1. Nehemiah Returns (1:1—2:10)

C2. Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls (2:11—7:5)

D. Evaluating the Restoration (Nehemiah 7:6—13:31)

D1. Zerubbabel's Legacy (7:6—7:73)

D2. Ezra's Legacy (8:1—10:39)

D3. Nehemiah's Legacy (11:1—13:3)

D4. An Underwhelming Restoration (13:4—13:31)

II. Detailed Structure

Zerubbabel's Contribution to Restoration (Ezra 1:1—6:22)

Zerubbabel Returns (1:1—2:70)

- Cyrus issues a proclamation that the exiles from Jerusalem can return to their land to rebuild the temple with provisions from the destroyed temple (1:1–10)
 - 30 basins of gold
 - 1,000 basins of silver
 - 29 censers
 - 30 bowls of gold
 - 410 bowls of silver
 - 1,000 other vessels
 - All the vessels of gold and silver were 5,400

- Zerubbabel leads first wave of returnees to Jerusalem (2:1–70)
 - Laity (2:1–35)
 - Priests (2:36–39)
 - Levites, Singers, Gatekeepers (2:40–42)
 - Temple Servants (2:43–54)
 - Sons of Solomon's Servants (2:55–58)
 - Those who could not prove their descent (2:59–63)
 - Totals (2:64–67)
 - Freewill offerings (2:64–69)
 - Habitation locations of returnees (2:70)

Zerubbabel Rebuilds the Temple (3:1—6:22)

- In the 7th month, Zerubbabel and Joshua lead in the rebuilding of the temple altar (3:1–7)

- In the 2nd month of the 2nd year, Zerubbabel and Joshua lead in the rebuilding of the temple by laying the foundation (3:8–13)

- Zerubbabel and Joshua do not permit the people left in the land to help with the rebuilding of the temple (4:1–3)

- The people left in the land make it difficult to rebuild the temple (4:4—6:12)
 - The people left in the land make the returnees afraid and bribed the leadership to try to discourage the rebuilding of the temple (4:4 – 6)

- The people left in the land write a letter to King Artaxerxes to warn the king that the returnees were rebuilding the temple in order to rebel (4:7–16)
 - King Artaxerxes orders work on the temple to cease (4:17–24)
 - Prophets Haggai and Zechariah exhort the people to continue working on the rebuilding of the temple (5:1–2)
 - Tattenai, governor of the province Beyond the River, and Shetharbozenai write a letter to King Darius to ask if Cyrus had given permission to rebuild the temple (5:3–17)
 - King Darius discovers Cyrus' decree and sends a letter of permission to the returnees to continue building the temple with help from the province Beyond the River (6:1–12)
- The temple is finished and dedicated (6:13–18)
 - Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is celebrated (6:19–22)

Ezra's Contribution to Restoration (Ezra 7:1–10:44)

Ezra Returns (7:1–8:36)

- Ezra is granted permission to return to Jerusalem (7:1–10)
- Ezra is given a letter of permission from Artaxerxes (7:11–26)
- Ezra praises the LORD for Artaxerxes' permission (7:27–28)
- Ezra leads second wave of returnees to Jerusalem (8:1–36)
 - The census of those who returned with Ezra (8:1–14)
 - Ezra calls for the sons of Levi to join him at Ahava (8:15–20)
 - Ezra leads the people in a fast for protection before setting out (8:21–23)
 - Ezra entrusts 12 leading priests with the silver, gold, and temple vessels (8:24–30)
 - Ezra departs for Jerusalem (8:31–36)

Ezra Reacts to Intermarriage (9:1—10:44)

- Ezra hears about the returnees' intermarriages (9:1-5)
- Ezra prays and makes confession on behalf of the returnees (9:6-15)
- The returnees repent and cut a covenant to divorce their foreign wives (10:1-17)
- The list of those guilty of intermarriage (10:18-44)

Nehemiah's Contribution to Restoration (Nehemiah 1:1—7:4)

Nehemiah Returns (1:1—2:10)

- Nehemiah hears a report about Jerusalem's walls being broken down (1:1-4)
- Nehemiah prays and makes confession (1:5-11)
- Nehemiah is granted permission to return to Jerusalem (2:1-10)

Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls (2:11—7:4)

- Nehemiah inspects Jerusalem's walls (2:11-16)
- Nehemiah confronts Jerusalem's officers (2:17-20)
- Nehemiah leads the people to rebuild the walls (3:1-32)
- Samaritans oppose Nehemiah's wall building project (4:1-23)
 - Sanballat and Tobiah the Ammonite plot against Jerusalem (4:1-3)
 - Nehemiah prays against his enemies (4:4-6)
 - Sanballat and Tobiah the Ammonite plot against Jerusalem (4:7-12)
 - Nehemiah fortifies his wall building efforts (4:13-23)
- Nehemiah addresses the problem of slavery by the nobles in Jerusalem (5:1-13)
 - The poor complain to Nehemiah about poverty and slavery resulting from taxes to Persia and interest on loans from fellow Jews (5:1-5)

- Nehemiah orders an end to interest on loans and the forgiveness of debts (5:6–13)
- Nehemiah refuses food allowance, taxes, and lands traditionally offered to governors during the 12 years of his governorship. Rather, Nehemiah was generous with the people, paying to feed many of them daily (5:14–19)
- Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab seek to destroy Nehemiah (6:1–14)
 - They call Nehemiah to a false peace talk (6:1–4)
 - They accuse Nehemiah of trying to become king (6:5–9)
 - They try to entrap Nehemiah in the temple (6:10–14)
- Nehemiah finishes rebuilding the wall and appoints officials over Jerusalem (6:15–7:5)

Evaluating the Restoration (Nehemiah 7:6–13:31)

Zerubbabel's Reforms (7:6–73)

- 42,360 Jews, 7,337 slaves, 245 singers, 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys returned to Jerusalem from Babylon in the first wave with Zerubbabel (7:5–69)
- The returnees contributed to the rebuilding of the temple (7:70–72)
 - Governor: 1,000 darics of gold, 50 basins, 30 priests' garments, and 500 minas of silver
 - Heads of the fathers' houses: 20,000 darics of gold and 2,200 minas of silver
 - Rest of the people: 20,000 darics of gold, 2,000 minas of silver, and 67 priests' garments
- The priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, temple servants, and all Israel lived in their towns by the 7th month (7:73)

Ezra's Reforms (8:1–10:39)

- Ezra reads the Torah to the people (8:1–12)

- Ezra teaches the people and they celebrate the Feast of Booths (8:13–18)
- Ezra assembles the people to fast and confess their sins of their national history (9:1–37)
- The returnees cut a firm covenant with the LORD in writing (9:38–10:39)
 - The covenant is written (9:38)
 - The covenant is sealed with the names of the leaders of the people (10:1–27)
 - The covenant that was written (10:28–39)

Nehemiah's Reforms (11:1–13:3)

- Jerusalem is repopulated by leaders and by 1 tenth of the people, chosen by lot (11:1–24)
- Cities and villages in Judah and Benjamin are repopulated by the rest of the people (11:25–35)
- The Levites were organized and certain divisions were reassigned from Judah to Benjamin (11:36–12:26)
- The wall was dedicated (12:27–13:3)
 - Levites and priests are gathered and make preparations for the dedication (12:27–30)
 - People are positioned along the wall (12:31–39)
 - Dedication ceremony for the walls celebrated at the temple (12:40–43)
 - The people make free will offerings at the temple (12:44–47)
 - The Book of Moses is read and foreigners are excluded (13:1–3)

An Underwhelming Restoration (13:4–13:31)

- Undermining Zerubbabel's Legacy (13:4–14)

- Eliashib the priest gives Tobiah, his relative by intermarriage, a room in the temple for housing. This room had been given to the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers to store grain offerings, frankincense, holy vessels, tithes of grain, wine and oil (13:4–9)
- The temple workers were neglecting their work, preferring to farm their fields (13:10–14)
- Undermining Ezra’s Legacy (13:15–18)
 - People from Judah break the Sabbath (13:15–18)
- Undermining Nehemiah’s Legacy (13:19–22)
 - People were profaning the walls of Jerusalem by breaking Sabbath (13:19–22)
- Undermining the Restoration (13:23–29)
 - Jews were intermarrying with women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab, sinning just as King Solomon had sinned (13:23 – 27)
 - Even one of the grandsons of Eliashib the high priest had intermarried, becoming the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite (13:28–29)
- Nehemiah asserts that he tried his best (13:30–31)

III. Biblical Theology

1. *An Underwhelming Restoration*

One of the defining features of Ezra-Nehemiah is its description of an entirely underwhelming restoration.

The spiritual and covenantal highpoints of the restoration community include the repopulation of their ancestral land (Ezra 2:1–70; Nehemiah 7:6–73), celebration of Passover (Ezra 6:19–22), the public reading and instruction of the Torah (Nehemiah 8:1–12), the celebration of the Feast of Booths (Nehemiah 8:13–18), prayers of confession (Nehemiah 9:1–38), and a written recommitment to the covenant (Nehemiah 10:1–39). In spite of these seemingly positive descriptions of life in the restored Jerusalem, however, Ezra-Nehemiah presents a restoration that fails to live up to prophetic expectation.

The Temple is rebuilt, but unlike Exodus 40:34–38 and 1 Kings 8:10–11, the glory of the LORD did not fill the holy of holies. Those who were alive when Solomon’s temple still stood, wept when they saw the foundation stone being laid for the second temple (Ezra 3:12–13). Moreover, once completed, the temple immediately suffered neglect (Nehemiah 13:10–14) and the creep of foreign profanity (Nehemiah 13:1–9).

The Torah is retaught, but the people are already caught in a web of intermarriage (Ezra 9–10; Nehemiah 13:23–29), social injustice (Nehemiah 5:1–13), and Sabbath breaking (Nehemiah 13:15–22). One cannot help but anticipate the inevitability of the returnees’ inability to live up to their renewed covenant commitment (Nehemiah 10:1–39).

The walls are rebuilt in the face of considerable opposition. Though this is often preached in our contemporary Christian sermons as a great accomplishment of faith, the very need for walls is, in and of itself, a massive let-down from the prophetic hope that the new Jerusalem would be a city without need of walls (Isaiah 60:18; Zechariah 2:4–5).

Lastly, the LORD’s signet ring (Haggai 2:23), Zerubbabel, the Davidic heir and potential king of the new Jerusalem, disappears from the pages of Ezra without explanation. Rather than a Davidic King on the throne in Jerusalem, the kings who wield power in Ezra-Nehemiah sit on a throne in Babylon.

The total disappointment of restoration necessitates the view toward something greater. Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah do not bring about the prophetic hope. Therefore, the rebuilding of Jerusalem in the 5th Century B.C. is NOT the fulfillment of God’s promises of restoration as delivered by his pre-exilic prophets.

Thus, we wait for something—someone—greater to come.

2. *Davidic King*

Zerubbabel, the great-grandson of King Jehoiachin, is the potential Davidic King. In the opening pages of Ezra, Zerubbabel looks like he might become a new-Solomon, leading in the rebuilding of the temple (see also Haggai 2:23). With the exception of three mentions of him in Nehemiah (7:7; 12:1, 47), however, Zerubbabel disappears from the pages of history after Ezra 5:2.

Indeed, Zerubbabel is overshadowed by the Persian kings Cyrus (Ezra 1:1–4; 5:1–17), Darius (Ezra 6:1–22), Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:1–28; Nehemiah 2:1 – 8) who rule over Jerusalem from Babylon. Zerubbabel’s failure to re-establish the Davidic monarchy is drawn especially explicit in Nehemiah 12:47, where Nehemiah is listed as Zerubbabel’s successor.

Compare the failure of the House of David to re-emerge with the explicit pre-exilic and exilic prophetic expectation that the Davidic monarchy would, indeed, be re-established:

Isaiah 9:1–7 (ESV)

¹ But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. ² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. ³ You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. ⁴ For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ **Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.**

Isaiah 11:1–5 (ESV)

¹ **There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.** ² And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. ³ And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,

and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

Isaiah 16:3–5 (ESV)

³ “Give counsel; grant justice; make your shade like night at the height of noon; shelter the outcasts; do not reveal the fugitive; ⁴ let the outcasts of Moab sojourn among you; be a shelter to them from the destroyer. When the oppressor is no more, and destruction has ceased, and he who tramples underfoot has vanished from the land, ⁵ **then a throne will be established in steadfast love, and on it will sit in faithfulness in the tent of David one who judges and seeks justice and is swift to do righteousness.**”

Isaiah 55:1–5 (ESV)

¹ “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. ³ Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and **I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.** ⁴ **Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.** ⁵ Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

Jeremiah 23:1–8 (ESV)

¹ “Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!” declares the Lord. ² Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: “You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the Lord. ³ Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴ I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the Lord. ⁵ **“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.** ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. **And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’** ⁷ “Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when they shall no longer say, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ ⁸ but ‘As the Lord lives who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel

out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ Then they shall dwell in their own land.”

Jeremiah 30:1–9 (ESV)

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ² “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. ³ For behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the Lord, and I will bring them back to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall take possession of it.” ⁴ These are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah: ⁵ “Thus says the Lord: We have heard a cry of panic, of terror, and no peace. ⁶ Ask now, and see, can a man bear a child? Why then do I see every man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor? Why has every face turned pale? ⁷ Alas! That day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be saved out of it. ⁸ **“And it shall come to pass in that day, declares the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off your neck, and I will burst your bonds, and foreigners shall no more make a servant of him. ⁹ But they shall serve the Lord their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.**

Jeremiah 33:14–26 (ESV)

¹⁴ “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ **In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.** ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’ ¹⁷ **“For thus says the Lord: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel,** ¹⁸ and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever.” ¹⁹ **The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ²⁰ “Thus says the Lord: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, ²¹ then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers. ²² As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me.” ²³ The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ²⁴ “Have you not observed that these people are saying, ‘The Lord has rejected the two clans that he chose?’ Thus they have despised my people so that they are no longer a nation in their sight. ²⁵ Thus says the Lord: If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed order of heaven and earth, ²⁶ then I will reject the offspring of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one**

of his offspring to rule over the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.”

Ezekiel 34:20–24 (ESV)

²⁰ “Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²¹ Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, ²² I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. ²³ **And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.** ²⁴ **And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the Lord; I have spoken.**

Ezekiel 37:24–28 (ESV)

²⁴ **“My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd.** They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. ²⁵ They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. **They and their children and their children’s children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever.** ²⁶ I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. ²⁷ My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ²⁸ Then the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.”

Hosea 3:1–5 (ESV)

¹ And the Lord said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.” ² So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. ³ And I said to her, “You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.” ⁴ **For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods.** ⁵ **Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days.**

Amos 9:11–15 (ESV)

¹¹ **“In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old,** ¹² **that they**

may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name,” declares the Lord who does this. ¹³ “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. ¹⁴ I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit. ¹⁵ I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them,” says the Lord your God.

Micah 5:1–5 (ESV)

¹ Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. ² **But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.** ³ **Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.** ⁴ **And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.** ⁵ **And he shall be their peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men;**

The failure of Zerubbabel to meet these prophetic expectations is, perhaps, the greatest surprise and disappointment in Ezra-Nehemiah. The effect of this is the necessary conclusion that the restoration of Zerubbabel-Ezra-Nehemiah did NOT fulfill the prophetic promise of restoration after exile. Therefore, the restoration is yet to come, and will only come with the coming of the promised Davidic king.

As Christians, we recognize Jesus of Nazareth as this promised Davidic King. The coming of the King, however, did not bring with it the rest of the promised restoration, which we will explore next. Therefore, even for us, the promised restoration is yet to come, and will only come with the return of the promised Davidic king, Jesus Christ, who will bring the kingdom to its promised consummation.

3. *New Jerusalem/Zion*

The pre-exilic prophets foretold of coming judgment against Jerusalem. However, they also prophesied a spectacular restoration of Jerusalem (which is also referred to as Zion, the mountain on which Jerusalem is built). Compare the prophetic expectation with the reality described in Ezra-Nehemiah:

Isaiah 2:1–4 (ESV)

¹ The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ² **It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it,** ³ **and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.** ⁴ **He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.**

Isaiah 4:2–6 (ESV)

² In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. ³ **And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem,** ⁴ **when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning.** ⁵ **Then the Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy.** ⁶ **There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.**

Isaiah 11:6–9 (ESV)

⁶ The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. ⁹ **They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.**

Isaiah 24:21–23 (ESV)

²¹ On that day the Lord will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth. ²² They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished. ²³ Then the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, **for the Lord of hosts reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and his glory will be before his elders.**

Isaiah 25:6–9 (ESV)

⁶ On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. ⁷ And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. ⁸ He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. ⁹ It will be said on that day, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

Isaiah 30:18–26 (ESV)

¹⁸ Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him. ¹⁹ **For a people shall dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as he hears it, he answers you.** ²⁰ And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. ²¹ And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left. ²² Then you will defile your carved idols overlaid with silver and your gold-plated metal images. You will scatter them as unclean things. You will say to them, “Be gone!” ²³ And he will give rain for the seed with which you sow the ground, and bread, the produce of the ground, which will be rich and plenteous. In that day your livestock will graze in large pastures, ²⁴ and the oxen and the donkeys that work the ground will eat seasoned fodder, which has been winnowed with shovel and fork. ²⁵ And on every lofty mountain and every high hill there will be brooks running with water, in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. ²⁶ Moreover, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when the Lord binds up the brokenness of his people, and heals the wounds inflicted by his blow.

Isaiah 27:1–13 (ESV)

¹ In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea. ² **In that day, “A pleasant vineyard, sing of it! ³ I, the Lord, am its keeper; every moment I water it. Lest anyone punish it, I keep it night and day; ⁴ I have no wrath. Would that I had thorns and briers to battle! I would march against them, I would burn them up together. ⁵ Or let them lay hold of my protection, let them make peace with me, let them make peace with me.”** ⁶ In

days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit. ⁷ Has he struck them as he struck those who struck them? Or have they been slain as their slayers were slain? ⁸ Measure by measure, by exile you contended with them; he removed them with his fierce breath in the day of the east wind. ⁹ Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be atoned for, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no Asherim or incense altars will remain standing. ¹⁰ For the fortified city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness; there the calf grazes; there it lies down and strips its branches. ¹¹ When its boughs are dry, they are broken; women come and make a fire of them. For this is a people without discernment; therefore he who made them will not have compassion on them; he who formed them will show them no favor. ¹² In that day from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt the Lord will thresh out the grain, and you will be gleaned one by one, O people of Israel. ¹³ **And in that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.**

Isaiah 33:17–22 (ESV)

¹⁷ Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty; they will see a land that stretches afar. ¹⁸ Your heart will muse on the terror: “Where is he who counted, where is he who weighed the tribute? Where is he who counted the towers?” ¹⁹ You will see no more the insolent people, the people of an obscure speech that you cannot comprehend, stammering in a tongue that you cannot understand. ²⁰ **Behold Zion, the city of our appointed feasts! Your eyes will see Jerusalem, an untroubled habitation, an immovable tent, whose stakes will never be plucked up, nor will any of its cords be broken.** ²¹ **But there the Lord in majesty will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams, where no galley with oars can go, nor majestic ship can pass.** ²² **For the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our king; he will save us.**

Isaiah 35:1–10 (ESV)

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; ² it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. ³ Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴ Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.” ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; ⁷ the burning sand shall

become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸ And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. ⁹ No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. **¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**

Isaiah 40:9–11 (ESV)

⁹ Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” ¹⁰ Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹ He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

Isaiah 46:12–13 (ESV)

¹² “Listen to me, you stubborn of heart, you who are far from righteousness: ¹³ I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off, and my salvation will not delay; **I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.”**

Isaiah 51:1–23 (ESV)

¹ “Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the Lord: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. ² Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him. **³ For the Lord comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.** ⁴ “Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation; for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples. ⁵ My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait. ⁶ Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed. ⁷ “Listen to me, you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings. ⁸ For the moth will eat them up like a garment,

and the worm will eat them like wool, but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations.”⁹ Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon?¹⁰ Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over?¹¹ **And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**¹² “I, I am he who comforts you; who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass,¹³ and have forgotten the Lord, your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and you fear continually all the day because of the wrath of the oppressor, when he sets himself to destroy? And where is the wrath of the oppressor?¹⁴ He who is bowed down shall speedily be released; he shall not die and go down to the pit, neither shall his bread be lacking.¹⁵ I am the Lord your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the Lord of hosts is his name.¹⁶ And I have put my words in your mouth and covered you in the shadow of my hand, establishing the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth, and saying to Zion, ‘You are my people.’ ”¹⁷ **Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering.**¹⁸ There is none to guide her among all the sons she has borne; there is none to take her by the hand among all the sons she has brought up.¹⁹ These two things have happened to you— who will console you?— devastation and destruction, famine and sword; who will comfort you?²⁰ Your sons have fainted; they lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a net; they are full of the wrath of the Lord, the rebuke of your God.²¹ Therefore hear this, you who are afflicted, who are drunk, but not with wine:²² Thus says your Lord, the Lord, your God who pleads the cause of his people: “Behold, I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering; the bowl of my wrath you shall drink no more;²³ and I will put it into the hand of your tormentors, who have said to you, ‘Bow down, that we may pass over’; and you have made your back like the ground and like the street for them to pass over.”

Isaiah 52:1–10 (ESV)

¹ Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean. ² Shake yourself from the dust and arise; be seated, O Jerusalem; loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion. ³ For thus says the Lord: “You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money.” ⁴ For thus says the Lord God: “My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them for nothing. ⁵ Now therefore what have I here,” declares the Lord, “seeing that my people are taken away for nothing? Their rulers wail,” declares the Lord, “and continually all the

day my name is despised. ⁶ Therefore my people shall know my name. Therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here I am.” ⁷ **How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”** ⁸ The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion. ⁹ Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰ The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Isaiah 59:20–21 (ESV)

²⁰ **“And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” declares the Lord.** ²¹ “And as for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the Lord: “My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children’s offspring,” says the Lord, “from this time forth and forevermore.”

Isaiah 60:1–62:12 (ESV)

¹ Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. ² For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. ³ And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. ⁴ Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. ⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. ⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord. ⁷ All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you; the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on my altar, and I will beautify my beautiful house. ⁸ Who are these that fly like a cloud, and like doves to their windows? ⁹ For the coastlands shall hope for me, the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your children from afar, their silver and gold with them, for the name of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel, because he has made you beautiful. ¹⁰ Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in my wrath I struck you, but in my favor I have had mercy on you. ¹¹ Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut, that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession. ¹² For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste. ¹³ The glory

of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the plane, and the pine, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious. ¹⁴ **The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low to you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.** ¹⁵ **Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through, I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age.** ¹⁶ You shall suck the milk of nations; you shall nurse at the breast of kings; and you shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. ¹⁷ Instead of bronze I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver; instead of wood, bronze, instead of stones, iron. I will make your overseers peace and your taskmasters righteousness. ¹⁸ Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise. ¹⁹ The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. ²⁰ Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. ²¹ Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified. ²² The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the Lord; in its time I will hasten it.

^{61:1} The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. ⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁵ Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks; foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers; ⁶ but you shall be called the priests of the Lord; they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God; you shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory you shall boast. ⁷ Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy. ⁸ For I the Lord love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹ Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the Lord has blessed. ¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a

beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

^{62:1} For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. ² The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. ³ You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. ⁴ You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. ⁵ For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. ⁶ On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest, ⁷ and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth. ⁸ The Lord has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: "I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink your wine for which you have labored; ⁹ but those who garner it shall eat it and praise the Lord, and those who gather it shall drink it in the courts of my sanctuary." ¹⁰ Go through, go through the gates; prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway; clear it of stones; lift up a signal over the peoples. **¹¹ Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him."** ¹² And they shall be called The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord; and you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.

Jeremiah 30:17–22 (ESV)

¹⁷ For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, declares the Lord, because they have called you an outcast: 'It is Zion, for whom no one cares!' ¹⁸ **"Thus says the Lord: Behold, I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob and have compassion on his dwellings; the city shall be rebuilt on its mound, and the palace shall stand where it used to be.** ¹⁹ **Out of them shall come songs of thanksgiving, and the voices of those who celebrate.** I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will make them honored, and they shall not be small. ²⁰ Their children shall be as they were of old, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all who oppress them. ²¹ Their prince shall be one of themselves; their ruler shall come out from their midst; I will make him draw near, and he shall approach me, for who would dare of himself to approach me? declares the Lord. ²² And you shall be my people, and I will be your God."

Jeremiah 31:1–14 (ESV)

¹ “At that time, declares the Lord, I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they shall be my people.” ² Thus says the Lord: “The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest, ³ the Lord appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. ⁴ **Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel! Again you shall adorn yourself with tambourines and shall go forth in the dance of the merrymakers.** ⁵ **Again you shall plant vineyards on the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant and shall enjoy the fruit.** ⁶ **For there shall be a day when watchmen will call in the hill country of Ephraim: ‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God.’ ”** ⁷ For thus says the Lord: “Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘O Lord, save your people, the remnant of Israel.’” ⁸ Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the pregnant woman and she who is in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. ⁹ With weeping they shall come, and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back, I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble, for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. ¹⁰ “Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.’” ¹¹ For the Lord has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. ¹² **They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall be like a watered garden, and they shall languish no more.** ¹³ **Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.** ¹⁴ **I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, declares the Lord.”**

Jeremiah 32:36–44 (ESV)

³⁶ “Now therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, ‘It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword, by famine, and by pestilence’: ³⁷ **Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety.** ³⁸ **And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.** ³⁹ **I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them.** ⁴⁰ I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. ⁴¹ I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them

in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul. ⁴² “For thus says the Lord: Just as I have brought all this great disaster upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the good that I promise them. ⁴³ Fields shall be bought in this land of which you are saying, ‘It is a desolation, without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.’ ⁴⁴ **Fields shall be bought for money, and deeds shall be signed and sealed and witnessed, in the land of Benjamin, in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephelah, and in the cities of the Negeb; for I will restore their fortunes, declares the Lord.**”

Jeremiah 33:10–13 (ESV)

¹⁰ “Thus says the Lord: In this place of which you say, ‘It is a waste without man or beast,’ in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man or inhabitant or beast, there shall be heard again ¹¹ the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank offerings to the house of the Lord: “ ‘Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!’ For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the Lord. ¹² “Thus says the Lord of hosts: In this place that is waste, without man or beast, and in all of its cities, there shall again be habitations of shepherds resting their flocks. ¹³ In the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephelah, and in the cities of the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin, the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, flocks shall again pass under the hands of the one who counts them, says the Lord.

Joel 3:16–21 (ESV)

¹⁶ The Lord roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the Lord is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel. ¹⁷ “So you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall never again pass through it. ¹⁸ “And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water; and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord and water the Valley of Shittim. ¹⁹ “Egypt shall become a desolation and Edom a desolate wilderness, for the violence done to the people of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. ²⁰ **But Judah shall be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem to all generations.** ²¹ **I will avenge their blood, blood I have not avenged, for the Lord dwells in Zion.**”

Micah 4:1–8 (ESV)

¹ It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, ² and many nations shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” **For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.** ³ He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; ⁴ but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. ⁵ For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever. ⁶ In that day, declares the Lord, I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away and those whom I have afflicted; ⁷ and the lame I will make the remnant, and those who were cast off, a strong nation; **and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and forevermore.** ⁸ And you, O tower of the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, the former dominion shall come, kingship for the daughter of Jerusalem.

Zephaniah 3:14–20 (ESV)

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! ¹⁵ The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. ¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: “Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. ¹⁷ The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.” ¹⁸ I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach. ¹⁹ Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. ²⁰ At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,” says the Lord.

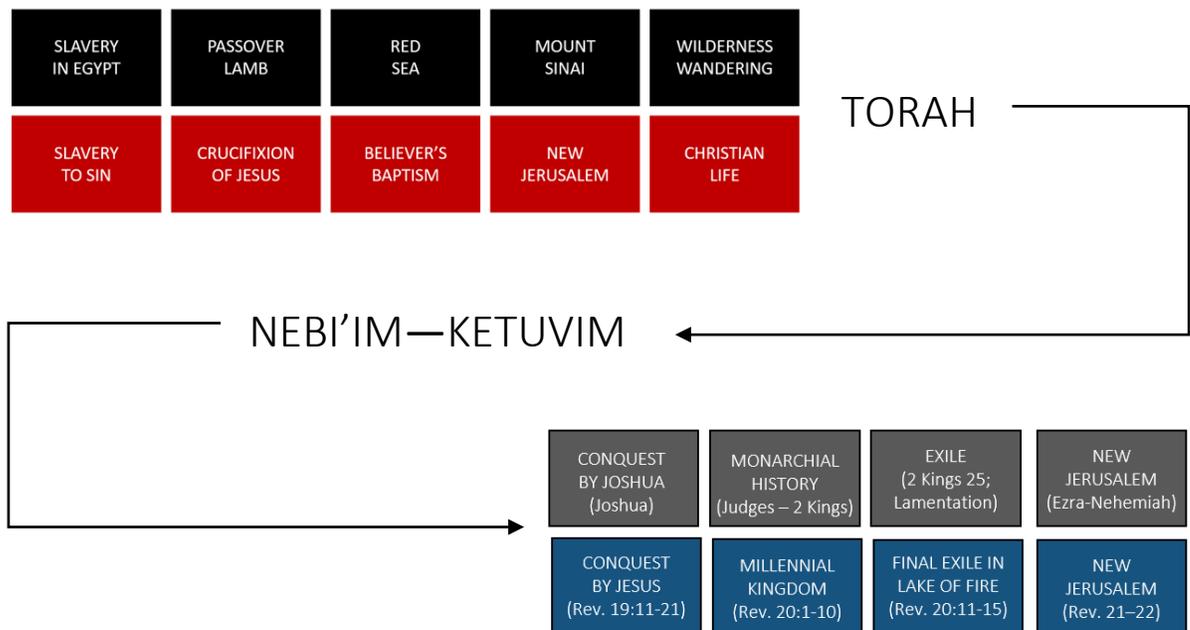
Although this is an incomplete list of prophetic expectations about the restoration of the new Jerusalem (Zion), the idea is clear. On the other side of judgment and exile is a new era of peace, prosperity, and righteousness. Some of the visions include a promise of an international ingathering, immortality, and a return to Edenic environmental realities.

What do we do with the disconnect between the prophetic expectation and the reality as described by Ezra-Nehemiah? We really have two options:

1. Disregard the prophetic expectation by recognizing the prophetic language to be symbolic and not literal. Thus, the reality as presented by Ezra-Nehemiah can be understood as the direct fulfillment of the prophetic restoration passages.
2. Recognize that the restoration of the remnant under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah falls short of the prophetic promise. Thus, the prophetic hope is yet to be fulfilled in our historic future. Under this option, Ezra-Nehemiah is a partial and typological fulfillment of the prophetic expectation. That is, the restoration of Jerusalem as described by Ezra-Nehemiah is a picture of a future restoration yet to come.

I will argue for the latter of these two options. Ezra-Nehemiah falls so far short of the prophetic hope that we must look to a future era when the prophetic promises are fulfilled. No such era has yet occurred, which means that this ultimate restoration is yet future, even for us.

Although underwhelming, Ezra-Nehemiah serve a crucial canonical function, bringing to completion the gospel macro-typology of the Old Testament.



On the macro-typological level, then, Ezra-Nehemiah is fulfilled by the apocalyptic vision of Revelation 21—22. Note the beginning of these chapters:

Revelation 21:1–5 (ESV)

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² **And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.** ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” ⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true” . . .

4. *Historical Reliability*

More than any other book in the Bible, Ezra-Nehemiah is an anthology of historical records, creatively sown together to tell a story about the past. The book is a series of primary documents assembled into its current form as an anthology depicting the realities of the restoration community. These documents include first-person memoirs, letters, census data, and additional lists.

This approach creates a deep historicity that is both ascetically pleasing and trustworthy. The editors of the final form of Ezra-Nehemiah even preserved statistically conflicting documents, such as the census data from Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7. A careful comparison of these two lists showcases a generally identical list with notable discrepancies.

At first this can be disconcerting to us. After all, we have been disciplined to affirm the inerrancy and total harmony of the Scriptures. However, the final editors of Ezra-Nehemiah were comfortable preserving both lists in the same document precisely because the differences between the two lists affirms the historicity of both lists! Confronted with both lists, the editors decided to use both of them, while preserving their respective distinctiveness, because the general content of each list affirms the other. In fact, the differences support their authenticity precisely because they are different. If they were identical, it is more likely for them to be manufactured or altered.

These lists support the belief that Ezra-Nehemiah is reporting historical events about the restoration community in Jerusalem in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C.

Ezra 2:1–70	Nehemiah 7:6–73
<p>¹ Now these were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried captive to Babylonia.</p> <p>They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town. ² They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah.</p> <p>The number of the men of the people of Israel: ³ the sons of Parosh, 2,172.</p> <p>⁴ The sons of Shephatiah, 372.</p> <p>⁵ The sons of Arah, 775.</p> <p>⁶ The sons of Pahath-moab, namely the sons of Jeshua and Joab, 2,812.</p> <p>⁷ The sons of Elam, 1,254.</p> <p>⁸ The sons of Zattu, 945.</p> <p>⁹ The sons of Zaccai, 760.</p> <p>¹⁰ The sons of Bani, 642.</p> <p>¹¹ The sons of Bebai, 623.</p> <p>¹² The sons of Azgad, 1,222.</p> <p>¹³ The sons of Adonikam, 666.</p> <p>¹⁴ The sons of Bigvai, 2,056.</p> <p>¹⁵ The sons of Adin, 454.</p> <p>¹⁶ The sons of Ater, namely of Hezekiah, 98.</p>	<p>⁶ These were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried into exile.</p> <p>They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his town. ⁷ They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah.</p> <p>The number of the men of the people of Israel: ⁸ the sons of Parosh, 2,172.</p> <p>⁹ The sons of Shephatiah, 372.</p> <p>¹⁰ The sons of Arah, 652.</p> <p>¹¹ The sons of Pahath-moab, namely the sons of Jeshua and Joab, 2,818.</p> <p>¹² The sons of Elam, 1,254.</p> <p>¹³ The sons of Zattu, 845.</p> <p>¹⁴ The sons of Zaccai, 760.</p> <p>¹⁵ The sons of Binnui, 648.</p> <p>¹⁶ The sons of Bebai, 628.</p> <p>¹⁷ The sons of Azgad, 2,322.</p> <p>¹⁸ The sons of Adonikam, 667.</p> <p>¹⁹ The sons of Bigvai, 2,067.</p> <p>²⁰ The sons of Adin, 655.</p> <p>²¹ The sons of Ater, namely of Hezekiah, 98.</p>

<p>¹⁷ The sons of Bezai, 323.</p> <p>¹⁸ The sons of Jorah, 112.</p> <p>¹⁹ The sons of Hashum, 223.</p> <p>²⁰ The sons of Gibbar, 95.</p> <p>²¹ The sons of Bethlehem, 123. ²² The men of Netophah, 56.</p> <p>²³ The men of Anathoth, 128.</p> <p>²⁴ The sons of Azmaveth, 42.</p> <p>²⁵ The sons of Kiriath-arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, 743.</p> <p>²⁶ The sons of Ramah and Geba, 621.</p> <p>²⁷ The men of Michmas, 122.</p> <p>²⁸ The men of Bethel and Ai, 123.</p> <p>²⁹ The sons of Nebo, 52.</p> <p>³⁰ The sons of Magbish, 156.</p> <p>³¹ The sons of the other Elam, 1,254.</p> <p>³² The sons of Harim, 320.</p> <p>³³ The sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, 725.</p> <p>³⁴ The sons of Jericho, 345.</p> <p>³⁵ The sons of Senaah, 3,630.</p> <p>³⁶ The priests: the sons of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, 973.</p> <p>³⁷ The sons of Immer, 1,052.</p>	<p>²² The sons of Hashum, 328.</p> <p>²³ The sons of Bezai, 324.</p> <p>²⁴ The sons of Hariph, 112.</p> <p>²⁵ The sons of Gibeon, 95.</p> <p>²⁶ The men of Bethlehem and Netophah, 188.</p> <p>²⁷ The men of Anathoth, 128.</p> <p>²⁸ The men of Beth-azmaveth, 42.</p> <p>²⁹ The men of Kiriath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, 743.</p> <p>³⁰ The men of Ramah and Geba, 621.</p> <p>³¹ The men of Michmas, 122.</p> <p>³² The men of Bethel and Ai, 123.</p> <p>³³ The men of the other Nebo, 52.</p> <p>³⁴ The sons of the other Elam, 1,254.</p> <p>³⁵ The sons of Harim, 320.</p> <p>³⁶ The sons of Jericho, 345.</p> <p>³⁷ The sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, 721.</p> <p>³⁸ The sons of Senaah, 3,930.</p> <p>³⁹ The priests: the sons of Jedaiah, namely the house of Jeshua, 973.</p> <p>⁴⁰ The sons of Immer, 1,052.</p>
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³⁸ The sons of Pashhur, 1,247.

³⁹ The sons of Harim, 1,017.

⁴⁰ The Levites: the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the sons of Hodaviah, 74.

⁴¹ The singers: the sons of Asaph, 128.

⁴² The sons of the gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, and the sons of Shobai, in all 139.

⁴³ The temple servants: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth, ⁴⁴ the sons of Keros, the sons of Siaha, the sons of Padon, ⁴⁵ the sons of Lebanah, the sons of Hagabah,

the sons of Akkub, ⁴⁶ the sons of Hagab,

the sons of Shamlai, the sons of Hanan, ⁴⁷ the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, the sons of Reaiah, ⁴⁸ the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda, the sons of Gazzam, ⁴⁹ the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah, the sons of Besai,

⁵⁰ the sons of Asnah,

the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephisim,

⁵¹ the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur, ⁵² the sons of Bazlith, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha, ⁵³ the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Temah, ⁵⁴ the sons of Nezhiah, and the sons of Hatipha.

⁵⁵ The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of Sotai, the sons of Hassophereth, the sons of Perida, ⁵⁶ the sons of Jaalah, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel, ⁵⁷ the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil,

⁴¹ The sons of Pashhur, 1,247.

⁴² The sons of Harim, 1,017.

⁴³ The Levites: the sons of Jeshua, namely of Kadmiel of the sons of Hodevah, 74.

⁴⁴ The singers: the sons of Asaph, 148.

⁴⁵ The gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, the sons of Shobai, 138.

⁴⁶ The temple servants: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth, ⁴⁷ the sons of Keros, the sons of Sia, the sons of Padon, ⁴⁸ the sons of Lebana, the sons of Hagaba,

the sons of Shalmal, ⁴⁹ the sons of Hanan, the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, ⁵⁰ the sons of Reaiah, the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda, ⁵¹ the sons of Gazzam, the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah, ⁵² the sons of Besai,

the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephushesim,

⁵³ the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur, ⁵⁴ the sons of Bazlith, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha, ⁵⁵ the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Temah, ⁵⁶ the sons of Nezhiah, the sons of Hatipha.

⁵⁷ The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of Sotai, the sons of Sophereth, the sons of Perida, ⁵⁸ the sons of Jaala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel, ⁵⁹ the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the

<p>the sons of Pochereth-hazzebaim, and the sons of Ami.</p> <p>⁵⁸ All the temple servants and the sons of Solomon's servants were 392.</p> <p>⁵⁹ The following were those who came up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addan, and Immer, though they could not prove their fathers' houses or their descent, whether they belonged to Israel: ⁶⁰ the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, and the sons of Nekoda, ⁶¹ 52.</p> <p>⁶¹ Also, of the sons of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, and the sons of Barzillai (who had taken a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name). ⁶² These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but they were not found there, and so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean.</p> <p>⁶³ The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food, until there should be a priest to consult Urim and Thummim.</p> <p>⁶⁴ The whole assembly together was 42,360, ⁶⁵ besides their male and female servants, of whom there were 7,337, and they had 200 male and female singers.</p> <p>⁶⁶ Their horses were 736, their mules were 245, ⁶⁷ their camels were 435, and their donkeys were 6,720.</p> <p>⁶⁸ Some of the heads of families, when they came to the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem, made freewill offerings for the house of God, to erect it on its site. ⁶⁹ According to their ability they gave to the treasury of the work 61,000 darics of gold, 5,000 minas of silver, and 100 priests' garments.</p>	<p>sons of Pochereth-hazzebaim, the sons of Amon.</p> <p>⁶⁰ All the temple servants and the sons of Solomon's servants were 392.</p> <p>⁶¹ The following were those who came up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but they could not prove their fathers' houses nor their descent, whether they belonged to Israel: ⁶² the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, the sons of Nekoda, ⁶³ 42.</p> <p>⁶³ Also, of the priests: the sons of Hobaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai (who had taken a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by their name). ⁶⁴ These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but it was not found there, so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean.</p> <p>⁶⁵ The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food until a priest with Urim and Thummim should arise.</p> <p>⁶⁶ The whole assembly together was 42,360, ⁶⁷ besides their male and female servants, of whom there were 7,337. And they had 245 singers, male and female.</p> <p>⁶⁸ Their horses were 736, their mules 245, ⁶⁹ their camels 435, and their donkeys 6,720.</p> <p>⁷⁰ Now some of the heads of fathers' houses gave to the work. The governor gave to the treasury 1,000 darics of gold, 50 basins, 30 priests' garments and 500 minas of silver. ⁷¹ And some of the heads of fathers' houses gave into the treasury of the work 20,000 darics of gold and 2,200 minas of silver. ⁷² And what the rest</p>
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<p>⁷⁰ Now the priests, the Levites, some of the people, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants lived in their towns, and all the rest of Israel in their towns.</p>	<p>of the people gave was 20,000 darics of gold, 2,000 minas of silver, and 67 priests' garments.</p> <p>⁷³ So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants, and all Israel, lived in their towns.</p> <p>And when the seventh month had come, the people of Israel were in their towns.</p>
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