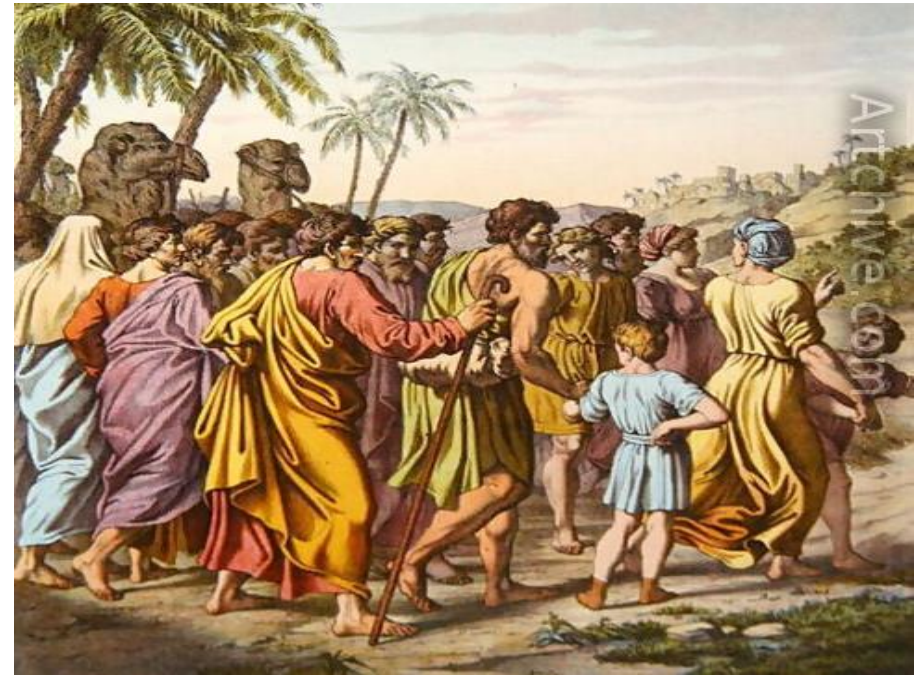


Ezra:

Working together in God's service



Class 2:
We must learn to
work together now!



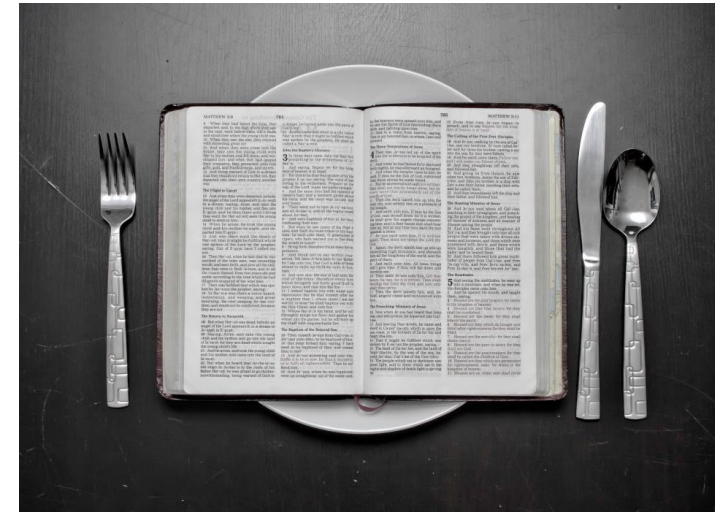
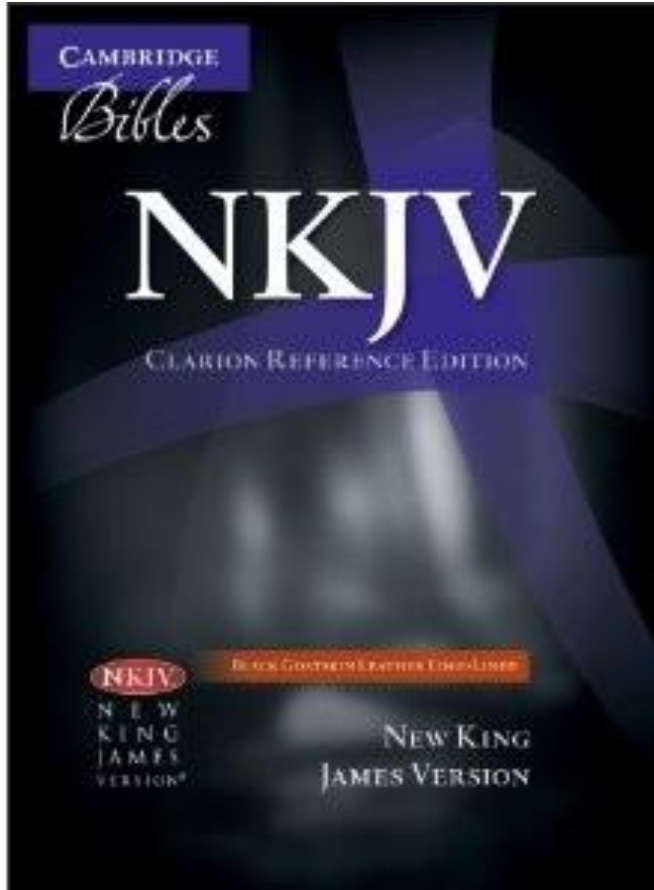
**We're still getting use
to Australian food!**



**We're still getting
use to Australian food**



Hopefully you won't
mind eating our
spiritual meals....



Most of my
Bible verses are
from the NKJV

At least I'm
not using a
1611 KJV
Authorized
Version!



He LORD is * my shep-
heard, I shall not want.
2 He maketh me to lie
downe in † greene pa-
stures: he leadeth mee be-
side the † still waters.
3 He restoreth my soule: he leadeth
me in the pathes of righteousness, for
his names sake.
4 Bea though I walke through the
valley of the shadowe of death,* I will
feare no euill: for thou art with me, thy
rod and thy staffe, they comfort me.

ChristadelphianBibleTalks.com

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Title Ezra: Working together in Ecclesial Life

Speaker Jim Styles

Location Cambridge

Year 2022

Description 4 classes and an exhort on the book of Ezra

Attachments

Ext

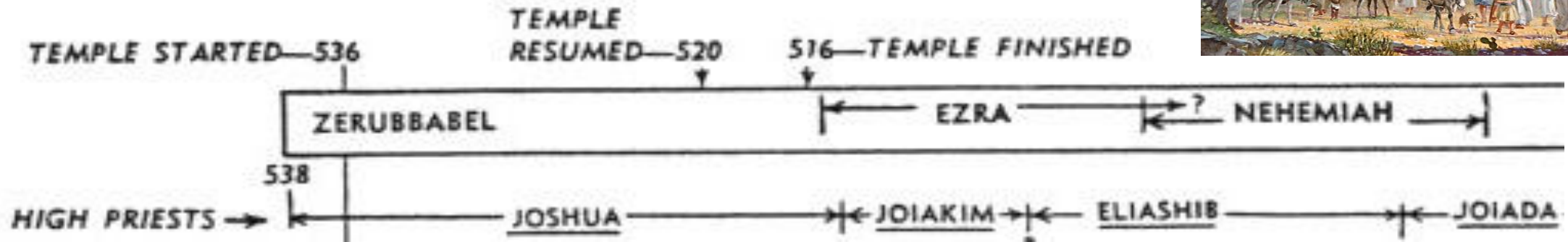
Size

Attachment 1 Ezra Cambridge 2022 Slides

pdf

5.73 MB

Sequence of Events



- 1) **Cyrus allows exiles to return** with Jeshua & Zerubbabel (Ezra 1-2)
- 2) **Rebuilding the temple**, but then the work stops (Ezra 3-4)
- 3) **Zechariah & Haggai** motivate the finishing of the temple (Ezra 5-6)
- 4) **Ezra Returns** with more exiles (Ezra 7-10)
- 5) **God uses Haman** to convince the Jews to return home (Esther)
- 6) **Nehemiah builds the walls** of Jerusalem
- 7) **Malachi**, then time between the Testaments

2 Sections in the Book of Ezra

Chapters 1-6 Return & building the temple

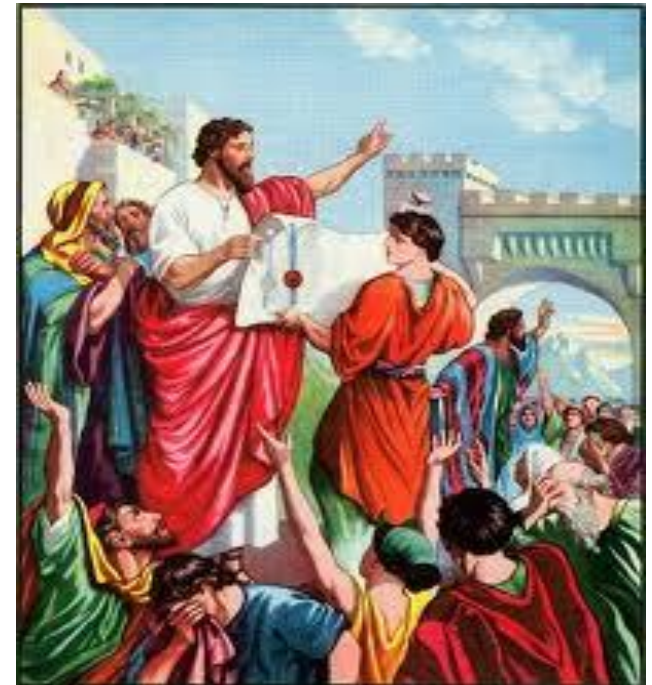
- Continue 2 Chronicles 36:23
- initial return from captivity
- rebuilding of the temple
- Ezra is still in Babylon (7:1)



Chapters 7-10 involve Ezra himself

- Ezra returns to work in the temple
- Solving the marriage with unbelievers problem

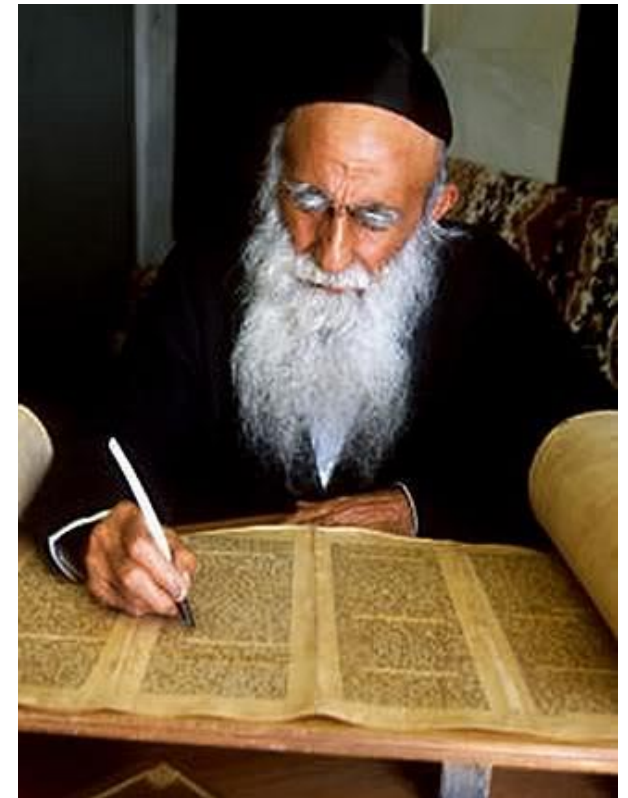
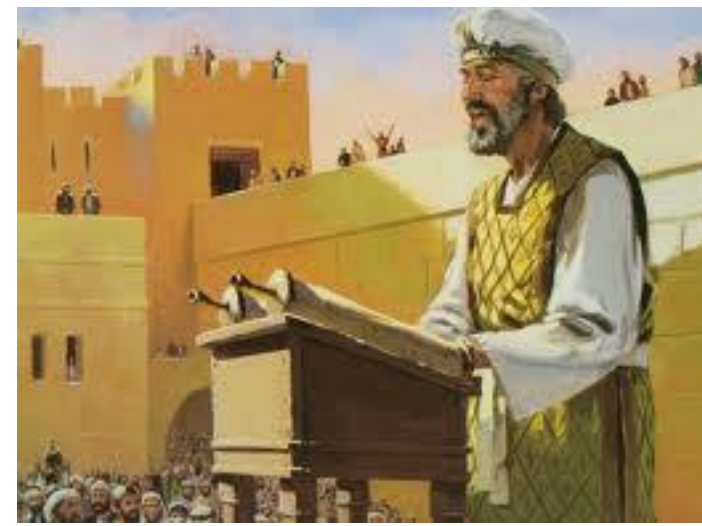
Ezra probably returned as soon
as the temple was finished



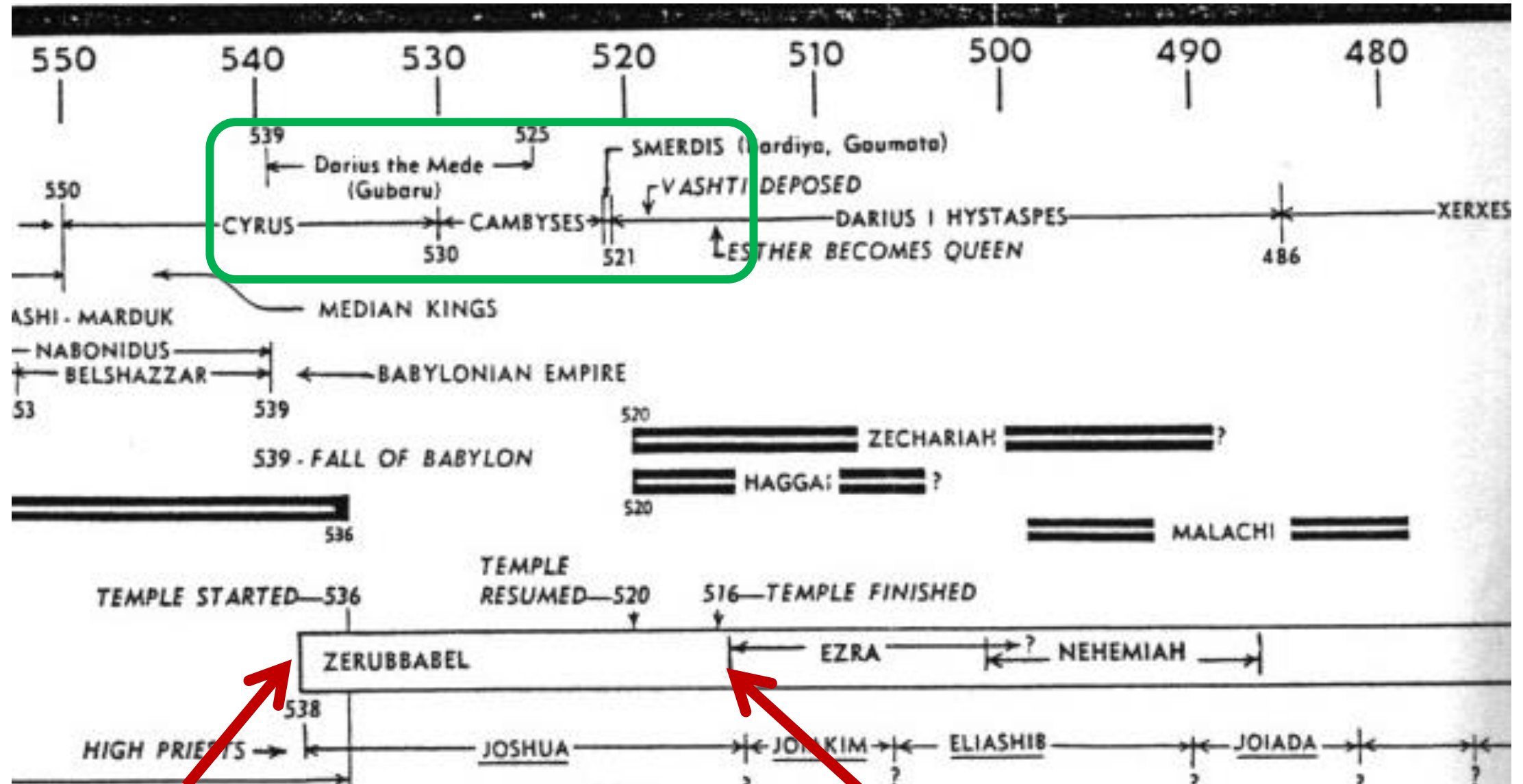
Author of the Book of Ezra

- **Ezra:** note his use of “I”, “me” (8:15, etc.)
- Earlier information was probably compiled later by Ezra
- Clear sections of Hebrew & Aramaic:
 - **Hebrew: 1:1 – 4:7**
 - **Aramaic: 4:8 – 6:18**
 - **Hebrew: 6:19 – 7:11**
 - **Aramaic: 7:12-26**
 - **Hebrew: 7:27 – end**

Probably switches because
book was compiled by Ezra



Time Line for Ezra



Book of Ezra starts here

Ezra returns here

Darius the Mede

Daniel 5:30-31

30 That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. 31 And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

Daniel 6:1-2

1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; 2 and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one. *[then Daniel in lions' den]*

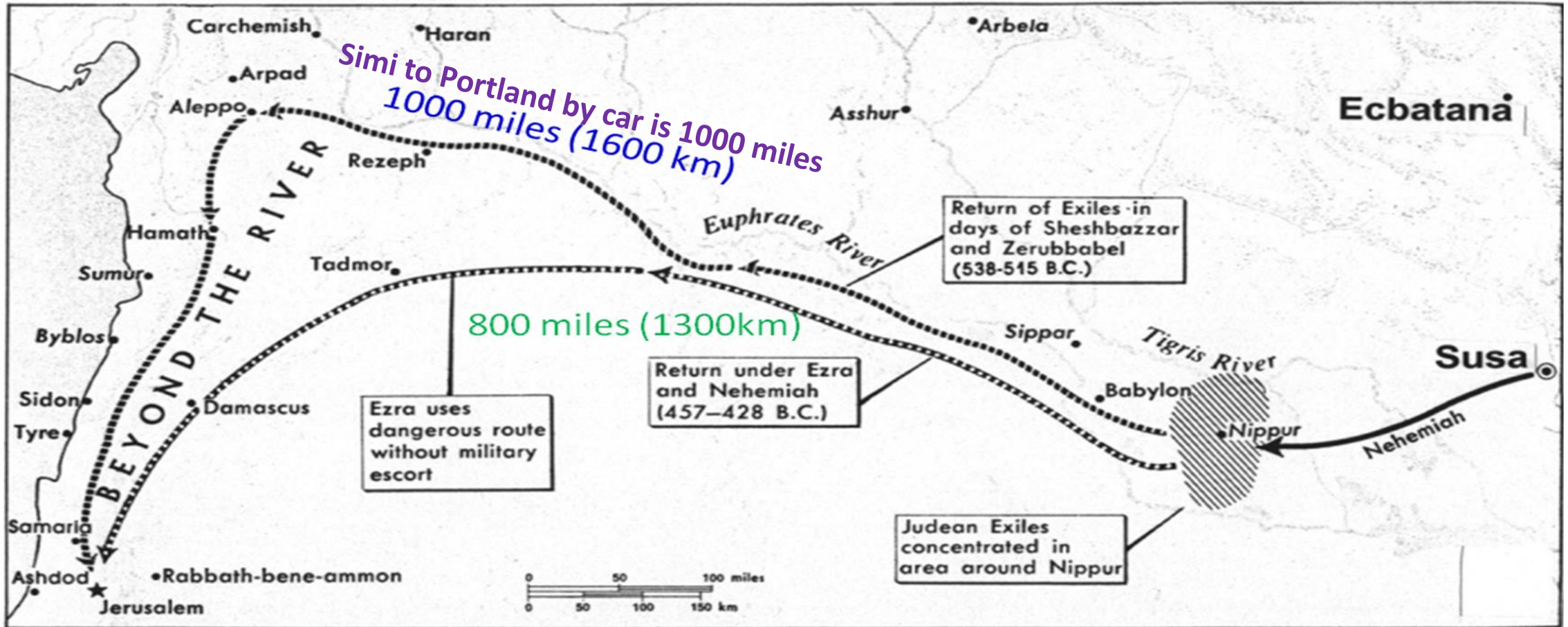
Daniel 6:28

28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

This was the beginning of the Medo-Persian kingdom.

After 2 years Darius died. Cyrus' daughter had married Darius' son, so Cyrus took over the kingdom

Return of the Exiles



Jeshua & Zerubbabel took the long, safe route (1000 miles) Ezra took the short, risky route

Accounting those who returned

Ezra 2:1

1 Now these are the people of the province who came back from the captivity, of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away to Babylon, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, **everyone to his own city.**

v. 2 **Leaders**

Vs. 3-35 the **People**

Vs. 36-39 **Priests**

v. 40 **Levites**

v. 41 **Singers**

v. 42 **Gatekeepers**

Vs. 43-58 **Temple servants & sons of Solomon's servants**

Vs. 59-63 **Unknowns** (could not verify their ancestry)

They tried to get an accurate record

Some from All 12 Tribes Returned

Ezra 6:16-17 Sin offering at dedication of temple was 12 male goats, *according to the number the tribes of Israel*

Ezra 8:35 Exiles returning with Ezra offered *“12 bulls for all Israel”* and 12 male goats for sin offering.

Mat 10:6; 15:24 Jesus sent to *“lost sheep of house of Israel”*

Appears that some from 10 tribes moved south early on and survived the captivity (Josh 19:9; 1 Kg 12:17; 1 Chr 9:3; 2 Chr 11:3, 13-16; 15:9)

British Israelites & Mormons misunderstand this



Summary of those who Returned

Notice
the low
Levite
number!

- People (vs 2-35) 24,194
- Priests (vs 36-39) 4,289
- Levites (v.40) 74
- Singers (v. 41) 128
- Gatekeepers (v. 42) 139
- Temple Servants & Solomon's servants (vs 43-58) 392

Total 29,216

29,216 may
only include
Judah &
Benjamin

Ezra & Neh 7 both list the grand total as 42,360

Much of Ezra 2 is also in Neh 7 after the wall is finished

Judah and Benjamin

Ezra 1:5

5 Then the heads of the fathers' houses of **Judah** and **Benjamin**, and the **priests** and the **Levites**, with all whose spirits God had **moved**, arose to go up and build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.

**Judah & Benjamin were able
to prove their ancestry**

Summary of those who Returned

<i>According to:</i>	<i>Ezra</i>	<i>Nehemiah</i>	<i>1 Esdras</i>
Men of Israel:	24,144	25,406	26,390
Priests:	4,289	4,289	2,388
Levites:	341	360	341
Nethinim and servants of Solomon:	392	392	372
Those who could not prove their Israelite origin:	652	642	652
Total:	29,818	31,089	30,143

But all 3 accounts list the total number as 42,360

Taken from Keil & Delitzsch

1 Esdras does mention the 42,360 included 12 yrs old & up
while the smaller numbers may only count 20 yrs old & up

Comparison of the Levites

- Ezra 2 $\frac{74}{42,360} = 0.17\%$ 1 of 588
- Num 2 $\frac{22,000}{625,550} = 3.5\%$ 1 of 28
- Num 26 $\frac{23,000}{624,730} = 3.7\%$ 1 of 27

Seems Levites not interested in returning.
They depended on tithes to survive in Israel.
They probably had good jobs in Persia!

The Role of the Levites

- **Support group for priests** (like Sunday school teachers, CYC leaders, seminar helpers, etc.)
- **Didn't own pasture land:** depended on Jews for food
- **Responsible to teach the truth**
 - Better educated, more easily integrated into Babylonian & Persian life
 - Used to higher standard of living (probably supplied some of the money in Ezra 1)
- **Warning:** Believers today tend to shoot up the corporate ladder
 - Be careful – work & life-style can limit our service to God



**We need lots of volunteers for our
ecclesias to function smoothly today!**

Some priests could not be verified

Ezra 2:61-63

61 and **of the sons of the priests:** the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Koz, and the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name. 62 **These sought their listing among those who were registered by genealogy, but they were not found; therefore they were excluded from the priesthood as defiled.** 63 And the governor said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things **till a priest could consult with the Urim and Thummim.**

Some people had to accept disappointment

Those excluded from the Priesthood as defiled (v.62)

- Shows the Jews were attempting to follow God's recorded Law
- Illustrates the need to respect dividing lines – *Drawing our own lines individually does not lead to ecclesial unity*
 - Ecclesial jobs & positions
 - Fellowship lines



God doesn't need the best person for a job
(priesthood & kings prove that!). He can work
through many people if they are willing to let him.

Some people freely offered!

Ezra 2:68-70

68 **Some of the heads of the fathers' houses**, when they came to the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem, **offered freely for the house of God**, to erect it in its place:
69 **According to their ability, they gave to the treasury** for the work sixty-one thousand gold drachmas, five thousand minas of silver, and one hundred priestly garments.

70 So the priests and the Levites, some of the people, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim, **dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.** (*Nehemiah cast lots to select 10% of the people to live in Jerusalem [Neh 11]*)

**Most not interested in living in
Jerusalem because it was destroyed**

Freewill Offerings to God

To build the tabernacle (Ex 25:2; 35:21-29)

Gives it *willingly* with his heart (Ex 25:2)

All the men & women whose hearts were *willing* (35:29)

To build Solomon's temple (1 Chron 29:5,6,9,14,17)

People *rejoiced* because with a loyal heart they offered *willingly* (v.9)

To rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:4; 1:6; 2:68-69)

According to their *ability* (Ezra 2:69)

To help the poor in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8 & 9)

Beyond their ability, they were *freely willing* (8:3)

According to what one has, and not what he doesn't have (8:12)

As a matter of *generosity* and not as a grudging obligation (9:5)

God loves a cheerful giver (9:7)

**Freewill giving should be in response to our faith,
in appreciation for God's gift of grace to us!**

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Cor 9:15)



Beginning a Spiritual Revival

Ezra 3:1-4

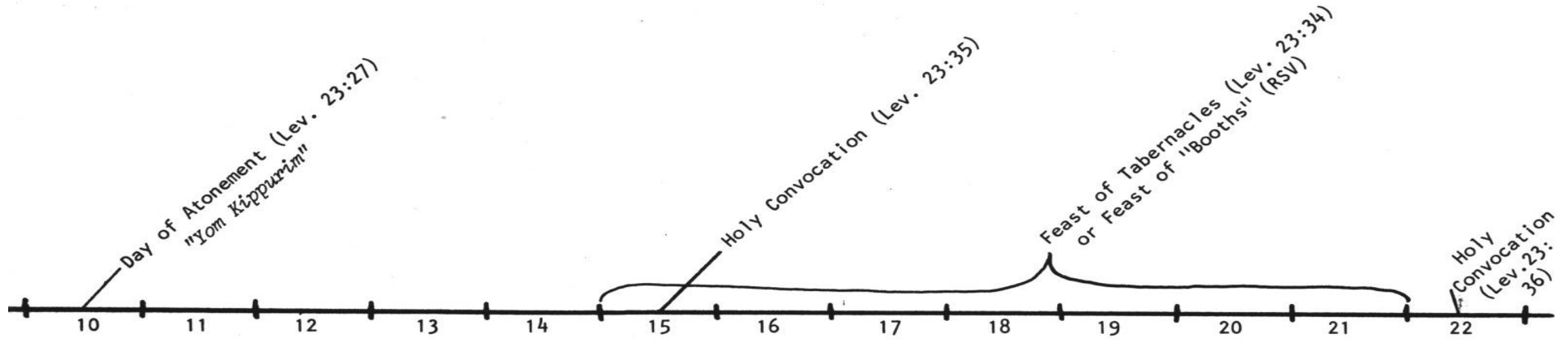
1 And when **the seventh month** had come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the **people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem.** 2 Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and **built the altar of the God of Israel**, to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the Law of Moses the man of God. 3 **Though fear had come upon them because of the people of those countries**, they set the altar on its bases; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the Lord, both the morning and evening burnt offerings.

Moving forward, trusting in God



**Unity comes
when we all work
together for a
common goal**

Now the 7th month (Ethanim) [3:1]



Kept Feast of Tabernacles

DAY OF ATONEMENT

1. People had to "*afflict themselves*" (Lev. 23:27) reminding them of the need to examine themselves spiritually to properly assess their sinfulness.
2. Two male goats were chosen on this day (Lev. 16):
 - a) One goat was *killed* as a sin offering — teaching us that the METHOD of redemption would only be accomplished by Messiah putting Sin to death in himself and by ourselves trying to do the same.
 - b) Aaron confessed all the iniquities, transgressions and sins of the people over the head of the *live* goat & it was led away — teaching us the RESULT of Messiah's work would be the forgiveness of our sins because he would still live!

FEAST OF TABERNACLES

1. This was a time to rejoice because of the harvest of wheat and grapes, foreshadowing the time of rejoicing at the great harvest when Christ returns.
2. The people had to dwell in booths for 7 days like the Jews did who left Egypt, reminding us that in order to be redeemed we must live as strangers and pilgrims on earth now.
3. It would seem very probably that the first day of the millenium will be the 15th of Ethanim.

No mention of Day of Atonement – not ready for this yet

Hilkiah the High Priest

(1 Chron 6:13; 9:11; 2 Kgs 22:14)

Azariah

(1 Chron 6:13,14; Ezra 7:1)

Jeremiah

(Jer 1:1)

Gemariah

(Jer 29:31)

Seraiah

(2 Kgs 25:18; 1Chr 6:14
Jer 52:24-27)

**Family Line of
Jeshua ("God is
Salvation")**

Carried
away
captive

Jehozadak (Jozadak)

(1 Chron 6:15; Ezra 3:2)

Ezra

(Ezra 7:1)

Joshua (Jeshua)

The High Priest

(Zech 6:11; Ezra 3:2)

**Ezra was
Joshua's Uncle**

Zerubbabel = “shoot of Babylon” (Yg)

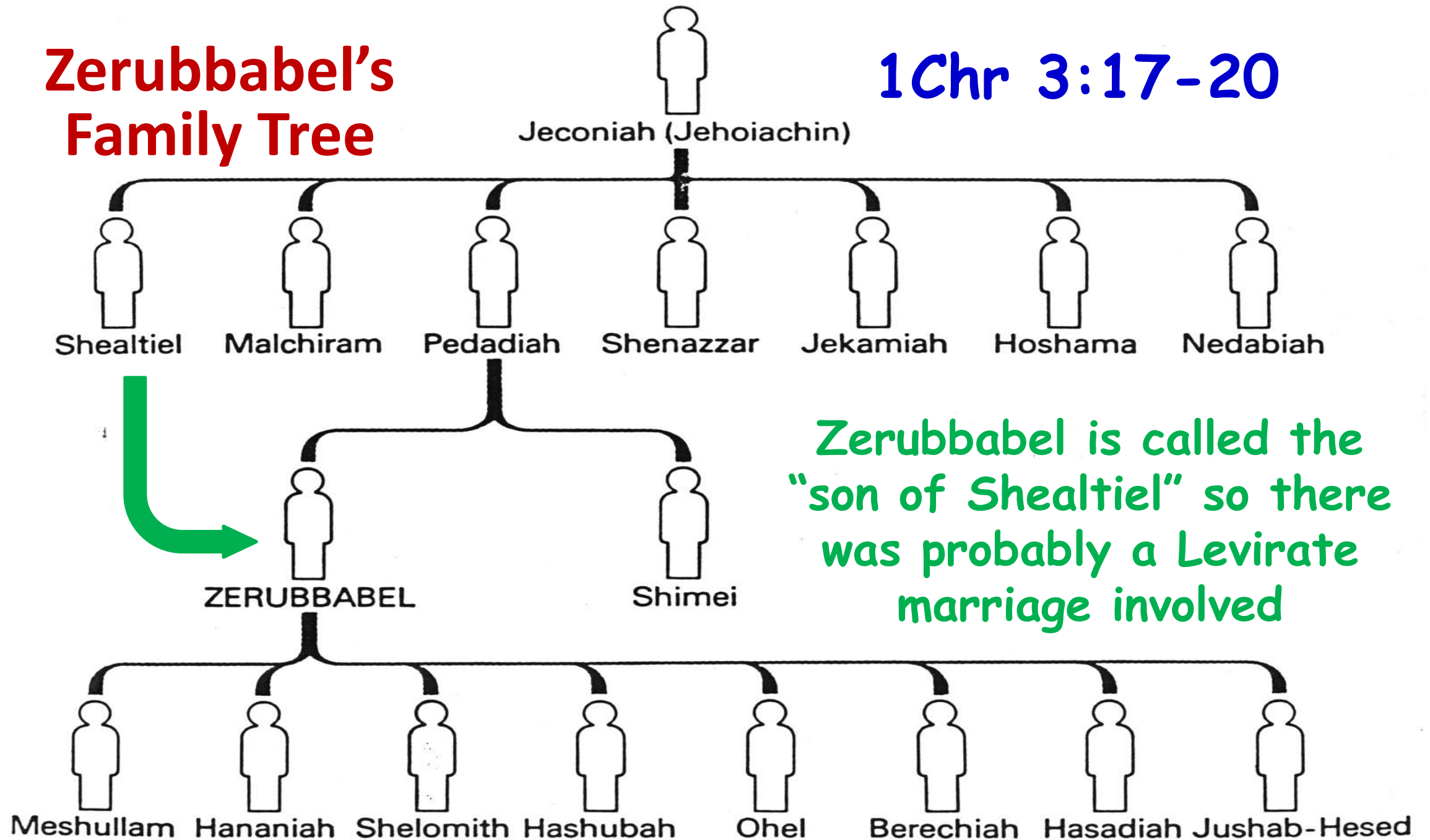
- Would have been king now
- Organized the return from Babylon
- Really the son of Pedaiah (1 Chr 3:19), but counts as Shealtiel’s son (maybe a Levirate marriage?)

Zerubbabel would have been “the king”
and Jeshua (Joshua) is “the High Priest”



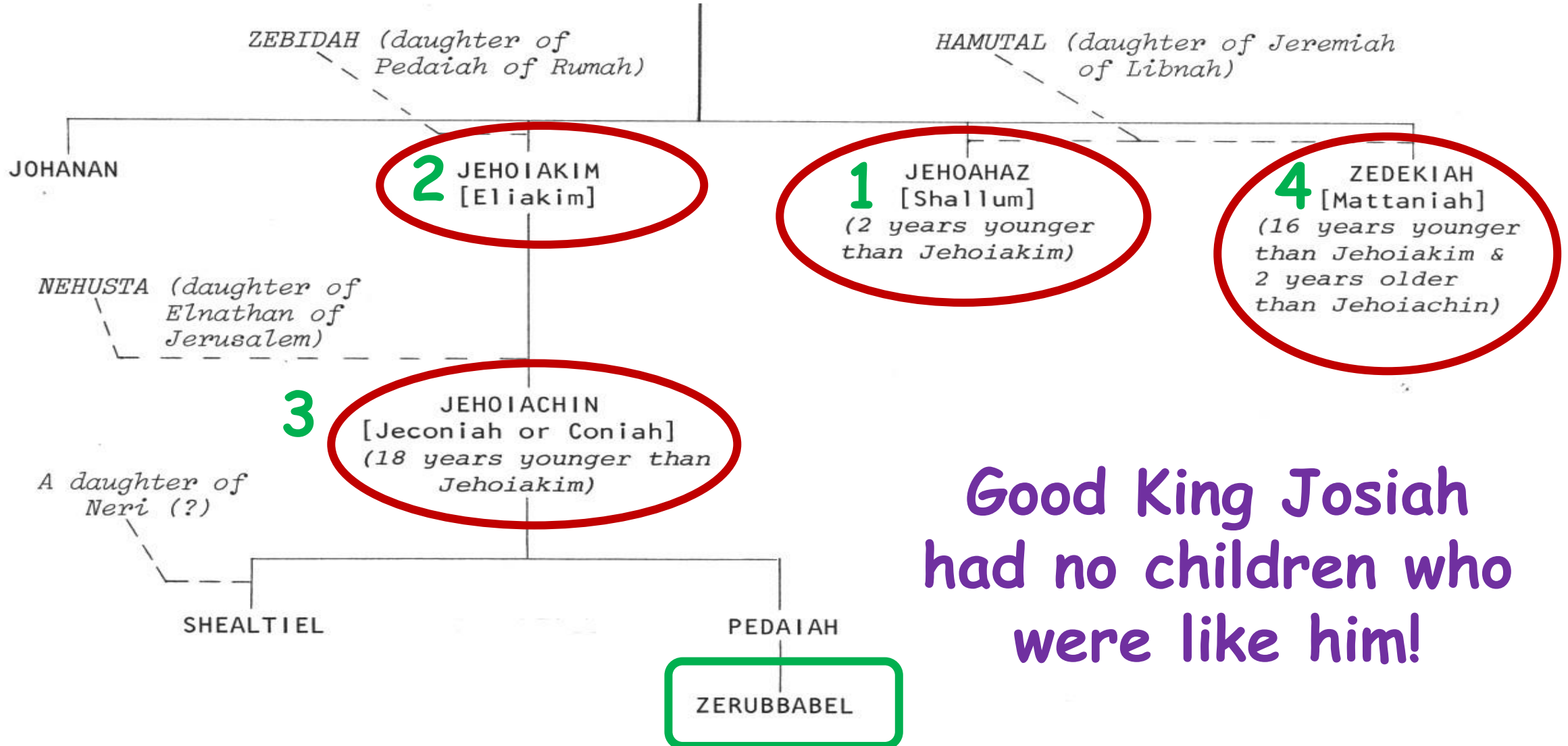
Zerubbabel's Family Tree

1Chr 3:17-20



King Josiah's Descendants

Josiah

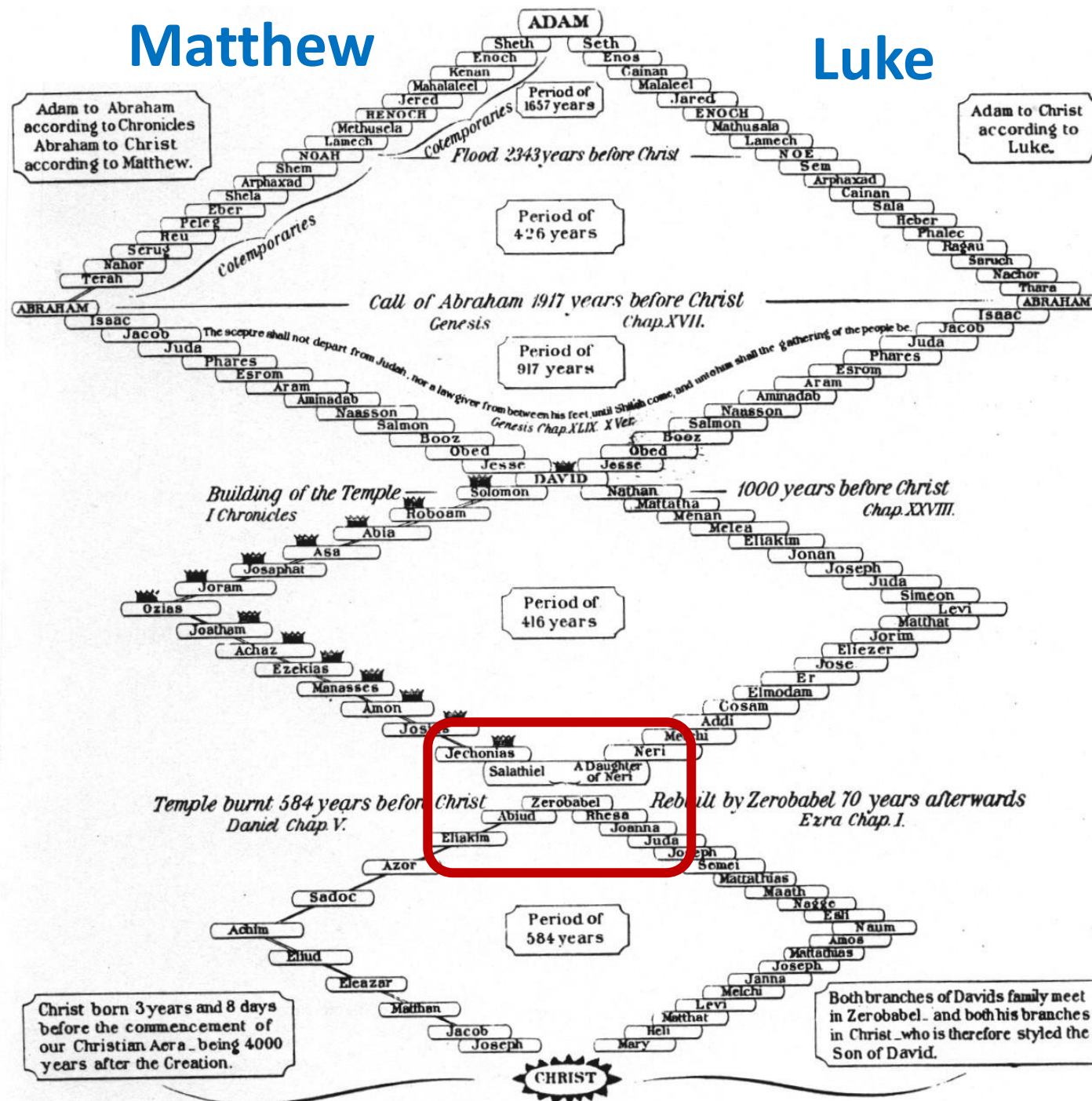


Genealogies of Jesus

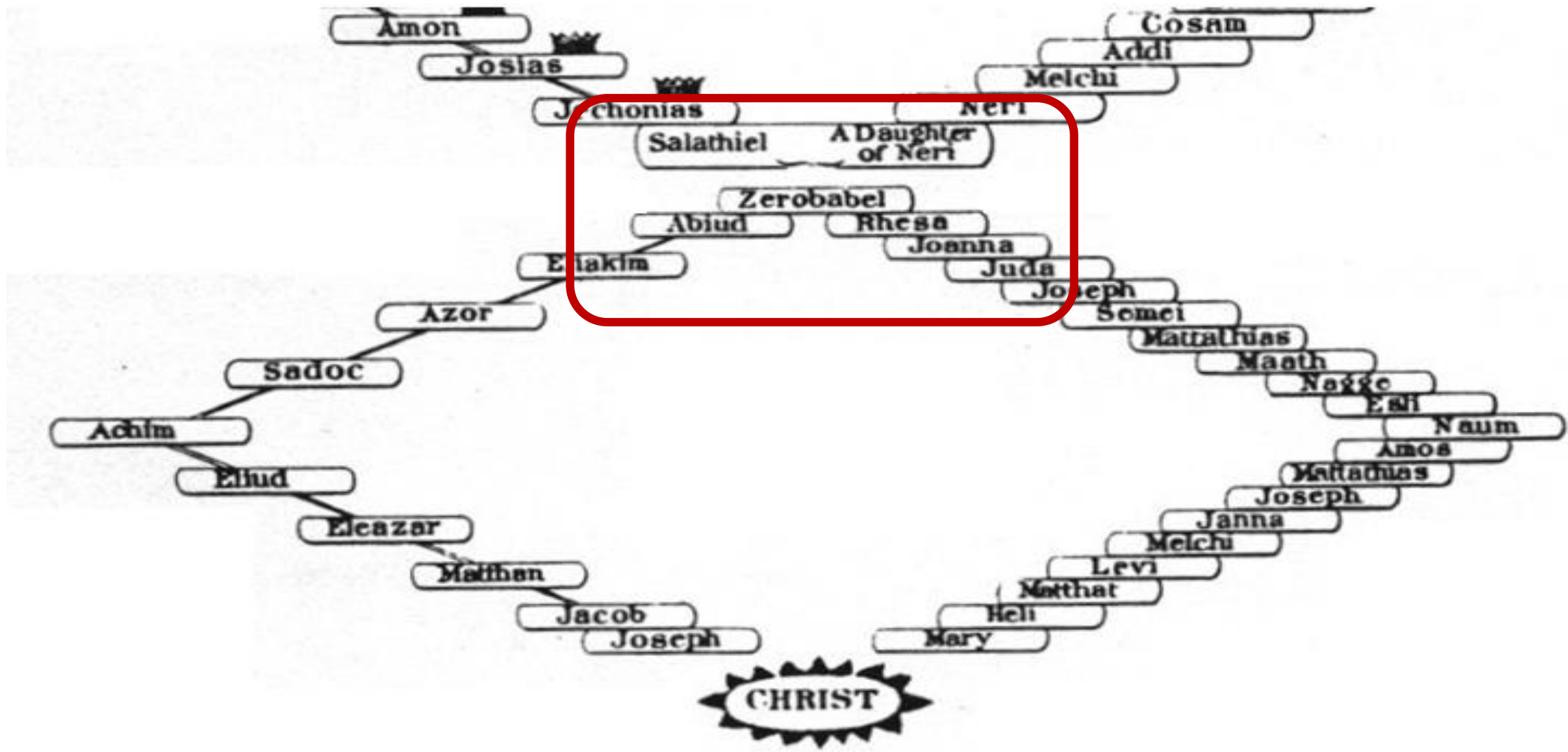
Both Family lines go thru Zerubabbel

Matthew

Luke



Genealogies of Jesus



Both Family lines go thru Zerubbabel

Jeremiah's prophecy had an impact!

Jeremiah 22:24-30

29 O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD!

30 Thus says the LORD: *'Write this man (Jehoiachin) down as childless, a man who shall not prosper in his days; for none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah.'* "

Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) obeyed Jeremiah & surrendered.
He was released from prison in Jer 52:31-34.

Jehoiachin was rewarded

Jeremiah 52:31-34

31 Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, that **Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison.** 32 And he **spoke kindly to him and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who were with him in Babylon.**

33 So **Jehoiachin** changed from his prison garments, **and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life.** 34 And as for his provisions, there was a **regular ration given him by the king of Babylon, a portion for each day until the day of his death, all the days of his life.**

Jesus was one of his descendants



Judgment & Mercy



- Zerubbabel – King – Judgment
- Joshua – Priest – Mercy

The Law of Moses separated these two offices until Messiah would come who could perfectly balance judgment and mercy

This is the challenge of every parent & Ecclesial leader: properly balance judgment & mercy! Two parents & many ecclesial leaders help us to find a balance.

Judah & Israel Finally United!

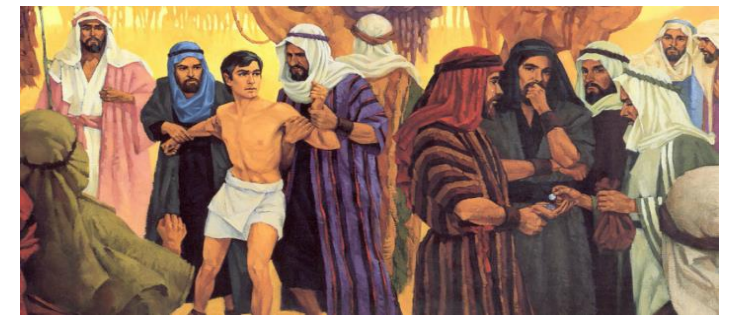
Ezra 3:1-4

1 And when **the seventh month** had come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the **people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem.**

First time in the history of Israel that all the tribes finally put away their petty jealousies and united



Israel's Family were never united



- **Gen 29-30:** Jealousy & envy of Jacob's wives
- **Gen 37:** Joseph's brothers
- **Num 16:** Korah's rebellion – wanted priesthood
- **Josh 22:** Altar on western side of Jordan
- **Jud 8:** Ephraimites response to Gideon
- **Jud 12:** Ephraimites response to Jephthah
- **2Sam 20:** Sheba's rebellion (*we have no share*)
- **1Kgs 12:** Rehoboam & Jeroboam split

If we don't actively seek to pursue unity,
inevitably strife and conflict will arise



God is Determined to Unite Israel & Judah

Ezekiel 37:15-22

15 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 16 "As for you, son of man, **take a stick** for yourself and write on it: 'For **Judah** and for the children of Israel, his companions.' Then take **another stick** and write on it, 'For **Joseph**, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.' 17 **Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand.**

18 "And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, 'Will you not show us what you mean by these?' — 19 say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and **make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.**" 20 And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes.

21 "Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will **gather them from every side and bring them into their own land;** 22 and **I will make them one nation** in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and **one king** shall be king over them all; **they shall no longer be two nations,** nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.

The true, final fulfillment will be under Jesus

“As one Man” (3:1)



- **Judah & Israel** were finally united!
- **Cost to bring about unity was huge:** 70 years of captivity, Jerusalem burned, so much loss!
- **Learn to value ecclesial unity and work for it constantly**
 - Ecclesial leaders need to provide activities that will encourage unity of their members & other ecclesias
 - Many years of working for unity can be overturned in a moment by bad behavior or unkind words or insistence on a personal issue

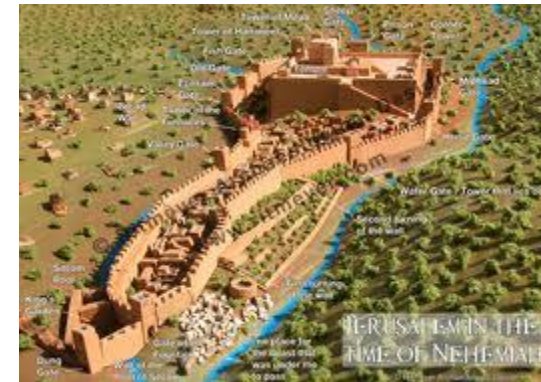
**Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for
brethren to dwell together in unity! (Ps 133:1)**

The Order of the Building

- 1) **Altar** – dedication to become living sacrifices

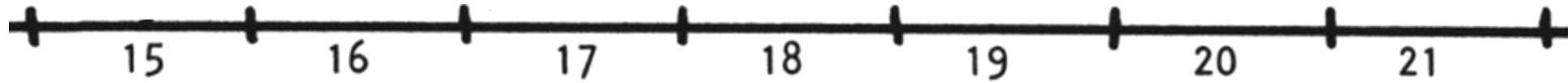


- 2) **Temple** – commitment to daily service & worship



- 3) **Walls** – (during Nehemiah) develop defenses against the evils of this world

God wanted it this way to encourage faith in His ability to provide



Feast of Tabernacles (v.4)

- **Required** in Ex 23:14-17
- **Didn't need a temple**
- **Represented the final gathering** of saints throughout the ages into God's kingdom
- **Reminder of redemption** from Egypt (sin)
 - When Jews were slaves and had nothing
 - God in His mercy redeemed them



**Would have been encouraging & exhortational
to experience the Feast at this time**

The Temple work Begins!

Ezra 3:7-9

7 They also **gave money** to the **masons** and the **carpenters**, and **food, drink, and oil** to the people of Sidon and Tyre to bring **cedar logs** from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the permission which they had from Cyrus king of Persia.

8 Now **in the second month of the second year** of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, **Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, **Jeshua** the son of Jozadak, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and **all those who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem, began work and appointed the Levites from twenty years old (1Chr 23:27) and above to oversee the work of the house of the Lord.** 9 Then Jeshua with his sons and brothers, Kadmiel with his sons, and the sons of Judah, arose as one to oversee those working on the house of God: the sons of Henadad with their sons and their brethren the Levites.

Levites in charge to oversee the work

Use of foreign supplies (v.7)

- **As Solomon** in 1Kgs 5:6-11
- **Only allowed foreigners to supply materials** – not actually build temple
- **Joshua & Zerubbabel drew a line:** no foreigners on site!



There are times to be selective about who we are willing to use in God's service too!
We have to balance unity & holiness.

Years to Build the Temple

Cyrus 6 years

Cambyzes 8 years

Pseudo-Smerdis 7 months

Darius 6 years (6:15)

Years to finish = 20 years

That's a long time to
maintain interest in an ecclesial project!

Off to a great start!

Ezra 3:10-11

10 When **the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord**, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, **to praise the Lord, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel.** 11 And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord:

"For He is good, for His mercy
endures forever toward Israel."

Then **all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord**, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

Giving God the praise & glory

Following David's Directions

V. 8 Levites: originally began at 25 years old (Num 8:24)

David changed to 20 years old (1 Chron 23:24) when there was no need to carry the tabernacle

V.10-11 Reenactment of 2 Chron 5 – Solomon brought ark into the new temple

David's directions: 1 Chr 6:31; 16:4,5,7; 25:1-31

V.11 *Quoted from:*

1 Chron 16:34 – David brought ark into tent in Jerusalem

2 Chron 5:13 – Solomon brought ark into Temple

Lots of responsibilities for 20-year olds. Older members must be willing to let young people be involved.





**Unity comes when we
worship together & praise
God for His goodness we
don't deserve**

Differing Perspectives

Ezra 3:12-13

12 But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' houses, old men **who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice** when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet **many shouted aloud for joy**, 13 so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and **the sound was heard afar off**.

This turned out to be a witnessing event

People's Reaction to the Laying of the Foundation

Younger: Shouted and praised (excited!)

Older: Wept (disappointed)



This problem hung on for 15 years!
Still around for Haggai & Zechariah

Hag 2:3-4 *Is it not in your sight as nothing?*

Zech 4:8-10 *Who has despised the day of small things?*

God wants our best effort, not best ever result!

Compare this temple to Solomon's

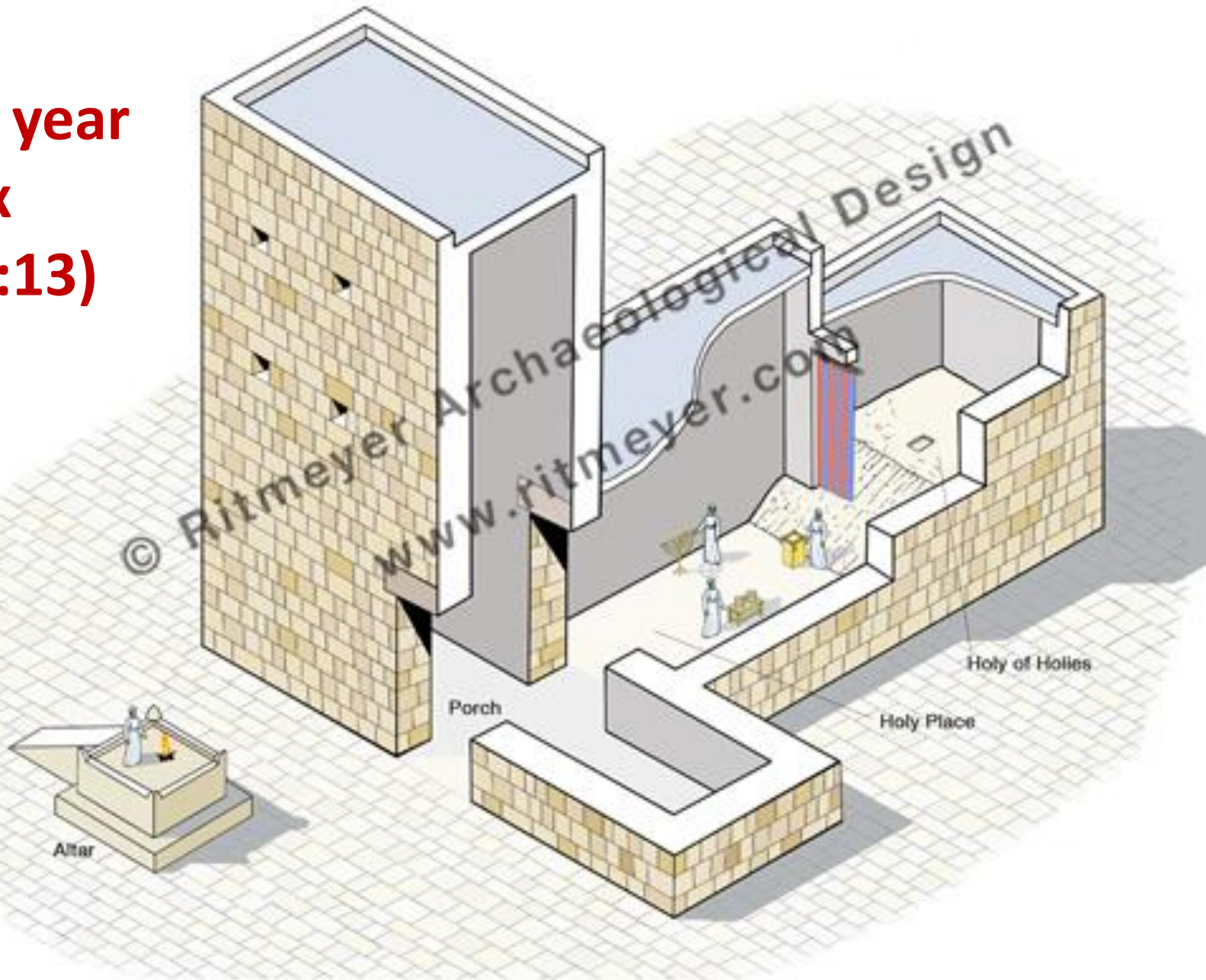
1 Kings 5:13-17

13 Then **King Solomon raised up a labor force out of all Israel;** and **the labor force was thirty thousand men.** 14 And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month in shifts: they were one month in Lebanon and two months at home; Adoniram was in charge of the labor force. 15 Solomon had **seventy thousand who carried burdens,** and **eighty thousand who quarried stone** in the mountains, 16 besides **three thousand three hundred from the chiefs of Solomon's deputies, who supervised the people who labored in the work.** 17 And the king commanded them to quarry large stones, costly stones, and hewn stones, **to lay the foundation of the temple.**

No wonder this temple was a “day of small things”

“The weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred sixty-six talents of gold.” (2 Chr 9:13)

666 talents of gold is 22 tons which today is worth about \$2 billion. This was the amount of gold that King Solomon received in payments and gifts.



Probably lots of rubble around (cp Neh 2:13-17)



God wanted a house built



- **Provided a central place** for committed worshippers to meet
- **Continual singing and sacrifices** to keep believers focused on spiritual things
- **Provided an opportunity for the workers** to learn to work together and spiritually grow as the temple was built
- **God was more interested in the spiritual growth** of the workers than the quality & value of the finished temple

Ecclesias provide the same opportunities today for us

Be patient with young projects

Ecclesiastes 7:8-10 (NirV)

8 The end of a matter is better than its beginning. So it's better to be patient than proud.
9 Don't become angry quickly. Anger lives in the hearts of foolish people.

10 **Don't say, "Why were things better in the good old days?" It isn't wise to ask that kind of question.**

**Most of us selectively remember the past
– not what really happened!**

A circular arrangement of hands of various skin tones, symbolizing unity and teamwork. The hands are stacked in a circle, with each hand resting on the arm of the person next to it. The skin tones range from light to dark, representing diversity. The background is plain white.

Unity is destroyed
when we do not
appreciate what God is
accomplishing through
the efforts of others

Time to make a choice!

Philippians 1:27 (RSV)

Only **let your manner of life** be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you stand firm in *one spirit*, with *one mind* striving *side by side* for the faith of the gospel

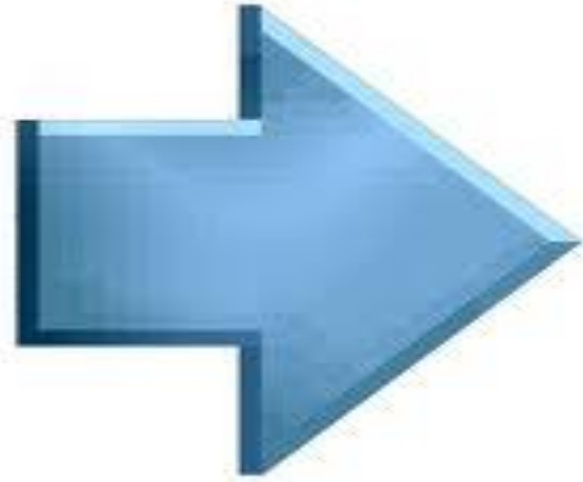
**So let's go home & get more involved in ecclesial life
& appreciate what each member can contribute!**

**Start appreciating the spiritual growth of the people involved,
not the quality of the end product**

Lessons from this Class

- Be careful not to get sucked into jobs & activities of this world that leave us no time for God's work.
- God doesn't need the best workers, just people who are willing to get involved.
- Thankful people bring free will offerings
- Unity has a huge cost – it's much better to work it out peacefully
- Appreciate the work of others & recognize God is the one who supplies the resources
- Make the most of today's opportunities, don't get trapped into comparing the past

Next



Class 3:
Don't give up
with things go
wrong!

