**GOD’S STORY – YOUR STORY**

**SESSION 10**

**The Survivors Come Home**

Readings

Isaiah 9:1-7 Isaiah 44:24-28

Isaiah 11:1-9 Ezra 1:1-5

Jeremiah 31:31-34 Haggai 1

Isaiah 53 Nehemiah 8:1-8

Old Testament prophecies of hope

The hope for a Messiah

A good, just, and wise king or leader who followed God, took good care of the people and who will restore the kingdom of Israel to power and glory

The hope of a new covenant

Jeremiah prophesied of a day when all people would know what was right to do and would do it. God would make a new covenant with his people and the law would be written on their hearts.

The hope for a suffering servant

The (unusual) prophecy and hope that God will send a servant who will suffer greatly. Somehow this servant’s suffering will benefit all humanity.

To the Jews Isaiah 53 was not seen as a hope for the future. They saw the suffering servant as their nation, God’s people, and believed that somehow their suffering was going to benefit all people. The Jews hoped for and expected a new king or leader who would rescue them.

This passage is important to Christians as a prophecy of Jesus. Jesus suffered for the people. He was not a king of this world in the way the Jews expected. Those who hoped that he would be a victorious king or a Messiah rescuing them from the enemies of their country were disappointed.

The Jews return.

King Cyrus

About 50 years after the Exile began Babylon was defeated by the Persians. The Persian king, Cyrus issued an order that the Jews could return home and rebuild their temple if they chose to do so.

Books of the Bible

The biblical books concerned with this time are Ezra and Nehemiah and the prophets Haggai and Zechariah.

The temple was rebuilt

Prophets

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah both delivered messages from God encouraging the people to rebuild the temple.

Controversy

Rebuilding the temple was not an easy task. It took both money and labor while those Jews who had returned to their homeland were also building their own homes.

The temple was rebuilt by 515 BC.

This temple was again rebuilt with some additions by the time of Jesus. This work was done under Herod the Great.

Nehemiah

After the temple was restored, the leader Nehemiah rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem.

The beginnings of the Bible

Old Testament collections

Biblical scholars believe that during the Exile Jewish scholars and priests began to collect the poems, prophetic writings, and other sacred writings of the past.

Ezra

The stories from this time refer to the Law of Moses. It is believed that Ezra brought this Law with him from Babylon and taught it to the people. He probably had the first five books of what is now the Bible, or at least a major portion of them. This collection of sacred writing was the beginning of what would eventually become our Old and New Testament.

Old Testament 1500-400 BC New Testament 50-95 AD

**Looking ahead:**

Luke 22:35-38

Acts 8:26-38

Luke 22:19-20

John 19:19-24

John 2:13-22