Lesson 9: The Exile and Return

Part 1: The Exile (blue period)

Introductory remarks:
• Remember the context of the curses and blessings of the law: (Deut 30:16-18.)
• Daniel’s underscores the reasons behind this exile: (Dan 9:4-5, 9-12)
• CCC 710 and the meaning of the Exile.
• Jeremiah prophesied their return after 70 years (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10).
• The supplemental books of Tobit, Daniel and Ezekiel give us the perspective of this period.
• There are some great promises and prophecies during this time of discipline.

The Exile of the Northern Kingdom:

I. Assyrian king Tiglathpileser III conquered a lot of land and booty around 732 B.C. (2 Kings 15:29). Then, Samaria was destroyed by Assyria in 722 B.C. (2 Kings 17:1-6).

II. Assyria’s tactics of exile and integration: exile some and intermarry the others. Assyria wanted to destroy the cultural, political and religious identity of the people and prevent future uprisings.

III. The Ten lost tribes:
   A. The 10 tribes of the north never returned from exile.
   B. Those that remained intermarried and were absorbed into the five pagan nations that were imported into Samaria (2 Kgs 17:24). They became known as Samaritans.
   C. As a result, they lost their kingdom, culture, religion, and identity.

IV. The Book of Tobit:
   A. Tobit was exiled to Nineveh by the Assyrians. This is a familial history, like Ruth, with themes of faithfulness to God, preserving and patience in trail.
   B. Tobit obeys the law in the foreign land and prays to God. Sarah endures taunting and prays to God. God sends Raphael, the archangel to assist each in their own way.
   C. With Raphael’s help Tobias exorcises Sarah’s demon, married her, and healed Tobit’s blindness. After all this, Raphael revealed his identity and encouraged them.
   D. About the presence of the angels: CCC 336

The Exile of the Southern Kingdom:

   A. 605 B.C. — King Jehoiakim forced to give tribute to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 24:1-2).
   B. 598 B.C. — King Jehoiakim rebelled, Nebuchadnezzar attacked, Jehoiakim died at the beginning of the siege (2 Kgs 25:6; Jer 22:18-19; 36:30). Jehoiachin, the new king, surrendered and was taken off to Babylon. Josiah’s third son, Zedekiah was made a puppet to the king.
   C. 587 B.C. — Zedekiah rebelled, was captured at Jericho, his sons killed before him, then he was blinded and carried off to Babylon (2 Kings 25)
II. The Jewish community in Jerusalem:
   A. Gedaliah was made the governor of Judah, but he was assassinated.
   B. The people flee and take Jeremiah and Baruch with him: The Exodus is reversed as they go back to Egypt and idolatrous sin (Dt 28:68).

III. The Prophet Daniel:
   A. He was taken in the first deportation.
   B. Daniel story exemplifies God’s faithfulness to Judah (Cavins & Gray, p. 194).
   C. Daniel is a new Joseph:
      1. Both were taken captive in a foreign land
      2. Both were honored at court because of their gift of interpreting dreams.
      3. Now, there is a new captivity like Egypt: (Cavins & Gray, p. 195). The return from exile is like a new exodus out of captivity to Babylon.
   D. Chapter 2: Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the statue.
   E. Chapter 3: Saved in the fiery furnace.
   F. Chapter 9: 490 more years until the “exile” will be over. Daniel is reading Jeremiah’s prophecy. Verse 11 mentions the curses of Deut 28! Daniel learns that 70 years are not enough. They need 490 years before their hearts return to the Lord!
      1. When Jesus tells Peter to forgive 70x7, he is referring to this period of exile and the Lord’s patience and love toward the people time and time again. We must be as forgiving as God has been towards Israel.

IV. The Prophet Ezekiel:
   A. He was taken in the 2nd deportation. He began his ministry while in Exile.
   B. He gave prophecies in words and actions:
      1. Prophecies of destruction:
         a) He built a miniature model symbolizing Jerusalem and lied next to it for days to symbolize it’s long siege (Ez 4).
         b) He shaved his head and beard to symbolize the destruction of Jerusalem (Ez 5).
      2. Prophecies of restoration:
         a) God himself, as the servant David, will be their shepherd (Ez 34:11 - 31).
         b) A new exodus and a new heart (Ez 36:22-32)
         c) Dry bones coming to life represents Israel in exile. They will return to the land of the living, that is, the promised land. (Ez 37)
         d) Chapters 40 - 48 all refer the the restoration of the new temple, which St. John describes as the heavenly temple, the body of Jesus Christ.
Lesson 9: The Exile and Return

Part 2: The Return (Gold Period)

The Remnant returned from exile:
I. Remember, the 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom never returned from exile.

II. A new generation from the Southern Kingdom was born in captivity in Babylon. Many people got comfortable in their new settlements and careers and were absorbed into Babylonian culture. However, many were faithful to the Law and repented of their sins. This is when synagogues began to form as centers for common prayer. There are no sacrifices at a synagogue.

III. The story about the “writing on the wall” is the occasion that the Babylonian kingdom fell to the Medo-Persian Empire (Dan 5:3-6), the new super-power.

IV. Cyrus later became king of Persia. He let his conquered peoples keep their own customs and practices. He was the one who allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple (Ezra 1:2-4). Only a remnant of the southern tribes came back from exile (Judah, Ben, and the Levites). They became known as “Jews” because they came from the Kingdom of Judah.
A. Isaiah prophesied Cyrus by name in Is 44:28-45:1.

V. Remember, Jeremiah prophesied their return after 70 years (Jer 25:11-12 & 29:10).
A. It was 68 years, nearly 70, when the Jews returned (605 - 538 = 68 years.)

Remember the theme of the “New Exodus”:
I. Prophecies of the New Exodus:
   A. Jeremiah 32:36 - 41; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Isaiah 48:20-21; 51:10-11

II. Similarities between the original and new exodus:
   A. The people left with gold and goods like Egypt (Ezra 1:4; Ex 11:2; 12:35-36)
   B. The census of Ezra 2:1-67 is like the census of Numbers.
   C. Free will offerings for the temple in Ezra 2:68-69 recalls that in the desert (Ex 25:2-9; 35:21-29).
   D. After Ezra instructed the people in the law, they celebrated the feast of booths (Ezra 3:4), which is the celebration of Israel receiving the law at Sinai before wandering in the desert to the promised land.
Joshua, Zerubbabel and the new temple: (537 - 515)

I. Joshua and Zerubbabel rebuild the Temple:
   A. Joshua, the high priest and Zerubbabel, the decedent of David, returned from exile to begin rebuilding the temple.
   B. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah received oracles and visions from God to encourage and inspire the people, as well as Zerubbabel and Joshua, to rebuild the Temple (Ezra 5:1-2; Hag 1:1-2; Zech 4:9).
   C. There were various problems:
      1. The Jews stopped working on the temple because they wanted to build their own houses (Hg 1:2-8). The prophets warned them to get their priorities straight.
      2. The Samaritans wanted to help rebuild the temple, but weren’t allowed because of their blood and syncretism. They attacked the Jews working on the Temple.
      3. Political issues at court in Persia forced them to stop for a decade (537 - 520 B.C.).
         Darius I later continued Cyrus’ wishes and give financial support to the Jews (Ezra 6).
   D. The Jews hoped to restore the davidic kingdom, placing their hope in Zerubbabel, a descendent of David, but he was just a pledge and a type of the future messiah (Hag 2:23) and the ancestor of Jesus (Matt 1:12)

II. The temple is finally complete (Ezra 6:13):
   A. The temple is complete and rededicated in 515 B.C. and the restored Levites sacrifice.
   B. This temple was smaller and much less ornate than Solomon’s. The people were praising the weeping at the same time (Ez 3:11-13). The ark wasn’t there. The restoration wasn’t complete. The Holy of Holies was empty, the ark was gone. They would have to wait for the future glorious one that Ezekiel prophesied about until Christ.
   C. Because this is a “new Exodus” they celebrate Passover right away (Ezra 6:19-22). The 12 goats points to the beginning of the restoration of the 12 tribes (Ezra 6:17).

Ezra and the torah:
I. Ezra was a priest, skilled in the law of Moses, and lived in the Jewish community in exile. Artaxerxes allowed him to return to Jerusalem and bring more Jews with him. The king gave him money to refurbish the temple. His mission is clear: instruct the Jews in the Law of Moses (Ezra 7:10)!
II. Intermarriage was a problem and forbidden (Ex 34:13-16; Dt 7:3) because in marriage one would swear by the false gods of the spouse. Much of the problems that caused Israel to fall into sin was marriage with pagan people. Thus, in order to prevent themselves from falling into paganism again, they needed to divorce their wives. The Jews were willing to give up their sinful marriage to be faithful to God. If Solomon couldn’t handle it, neither could they.
III. Divorce was permitted because of their weak natures. In Christ, divorce wouldn’t be permitted because the grace would be provided for the marriage.
Lesson 9: The Exile and Return

Nehemiah and the city and walls.
I. He was a layman who rose to influence in the court of Artaxerxes. He asked the king to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls. He understood the cause of exile was because of the people’s covenant infidelity (Neh 1:7-11). He served the people as a civil administrator and governor, whereas Ezra, the priest, was their spiritual leader.

II. He arrived in Jerusalem in 444 B.C.

III. The people built the walls quickly, in 52 days, in spite of threats and violence from the local peoples. They build the walls with weapons at their sides.

IV. Thanks to his social and religious reforms, the people had renewed enthusiasm for the Law and the covenant (Neh 9).

Concluding points:
I. Point 1: Jerusalem was supposed to be the leader of nations, the Temple was to be God’s dwelling place, and David’s dynasty was to be eternal. None of these promises were restored during the Jews’ return from exile. A restored Jerusalem, a glorious temple, and the messiah king were still to come.

II. Point 2: Most of the tribes were still in exile. Many Jews from the southern tribes came back, but only a few converted. All the tribes were in exile spiritually speaking. God wanted to free their hearts from slavery to sin. He would only accomplish this new exodus in the new covenant of Christ’s blood. How many of us are back in the land, but still in exile. The parable of the prodigal son tells this story.

I. Malachi prophesied about the coming Messiah and his herald in the spirit of Elijah (3:5; 4:1).